



## Innovation Campus Grant Call for Submissions

**Call for Submissions is open March 24 – April 14, 2025.  
Submissions due April 14, 2025, by 5:00pm ET.**

### **Program Overview**

The State of Rhode Island (denoted herein as “RI”, “Rhode Island”, or “State”) seeks to create one or more Innovation Campus(es) that will catalyze the commercialization of local research from both institutions of higher education and industry into new products, businesses, and jobs in the state’s targeted industries. This campus (or these campuses) will build and strengthen the partnerships needed to close the gap between the high level of strong research occurring in RI and the comparatively low level of subsequent commercialization, business growth and job creation.

This opportunity, first and foremost, represents Rhode Island’s commitment to utilizing its home-grown assets to drive greater economic growth, foster the development of new technologies, and provide expanded employment opportunities for Rhode Islanders in new-economy jobs that span a variety of skill sets.

A successful Innovation Campus will achieve the following goals for Rhode Island:

- Foster collaboration between industry, academic partners, and research entities;
- Create new high-value innovation jobs;
- Advance Rhode Island’s leading innovation clusters; and
- Catalyze increased private sector investment in Rhode Island.

### **Background**

This Call for Submissions is supported by the \$20 million bond issuance approved by Rhode Island voters in November 2016 and represents an opportunity for industry, academic, real estate, and/or research organizations to form a partnership with the University of Rhode Island (URI) and potentially other institutions of higher education (IHEs) under the auspices of the Rhode Island Executive Office of Commerce (EOC). These partnerships will foster innovation, the commercialization of academic research, and job creation.

### **Respondent Eligibility**

Respondents to this Call for Submissions can be a combination of any of the following types of entities: industry, academic, real estate, and/or research organizations. Submissions must, at a

minimum, include one (1) business partner and the University of Rhode Island.

A company or person whose primary business is the development of real estate or the provision of passive equity or the sale/resale of equity participations may be a member of a consortium, but may not be the managing or majority (“lead”) member of the consortium. Respondents may respond as part of multiple consortia. Any Respondent that is based outside the U.S. must include at least one member that is based in the U.S.; and the U.S.-based member(s) shall ensure compliance with all legal requirements involving the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.

The minimum criteria that a Respondent must meet, as approved by the people of the State, are that each Respondent must:

- • Partner with the University of Rhode Island;
- • Propose a match that exceeds the amount of money requested from this bond issuance;
- • Involve at least one business partner; and
- • Create a substantial number of jobs at a variety of skill levels.

This Call for Proposals outlines additional requirements to be met by Respondents, including the necessary components of the conceptual and financial dimensions of each proposal, as well as further details on the submission of proposals and the selection of winners.

### **Eligible Uses of Funding**

Funding from the bond proceeds may be used to (i) acquire land or other real property or any interest, estate or right therein (including leaseholds); (ii) pay cost of demolition, construction, rehabilitation, enlargement, provision of service utilities, and other improvements to land; (iii) pay for the cost of furnishings, equipment, supplies, devices, materials and labor for repair, renovation or conversion of systems and structures; and (iv) pay for the preparation of reports, plans and specifications relocation expenses, and other costs such as for designing, inspecting and engineering required in connection with a Project.

### **Submission Components**

#### Team Summary:

Respondents shall provide the following information relevant to the Respondent and its Team Members and must identify all Team Members.

#### *1. Respondent*

Identify the legal name and nature of Respondent, and the state of its organization, if applicable. If the Respondent typically uses a trade name, identify both the trade name and the underlying legal name as registered with the State and/or country of origin. If Respondent is a consortium, partnership, or any other form of joint venture, the submission shall contain any executed teaming agreement. If an executed teaming agreement does not yet exist, the submission must contain the summary of the key terms of the anticipated agreement.

#### *2. Team Members*

Provide Form A (see Appendix 1) for each Team Member (also include any financially responsible party). For each Team Member, identify the member’s role, planned equity ownership percentage (if

applicable), and the entity's legal nature and state of organization. If any of the Team Members are a consortium, partnership or any other form of joint venture, the submission must contain any executed teaming agreement. If an executed agreement does not yet exist, the submission must contain a summary of the key terms of the anticipated teaming agreement. Executed teaming agreements or summaries of teaming agreement key terms shall be included.

Relevant Project Experience:

Please include project descriptions (not to exceed one (1) page per project) of relevant project experience held by the Respondent and Team Members. Please include up to eight (8) projects in the aggregate.

Within each description, the team shall include:

- Length of term of involvement to date, including first year of involvement and final year of involvement, if relevant (with a preference for projects over five years in length);
- Project description narrative, including location, total scope of work undertaken;
- Specific roles and responsibilities fulfilled;
- Full team (firms) included in programming, management, and/or operation of the space;
- Term of involvement with the project, including total economic value of the contract; and
- References for the team and/or any assigned key staff for each example engagement.
  - References shall include reference names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and the name or title of specific projects with which the reference is associated. Respondents are requested to verify that all contact information is correct.

The team should ideally demonstrate that it has experience successfully executing projects of a similar scale. Teams are encouraged to form partnerships and include other firms in their proposals to help successfully deliver the Innovation Campus.

Project Narrative:

Respondents should submit a compelling narrative explaining the team's proposal. The narrative should clearly explain the overall objectives and goals of the Project. Respondents should include sufficiently detailed plans for the development, programming, operation, and/or management of the facility ("Facility") together with a project development timeline, including key milestones.

The Project should include programs and activities to support and encourage commercial applications and ventures and a culture of entrepreneurship, such as technology transfer centers, business incubators, and/or corporate research and development facilities. Proposals should address methods for retaining such commercial activity and the related jobs in Rhode Island.

Successful projects will maximize collaboration and opportunities across industry, academic, and research tenants as well as detail a well-defined, compelling statement of work.

Submissions will be reviewed based on their ability to grow sectors that are strengths in the State such as but not limited to: ocean sciences and maritime industries; defense; information technology (IT), Internet of Things (IoT), and cyber & data analytics; advanced manufacturing; food technologies; life sciences; and renewable energy. Interdisciplinary programs are additionally encouraged.

Specifically, the Project Narrative should detail how the Respondent will:

- Dedicate sufficient space for academic and/or research use (e.g., teaching space, wet and dry labs), associated conference facilities, offices and administrative space, among other uses.
- Describe how the existing or incrementally new research enterprise and activities will be integrated into the activities of the Respondent.
- Describe the Innovation Campus Facility. The proposed program will require one or more facilities to bring together the educational, research, translational and commercial aspects of the proposal. The proposal must clearly identify the potential RI location(s) and size of the Facility(ies), and the program that it will contain, with allocation of space by approximate square feet. The Facility(ies) may be part of an existing facility or new construction.
- Describe how the Respondent will make the Facility available to users for the term of the Project.
- The Respondent must clearly identify the land and/or buildings to be leased, acquired and/or constructed and the proposed terms for the purchase or lease of such property. The Respondent must demonstrate capacity to complete the leasing, acquisition and/or construction in a timely fashion.
- Describe the governance of the project team, including control, decision-making, contracting, communications and financial accountability, as well as the commitment of the project team to the project for at least 10 years.

#### Economic/Jobs Impact:

Respondents should provide a short statement projecting the economic impact of the proposed concept, including the number of full-time equivalent jobs created upon initiation of consortium operations, along with a long-term projection for additional jobs created over time.

#### Letters of Commitment:

*Note: Letters of Support will not be accepted*

Each Respondent should provide letters of commitment from consortium members and letters of interest from other potential collaborators, if applicable, to support the Respondent's proposal for the Innovation Campus.

#### Project Financial Approach and Sustainability:

Each Respondent will provide a statement (not to exceed five (5) pages) describing its approach to financing the Project, including identification of any challenges to financing the Project and proposed solutions to meet these challenges. Include in the statement what the Respondent views as the most significant risks to the State and the Respondent with respect to financing the Project and how those risks can be addressed, mitigated or allocated to provide best value to the State.

Respondents should provide a clear statement of the financial resources pledged to the Innovation Campus, the sources of capital required to successfully launch and operate the Innovation Campus, and the cash flow requirements needed for operations. Teams should provide information that will enable the Selection Committee to evaluate a team's ability to obtain funding for the Project, and to provide a reasonable assurance regarding the ability of the team to deliver and operate the proposed concept in a sustainable manner. Respondents should demonstrate that they have developed an operating model for the venture that covers all operating costs without further State support for a minimum of 10 years.

The Selection Committee will evaluate each Respondent's financing approach and funding partnerships that may impact its ability to successfully execute the Project. Respondents must provide sufficient and

complete information to enable this committee to evaluate its financial capability and approach to the project.

Respondents shall note that the Selection Committee may, in its discretion based upon the review of the information provided or the Respondent’s form of organization, require certain financial commitments as a condition precedent to an award including, among other options, (i) that one or more Financially Responsible Party(ies) will be required to unconditionally guarantee payment and performance in relation to the Project; or (ii) that all participants to a venture assume joint and several liability. The Selection Committee may also require financial assurance for the Respondent’s obligation inclusive of acceptable payment and performance bond requirements and/or letters of credit.

Recognize that proposals that include the acquisition of assets or services directly by URI beyond the grant contemplated under this Call for Submissions will be subject to applicable procurement regulations.

**Review Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria set forth below. Only complete proposals, addressing all elements described in the Submission Components, will be evaluated with a maximum number of points allowed in each category. Each category will be considered independently, and teams may receive partial or full points for each criterion.

The Selection Committee may invite some or all qualified Respondents to participate in oral interviews at a specified time, date, and location. The Selection Committee may impose a time limit for each oral interview.

<p><b>Proposal Concept Quality</b> Submissions will further be reviewed against their ability to demonstrate the potential for commercialization of research.</p>	<p>30</p>
<p><b>Financial/Budget Approach</b> Submissions will be evaluated based on the reasonableness and impact of the uses of funding and the level and type of match provided to the project. Fiscal sustainability of the project after the grant term ends will also be considered.  Further recognize that all Submissions that match is provided exceeding the amount of bond proceeds requested.</p>	<p>20</p>
<p><b>Economic/Jobs Impact</b> Submissions will be reviewed against the proposed economic impact of the proposed concept, including the number of full-time equivalent jobs created upon initiation of consortium operations, along with a long-term projection for additional jobs created over time. Submissions will further be reviewed against the methodology used to calculate the job growth numbers and implicit assumptions made.</p>	<p>20</p>
<p><b>Team Capacity/Project Experience</b> Submissions will be evaluated against the experience of the Lead Applicant as well as the other Team Members. This review will include the proposed URI and industry collaborations.</p>	<p>20</p>

<b>Letters of Commitment</b>	10
<b>Total Maximum</b>	<b>100 pts</b>

**Selection Process**

The Selection Committee, composed of representatives chosen by the State Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with URI and the Governor’s Office, will evaluate the written proposals. The Selection Committee may at any time during the evaluation process seek clarification or additional information from Respondents regarding proposals. Respondents may be asked to elaborate upon or revise proposals.

**Funding**

The EOC anticipates selecting more than one proposal, which will receive a portion of available funding. It is anticipated that projects will be no smaller than \$500,000 in required state funding and that Respondents will provide matching private or federal funds that exceed the committed state funding.

**To be considered for funding, all application materials must be emailed to [RFP@commerceri.com](mailto:RFP@commerceri.com) by April 14, 2025, by 5:00PM ET.**

**Questions? Contact [RIInnovationCampus@commerceri.com](mailto:RIInnovationCampus@commerceri.com).**

*NOTICE: Respondents are requested to clearly mark any information in their proposal they deem confidential. Applicants should familiarize themselves with the Access to Public Records Act. The EOC will consider the Respondent to have waived any claim of confidentiality and exemption from public disclosure for any materials placed in any other location in the submittal.*

*The EOC reserves the right to terminate this call for submissions at any time, and by responding hereto, no person, firm, or entity is vested with any rights in any way whatsoever.*

*The EOC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for not complying with the terms of this Call for Submissions.*

*See Appendix A for additional qualifications.*

## **Appendix A: Call for Submissions Policies and Notifications**

1. Respondents are advised to review all sections of this Call for Submissions carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.
2. Proposals that depart from or materially alter the terms or requirements defined by this Call for Submissions may be rejected as being non-responsive.
3. All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Call for Submissions, or to provide oral or written clarification of content, shall be borne by the Respondent. The Rhode Island Executive Office of Commerce assumes no responsibility for such costs.
4. All financial information, as well as financing information, is assumed to be accurate and true to the best of the Respondent's knowledge. Misleading or false information will be a basis for disqualification.
5. Proposal submissions misdirected to other locations, or that are otherwise not present in the RI Innovation Campus email inbox by the submission deadline for any cause, will be determined to be late and will not be considered. For the purposes of this requirement, the official time and date shall be that of the time clock with the receptionist.
6. All proposals should identify the proposed team of professionals, including those employed by subcontractors, if any, along with respective areas of expertise and relevant credentials.
7. The award made pursuant to this Call for Submissions will be contingent on the availability of bond funds and made at the discretion of the Executive Office of Commerce.
8. Interested parties are instructed to review the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation's website (<http://commerceri.com/ri-innovation-initiatives/>) on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this Call for Submissions.
9. Equal Employment Opportunity (R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-5.1-1, et seq.) – § 28- 5.1-1 Declaration of policy – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies to all areas where State dollars are spent, in employment, public services, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation.
10. In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, no corporation organized under the laws of another state or country shall have the right to transact business in Rhode Island until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). This is a requirement only of the successful Respondents.