



Missouri Technology Corporation

**Regional Node Planning Grant Program
Proposal Guidelines**

Fiscal Year 2024

Timeline:

Application Period Open – Tuesday, August 22, 2023

Final Submission Deadline – Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Award Notifications – by mid-November 2023

1. Introduction and General Information

1.1. About the Missouri Technology Corporation

The Missouri Technology Corporation ("MTC") is a public-private partnership created by the Missouri General Assembly to promote entrepreneurship and foster the growth of new and emerging high-tech companies. MTC focuses on 21st Century industries that build on Missouri's rich history in agriculture and technology. The MTC is governed by a 15-member board of directors, which is appointed by Missouri's Governor, Speaker of the Missouri House, and President Pro Tem of the Missouri Senate. The President of the University of Missouri System and the Director of the Department of Economic Development are *ex officio* members of the board.

1.2. Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted no later than **11:59 p.m. CDT on Tuesday, September 26, 2023**, to be considered. Late proposals will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that MTC receives all required materials by the deadline. Final Grant Proposals should be submitted by completing the application in Google Forms (linked below) and submitting all required supporting documents. Grant Applications that do not include all required supporting documents may not be considered for funding at MTC's discretion.

[Direct Link to online application](#)

2. Program Description

2.1. Program Overview

In February of 2022, MTC released a report from TEconomy Partners, LLC ("TEconomy") entitled Catalyzing Innovation: Strategies for Missouri to Drive Innovation and Entrepreneurship (the "[Catalyzing Innovation Report](#)"). The report was informed by a robust, six-month planning process with guidance from a 16-member, statewide steering committee and from over 500 individuals across the state.

Based on a data-driven analysis of the insights collected, TEconomy identified five bold and compelling strategies and 16 action items to catalyze the state's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems to drive economic development over the next decade.

These strategies are:

- **Strategy One: Fund** – Deploy greater levels of investment capital to help meet the demands of the growing entrepreneurial base.

- **Strategy Two: Grow and Scale** – Increase access to quality entrepreneurial support services throughout Missouri to ensure companies can grow and scale.
- **Strategy Three: Launch and Cultivate** – Take advantage of Missouri's research strengths by converting intellectual assets into market opportunities.
- **Strategy Four: Inspire** – Encourage more Missourians to participate in innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Strategy Five: Connect** – Overcome physical and cultural barriers to better connect Missouri's communities with each other and with the world.

In September 2022, MTC released an Implementation Plan that outlines how MTC will either lead or support the implementation of the strategies and actions recommended by TEconomy. MTC's Implementation Plan is informed by the resources currently available to the organization, its capacity, and the alignment of action items to its mission.

The Implementation Plan includes a directive to develop and pilot new competitive grant programs designed to enhance entrepreneurial capacity throughout the state. MTC is establishing grant programs designed to support (a) entrepreneurs' access to affordable physical workspaces across the state, (b) the development of regional nodes across the state to allow entrepreneurs direct access to resources in their regions, and (c) the continued growth of programs and organizations designed to provide resources critical to the success of the state's entrepreneurs.

The Regional Node Planning grant will support the second goal of the development of regional nodes across the state to allow entrepreneurs direct access to resources in their regions.

2.2. Goals and Objectives

MTC is seeking to award planning grants to create regional "nodes" which are intended to incentivize more of Missouri's communities to successfully coalesce their assets in support of innovation and entrepreneurship through coordinated partnerships among entrepreneurial service organizations within the node. A successful node will serve as a front door for the regional entrepreneurial community, allowing entrepreneurs to more easily access the resources they need to launch or grow their businesses, thereby expanding the state's entrepreneurial capacity.

As a result of having access to quality support and services, regardless of location and company stage, regional nodes are intended to not only maximize the number of technology-based, high-growth potential startups but also encourage growth and scale within the state. In addition, regions will be able to use the grant-based funding to support all of their entrepreneurs and businesses, regardless of industry sector or business stage.

Applicants to this program should use the grant-based funding to collaboratively develop a plan that clearly articulates the role of each partner organization that will participate in the node and how the node will eliminate regional silos. The nodes will be an inclusive environment where collective efforts surpass individual capabilities, fostering collaboration, innovation, and growth.

Because coalescing a region around a coordinated plan to support a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem might prove difficult for some regions, planning grants are being awarded to incentivize and facilitate the coordination of regional resource development strategies to ensure the successful implementation of service delivery initiatives.

A Regional Node Implementation Grant Program will be launched in the spring of FY24 and awarded in early FY25. While not required, regions that successfully leverage a Regional Node Planning Grant to create a vibrant and well-thought-out regional node plan will be the most competitive.

2.3. Eligibility & Applicant Requirements

One entity must be designated as the primary applicant/fiscal agent for the grant (Applicant Organization). This is the organization that MTC will communicate directly with during the application process and active grant period. This is also the organization that will enter into the grant agreement with MTC and subsequently will be awarded the funding. The Applicant Organization must either be a non-profit entrepreneurial support organization or a public or private non-profit Missouri research institution, including institutions of higher education.

Each grant proposal submitted for consideration is required to identify at least three partner organizations (including the Applicant Organization). The partner organizations will be required to engage in the activities of the planning grant and submit letters of commitment. Partner organizations are not required to be non-profit organizations or public or private non-profit Missouri research institutions.

Applicant Organizations awarded grant funding will be required to submit the following corporate governance documents prior to the execution of the grant agreement:

- A State of Missouri certificate of good standing for the Applicant Organization obtained within 30 days of execution of the grant agreement.
- A certificate of authority for the Applicant Organization to conduct business in the State of Missouri obtained within 30 days of execution of the grant agreement (applicable for non-Missouri corporate entities).

- Attach a current Missouri tax clearance obtained within 30 days of execution of the grant agreement.
 - Note, even if the Applicant Organization is tax-exempt, it is required to submit a Missouri tax clearance letter.

2.4. Term of the Program

The grant period commences on December 1, 2023, and terminates on May 31, 2024. All grant activities must be completed prior to May 31, 2024, and applications must include specific timing for the expenditure of the grant funds.

2.5. Budget Restrictions

The request for financial support should be specific and narrowly tailored to the plan outlined in the application submitted to MTC and reflect the actual funding needs of the Applicant Organization for the development of the node.

The maximum grant award amounts as determined based on the size and complexity of the region the node will represent are outlined below:

Population Node Represents	Maximum Grant Award
50,000 or less	\$10,000
50,000 - 100,000	\$15,000
100,000 - 500,000	\$25,000
500,000 - 1,000,000	\$35,000
1,000,000 or more	\$50,000

The Applicant Organization will be able to allocate up to 10% of the awarded grant amount to cover administrative/indirect costs associated with the management of the grant.

Some examples of how the planning grant funds can be deployed include, but are not limited to: partner organizations and community stakeholder planning meetings; quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to understand regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and engagement of consultants to facilitate planning efforts and community engagement processes.

2.6. Matching Funds

Applicants must have an actual, conditional or anticipated third-party cost-sharing commitment to match the requested MTC Grant funding.

Due to the nature of the purpose of the planning grant, consideration will be given to applications that are proposing to satisfy the cost-sharing requirement through a contribution of in-kind cost support. Eligible in-kind cost support includes time dedicated to the project by the Node Leadership Team and other stakeholders engaged that fall outside of their compensated roles with partner organizations engaged with the node.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, preference will be given to proposals where the majority of the matching funds identified are not in-kind cost support.

3. Proposal Submission Requirements

3.1. General Proposal Requirements

- (i) Each Applicant Organization must complete the Grant Application and submit a digital copy (PDF) of the Grant Proposal and the required supporting documents by the submission deadline. Hard copy submissions or submissions received after the submission deadline will not be considered. A link to the Grant Application can be found at www.missouritechnology.com.
- (ii) All Grant Proposals must include the subject matter outlined below in Section 3.2.
- (iii) Any information included in the proposal that an Applicant Organization wishes to request to be treated as confidential during the evaluation process should be clearly marked as confidential. All proposals submitted will become public records once the awarding process is completed.

3.2. Proposal Form and Content

3.2.1. Cover Letter

The cover letter should include the name and contact information of the Applicant Organization, the amount of funding being requested, a brief overview of the Applicant Organization, identification of the region the node will serve, and a summary of the impact and associated outcomes of the planning grant. The cover letter may not exceed one page in length and should be included in the Grant Proposal, but is not included in the 15-page Grant Proposal limit.

3.2.2. Grant Proposal

Each proposal should include sections that clearly and concisely address the topics below and should not exceed fifteen (15) pages in length. Please clearly label each section with the title in parentheses. Applications that do not submit a Grant Proposal will not be eligible for consideration.

- (i) A brief summary or overview of the planning grant proposal, including clearly identifying the region the node will serve (Abstract).
- (ii) An overview of the Applicant Organization, including entrepreneurial programs and efforts, historical successes, and economic development impact. This section should also describe why the Applicant Organization is the primary applicant organization/fiscal agent and what role the Applicant Organization will play in implementing the planning grant (Applicant Organization).
- (iii) An overview of the partner organizations, including their entrepreneurial programs and efforts, historical successes and economic development impact. This section should also identify the role that each partner organization will have in implementing the planning grant (Node Members).
- (iv) A description of the node's proposed leadership team responsible for coalescing the region around a coordinated plan. This can include members of the Applicant Organization as well as partner organizations. This section should clearly identify which organization each member of the leadership team is representing (Node Leadership Team).
- (v) An overview of the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem that the node will serve, including a general understanding of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Regional Ecosystem).
- (vi) A description of the proposed regional planning effort, including how the region plans to coalesce its assets to best support innovation and entrepreneurship through coordinated partnerships among entrepreneurial service organizations within the node. Preference will be given to applications that include an explanation of how the planning effort will align with the strategies and recommendations identified in the Catalyzing Innovation report (Planning Effort).
- (vii) A description of the impact and associated outcomes anticipated from receiving a Regional Node Planning Grant as well as the specific milestones that the project seeks to achieve using the grant funding and matching funds (Impact & Milestones).
- (viii) A brief narrative that describes the proposed use of funds and the source and status of the matching funds outlined in the Budget Form (Program Budget).

3.2.3. Program Budget

Complete a proposed budget using the Budget Form that is available on the MTC website at www.missouritechnology.com. The Budget Form should include the source and status of all matching funds and provide an itemized summary/overview of the planned expenses for each budget category. Note, a brief narrative describing the specific use of funds and the source and status of the matching funds included on the Budget Form must be included in the Grant Proposal (Section 3.2.2.viii).

The Program Budget Form should be included in the grant proposal as Appendix 1 but is not included in the 15-page proposal limit.

Grant proposals **must** use the Budget Form provided. Applicant Organizations should not create a budget form or change the page settings in the Budget Form when creating a PDF.

3.2.4. Affirmation and Signature Page

The Affirmation and Signature Page Form is available on the MTC website at www.missouritechnology.com.

The Affirmation and Signature Page should be included in the Grant Proposal as Appendix 2 but is not included in the 15-page proposal limit.

3.2.5. Required Supporting Documents

Governance and Organization Supporting Documents

- Attach copies of the following for the Applicant Organization:
 - Articles of incorporation
 - Organizational chart *
 - List of officers, directors, and management team *
 - List of advisory board members *
 - List of all Applicant Organization affiliates *

* Documents may be submitted as a single combined PDF file or up to five (5) individual files.

Financial Related Supporting Documents

- Attach financial statements for the three most recently completed fiscal years of the Applicant Organization.
- Attach the most recent balance statement and profit & loss statement for the Applicant Organization at the time this application is submitted.
- Attach pro forma financial projections for the Applicant Organization for at least a three-year period.

Note, Applicant Organizations that are applying as a private or public university, or as part of a larger organization, are required to submit the requested financial documents, including pro forma, for the program seeking funding. Without the financials for the program seeking financial support, the grant proposal cannot achieve a maximum score in the Finance Plan and Sustainability scoring categories.

Example 1. An Innovation Center or an entrepreneur support organization directly associated with a university should submit the

requested financial documents for the Innovation Center or entrepreneurial support organization and not for the university.

Example 2. An entrepreneurial support organization that is part of a larger national entrepreneurial support organization should submit the requested financial documents for the programs in Missouri and not for the national organization.

Letters of Commitment

- Each grant proposal submitted for consideration is required to include at least three partner organizations (including the Applicant Organization) that will be required to engage in the activities of the planning grant. Partner organizations are required to submit letters of commitment in the application.

Pitch Video

Please record an 8-minute or less video presentation of the Grant Proposal.

MTC recommends recording the video as a screen recording using Zoom or a similar application to present a slide deck overview of the proposal.

Videos should be recorded in 720p or 1080p at 30fps to keep file size reasonable. Acceptable video file formats are .MP4, .AVI, .WMV, or .MOV. Recordings made with a smartphone are acceptable if they meet the requirements outlined above.

The video will be uploaded in the application submission form.

3.2.6. Additional Supporting Documents

The Applicant is encouraged to include additional supporting documents, including but not limited to letters of support for collaborators or commitment letters from the source of any matching funds.

The documents described in Sections 3.2.1 through 3.2.4 should be combined into a single file and uploaded as a PDF. Supporting Documents described in Sections 3.2.5 and 3.2.6 should be uploaded as individual files - preferably in PDF format and with easily identifiable file names.

All files submitted should be named using the following naming convention - OrgName_documenttitle i.e., MTC articlesofincorporation.

4. Evaluation Criteria

Grant Proposals submitted by eligible Applicant Organizations will be evaluated based upon the five criteria outlined below:

- **Alignment with Goals and Objectives:** Proposals will be assessed on the relative strength of how the Applicant Organization and Node Members will coalesce regional assets to best support innovation and entrepreneurship within the region served. The assigned score will reflect the coordinated effort to collaboratively develop a node that will eliminate silos, creating a node where the sum of the partners is greater than the individual parts. Proposals will also be evaluated based on alignment with the strategies included in the Catalyzing Innovation report and the ability to support the launch and growth of technology-based high-growth potential startups.
- **Applicant Grant Proposal:** Grant proposals will be assessed on the relative strength of the Applicant Organization's proposal. The assigned score will reflect the proposal's feasibility and clarity, including the underlying logical and factual support.
- **Applicant Experience:** Grant proposals will be assessed on the relative strength of the Applicant Organization and node members' experience and prior success, including the proposed leadership team of the node. The assigned score will reflect the strength of the team's experience and ability to achieve the outcomes described in the grant proposal.
- **Impact:** Grant proposals will be assessed on the relative strength of the Applicant Organization's anticipated impact and associated outcomes from receiving a Regional Node Planning Grant.
- **Finance Plan:** Grant proposals will be assessed on the relative strength of the Applicant Organization's finance plan. The assigned score will reflect the amount of the matching funds presented relative to the MTC funds requested, the value of matching funds (secured, committed, cash vs. in kind), use of funds, appropriateness of the budget relative to the milestones' activities outlined in the proposal and the feasibility of the finance plan.

5. Additional Notes

To submit an online application, the Applicant Organization or its representatives will need to have a Google account. Individuals with a Gmail email address have a Google account, but a Gmail email address is not required to have a Google account. Individuals can create a Google account with an existing non-Gmail email address.

Questions related to the Regional Node Planning Grant Program, including eligibility or online application issues, should be directed to Jakob Pallesen (jakob.pallesen@missouritechnology.com).

Awards authorized by MTC are contingent upon the Applicant Organization entering into a binding contractual agreement with MTC. The binding contract will require that the MTC be given appropriate oversight of its award.