



## **Missouri Technology Corporation**

# **Missouri Building Entrepreneurial Capacity (MOBEC) Operations Support Grant Program Proposal Guidelines**

## **Calendar Year 2025**

### **Key Dates:**

Application Period Opens – Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Final Submission Deadline – Wednesday, October 30, 2024

Presentation to Investment Committee – Early January 2025

Approval by MTC Board of Directors – Late January 2025

Grant Period Start Date – April 1, 2025

## 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. 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 Wednesday, October 30, 2024**, 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 Applications must be submitted through the MTC Grants Portal using the designated application form, along with all necessary supporting documents. Submissions that do not include all aspects of the proposal requirements as outlined in Section 3 may not be considered for funding at MTC's discretion.

Direct Link to MTC Grants Portal: <https://missouritechnology.grantplatform.com>

## 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 are able to grow and scale.
- **Strategy Three: Launch and Cultivate** – Take advantage of Missouri's research strengths by converting the 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.

Since September 2022, MTC has released an annual Implementation Plan (the “Implementation Plan”) that outlines how MTC will either lead or support in 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.

Through the Missouri Building Entrepreneurial Capacity grant program (MOBEC), MTC will be focused on funding organizations that not only create more home-grown, high- tech companies, but that are also aligned with the strategies and action items included in the Catalyzing Innovation Report.

MTC anticipates that MOBEC will continue to be a cornerstone of MTC’s investment strategy. Through the MOBEC grant program, MTC makes strategic investments that expand the support system for entrepreneurs that are commercializing new technologies or that enhance the capacity of Missouri to grow its innovation economy.

MTC currently offers three core grant programs: MOBEC, Physical Infrastructure, and Regional Node. Each of these programs are designed to enhance and foster the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Missouri. It is important for organizations to have a comprehensive understanding of all three grant programs prior to submitting an application. The [Physical Infrastructure Grant Program](#) seeks to ensure entrepreneurs throughout the state have access to the physical infrastructure and resources required to launch and grow their businesses. The [Regional Node Grant Program](#) provides funding for regions to coalesce their assets in support of innovation and entrepreneurship through coordinated partnerships among entrepreneurial service organizations within the node. MTC advises each potential applicant to identify the grant program that most closely reflects the purpose of the applicant’s needs and position within the ecosystem. Applicants to the MOBEC grant program will not be considered if the purpose of the funding is more appropriately reflected in the Physical Infrastructure or Regional Node Grant Programs.

## 2.2 Goals and Objectives

In alignment with the Catalyzing Innovation Report and Implementation Plan, the MOBEC grant program seeks to enhance the capacity of non-profit organizations that support entrepreneurs who are:

- commercializing new technologies around which high-growth companies can be created; and
- creating sustainable, high-paying, private sector jobs based on the establishment or growth of new and emerging companies.

## 2.3 Eligibility

The Applicant Organization must either be:

- A public or private **non-profit** Missouri research institution, including institutions of higher education; or
- A **non-profit** entrepreneurial support or related organization.

## 2.4 Applicant Requirements

### 2.4.1 Primary Applicant Designation

The MOBEC Grant Program requires one entity to be designated as the primary applicant (referred to as the Applicant Organization). The Applicant Organization is also the fiscal agent for the grant. MTC will communicate directly with the Applicant Organization throughout the application process as well as the active grant and reporting periods. The Applicant Organization will enter into the grant agreement with MTC and receive the grant funding.

### 2.4.2 Partner Organizations

Applicant Organizations are encouraged to collaborate with partner organizations for their submission to the MOBEC Grant program, though partnerships are not mandatory. For partnerships, partners should be classified as follows: the Applicant Organization (acting as the fiscal agent), Primary Partners (financial beneficiaries), and Affiliated Partners (non-financial beneficiaries). Applicant Organizations must clearly identify in both the Grant Application and the Grant Proposal Narrative any partner organizations that will be receiving a portion of the grant funding.

Primary Partners are required to be actively engaged in the proposed activities of the MOBEC program, rather than merely providing goods or purchased services, and submit letters of commitment. The Applicant Organization must complete a budget form section located on the 2025 MOBEC Budget form for each Primary Partner. Partners are not

required to be non-profit organizations or public or private non-profit Missouri research institutions.

### **2.4.3 Required Certifications**

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;
- A certificate of authority for the Applicant Organization to conduct business in the State of Missouri (applicable for non-Missouri corporate entities); and
- A current Missouri tax clearance certification.

Each of the certifications identified above must be dated within 30 days of the effective date of the grant agreement.

### **2.4.4 Grant Type**

Applicants will be asked to indicate the type of MOBEC grant proposal they are submitting which should be characterized as either Operations Support or Project Support. This set of guidelines addresses the specifics of Operations Support grants. You can find the Operations Project Support guidelines at [www.missouritechnology.com](http://www.missouritechnology.com).

An organization is only eligible to submit **one** MOBEC Operations Support grant proposal per application cycle. Applicant Organizations with an active MOBEC Operations Support grant may submit a MOBEC Operations Support grant proposal for funding consideration if the currently active MOBEC Operations Support grant concludes before the 2025 grant begins.

Applicant Organizations may submit multiple MOBEC grant proposals under the following conditions:

- If one proposal is a MOBEC Operations Support proposal and one is a MOBEC Project Support proposal. There can be no duplication in requested funding for general operational support and the specific project/program that is the subject of the Project Support proposal.

## **2.5 Intended Use of Funds**

Applicants may submit proposals that align with the Catalyzing Innovation Report, which includes the following categories:

- Access to Capital
- Entrepreneurial Mentoring/Networking

- Entrepreneurial Training/Education
- Commercialization Assistance

Operations Support funding can be used to support the operations required to fulfill the mission of the applicant organization. Funding can be used to support the day-to-day operations of the organization, as well as multiple projects or programs.

MOBEC funding cannot be used to fund activities already supported by an active MTC grant.

## 2.6 Term of the Program

Grant proposals can be requested with respect to one-, two-, or three-year implementation plans. The grant period commences on April 1, 2025. Accordingly, a one-year grant will terminate on March 31, 2026. A two-year grant will terminate on March 31, 2027. A three-year grant will terminate on March 31, 2028. Grant activities must be completed by the first, second, or third anniversary, as applicable, of the grant award.

Applications must explicitly include the timing for the expenditure of the grant funds. However, MTC will consider, on a case-by-case basis, no-cost extensions requested by Applicant Organizations.

## 2.7 Budget Restrictions

The request for financial support should be specifically and narrowly tailored to the plan outlined in the application and reflect the actual funding needs of the organization to complete the proposed plan.

**MTC will not award more than \$150,000 for any grant with a one-year implementation plan, more than \$325,000 for any grant with a two-year implementation plan, and more than \$500,000 for any grant.**

MTC expects that the applicant's budget will have an approximately equal amount of funding requested for each year of the proposed plan. MTC expects that no more than 60% of the total budget is to be spent in either year of a two-year grant, and no more than 40% of the total budget is to be spent in any year of a three-year grant, unless a strong justification for an uneven distribution of funds is clearly identified in the Program Budget Narrative of the Grant Proposal Narrative.

Applicant Organizations must demonstrate an actual, conditional, or anticipated third-party cost-sharing commitment to match the requested MTC grant funding that equals at least the amount requested in the application. Applications may propose to satisfy a portion of the cost-sharing requirement through in-kind cost-support, but in-kind matching funds generally will be evaluated less favorably.

Proposed budget requests for indirect cost reimbursement must limit the indirect cost recovery allocation to no more than 5% of the total amount of funding requested. MTC intends to prioritize applications that utilize grant funding for permissible direct expenditures without reimbursement for indirect costs. No indirect costs to support the general activities of the Applicant Organization may be reimbursed with grant funds.

### 3. Proposal Submission Requirements

#### 3.1 General Proposal Requirements

- (i) Each Applicant Organization must complete the online **Grant Application** which also includes uploading the **Grant Proposal File** (a digital PDF of the combined Cover Letter, Grant Proposal Narrative, Appendices, and Affirmation and Signature Page as indicated in Section 3.2), as well as **the required and any additional supporting documents** (as PDFs) 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](http://www.missouritechnology.com).
- (ii) All proposals must include the subject matter outlined below in Section 3.2.
- (iii) Any information included in the Grant Proposal File that a respondent 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 for the Applicant Organization, the amount of funding being requested, a brief overview of the project, goals, and a summary of the impact and associated outcomes of the grant. The cover letter may not exceed one page in length and should be included in the Grant Proposal File but is not included in the 15-page Grant Proposal Narrative limit.

##### 3.2.2 Grant Proposal Narrative

Each Grant Proposal Narrative should include sections that clearly and concisely address the topics below and should not exceed fifteen (15) pages in length. *Topics should appear in the order below and each section should be clearly labelled with the corresponding title in bold below.*

- (i) **Abstract** – A short summary or overview of the entire Grant Proposal Narrative.
- (ii) **Applicant Organization** – An overview of the Applicant Organization’s

entrepreneurial programs and efforts, including a summary of the Applicant Organization's programs achievements and economic development impact.

- (iii) **Problem Statement** – A clear identification of the problem/issue being addressed by the proposal and the relevant background information that would help the reviewer understand the benefit of addressing the problem/issue identified.
- (iv) **Goals and Objectives Alignment** – An explanation of how the Applicant Organization's program will align with the Catalyzing Innovation Report and MOBEC Goals and Objectives. Specifically, this section should detail how the proposed efforts will enhance the capacity of non-profit organizations that support entrepreneurs who are commercializing new technologies around which high-growth companies can be created and creating sustainable, high-paying, private sector jobs based on the establishment or growth of new and emerging companies.
- (v) **Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Synergies** – A description explaining how the organization will strengthen partnerships across service providers and institutions that operate within an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The section should also clearly state the roles and responsibilities of the Applicant Organization, as well as any Primary Partners and Affiliated Partners.
- (vi) **Critical Milestones** – Enumerate and describe the specific milestones that the Applicant Organization seeks to achieve using the MTC and matching funds. Vague or generalized milestones are not acceptable responses.
- (vii) **Applicant Experience** – A description of the experience of the Applicant Organization's leadership team and experience of any Primary Partners.
- (viii) **Program Budget Narrative** – A brief narrative that describes the specific use of funds, the source and status of matching funds, and future finance strategy to sustain the operations longer term
- (ix) **Future Finance Strategy** – A description of the Applicant Organization's funding to sustain the operations after the MTC and matching funds are exhausted.

### 3.2.3 Program Budget

Complete a proposed budget using the **2025 MOBEC Budget Form** that is available on the MTC website at [www.missouritechnology.com](http://www.missouritechnology.com). A 2025 MOBEC Budget Form completed section for the Applicant Organization and completed sections for any Primary Partners are required. The budget 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, that a brief narrative describing the specific use of funds as well as the source and



status of the matching funds must be included in the Grant Proposal Narrative (Section 3.2.2.viii).

**MTC will not award more than \$150,000 for any grant with a one-year implementation plan, more than \$325,000 for any grant with a two-year implementation plan, and more than \$500,000 for any grant.**

The Program Budget Form should be included in the Grant Proposal File as **Appendix 1** to the Grant Proposal Narrative and is not included in the 15-page Grant Proposal Narrative limit.

Applicant Organizations **must use the 2025 MOBEC Budget Form** and are advised against altering the budget form or adjusting page settings when converting it to a PDF.

#### **3.2.4 Summary of Projected Economic Impact**

Summarize the projected economic impact for the organization using the **2025 MOBEC Summary of Projected Economic Impact Form** that is available on the MTC website at [www.missouritechnology.com](http://www.missouritechnology.com). The form requires a detailed description of the assumptions and methodology used to project the economic impact.

The 2025 MOBEC Summary of Projected Economic Impact Form should be included in the Grant Proposal File as **Appendix 2** to the Grant Proposal Narrative and is not subject to the 15-page Grant Proposal Narrative limit.

Applicant Organizations must use the 2025 MOBEC Summary of Projected Economic Impact Form provided.

#### **3.2.5 Baseline Annual Reporting**

The Baseline Annual Reporting Form is available on the MTC website at [www.missouritechnology.com](http://www.missouritechnology.com).

The Baseline Annual Reporting Form should be included in the Grant Proposal File as **Appendix 3** to the Grant Proposal Narrative and is not subject to the 15-page Grant Proposal Narrative limit.

#### **3.2.6 Affirmation and Signature Page**

The Grant Affirmation and Signature Page Form is available on the MTC website at [www.missouritechnology.com](http://www.missouritechnology.com).

The Grant Affirmation and Signature Page should be included in the Grant Proposal File as **Appendix 4** and is not included in the 15-page Grant Proposal Narrative limit.

### 3.2.7 Required Supporting Documents

#### 3.2.7.1 Governance and Organization Supporting Documents

Attach copies of the following for the Applicant Organization as individual PDF files

- Articles of incorporation
- Organizational chart
- List of officers, directors, and management team
- List of advisory board members
- List of organizations of any corporate type that own in whole or in part the Applicant Organization
- List of organizations of any corporate type that the Applicant Organization owns in whole or in part

#### 3.2.7.2 Financial Related Supporting Documents

- Attach financial statements for the three most recently completed fiscal years of the Applicant Organization. The financial statements should be combined into a single PDF file.
- Attach a single PDF file of the most recent balance statement of the Applicant Organization at the time this application is submitted.
- Attach a single PDF file of the most recent profit & loss statement for the Applicant Organization at the time this application is submitted.
- Attach a single PDF file of pro forma financial projections for the Applicant Organization for at least a three (3) 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 proposal cannot achieve a maximum score in the Budget 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.

### 3.2.7.3 Letters of Commitment (if Primary Partners are included in proposal)

Each proposal submitted for consideration may, but is not required to, include Primary Partner organizations that will receive financial support from the grant and must take an active role in the proposed activities. The Applicant Organization must attach letters of commitment from each Primary Partner organization. All letters of commitment should be combined into and attached as a single PDF file.

### 3.2.8 Additional Supporting Documents

The Applicant Organization is encouraged to upload additional supporting documents, including, but not limited to, letters of support for collaborators or commitment letters from the source of any matching funds. Please combine supporting documents into a single PDF file or, if necessary, into no more than three (3) separate PDF files.

### 3.2.9 File Formatting for Proposal Submission Uploads

- (i) **Grant Proposal File** (PDF file): The documents described in Sections 3.2.1 through 3.2.6 collectively make up the **Grant Proposal File**. The documents from Sections 3.2.1 through 3.2.6 should be combined, in the order below, into a **single** PDF file and named with the following convention: **ApplicantOrgName\_GrantProposalFile** i.e., MTC\_GrantProposalFile.

1. Cover Letter
2. Grant Proposal Narrative (*15-page limit*)
3. 2025 MOBEC Budget Form
4. 2025 MOBEC Summary of Projected Economic Impact Form
5. Baseline Annual Reporting Form
6. Affirmation and Signature Page

- (ii) **Supporting Documents**: The required supporting documents described in Section 3.2.7 should be uploaded as PDF files as indicated in Section 3.2.7. Additional Supporting Documents described in Section 3.2.8 can be combined into one, but not more than three, PDF files for uploading. All supporting documents should be named according to the following naming convention: OrgName\_documenttitle i.e., MTC\_articlesofincorporation.

## 4. Evaluation Criteria

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

- **Alignment with Goals and Objectives**: Proposals should include a clear articulation of the organization's alignment with at least one of the five strategies included in the Catalyzing Innovation Report, as well as the MOBEC Goals and Objectives. The assigned score will

reflect the strength of the alignment to the strategies in the Catalyzing Innovation Report, specifically the strategies prioritized in the Implementation Plan, as well as the feasibility of achieving MOBEC Goals and Objectives.

- **Applicant Proposal Strength and Feasibility:** Proposals will be assessed on the relative strength of the Applicant Organization's proposal, including overarching capacity-building goals, structural improvement to an entrepreneurial ecosystem, and articulation of critical milestones. The assigned score will reflect the proposal's feasibility and clarity, including the underlying logical and factual support.
- **Applicant Experience:** Proposals will be assessed on the relative strength of the Applicant Organization's experience and prior success, including the management team, advisors, collaborators, and mentors committed to the organization as well as any Primary Partners. The assigned score will reflect the strength of the team's experience and ability to achieve the outcomes described in the proposal.
- **Economic Impact:** Proposals will be assessed on the relative strength of the Applicant Organization's proposed economic impact in Missouri, including developing high-growth potential, traded sector, venture-backed companies, increasing capital investment, strengthening one or more of MTC's targeted high-tech clusters and creating high-paying private-sector jobs. The assigned score will reflect the potential for economic impact relative to the region in which it is located, the likelihood of the Applicant Organization achieving the projected economic impact within the context of the submitted proposal, and the feasibility of the underlying methodology used to project the economic impact.
- **Budget:** Proposals will be assessed on the relative strength of the Applicant Organization's budgetary plan. The assigned score will reflect the nature of the matching funds (secured, committed, cash vs. in kind), how the funds will be utilized, the appropriateness of the budget in relation to the proposed activities and the feasibility of the budget. Matching funds are assessed by MTC based on their capacity to be independently verified in their support for the project or organization. The competitiveness of matching sources is typically evaluated on the following scale:
  - **Highly competitive:** This refers to funds that are secured from local, regional, or federal partners/organizations specifically for the MOBEC Grant Program.
  - **Competitive:** This category includes cash on hand, programmatic revenue, and non-programmatic revenue.
  - **Least competitive:** This refers to in-kind funds received from either a first or third-party source.
- **Sustainability:** Proposals will be assessed by the relative strength of the Applicant Organization's plan to sustain their mission and goals. The assigned score will reflect the viability of the plans to finance the organization in the future or to otherwise sustain the

structural entrepreneurial ecosystem change when MTC funds have been exhausted, including the underlying logical and factual support for such sustainability plan.

## **5. Reporting**

If funding is awarded through the MOBEC Grant Program, the following Periodic Reports will be required during the grant term: (a) a six-month report covering the period from April 1 to September 30, due by October 31, and (b) a six-month report covering the period from October 1 to March 31, due by April 30. Periodic Report forms for these reports will be provided once the grant is awarded.

Additionally, Annual Reports covering annual economic development and impact will be required once a year beginning in the spring of 2026 (CY2025 Annual Report) and required for five years after the grant period ends.

## **6. Additional Notes**

To submit an online application, the Applicant Organization must have or create an account on the [MTC Grants Portal](#). Instructions for creating an account can be found at [www.missouritechnology.com](http://www.missouritechnology.com).

Questions related to the MOBEC Grant Program, including eligibility or online application issues, should be directed to Sheila Baker ([sheila.baker@missouritechnology.com](mailto:sheila.baker@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.