

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

# Incubator Assistance Program

### **Purpose:**

The TEDCO Incubator Assistance Program (the “Program”) is intended to assist Maryland’s incubators provide additional added value to their client companies. In order to insure the highest and best use of funds, the Program is a competitive process intended to reward the effective and efficient display of best practices such that the incubator’s impact on Maryland’s entrepreneurial ecosystem is maximized. Grant applications will be accepted from incubators and the highest scoring applications will receive highest consideration.

### **Program Overview:**

The Program will fund incubator initiatives that could not otherwise be funded by either the incubator or its client companies. These initiatives fall into two categories.

- 1) Assistive services provided to an individual portfolio company.
- 2) Assistive services provided to a group of incubator portfolio companies.

Note that for the purposes of this RFA “assistive services” means mentoring, coaching, advising, and other incubator services intended to help the client company successfully scale its business.

Funds may not be used for facility capital expenditures, facility operating expenses, staff salary support, or existing incubator programs not previously funded by a TEDCO Incubator Assistance grant. Additionally, Program funds may not be used to generally compensate entrepreneurs-in-residence, mentors and/or coaches; however, Program funds may be used to enable these individuals to perform specifically identified work with an incubator client.

### **Funding Amount:**

Grant proposals will be accepted for amounts no less than \$3,000 and no more than \$12,000.

### **Funding Mechanism:**

All Program awards will be made in the form of a grant and the awards do not include any repayment obligation.

### **Eligibility:**

All Full Members in good standing of the Maryland Business Incubation Association are eligible to apply for the Program. Incubator companies assisted through the Program must be active incubator clients (i.e. those companies receiving assistive services from the incubator) and not anchor tenants or strategic partners. Program funds should be directed at companies with innovative or disruptive, technology-enabled business models. Whenever possible, Program funds should be directed at those IT and other non-life sciences companies that have been incubator clients for three (3) years or less, and those life sciences companies that have been incubator clients for five (5) years or less.

Notwithstanding the forgoing, a grant proposal will not be considered for award until:

1. The incubator, in TEDCO's reasonable opinion, has a dedicated, on-site manager.
2. All TEDCO Incubator Assistance grants for fiscal years prior to FY2017 have been spent.
3. A final report acceptable in form and substance to TEDCO has been received by TEDCO for all fiscal years prior to FY2017.

### **Multiple Grants:**

An incubator may submit more than one grant application but must rank order the priority order of its applications. If an incubator chooses to submit multiple applications, then each application must be a separate and distinct standalone document. A multiple grant award will be made to an incubator only after all other single or (initial) grant proposals have been adjudicated.

### **Collaboration:**

In light of continued level funding of the Program and as the number of MBIA member incubators increases, it is imperative that applicants collaborate with one another. By doing so, the greatest number of client companies can be positively impacted. For example, rather than fund four separate "Federal Government Marketing" workshops, TEDCO prefers to fund a single

workshop delivered collaboratively by four incubators. Grant applications demonstrating creativity in collaboration will be favorably evaluated.

**Applying for the Business Assistance Grant Program:**

The incubator will submit a proposal for each grant request consisting of a maximum 2 pages with one inch margins and 12 point Calibri font in PDF format to [ndavis@tedco.md](mailto:ndavis@tedco.md) that clearly contains the following information:

- The amount of funding requested.
- The priority of each proposal, if multiple submittals are made.
- A description of the work to be performed under the grant.
- The inter-incubator collaboration, if any, contemplated within the grant-funded work.
- The expected quantitative and qualitative outcomes from the grant-funded work.
- The incubator staff person responsible for the work to be performed under the grant with full contact information.
- The legal entity that will enter into the grant agreement.
- The complete business address to be used for all communications concerning the grant.
- A statement that the Program funds will be used to fund only either a net new incubator program or an incubator program previously funded by a Program grant.
- Any other incubator-specific information required by TEDCO to expeditiously process the grant payment and grant agreement.

**Schedule and Review:**

Schedule – The schedule for the FY2015 Incubator Assistance Program is as follows.

FY2016 Final Reports Due	June 30, 2016
FY2017 Grant Proposals Accepted	April 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016
FY2017 Award Notifications Sent	August 15, 2016
FY2017 Award Checks Mailed	15 days after receipt of signed agreement
FY2017 Final Reports Due	June 30, 2017

Review – Once a Program application has been submitted, TEDCO will begin its review process.

Compliance Review:

The program manager for the Incubator Assistance Program will initially review all applications to ensure that they meet the basic requirements indicated by this RFA. Those not meeting the specified requirements will be rejected without further review and the applicant will be so notified.

#### Review Committee:

A Review Committee comprised of TEDCO staff will review and discuss all the Program applications. After reviewing all of the applications, the Review Committee will make a decision whether or not to recommend each specific application for funding. Decisions will be based upon the following review criteria:

- The extent to which the proposed project is consistent with TEDCO's goal of assisting Maryland's incubators provide added value to their client companies, such that the impact on Maryland's entrepreneurial ecosystem is maximized.
- A demonstration that the requested grant will fund initiatives at the incubator level that could not otherwise be funded by either the incubator or its clients companies.
- Applicants that include all of the requested information and present that information in an organized, convincing way will be considered more favorably.
- The strength of the proposed project and the likelihood of its success will be considered.

For those applications that are not recommended for funding, the Program Manager will summarize the Review Committee's concerns with the application and provide that summary to the applicant. The final decision for awards is made by TEDCO's president.

#### **The Award Process**

At the end of the acceptance period funding decisions will be made up to the limit of TEDCO's total available funding for this Program. **There is no guarantee that all proposals will be funded** and no guarantee that all of TEDCO's total available funding for this Program will be committed. Furthermore, TEDCO reserves the right to fund proposals either in whole or in part and all grants are subject to the availability of funds.

In the event of an award, a notice of award will be sent to the applicant via e-mail. The incubator is then expected to confirm its acceptance of the grant, also via e-mail, at which time a TEDCO Incubator Assistance Grant Agreement will be created. When the Grant Agreement is



fully executed, TEDCO will issue a check to the incubator in the full amount of the grant. In the event that an application is rejected, TEDCO will so notify the applicant.

### **Reports and Project Funding:**

At the completion of the project the incubator will submit a final grant report consisting of a maximum 5 pages with one inch margins and 12 point Calibri font in PDF format to [ndavis@tedco.md](mailto:ndavis@tedco.md) that mirrors the grant proposal outline shown above, but which also includes:

- A statement from the incubator manager that the TEDCO Incubator Assistance grant was used by the incubator “for the purpose described in the grant proposal”.
- The specific outcomes of the grant-funded work, described in both a quantitative and qualitative fashion.
- Vendor invoices that support the incubator’s grant spending. Ideally, these invoices will be “paid in full” final invoices with a zero balance. At the very least, they will be shown as “approved for payment” by the responsible incubator staff person.
- TEDCO’s requested set of incubator performance metrics (requested metrics will be provided under separate cover).

### **Program Manager Information:**

Inquiries regarding the Incubator Assistance Program should be directed to:

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