

Oregon Innovation Council Requests for Grant Applications High Impact Opportunity Projects

Background

The Oregon Innovation Council (Oregon InC) is taking a new approach to support the growth of emerging, potentially high-value industry sectors. Rather than funding organizations to help grow sectors, Oregon InC intends to fund discrete projects—called high impact opportunity projects (HIOPs)—that will remove barriers to growth, increase capacity or accomplish other things to help an industry sector grow. To accomplish this, the Oregon Business Development Department (Business Oregon) is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for HIOPs.

Oregon InC has identified three industry sectors as priorities:

- Active Lifestyle—digital health, apparel & outdoor gear and wearable technology
- Advanced Manufacturing—metals/advanced materials, chemicals/processes and bioscience
- Natural Resources—ag tech, wood products, and food & beverage

The theme identified as horizontally crossing all of these industries is high tech, which includes smart technology, clean technology, and data/software/analytics. Projects are highly encouraged from these sectors although it is not required that projects fit into these sectors.

HIOP Grants

Oregon InC allocated approximately \$4 million for HIOP grants, to be disbursed through Business Oregon. Projects are anticipated to last from 6 to 18 months. All projects are expected to support the growth of an industry, not an individual business. Proposals that demonstrate benefits for just a single business will not be considered. Project funds are flexible in how they can be used to best support a particular sector's needs to support its growth. Thus, there is no exact list of examples of eligible uses of the funds, but possible things projects would fund include, but are not limited to:

- shared facilities
- shared specialty testing or production equipment
- research and development that benefits an entire industry
- market research, business development expertise or consultants
- marketing, tradeshow, and promotions

Funding is offered for two types of projects:

- Feasibility Studies—These are projects that still require design and/or proof of concept before they are ready for implementation. It is anticipated that these projects will have budgets of between \$50,000 and \$150,000 and be shorter in duration. Projects are encouraged to identify sources of follow-on funding that will support implementation of the projects. Oregon InC hopes to provide additional HIOP funding in the future for which these projects could apply, but applicants should consider other sources of implementation funding as well.

- **Implementation Projects**–These are projects that are ready to be implemented. Some level of design and scoping has already occurred, and the need for the project can be clearly demonstrated. Measurable benefits to an industry sector from the project can be demonstrated. It is anticipated that these projects will have budgets of between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000 and be longer in duration although not longer than 18 months.

All projects must have as a key and clear objective: 1) connections to and involvement of Oregon’s colleges and/or universities, or 2) a transfer of technology to the private sector, or 3) the commercialization of research and development. Examples of ways colleges or universities could be involved in a project are utilizing their equipment, faculty, students, funding, and/or technology. An organization may submit more than one proposal in response to this RFP whether under one or both of the eligible types of projects. It is highly unlikely, however, that an organization will receive more than one grant award.

Eligibility Requirements

- Applicant’s project must apply to a traded-sector industry. “Traded sector” is defined in Oregon statute as “industries in which member firms sell their goods or services into markets for which national or international competition exists.”
- Applicant must be an Oregon-based organization.
- Applicant has clearly demonstrated how the HIOP grant will benefit the relevant industry sector, not an individual business.

Selection Process & Preferences

Applications will be evaluated by a committee approved by Oregon InC. The committee will provide the results of its evaluation to Business Oregon, which will make the final funding decisions. Meeting the above eligibility requirements does not guarantee a grant award. A set of criteria will be used in the review process to compare proposals and identify the most deserving projects. The criteria are as follows:

- **Leverage**–This could be funding leveraged from the industry sector, project collaborators, or other sources. It could also be leverage of university research, other economic development activities and/or legislative initiatives.
- **Uniquely attributable links to Oregon**–This includes geographic advantages or other attributes unique to Oregon, as well as any link to one of Oregon’s existing, strong industry sectors.
- **Level of impact derived from Oregon InC’s investment**–The use of a relatively small amount of Oregon InC dollars will have significant results for the industry sector.
- **Ability to scale into significant jobs and/or revenue**–Job impacts of projects will be evaluated for their potential in the medium- to long-term.
- **Broad impacts**–Projects will be evaluated for the geographic scope of their impacts as well as the impacts at a variety of income and education levels.
- **Sector**–Projects that would impact one of the prioritized industry sectors are highly encouraged and may be given priority in the evaluation process.

How to Apply

Submission Requirements

In order to allow sufficient evaluation of a grant application, the following documents are required to be submitted:

- Signed HIOP Application form indicating which type of project (feasibility study or implementation project) the proposal covers.
- Project description (no more than 10 letter-size pages with at least 11-point font and 1" margins) that describes the project activities, who will conduct the project activities, the benefits of the project, how the project meets the criteria listed above, and any other information necessary for a reviewer to understand the project and its potential impacts. Project description should include a discussion of the estimated return on the State's investment, i.e., describe how this funding will help the industry sector. (Feasibility study proposals are expected to be briefer than implementation project proposals, but both are limited to no more than 10 pages.)
- Line-item budget with brief justification for each item. Indirect costs are capped at 10%.
- Bios of key personnel on the project with summaries of relevant experience
- Proposed list of performance measures (metrics), targets for these measures and estimated return on investment for the project. These will ultimately be negotiated as part of developing the grant agreement, but proposers are asked to submit initial ideas of what these might be. Selected projects will also likely be held to performance measures relating to the criteria listed above as well as other possible performance measures.
- List of committed collaborators on the project with a letter from each collaborator signed by someone in a position of authority to commit that collaborator stating that the collaborator would participate in the project if it is funded and briefly describing what the collaborator's participation would look like (e.g., cash contributions, staff time, equipment, space, etc.).

Submission Deadline and Process

Completed applications must be received by Business Oregon by 5pm on Tuesday, December 12, 2017. Signed proposals **along with the required attachments** may be submitted to Business Oregon either by:

email: mark.brady@oregon.gov

OR

standard mail: Mark Brady, Innovation Strategist Business
Oregon 121 S.W. Salmon Street, Suite 205
Portland, Oregon 97204

As part of the review process, Business Oregon may seek written clarification of some points in the proposals. In addition, interviews may be held to help decide which projects are funded. It is anticipated that selections will be made in early January with a public announcement in late January or early February after grant agreements are negotiated with the selected organizations.

Grant Agreement

Each grant award is conditioned on the applicant entering into a grant agreement with Business Oregon, in a form designated by Business Oregon. Among other items, the agreement will set forth the process that will be used to disburse funds, the reports and documentation of expenses incurred that will need to be submitted throughout the project, as well as other requirements considered necessary by Business Oregon to ensure the grant funds are used appropriately and effectively.