



Request for Proposals for Consultant Support for Artificial Intelligence Taskforce

RFP No. 2021-JAII-03

**Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
75 North Drive
Westborough, MA 01581-3340
<http://www.masstech.org>**

Procurement Team Leader: Pat Larkin

RFP Issued:	July 29, 2021
Bidders' Conference:	August 12, 2021
Questions Due:	August 13, 2021
Answers to Questions Posted:	August 20, 2021
Responses Due:	August 31, 2021 by 3:00PM

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The John Adams Innovation Institute (“Innovation Institute”), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP No. 2021-JAII-03) (the “RFP” or “RFP”) to solicit responses from qualified consultants (“Respondents”) with demonstrated knowledge and experience in the development of strategic planning documents focused on improving the competitiveness of individual industry sectors within tech and innovation economies. This engagement focuses specifically upon the development of a Strategic Plan for the Artificial Intelligence sector in Massachusetts. Respondents will be competing against each other for selection to provide the services set forth herein (the “Services”). The submissions of all Respondents shall be compared and evaluated pursuant to the evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP, and a single Respondent may be selected.

Mass Tech Collaborative will be the contracting entity on behalf of the Innovation Institute for the purposes of this RFP, and (except where the specific context warrants otherwise), the Innovation Institute and Mass Tech Collaborative are collectively referred to as Mass Tech Collaborative or MassTech. Mass Tech Collaborative will enter into a Services Agreement and Statement of Work with selected Respondents containing certain standard provisions (the “Agreement”), located [HERE](#).

1.2 Mass Tech Collaborative and the Innovation Institute

Mass Tech Collaborative is an independent public instrumentality of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts focused on strengthening the competitiveness of the tech and innovation economy by driving strategic investments, partnerships, and insights. The Mass Tech Collaborative brings together leaders from industry, academia, and government to advance technology-focused solutions that lead to economic growth, job creation, and public benefits in Massachusetts. Mass Tech Collaborative has five primary divisions: The Innovation Institute at MassTech, the MassCyberCenter, the Massachusetts Center for Advanced Manufacturing, the Massachusetts e-Health Institute, and the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. For additional information about Mass Tech Collaborative and its programs and initiatives, please visit our website at www.masstech.org.

Established in 2004 as a division of Mass Tech Collaborative (MassTech), the Innovation Institute works to support key industry clusters and to improve conditions for growth in the Commonwealth’s innovation economy. Acting as an agent of the state the Innovation Institute identifies and promotes new ideas and collaborative strategies that drive economic growth in priority clusters by convening leaders from state, industry, university, finance and nonprofit sectors across Massachusetts. For more information about the Innovation Institute and its activities and investments, please visit the web site at www.masstech.org/innovation-institute.

2. SERVICES REQUIRED

2.1 Overview

The Innovation Institute at MassTech works closely with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) in Massachusetts on the development and support of projects and initiatives that promote the growth of key industry clusters and technology sectors in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In Spring 2019 the Innovation Institute conducted an analysis of emerging technology sectors in Massachusetts with a stated objective to answer the following question: *What is next for the Tech and Innovation Economy in Massachusetts?* The findings from this analysis align with the policies of the Baker-Polito Administration to foster a business climate that encourages industry leaders, innovative companies, and entrepreneurs to prosper in Massachusetts as well as with state policies to improve the

competitiveness of key industry clusters through strategic investments in technology and infrastructure (see: [Partnerships for Growth: A plan to enable the Commonwealth's regions to build, connect and lead](#)).

The Innovation Institute's 2019 Emerging Tech Study led to the introduction of five priority focus areas that are contributing to new growth in the Tech and Innovation economy in Massachusetts: Artificial Intelligence ("AI"), FinTech, Robotics, Blockchain and Quantum Computing. To date, the Innovation Institute has been fully engaged with Stakeholder groups from three of these focus areas, supporting development of strategic frameworks and action agendas for each. The Innovation Institute has provided project support for a Robotics Industry Steering Committee, Blockchain Leadership Group, and Massachusetts FinTech Working Group. The FinTech Working Group has just launched the [Mass Fintech Hub](#), a membership organization focused on improving the Competitiveness of FinTech

With this work underway the EOHEd is making plans for the launch of an Artificial Intelligence Task Force in Massachusetts, a leadership group intended to arrive at a strategic plan that advises the state on ways to support the responsible development and adoption of artificial intelligence as a way to improve the competitiveness of the AI sector and to promote continued growth in the Massachusetts economy.

A body of 25 AI thought leaders from the ranks of industry, academia, nonprofit, finance and public sectors have been appointed to the AI Task Force and are poised to work with a project team to assess the current AI landscape in Massachusetts and develop a strategic plan that furthers economic growth in the AI sector.

The disruptions caused by COVID-19 necessitated a delay in the launch of the AI Task Force, originally intended to launch in early 2020. The current schedule calls for the first convening of the AI Task Force to take place in September 2021 with plans for quarterly meetings for the period of one year. A Steering Committee, appointed from among the members of the AI Task Force, will convene more regularly in order to support the assessment of the current AI landscape in Massachusetts and to focus the development of a strategic plan, which is anticipated to be the major deliverable of the AI Task Force

The AI Task Force will:

- Define a strategy for the Commonwealth that addresses unmet needs and opportunities for AI in the Massachusetts economy.
- Prioritize key focus areas for their work that leverage the assets and potential of the Commonwealth in AI and related technologies.
- Develop a strategic plan from their findings as a foundation for building further investment and economic growth.
- Have its members be ambassadors for Massachusetts thought leadership in AI and its application.

In addition to establishing an overarching policy framework for AI in Massachusetts, the discovery and learning that takes place through engagement with members of the AI Task Force will be transferred to and incorporated into the program priorities of the Innovation Institute and other divisions at the Mass Tech Collaborative. The insights gained from this strategic planning process will be used to support an action agenda that advances the competitiveness of the AI sector in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

2.2 Scope of Services

The successful respondent to this Request for Proposals will be an individual or firm, familiar with markets and technologies within this broad category known as artificial intelligence. This respondent will be comfortable synthesizing information from the dialogues of key stakeholders; collecting and analyzing data and information from secondary sources; and will have a demonstrated ability to draft an action driven strategic plan on behalf of the AI Task Force, a new policy body in the Commonwealth.

In addition to cataloguing the full range of opportunities that can be addressed to further economic growth in the AI sector, the successful respondent will be capable of developing comprehensive opportunity statements on public/private interventions that could have a transformational effect on the AI sector in Massachusetts within a three to five year timeframe. Success with this assignment requires a consultant with demonstrated abilities to assess, evaluate and develop economic development opportunities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The successful respondent will demonstrate proficiency with market conditions and opportunities in AI and machine learning and as well as knowledge of the ecosystem needs necessary to accelerate the development and adoption of AI technologies.

The scope of Services of the consultant are:

- Help facilitate dialogues of the AI Task Force and Steering Committee meetings in order to gather and systematically organize all available information on potential policy recommendations and to develop a consensus framework for the AI Strategic Plan. It is anticipated that this will include 4 quarterly meetings of the AI Task Force and an additional 6 meetings of a Steering Committee of the AI Task Force.
- Develop a current assessment of the AI landscape in Massachusetts and evaluate against the competitive positioning of other regions across the United State and internationally. A sizable body of information exists to support this deliverable.
- Conduct independent research on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the AI sector in Massachusetts.
- Develop scenarios, option memorandums, or presentations that allow Task Force Members to evaluate and finalize policy recommendations. (Applicants should propose an approach for this feedback process within the parameters of the proposed meeting sequence.)
- Produce the AI Task Force Strategic Plan, a strategy document that makes policy recommendations that support the economic competitiveness of the AI sector in Massachusetts. The Strategic Plan will be vetted with the AI Task Force and should be in a narrative document format.
- Create a summary PowerPoint of the Strategic Plan and the work of the AI Task Force

3 APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1 Application and Submission Instructions

Respondents are cautioned to read this RFP carefully and to conform to its requirements. Failure to comply with the requirements of this RFP may serve as grounds for rejection of an Application.

- a. All Applications must be submitted electronically in Microsoft Word or PDF format.
- b. Required Submissions- All Applications must include the items listed below:
 - Application Cover Sheet (Attachment A)
 - Application, which shall include:

- A description of the firm responding to the RFP (including descriptions of proposed subcontractors, if any) and the firm's qualifications to perform the Services.
 - The proposed approach to providing the Services. Additionally, Respondents are invited to propose alternative(s) which provide substantially better or more cost-effective performance than achievable under the stated RFP scope of services.
 - Provide the total not-to-exceed costs for providing the Services based on projected hours, proposed hourly rates, as well as any other appropriate costs, in the Budget Template ([Attachment C](#)). List additional fees, overhead charges, or reimbursable expenses, if any. As a general policy, the Mass Tech Collaborative does not pay mark-ups on reimbursables or out-of-pocket expenses. The Mass Tech Collaborative also does not pay for word processing, overtime or meals. For travel costs, the Mass Tech Collaborative pays the IRS rate per mile.
 - Three references for work previously performed by the Respondent that is substantially similar to the Services. References should include a contact person, address and phone number.
- **Authorized Application Signature and Acceptance Form ([Attachment B](#)). By executing the Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form and submitting a response to this RFP, Respondents certify that they (1) are in compliance with the terms, conditions and specifications contained in this RFP, (2) acknowledge and understand the procedures for handling materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative as set forth in subsection d. below, (3) agree to be bound by those procedures, and (4) agree that the Mass Tech Collaborative shall not be liable under any circumstances for the disclosure of any materials submitted to the Mass Tech Collaborative pursuant to this RFP or upon the Respondent's selection.**
 - Exceptions to the *Services Agreement and Statement of Work*, located at [HERE](#), if any.
- c. Applications **must** be delivered as follows:
- An **electronic version submitted to:**
- proposals@masstech.org (please include "RFP No. 2021-JAII-03" in the subject heading).
- d. Any and all responses, Applications, data, materials, information and documentation submitted to Mass Tech Collaborative in response to this RFP shall become Mass Tech Collaborative's property and shall be subject to public disclosure. As a public entity, the Mass Tech Collaborative is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (set forth at Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66). There are very limited and narrow exceptions to disclosure under the Public Records Law. If a Respondent wishes to have the Mass Tech Collaborative treat certain information or documentation as confidential, the Respondent must submit a written request to the Mass Tech Collaborative's General Counsel's office no later than 5:00 p.m. fourteen (14) business days prior to the required date of Application submission set forth in Section 4.2 below. The request must precisely identify the information and/or documentation that is the subject of the request and provide a detailed explanation supporting the application of the statutory exemption(s) from the public records cited by the Respondent. The General Counsel will issue a written determination within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written request. If the General Counsel approves the request, the Respondent shall clearly label the relevant

information and/or documentation as “**CONFIDENTIAL**” in the Application and **shall only include the confidential material in the hard copy of the Application**. Any statements in an Application reserving any confidentiality or privacy rights that is inconsistent with these requirements and procedures will be disregarded.

3.2 Application Timeframe

The application process will proceed according to the following schedule. The target dates are subject to change. Therefore, Respondents are encouraged to check Mass Tech Collaborative’s website frequently for updates to the schedule.

Task	Date:
RFP Released	July 29, 2021
Bidders’ Conference	August 12, 2021 @ 3PM EST
Questions Due	August 13, 2021 @ 5 PM EST
Question and Answer File Posted	August 20, 2021 @ 5 PM EST
Applications Due	August 31, 2021 @ 3 PM EST

3.3 Questions

Questions regarding this RFP must be submitted by electronic mail to proposals@masstech.org with the following Subject Line: “Questions – RFP No. 2021-JAII-03”. All questions must be received by 5:00 p.m. EST on August 13, 2021. Responses to all questions received will be posted on or before 5:00 p.m. on August 20, 2021 to Mass Tech Collaborative and Comm-Buys website(s).

3.4 Bidders’ Teleconference/Webinar

A bidders’ teleconference will be held on **August 12, 2021 at 3:00 PM**. All potential Respondents interested in participating in the bidders’ teleconference must register with Mass Tech Collaborative in order to obtain the conference call information. To register, please email Christina Bui at bui@masstech.org. Mass Tech Collaborative will transmit the conference call information to all registered bidders 24 hours in advance of the teleconference. Mass Tech Collaborative will post summary responses to procedural questions and issues addressed at the bidders’ teleconference on the Mass Tech Collaborative’s and the Comm-Buys websites.

4 EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

4.1 Process

The Mass Tech Collaborative shall evaluate each Application that is properly submitted. As part of the selection process, Mass Tech Collaborative may invite finalists to answer questions regarding their Application in person or in writing. In its sole discretion, Mass Tech Collaborative may also choose to enter into a negotiation period with one or more finalist Respondent(s) and then ask the Respondent(s) to submit a best and final offer.

4.2 Criteria

Selection of a Respondent to provide the services sought herein may be based on criteria that include but are not limited to:

- Strength of Applicant’s qualifications
- Familiarity with the artificial intelligence sector in Massachusetts

- Demonstrated experience in conducting ecosystem analyses including both quantitative analyses and qualitative ecosystem mapping
- Demonstrated success at recognizing and recommending actionable opportunities, especially with respect to collaborative improvements in an ecosystem
- Demonstrated ability to draft a Strategic Plan to improve the competitiveness of an industry sector
- Clarity and quality of proposed approach that demonstrates understanding of requirements and the significance of the project
- Familiarity with technologies and market trends that will impact artificial intelligence in the future and companies and business models that are to be expected in this space
- Ability to perform
- Overall pricing and rates proposed

The order of these factors does not generally denote relative importance. The goal of this RFP is to select and enter into an Agreement with the Applicant that will provide the best value for the Services to achieve Mass Tech Collaborative's goals. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to consider such other relevant factors as it deems appropriate in order to obtain the "best value".

The Innovation Institute will look positively upon the applicant who demonstrate the ability to integrate into an existing project team as well as the Task Force and can provide strategic services as described above. We are looking for a contractor who can quickly synthesize the existing body of information already assembled by the project team. The contractor will then work with the project team and key stakeholders to develop an early outline for the Strategic Plan in order to build out content throughout the engagement.

The Innovation Institute is looking for a contractor whose existing professional responsibilities allow for the contractor to work on deliverables at the pace of the project. In other words, work volumes will vary based upon the unique interests and activities of AI Task Force Members.

5.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

5.1 General Information

- a) If an Application fails to meet any material terms, conditions, requirements or procedures, it may be deemed unresponsive and disqualified. The Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to waive omissions or irregularities that it determines to be not material.
- b) This RFP, as may be amended from time to time by Mass Tech Collaborative, does not commit Mass Tech Collaborative to select any firm(s), award any contracts for services pursuant to this RFP, or pay any costs incurred in responding to this RFP. Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to withdraw the RFP, to engage in preliminary discussions with prospective Respondents, to accept or reject any or all Applications received, to request supplemental or clarifying information, to negotiate with any or all qualified Respondents, and to request modifications to Applications in accordance with negotiations, all to the same extent as if this were a Request for Information.
- c) On matters related solely to this RFP that arise prior to an award decision by the Mass Tech Collaborative, Respondents shall limit communications with the Mass Tech Collaborative to the Procurement Team Leader and such other individuals as the Mass Tech Collaborative may designate from time to time. No other Mass Tech Collaborative employee or representative is authorized to provide any information or respond to any questions or inquiries concerning this RFP. Respondents may contact the Procurement Team Leader for this RFP in the event this RFP is incomplete.
- d) The Mass Tech Collaborative may provide reasonable accommodations, including the

provision of materials in an alternative format, for Respondents with disabilities or other hardships. Respondents requiring accommodations shall submit requests in writing, with supporting documentation justifying the accommodations, to the Procurement Team Leader. The Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to grant or reject any request for accommodations.

- e) Respondent's Application shall be treated by the Mass Tech Collaborative as an accurate statement of Respondent's capabilities and experience. Should any statement asserted by Respondent prove to be inaccurate or inconsistent with the foregoing, such inaccuracy or inconsistency shall constitute sufficient cause for Mass Tech Collaborative in its sole discretion to reject the Application and/or terminate of any resulting Agreement.
- f) Costs that are not specifically identified in the Respondent's response and/or not specifically accepted by Mass Tech Collaborative as part of the Agreement will not be compensated under any contract awarded pursuant to this RFP.
- g) Mass Tech Collaborative's prior approval is required for any subcontracted services under any Agreement entered into as a result of this RFP. The selected Respondent will take all appropriate steps to assure that minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. The selected Respondent is responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of its subcontractors. Subcontractors are required to meet the same requirements and are held to the same reimbursable cost standards as the selected Respondent.
- h) Submitted responses must be valid in all respects for a minimum period of sixty (60) days after the deadline for submission.
- i) Mass Tech Collaborative reserves the right to amend the Agreement at any time prior to execution. Respondents should review the Agreement as they are required to specify any exceptions to the Agreement and to make any suggested counterproposal in their Application. A failure to specify exceptions and/or counterproposals will be deemed an acceptance of the Agreement's general terms and conditions, and no subsequent negotiation of such provisions shall be permitted.

5.2 Posting of Modifications/Addenda to RFP

This RFP has been distributed electronically using the Mass Tech Collaborative and COMMBUYS websites. If the Mass Tech Collaborative determines that it is necessary to revise any part of this RFP, or if additional data is necessary to clarify any of its provisions, an addendum will be posted to the websites. It is the responsibility of each potential Respondent to check the Mass Tech Collaborative, the Innovation Institute and COMMBUYS websites for any addenda or modifications to the RFP. The Mass Tech Collaborative accepts no liability and will provide no accommodation to Respondents who submit a response based on an out-of-date RFP.

Attachment A
Application Cover Sheet

Name of Respondent			
Mailing Address	City/Town	State	Zip Code
Telephone	Fax	Web Address	
Primary Contact for Clarification		Primary Contact E-mail Address	
Authorized Signatory		Authorized Signatory E-mail Address	
Legal Status/Jurisdiction (e.g., a Massachusetts Corporation, LLC, LLP, etc.)		Respondents DUNS No.	

Attachment B
Massachusetts Technology Collaborative
Authorized Respondent's Signature and Acceptance Form

The undersigned is a duly authorized representative of the Respondent listed below. The Respondent has read and understands the RFP requirements. The Respondent acknowledges that all of the terms and conditions of the RFP are mandatory, and that Respondent's response is compliant with such requirements.

The Respondent understands that, if selected by the Mass Tech Collaborative, the Respondent and the Mass Tech Collaborative will execute an Agreement specifying the mutual requirements of participation. The undersigned has either (*please check one*):

- specified exceptions and counter-proposals to the terms and conditions of the [Agreement](#); or
- agrees to the terms and conditions set forth therein;

The undersigned acknowledges and agrees that the failure to submit exceptions and counter-proposals with this response shall be deemed a waiver, and the Agreement shall not be subject to further negotiation.

Respondent agrees that the entire bid response will remain valid for sixty (60) days from receipt by the Mass Tech Collaborative.

I certify that Respondent is in compliance with all corporate filing requirements and State tax laws.

I further certify that the statements made in this response to the RFP, including all attachments and exhibits, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Respondent: _____
(Printed Name of Respondent)

By: _____
(Signature of Authorized Representative)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Attachment C
Budget Template

SEE EXCEL SPREADSHEET