



FY2027 Request for Proposals

SMALL BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM – CAPACITY BUILDING

Small Business Growth
Community Investments Department

Investing in Partners Empowering the Small Businesses Ecosystem
**CAPACITY BUILDING “TRAIN THE TRAINER” REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR PROVIDERS OF SMALL BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Address: MassDevelopment
99 High Street, Boston, MA 02110

RFP File Name: Capacity Building “Train the Trainer” RFP for Providers of Small Business
Technical Assistance

Contact Person: Rachel Powers, rpowers@massdevelopment.com

Please submit all questions and inquiries via email to the contact person listed above.

Schedule:

RFP Release Date:	Wednesday, July 8, 2026
Deadline for Proposals:	Wednesday, August 26, 2026 @11:59PM
RFP and Application via: Submittable Platform accessible on https://mgpsbtaprogram.submittable.com/submit	
Grants will be awarded:	October 2026 (subject to change)

Notices of funding availability through this RFP will be sent via email to program partners, members of the State Legislature, and posted at MassDevelopment.com.

COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL FUNDS, LAWS AND REGULATIONS

Applicants must comply with all applicable laws.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT ON SUBMITTABLE

Visit the Help Center: <https://www.submittable.com/help/submitter/>

OTHER QUESTIONS: Contact MassDevelopment

Email: rpowers@massdevelopment.com



Capacity Building “Train the Trainer” RFP for Providers of Small Business Technical Assistance

Overview

MassDevelopment seeks a qualified Massachusetts-based organization to design and deliver a Capacity Building “Train-the-Trainer” program for Business Support Organizations which service programs administered by MassDevelopment. The goal is to strengthen the effectiveness, consistency, and reach of services delivered to small and microbusinesses so they can more effectively start, stabilize, grow and access capital.

Purpose

Business Support Organizations (BSO), for the purposes of this RFP, are organizations that have been awarded funds from MassDevelopment to service the Small Business Technical Assistance (SBTA) Grant Program and/or the Lending Capital Matching Grant Program (“CDFI”). We strive to develop and elevate the expertise, competencies, and abilities of BSOs to address the changing needs of the Massachusetts small business landscape, respond to economic uncertainty, and facilitate lending to small businesses that are unable to obtain traditional sources of capital. More specifically, we are seeking an organization that can:

- Improve the quality of technical assistance for small and microbusinesses offered through BSOs.
- Build organizational capacity and resilience among BSOs.
- Equip BSOs with the tools, skills and operational capabilities to address the changing needs of the Massachusetts small business landscape.
- Leverage opportunities to increase equitable access to capital, advice, and resources for historically underserved entrepreneurs.

About Training Participants (Target Learners/BSO Staff):

Who are they and What do they do!

BSOs are critical to the economic ecosystem, helping small and micro businesses navigate economic challenges, pursue growth opportunities, create and retain jobs, and improve access to public and private financing. The SBTA and CDFI programs strive to increase access to one-on-one technical assistance and capital for small and micro businesses with fewer than 20 employees and earning no

more than \$2.5 million in annual revenues. Collectively, BSOs predominantly serve socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented small and microbusinesses, including:

- Minority-owned businesses
- Women-owned businesses
- LGBTQ+-owned businesses
- Non-native English speaking-owners
- Small businesses operating in Gateway Cities
- Rural communities
- Low-moderate-income individuals
- U.S. Military Veterans
- Businesses operating as cooperatives
- Businesses governed by Employee Stock Ownership Plans
- Disabled individuals
- Underserved markets

Please refer to the following links for additional information on the Small Business Technical Assistance Grant Program (SBTA) and Lending Capital Matching Grant Program (CDFI):

FY27 SBTA RFP and Program Guidelines -

[FY27 SBTA RFP](#)

[FY27 SBTA Program Guidelines](#)

FY25 Lending Capital Matching Grant Program –

[FY25 CDFI RFP](#)

[FY25 CDFI Program Guidelines](#)

Scope of Work

Proposed education and training must increase the knowledge and skill sets of BSOs, provide coaching and instruction on essential topics and proficiencies necessary to effectively help startups and existing businesses navigate economic challenges, pursue growth opportunities, create and retain jobs, and improve access to public and private financing.

Preference will be given to proposals offering BSO staff and contractors instruction on:

- Assisting Businesses to obtain certifications helpful in accessing public bidding opportunities, including but not limited to MBE, WBE and others
- Helping businesses understand and use AI tools related to their industry and operations
- Developing and updating business plans, market analyses, and financial projections
- Legal guidance and compliance

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- Financial Management, including accounting and bookkeeping, providing the fundamentals around income statements, balance sheets and cash flows
 - Loan Packaging and guidance around obtaining capital
 - Accessing new markets and customer growth to create and implement market strategies and effective scaling of operations
 - Organizational Capacity Building to address operational challenges and optimization

Proposed Curriculum

Respondents must craft an educational curriculum reflective of small business sector needs, gaps, challenges and opportunities, and which will allow BSOs to build their expertise, skills and competencies in the areas noted above, demonstrates best practices to share with BSOs, promotes the teaching of organizational resilience and supports providing Massachusetts small businesses the assistance they need to grow and thrive.

It should encompass a continuum of professional programs of study across multiple learning pathways, including, but not limited to the following:

- *Small Business Technical Assistance* and guidance elevating expertise and improving critical TA competencies in such areas as financial management and capital readiness, bookkeeping and accounting, marketing and customer growth, legal and regulatory compliance, and artificial intelligence.
- *Leadership development* advancing emotional intelligence, cultural competency, and self-awareness in TA providers counselling entrepreneurs through the complex personal, emotional and operational demands of business ownership.
- The *Principles of Community Development Finance* and a framework providing practitioners with the history of Community Development Financial Institutions and the CDFI field, and emerging trends in financing, capitalization, underwriting and portfolio management, impact measurement and public policy.

Networking & Knowledge Sharing

Respondents must also outline their plans to cultivate and grow the small business ecosystem in Massachusetts. This work should encompass activities and events that foster connections, including but not limited to:

- Facilitating peer networking among BSOs to strengthen the sharing of best practices and regional connectivity, broaden reach and diversity, and amplify collective endeavors to improve economic outcomes across Massachusetts.

Submissions must include detailed proposals (including estimated timelines for proposed work) in both areas: Proposed Curriculum and Network & Knowledge Sharing.

Proposed Budget

MassDevelopment anticipates awarding one grant of up to \$65,000 to a qualified organization (“Contractor”) for FY27. Funding for Capacity Building is intended to go toward activities that will be initiated quickly upon execution of the contract with the expectation that program delivery for FY27 will be completed by June 30, 2027.

Contractors applying for this funding opportunity will be responsible for:

- Creating a reasonable budget, inclusive of all costs and professional fees, that aligns with the Contractor's proposed program and all criteria enumerated herein;
- Demonstrating a clear plan for how funds will be used to support program delivery by June 30, 2027.

Respondent(s) should not proceed with proposal implementation until receiving an official award notification from MassDevelopment. The selected Contractor can expect to receive 75% of their funding award following contract execution and will receive the remaining 25% following satisfactory submission of their FY27 final report.

Management

Contractors will be responsible for managing and coordinating the delivery of all services associated with their proposal, including:

- Coordinating the delivery of services and offerings in collaboration with program partners, vendors, contractors, subcontractors and other providers;
- Conducting outreach, engagement and enrollment activities corresponding with program services and offerings;
- Executing a series of activities, workshops, seminars and/or training opportunities through multiple, potentially overlapping cohorts, with an expected minimum of 10 program participants/registrants per cohort;
- Providing technical, administrative, logistical and operational support for students, instructors, vendors, contractors and subcontractors throughout each cohort;

Reporting

MassDevelopment requires a final report detailing the use of awarded funds, including performance, demographic, and outcome data, to be submitted via the Submittable grants management portal by June 11, 2027. The selected Contractor will be responsible for collecting data and reporting on outcomes achieved that can be attributed to the services and offerings associated with their proposal and shared with State agencies, Legislators, grantees, partners and the public-at-large.

To this end, respondents must:

- Describe the methodology they will use for evaluating the impact of their proposed FY27 Capacity Building efforts, including collecting, tracking and measuring participant progress and outcomes;

- Agree to collaborate with MassDevelopment to refine performance metrics and terms and format of the final report prior to executing an agreement with MassDevelopment;
- Agree to deliver a final report summarizing a description of activities, participant outcomes, program impact, engagement metrics and recommendations for future support.

Timeline

<i>Award Benchmark</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Action</i>
RFP Release	July 8, 2026	Applications Open
Submission Deadline	August 26, 2026, 11:59 p.m.	Application Due
Application Review Period	August - September 2026 (Estimate)	Grant applications reviewed & requests for minor clarifications
Grant Award Notifications	October 2026 (Estimate)	Grant Agreement executed
FY27 Reporting Deadline	June 11, 2027	FY27 Final Report Due

Eligibility & Submission Requirements

Eligible applicants are Massachusetts-based organizations (including sole proprietors) with a history of successfully engaging stakeholders and demonstrated ability to develop and implement capacity building programming and technical assistance activities for small and micro business development. If multiple parties are involved, the applicant would be designated as the “Lead” and be responsible for coordinating all parties, vendors and subcontractors. The Lead and/or fiscal agent as “Contractor” will execute the contract with and receive funds directly from MassDevelopment.

Required qualifications include:

- Experience facilitating meetings, and in designing and facilitating small business development, educational and capacity building programming
- Demonstrated ability to project manage and coordinate logistics for the delivery of proposed program offerings
- Experience working with nonprofit organizations and in serving socially and economically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented groups and populations
- Familiarity with small business needs and Massachusetts’ small business landscape
- Commitment to and knowledge of practices in diversity, equity and inclusion

Proposals should be submitted as a PDF format file through the Submittable grants management system and include the following:

1. **Organizational Profile:** Brief history and experience in small business development and capacity building. Describe past performance and summary of qualifications, as well as point to examples of previous training your organization has provided.

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2. **Approach/Methodology:** Describe how you will deliver training and coaching. Reflect on how stated goals, objectives and small business needs, gaps and challenges have shaped your proposal.
 - The Contractor should utilize information, including, but not limited to the Small Business Survey developed by Coalition for an Equitable Economy and administered by MassINC Polling Group in partnership with MassDevelopment. ([CEE Small Business Survey Jan 2026.pdf](#))
 3. **Scope of Work:** Provide proposed breakdown of planned activities and expected outcomes to be undertaken during FY27, as well as the parties responsible for each component.
 4. **Budget:** Detailed cost breakdown, understanding that MassDevelopment's contribution will not exceed \$65,000; your proposed budget should directly correspond to and support your proposed Scope of Work, including delivery of capacity building services and all professional fees.
 5. **Required Supplemental Documentation and Attachments:**
 - Applicant's **2026 Certificate of Good Standing** as issued by the Massachusetts **Secretary of the Commonwealth** and/or the equivalent to be accepted at the discretion of MassDevelopment.
 - Alternatively, ***Sole Proprietors may provide a Business Certificate (DBA Filing);***
 - **Key Personnel:** Resumes/profiles of staff, trainers, consultants and/or partners participating in your capacity building efforts
 - **U.S. IRS Tax Exempt Certification**, if applicable
 - **EIN Confirmation Letter and/or completed W-9 form**, as applicable to ***Private For-Profit Consultants and Sole Proprietors***

Proposals are not expected to exceed five (5) pages, excluding required supplemental documentation outlined in #5. We encourage interested applicants to reflect on how the goals and objectives stated above inform their proposed plans within submitted materials. Failure to submit a complete proposal with all pertinent materials will result in reduced competitiveness and/or denial of funding.

Submission Guidelines

Complete proposals containing all supplemental information must be uploaded and submitted beginning **Wednesday, July 8, 2026 until 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, August 26, 2026** via the Submittable grants management system, through the link provided in this RFP. Late proposals will not be accepted.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- **Strategic Alignment** with team & agency mission and program priorities, goals & objectives;
- **Experience & Capacity:** Demonstrated experience in small business development and capacity building, with a history of successfully managing similar projects. Ability to implement proposed activities and achieve projected outcomes within the required timeframe;
- **Program Design:** Quality and suitability of the proposed training/coaching methods; Responsiveness to small business needs and opportunities;
- **Financial Feasibility:** Reasonability of budget and alignment with proposed activities

All materials submitted will become the property of MassDevelopment and must be made available for reproduction and may not be copyrighted.

Submittable

Proposals will only be accepted online via the Submittable Platform accessible on: <https://mgpsbtaprogram.submittable.com/submit>. Submittable streamlines the RFP process by allowing you to upload all required documents in one place for quick and efficient submission. You will need to create an account to access and submit a proposal. After submission, applicants can track their proposal status and receive updates to stay informed.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Scope of Work Template