

**FY21 Collaborative Workspace Program Questions Received  
July 15, 2020**

**Q: As an existing cowork operator would I qualify for this grant if the funds were to be used for expansion to a new location?**

**A:** The FY21 solicitation relates to existing locations only.

**Q: I am wondering if there is a definition of "fit out" that you are using for this grant? Specifically in terms of what phase of the project you are looking to fund, for example, would a funding request for something in the design phase be acceptable?**

**A:** Fit out means the equipping or build-out of a space, but could include design costs as a small part of a larger fit-out scope if the design relates to the expanded build-out of, or safety-related upgrades to, an existing collaborative workspace that is expanding in its current location.

**Q: If the project in question is new and has not yet opened, should the questions under "Space Functionality and Users" in Section 1 be left blank, with information being provided only in the subsequent Project Growth section?**

**A:** The FY21 solicitation relates to existing locations only. It is best not to leave any questions blank.

**Q: I am writing with an inquiry regarding the Collaborative Workspace Program grant opportunity and the timeline for use of funds. An application question asks for a detailed schedule for the project and an explanation of how funds will be used from 9/2020-6/30/2021. Attachment 1 explains that no invoice submitted shall be dated earlier than July 1, 2020. I am wondering whether improvements completed between July 1, 2020 and the date the funding is announced would be eligible under this program and want to confirm that no expenses incurred prior to July 1 would be eligible.**

**A:** Grant proceeds may not be used to reimburse for expenses incurred prior to July 1, 2020. Reimbursements may be allowed for eligible costs incurred on or after July 1, 2020. Evidence of matching contributions to the project exclusive of the rent subsidy may look back to April 1, 2020.

**Q: I have a question about what counts in the "funds raised" category. If the applicant is simply investing its own funds as part or all of the match, does this count? We earn money from the sale of development rights in order to fund our community-focused projects. We would be using those funds (and/or the interest those funds earn) to cover the remainder of our equipment budget. Would this qualify as a match? Or do funds need to be raised specifically as a campaign for the project in question?**

**A:** Yes, these funds would be considered a cash match as long as they are specifically set-aside and available for use on the project being funded.

**Q: My question is whether this is limited to one grant per company, or it's one grant per space. We haven't spent \$100,000 in any single space but definitely have spent more than \$100,000 in the aggregate across our multiple locations. As I read the program, it is one grant per workspace so for us that would mean (up to) 10 applications.**

**A:** The FY21 solicitation is limited to one grant application covering one location per applicant. We will not consider multiple spaces from the same applicant.

**Q: Is this program intended for projects that already have been completed, or for those that will be completed between September 2020 and June 2021?**

**A:** This program is not for projects that have already been completed.

**Q: My question is regarding outdoor space. Our building has many outdoor areas that could make excellent workshop spaces given the pandemic requirements. Does the grant help fund outdoor areas? Our idea is create a roof over our concrete slab in the back of the building for workshops. We are also considering using the roof of the pavilion space for solar panels. Does the grant fund renewable energy projects?**

**A:** The project as described sounds eligible for consideration.

**Q: We are a shared-use food processing facility; we incubate a wide variety of food businesses in our community. We are excited to apply for funding for a number of pieces of equipment that would greatly benefit our clients, but we are wondering about one piece that may not fit with this project. Would you please let me know what you think: We are committed to implementing an Environmental Monitoring Plan this year, a plan that would allow us to routinely swab for and monitor any pathogen growth in our facility. The costs involved in piloting this program would include a) purchasing ATP swab supplies and b) outsourcing testing of swabs for listeria and salmonella (can't be done in-house). Based on the RFP, I don't believe these would be allowable grant expenses, but I wanted to check in nevertheless. This program would allow us to work with more producers of Ready to Eat products.**

**A:** The Environmental Monitoring Plan as described would not qualify as an eligible fit-out cost.

**Q: Do the following meet your match requirements:**

- **Donations in form of free services/labor (e.g. painting)**

**A:** If the services can be documented and quantified, and are performed by an unrelated professional third party vendor (i.e., not by applicant staff or volunteers) then they would likely qualify.

- **PPP loan**

**A:** PPP loan proceeds do not qualify toward the match.

- **Discounts on e.g. furniture purchases**

**A:** If the discounts can be documented and quantified as donations specifically made to the space, and are not discounts/sales that are available to the general public.

**Q: How do you document matching funds when the donation will happen after the submission date?**

**A:** Matching funds must be certified and documented before entering into a grant agreement.

**Q: How much focus do you put on COVID related investments vs e.g., expansion related investments?**

**A:** If you are not applying for COVID-related investments, you should describe how your space is already compliant with the required health & safety standards for reopening. We will consider both types of investments.

**Q: We want to use one of our tenant's services as a donation for part of the matching. We would also like to donate our service for part of the matching, for example, discounting or giving away memberships or offices to help startups and businesses recover from COVID. We do also plan on using the full 50% rent match as well towards our actual rent. Would it also be possible to use the grant money towards software or applications that help with stopping the spreading of COVID, for example, we are currently piloting software that can detect and alert when someone isn't wearing a facemask when in the building.**

**A:** The referenced tenant services are unclear, however, in general, the value of in-kind services must be documented and quantified, and performed by an unrelated professional third party vendor (i.e., not by applicant staff or volunteers) then they would likely qualify. Discounting or giving away memberships or offices would not count toward the match. Rent subsidies come into play when the rent for a collaborative workspace is discounted through a signed lease with the building owner as evidenced through the required documentation for the benefit of the collaborative workspace operator. It is unclear what is meant by your statement that you “plan on using the full 50% rent match towards our actual rent.” Software is not an eligible use of the fit-out grant.

**Q: We would like to include as matching funds the rent- and utility-free facility that our landlord/corporate sponsor has provided us:**

**a. Is it acceptable for us to ask a real estate broker we know, to generate comps to assess the value of the space for purposes of the rent subsidy?**

**A:** Yes, but all rent comps submitted will be independently reviewed and evaluated by MassDevelopment.

**b. Can we count the market value of both the free rent and the free utilities towards the match, or only the rent value?**

**A:** The calculation of the rent subsidy should only consider the value of the rent subsidy, not utilities.

**c. The application guidelines mentions that "To qualify toward the match, all non-cash contributions to the project must have been received or committed no earlier than April 1, 2020", and later mentions that "The amount by which a lease for a space has been discounted below market rate may be counted towards the match, in an amount not to exceed the cumulative discount for a period, starting on July 1, 2020, equal to the shorter of 24 months or the remaining months on the lease." Which is the earliest date we can match the rent from, April 1 or July 1, 2020?**

**A:** We will only consider rent subsidies beginning on July 1, 2020 for match purposes.

**Q: Are the total number of grant recipients limited by number and/or aggregate amount? And if so, what are the number limits, and what is the aggregate amount available to you to award this year?**

**A:** The total number of grant recipients will be limited by the dedicated funding for the program. This amount has not yet been determined.

**Q: Is there a rough/planned schedule for grant award announcements, agreements, and distribution?**

**A:** We hope to announce grants in the fall of 2020. The process of entering grant agreements and distribution will follow immediately after the announcement.

**Q: If awarded, what is the timeline on invoice payments/reimbursements for each wave of expenditures that the awardees complete and invoice Mass Development?**

**A:** MassDevelopment will process appropriately completed invoice packages as they are submitted within 30 days, and usually much sooner.

**Q: Is there a minimum amount that should be applied for? (We have seen that past awards were as small as \$7,500. We would like to request only what we need for our budget.)**

**A:** There is no stated minimum amount that can be applied for. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for only what is needed for the project. Many grantees could receive less than the funds requested.

**Q: Can our non-profit apply for both this (Collaborative Workspace Program grant) & the Resurgent Places grant, and if yes, would we simply make a note of that in our applications, and make sure that the matching funds plan is mutually exclusive?**

**A:** Yes

**Q: Is there a staff or committee member I can call and/or E-Mail to help determine if the**

**Resurgent Places grant is a good fit for our organization?**

**A:** Amanda Gregoire, Program Manager, Email: [agregoire@massdevelopment.com](mailto:agregoire@massdevelopment.com)

**Q:** As a performing arts complex with three theatres, one of which is a co-work space, we are facing uncertainty in regards to what the safety standards will be for our sector. We will be applying for a fit-out grant for improved measures to safely reopen, which could include a new ventilation system, but we do not as yet have a detailed plan for the work. Can funding from this program be used to first bring in a consultant to do an analysis of our current reopening needs and make recommendations? Can we request funding without a current budget to present for the work that needs to be done as we are not sure at this time what improvements we need exactly?

**A:** Part of the fit-out grant could pay for a portion of the design costs for a new ventilation system, for example, but the consultant analysis that you describe would not qualify for a fit-out grant.

**Q:** Would the scope of a maker space include an alternating proprietorship, as defined by the Federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), winery/cidery/meadery distillery along with vinegar/syrup production and retail facility qualify as a “maker space” for the purposes of the Collaborative Workspace Program Grants?

**A:** It could, depending upon the breadth of the potential user community.

**Q:** Since late February 2020, we have committed a portion of our revenue to meet COVID MA safety guidelines. We are treating our COVID response broadly as its own project with its own expenses. For accounting purposes, we have documented and categorized all expenses pertaining to meeting MA state COVID standards within our accounting system. Are we eligible to list all COVID related expenses after 4/1 (invoices included) as quantifiable (and certifiable) contributions to our COVID project? Examples include:

- Masks, face shields, and gloves
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disinfecting Wipes
- Additional cleaning services from third party
- Self-cleaning surface applications
- Thermal Temperature Readers
- Thermometers
- No-touch utility tools
- Plexi-glass dividers
- Sign holders
- Take home COVID Tests for Clients and Staff

**Invoices and receipts would be included in the final application, but given those, would these expenses qualify for the match?**

**A:** Of the sample list provided, things like plexi-glass dividers, thermal temperature readers, and no-touch utility tools would be counted toward the match, as they appear to be capital costs as opposed to operating costs (operating costs would not qualify).

**Q: Does revenue spent count as matching dollars if spent on COVID expenses? Revenue was our primary source to cover the costs of COVID related project expenses.**

**A:** Yes, revenue spent specifically on eligible capital project costs after April 1<sup>st</sup> would be considered for the match.

**Q: In order to create a safe and healthy workspace, we are considering creating testing sites and other upgrades for our user community, visitors and guests. Would MassDevelopment be open to considering portions of grant funding be put towards these approaches to creating a safe and healthy workspace?**

**A:** Yes, but your application should focus on capital costs associated with the testing sites as opposed to operating costs (which would not qualify).

**Q: Since we are not the property managers or owner of our MA locations, we are also pursuing rent discounts from our landlords. If successful, would this be eligible for the match, or is it only rent discounts we are providing our own clients?**

**A:** The rent subsidy match only applies if the applicant/operator of the space is receiving a verifiable rent subsidy/discount from the building owner.

**Q: What are the reporting requirements for grant recipients, and how long are they in effect? The application lists "detailed annual reports [...] every year," please provide additional clarity.**

**A:** MassDevelopment expects annual reports (found in Attachment 1) for every year that the collaborative workspace is operational.

**Q: We are a government agency, overseeing a new nonprofit to operate a building with multiple uses and users. We are planning to apply, but wondered if the application should formally be from a partnership with the new nonprofit operator. Also, is the discount on rent we are providing the operator (with whom we will have a lease) count as matching funds?**

**A:** An applicant can be either the building owner, or the operator of a collaborative workspace. The rent subsidy match only qualifies if the operator is the applicant and is receiving a verifiable rent subsidy from the building owner.