



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

1515 Arch Street, 12th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19102

Request for Proposals

PHL: Most Diverse Tech Hub

Release Date: January 31st, 2024

Due Date to Apply: March 1st, 2024

Vision and Background:

Philadelphia has one of the more diverse tech sectors among cities in the United States. According to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), 25.1 percent of all science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) employees are women, while 6.3 percent are Black and seven percent are Latinx. Philadelphia's diversity is one of our city's best assets, and while we are especially proud of our diverse tech sector, we also know that we can and need to do much better—and we will continue to strive to do that. It is no secret that technology is a key element of our economic future. Philadelphia must enhance its tech workforce skills and grow tech-based companies in order to compete in the global economy. We must be intentional about ensuring our tech sector is highly diverse and representative of Philadelphia's population.

In 2018, the City launched a platform for a Tech Industry Partnership. Over the last few years, this Partnership has connected with or invited a network of more than 75 companies, consisting of a range of tech and tech-enabled companies of all sizes, to join together as an active network.

Goals:

In order to position Philadelphia as the most diverse tech hub, the Department of Commerce intends to invest in programs and ideas that:

- Enhance technology skills for the future talent pipeline, enabling more Black and brown Philadelphians—young adults and adults—to be prepared and trained in technology fields and to be ready for the jobs of the near term and the future.

- Match Black and brown talent—especially Philadelphia public school students—to local tech companies.
- Build longstanding diverse talent generating partnerships between local colleges and universities, as well as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and local tech and tech-enabled companies.
- Convene and organize tech employers around fostering a more diverse sector, while also identifying a partner to lead the coordination of the Tech Industry Partnership (Note: the City intends to facilitate a hand off of the Tech Industry Partnership to an organizational partner).

Request for Proposals (RFP):

The City is soliciting a summary of qualifications from experienced organizations to deliver programming in the following three categories:

- Diverse Tech Talent Pipeline Development
- Tech Industry Partnership Management
- Tech Jobs Landscape Analysis

Criteria for experienced organizations:

- Organizations must be based in Philadelphia
- Operating for at least two years
- Experience carrying out programs and initiatives

The City intends to fund two to five organizational partners in Fiscal Year 2024 to work with the City and stakeholders in making Philadelphia the Most Diverse Tech Hub.

Important Criteria:

Response shall include a concept, proposal, and budget to address one or more of the below programmatic categories:

1. TECH TALENT PIPELINE BUILDING (up to \$250,000)

- Retain our Black and brown higher ed talent in Philadelphia (college: four-year and two-year degree programs; Or recognized certificates: credential/certification programs) and expose such students to tech employment opportunities.
- Create pipeline trainings and career opportunities for non-degree holders, returning citizens, and other host underrepresented populations.
- Connect and place students into paid internships with companies in Philadelphia and throughout the region. Provide students the opportunity for immersion and real time sponsored experiences in the tech industry.

- Establish clear connections with local colleges, universities, and education partners that will provide social capital, networking, and investment into black and brown students.
- Establish HBCU initiative to encourage employer pipeline creation and internships with local and regional HBCU's.
- Establish career pipeline to high demand tech positions with broad access points to increase income equality.
- Expand the number of private sector employers in Tech and Tech-enabled industry that provide internships, Summer WorkReady, and year-round work experiences for Philadelphia residents/students.

2. STRENGTHEN DIVERSITY OF THE TECH SECTOR THROUGH: THE TECH INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP (up to \$60,000)

An Industry Partnership (IP) is a multi-employer collaborative effort that brings together management and labor around the common purpose of improving the competitiveness of a cluster of companies or organizations producing similar products or services and sharing similar supply chains, critical human resource needs, infrastructure requirements, business services, and/or retention/recruitment challenges.

Many local areas and regions have developed sector- or industry-specific strategies to address workforce shortages, respond to economic problems and opportunities, and align workforce investments with identified workforce needs. The Department of Commerce is seeking a partner to manage the Tech IP by doing the following:

- Facilitate convenings of tech startups and employers of all sizes to identify sector and talent needs; jointly develop strategies for increasing diversity and building Philadelphia's tech pipeline to meet our goal of being the Most Diverse Tech City.
- Cultivate a culture of inclusivity and focus on ensuring that the opportunities are provided and specifically creating pathways to help diversify the current workforce at local tech and tech enabled companies of all sizes.
- Build out the network of employer partners committed to providing opportunities such as:
 - Informing training curriculum
 - Internships
 - On-the-Job training
 - Unsubsidized employment
 - Targeted mentoring

3. **Philadelphia Tech & Innovation Industry Study (up to \$70,000)** Nationally, Philadelphia is ranked among the top 25 tech hubs in the country. As the 6th biggest city in the USA, this means we are underperforming relative to our size. Consequentially, the Commerce Department is proposing an industry study to determine gaps in the ecosystem and create specific next steps to propel our city to a top 10 Tech ecosystem within the next 5 years.

This industry report will provide a qualitative and quantitative snapshot of the Philadelphia tech economy. The findings will inform city policies and strategies to sustainably grow our city into a top 10 tech hub nationally within the next 5 years while also maintaining alignment to the goals of Most Diverse Tech Hub.

Ultimately, this report will provide the Commerce Department with action items and priorities into 2029. The report should be divided into the following 3 sections:

a. Fact Finding Industry Listening sessions

Listening sessions will engage tech leaders to understand their perspectives on the gaps and opportunities in the tech ecosystem. These sessions will strive to solicit feedback from a group of stakeholders in the innovation economy from across various disciplines, backgrounds and identities. We expect feedback from the following cohorts of people:

- i. Early Stage firm leadership
- ii. Large employer leadership
- iii. Growth Stage firms / Mature Firms leadership
- iv. Technologists
- v. Investors

b. Quantitative Research

This research will provide a statistical snapshot of the Philadelphia tech ecosystem and how it compares to those of our peer cities and regions. The research will also detail tech nationally and Philadelphia's specializations in the industry. It will allow us to effectively identify key needs, opportunities, and areas for growth. The selected consultant will deliver the following metrics:

- i. National tech trends
- ii. Philadelphia industry strengths
- iii. Hiring trends for tech talent at Philadelphia companies
 1. In demand occupations
 2. Growing companies
 3. Future talent skill set
- iv. Industry strengths
- v. Average wages by position
- vi. Demographic breakdown of tech workforce
 1. Racial

2. Gender
 3. Academic attainment
 - vii. Student retention
 - viii. Peer city comparison
- c. Outcomes
- This report will guide the work of the Director of Tech and Innovation and will inform city policy as it pertains to this sector. Most importantly, it will inform a realignment of strategies for the next 5 years. Key deliverables will be:*
- i. Key priority areas for the next 5 years of growth, i.e., challenges to industry growth
 - ii. Industry data and trends (Philadelphia MSA specific)
 - iii. Qualitative feedback from tech leaders
 - iv. Action items to address gaps in the ecosystem

The City may decide to fund more than one concept per category but will fund no more than \$750,000 total for all concepts.

Targeted Populations:

- Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), particularly those of the Black and Latinx communities.
- Underrepresented startup founders, especially Black and Latinx
- Young adults (age 18 and over) to adults (with an emphasis on dislocated, under-employed, or unemployed adults)
- Technology and tech-enabled local companies committed to diversifying the workforce and the industry reach and commitment in Philadelphia

Application Process:

- Applicants will submit proposals to talent.development@phila.gov by 5pm on due date (3/1/24). Any submissions after 5pm will be disqualified.
- Letter of Intent should be emailed to talent.development@phila.gov by 5pm on February 16th, 2024.
- Any questions on the RFP should be emailed to talent.development@phila.gov by 5pm on February 14th, 2024. All questions and answers will be sent to all those that intend to apply
- Winners will be announced the week of March 18th, 2024