Q: Must program participants be enrolled in a Massachusetts college?
A: No, Tech Talent Diversity Initiative funds are intended to benefit Massachusetts resident jobseekers in the tech sector, regardless of their educational background.

Q: Can we serve students enrolled in Massachusetts colleges with hometowns outside of Massachusetts?
A: Yes, students enrolled in a Massachusetts college are eligible to be served by proposed programs, even if their hometown is outside of Massachusetts, as long as the tech position is located in Massachusetts.

Q: Is this a reimbursement structure where we must submit receipts and payroll evidence before receiving funds?
A: Yes and invoicing can be done on a monthly or quarterly schedule.

Q: What aspects of a program are persuasive or would reviewers expect to see to show that you can reach the outcomes of a program?
A: There is no one element that is of more importance than all the others. Given the nature of this issue, industry engagement will be assessed closely as part of the application. However, it will not be solely determinative (i.e. the proposal with the most or highest quality industry engagement will not necessarily be selected).

Q: How does the MassTech Collaborative define the technology sector? What types of companies are included?
A: The Innovation Institute defines the technology sector quite broadly and can also be thought of as the "Knowledge Economy." A few examples, not meant to be exclusive, are robotics internet of things, artificial intelligence, digital health, consumer technologies, etc. While life sciences and clean energy may be considered part of the knowledge economy, Tech Talent Diversity Initiative funded programs should not focus primarily or exclusively on these two sectors as they fall outside the portfolio of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. Proposed projects may still address them, but the focus must be elsewhere.

Q: In terms of improving employer practices and increasing participation and retention rates among diverse populations, does the Innovation Institute have expectations in terms of how that is measured or how success is demonstrated?
A: The Innovation Institute does not have preconceived notions as to how applicants should measure the success of their programs. Appropriate evaluation metrics will be dependent upon what is proposed. Applicants should propose and explain whatever metrics they think are most relevant.

Q: Are new initiatives just as welcome as existing work/collaborations given pilot nature of this, or is there a preference one way or another (ex: track record or scaling of existing initiative)?
A: The Innovation Institute has no preference regarding whether applicants propose to scale an existing program or create a new one. In both situations, the proposal must make a compelling case that the proposed project will be impactful.

Q: Are there particular research or reports - whether within MassTech, the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, or beyond - that have informed your thinking or framing of the solicitation and which you would refer as a point of reference or background?
A: References are posted alongside this Q&A document. These are not meant to be comprehensive or inclusive and applicants will likely have access to or read materials that are equally, if not more informative.

Q: Can we submit an application if we don't have the specific project worked out yet? For instance the student and the project manager could hone in which project is the best fit based on their skills and the resources they will need.
A: The Innovation Institute recognizes that proposed programs will need some fine tuning and changes resulting from learnings along the way. However, applicants are encouraged to submit the most complete and thorough proposal feasible as this is a competitive solicitation.

Q: Is there a preference for statewide vs regional impacts?
A: The Innovation Institute has no preference for proposals that address tech talent diversity statewide or in a specific region.

Q: Is there a minimum number of people that need to be served by a proposed program?
A: There is no set minimum number of people served by proposed programs. The Innovation Institute will make a judgement as to whether the funding requested is justified by the reach of a proposed program.

Q: Can organizations incorporated outside of Massachusetts apply?
A: Yes, as long as the services provided and impact of the program and are generated in Massachusetts.

Q: Is there a need to generate sustained funding after the program funds are spent?
A: The Innovation Institute is not necessarily looking for financial sustainability after a set time period. Instead, we are looking for the best ideas and recognize that the pilot nature of some proposals will make financial sustainability hard to predict. Follow on funding from other sources is possible, but not guaranteed. Sustainability is a positive attribute, but is not dispositive.

Q: Do you provide the contents of bidder submittals if a bidder or anyone else submits a qualified Public Records Request to examine ALL bid response packages?

A: As a public entity, MassTech is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (set forth at Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 66) and thus documents and other materials made or received by MassTech and/or its employees are subject to public disclosure. All information received by MassTech shall be deemed to be subject to public disclosure. If a public records request is received, MassTech will not release bid response packages prior to the final date for submission of responses (June 28, 2019), but would be required to release bid responses after that date. If you are concerned about disclosure of certain information submitted in you proposal, please refer to section 4.1 Application and Submission Instructions, subsection (c), of the solicitation for procedures to request an exemption. Please note that state law provides very limited disclosure exceptions, and should your information not fall under an exemption it will be subject to all such public records requests.

Q: Does the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative have a figure in mind, such as 5% or 10% as a GOAL to increase the level of African American participation in computer, engineering, and science occupations, from the current level of 3.5%? If so what percentage is your goal?
A: No, there is not a specific target for participation rates in tech occupations. While an ideal long term goal would be to make participation rates representative of the Commonwealth's demographics, applicants should present a realistic target for all metrics based upon the funding requested and project timeline.

Q: Are there guidelines regarding the length of the project application portion of the proposal?
A: No, applicants should present what they feel is needed to make the case for their proposal and explain how it addresses the evaluation criteria listed in the solicitation, but there is no minimum or maximum length.

Q: Are state colleges/universities considered eligible nonprofits under this grant solicitation?
A: Yes, the solicitation is open to any organization operating in Massachusetts, inclusive of state colleges and universities.

Q: Is increasing neurodiversity an appropriate area for proposed programs to address?
A: Yes, the underrepresented groups used as an example in the solicitation are not meant to be exclusive.