Inclusive Innovation Hubs Squared (iHub^2) – Q & A

Updated as of 10/29/2021

1. I am interested in applying for the I Hub grant but am unable to attend the meeting on October 21st. Will that meeting be recorded and if so, may I get a copy of the recording to hopefully answer my questions?
   a. Yes, the recording of the iHub^2 webinar is available on CalOSBA's website at https://calosba.ca.gov/grant-and-funding-opportunities/ and emailed to all webinar registrants.

2. Who is eligible to apply as a host organization?
   a. The following entities are eligible to apply as a host organization(s):
      • Fully accredited institutions of higher education such as community colleges, public and private universities and state colleges;
      • Private nonprofit corporations engaged in economic development activities
      • Local counties or municipalities with pre-existing community/economic development departments and/or programs; and,
      • Public economic development institutions such as workforce investment boards and economic development corporations.

3. Can we identify our potential partnerships in the application and pursue formal MOU's (or similar document) later in the process?
   a. Per the Request for Proposals (page 19), the applicant must provide a statement of cooperation, which should specifically include the outlined strengths of the partnership as well as the individual member roles, responsibilities, value and expected contributions (financial and other). This plan may be submitted as an attachment to this proposal in the form of an operational plan, memorandum of understanding (MOU), partnership agreement, or similar document. If there are MOUs that will be implemented later in the program, it is acceptable for the applicant to identify them in the application and obtain a formal MOU at a later date.

4. On page 16 there is a limit of 5 Letters of Support, is there a limit to any other partnership docs such as MOU's, statements of cooperation, operational plan, partnership agreement, or similar documents beyond the 1000-word maximum section length?
   a. The partnership MOUs or formal agreement(s) can be included as attachments and will not be counted against the 20 page limit. Letters of support are

independent of the partnership agreements, and we are requesting a maximum of 5. For the partnerships section of the narrative, we are looking for applicants to demonstrate that a broad partnership in innovation has been formed across multiple regional partners, outlining strengths of the partnership and describing individual member roles, responsibilities, value and expected contributions (financial and other). On page 19 of the RFP, we note that formal agreements can be submitted as an attachment to the proposal in several different formats, for example as an operational plan, memorandum of understanding (MOU), partnership agreement, or similar document.

5. Are the agreements/MOUs/partnership agreement/operational plan or similar document the same as the 5 letters of support listed under the application section E?
   a. The letters of support are different than partnership agreements. Please submit no more than 5 letters of support. Separately, please include a description of your partnership plan under the partnership section.

6. Can we have multiple MOU's/partnership agreements attached to the appendix of the application that makes up the "operational plan" or are we supposed to only have one (1) MOU/Partnership Agreement/Operational Plan which all partners cosign as a signature is another requirement of the partnership section?
   a. You may structure your formal agreements however makes sense to you. They may be included as separate documents or as one comprehensive agreement where every partner signs.

7. In the partnership section of the 20-page narrative are we referring to the attached partnership items (LOS, MOU, Partnership Agreements, Operational Plan) or an additional narrative?
   a. The partnership section should address the questions c) and d) under #3 Partnerships and demonstrate that a broad partnership in innovation has been formed across multiple regional partners. This should be a narrative of no more than 1,000 words. You will also include your attached partnership documentation in addition to the narrative description.

8. Since there is a limit of how many iHub² will be rewarded, my question is can multiple jurisdictions (counties) partner on submission of the application? Can both lead as the Prime?
   a. Multiple counties may absolutely partner on a submission of the application; however one will need to be the lead applicant for administrative and reporting purposes.

9. Can one entity submit multiple proposals? And if not, can that entity be a participant/partner in multiple proposals (if not the prime)?

a. Please only submit one proposal as a lead applicant. An entity can be a sub partner on multiple proposals.

10. Is the category "development of product testing" for purchasing testing equipment for an existing entity to expand our ecosystem capabilities or for offering product testing services to participants?

a. Product testing is included in the program announcement in the context of allowable activities and expenditures: Consulting, Training, Program development, as an example of a subject or area that might be covered by an iHub[2]. Allowable expenses under this category include personnel time and effort and/or contracts to develop, expand, and implement innovation and entrepreneurship programs and services to underserved entrepreneurs. Funding is intended to be used for building capacity to support diverse entrepreneurs with "product testing" which includes, but not limited to, having the ability (capacity, knowledge, and staff) to assist entrepreneurs in converting their ideas to protype and commercialization (discovery to commercialization phase).

11. Does the category "product development resources" include expenditures for individual participants?

a. Product development resources is included in the program announcement in the context of Allowable activities and expenditures: Consulting, Training, Program development as an example of a subject that might be covered by an iHub[2]. Allowable expenses for this category include personnel time and effort and/or contracts to develop, expand, and implement innovation and entrepreneurship programs and services to underserved entrepreneurs. Any expenditures must be directly related to consulting, training, program development and marketing.

12. Are overhead, indirect, or administrative costs allowed? To avoid confusion with the staffing salary required for program development, training, or consulting, can an Administrative Salary expenditure be elaborated or given an example?

a. Indirect and overhead costs are not allowable for the iHubs2 program. Unallowable administrative salary and contract bonuses includes anything that would be considered indirect or overhead costs. Direct services related to program development and implementation (i.e. training and consulting, program development to prepare training and consulting, outreach, etc.) is allowable.

13. Can you provide an example of "Educational consortium - including technology transfer representatives"?

a. An example would be academic institutions or private entities that have access to facilities or laboratories that can support entrepreneurs with testing their hypothesis and producing a prototype (translate research findings into new products).

14. We were hoping to get a better understanding of the way funding will be allocated in years 2-5 of the program. We understand the $250,000 is for the first year but are unclear what OSBAs vision is for funding for subsequent years.
    a. The designated iHub^2 will be awarded $250,000 to be spent down within one budgeted performance year (January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022). These financial one-year awards are designed to create the foundation, infrastructure, and plans for the iHub^{2}program. The iHub^2 designation and state engagement will continue thereafter for a total period of 5-years (January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2027). For years 2-5, it is CalOSBA's vision that the designated iHub^{2}s will build on the foundation created by the State's Year 1 funding and leverage the funding for other outside funding sources. The applicant will need to demonstrate a clear and strategic fundraising plan to leverage private and public funding to sustain the iHub^2 beyond the awarded period. It is expected they will lay out fundraising goals and benchmarks to help track their fundraising progress and success.

15. Can the funds be used to provide direct investment in underrepresented founders/startups?
    a. No. However, you should incorporate in your strategic plan and narrative how you will use grant funds to attract new capital to finance startups led by diverse founders

16. What are realistic metrics for year one?
    a. CalOSBA implemented the 5-year MOU model with the understanding that year 1 would be the program development and ramp up period (i.e., outreach, marketing, research, etc.). We know that metrics and success stories will be realized over the course of years 2-5. Year 1 successful proposals will be able to demonstrate the progress towards meeting goals as well as the practices, partnerships, and collaborations being developed.

17. In the reporting section, there is a long list of metrics. Does each member of the network have to track these, or only the metrics that make sense?
    a. You will propose goals that make sense for your organization. We encourage and challenge organizations to build upon their existing work and expand upon that.

18. If funding is to be fully utilized in year 1. What financial information would be requested in the financial reports in years 2-5?
    a. At this time there is no additional funding for years 2-5. As such, there will be no financial reporting for years 2-5. During years 2-5, we will require bi-annual narrative and data progress reports.

*Please note that questions may be added to this document on a rolling basis, please check back for updates