



GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Life Sciences Out-of-School Time Grant Program

Solicitation No. MLSC-OST-2024-01

Program Manager: Linda Lee
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Solicitation Issued: November 12, 2024

Application: www.masslifesciences.com/programs/ost
Applications Due: February 13, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview of Program

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC), through this solicitation, seeks to further the development and expansion of life sciences education and training for Massachusetts K-12 students by investing in impactful out-of-school time (OST) programs. The MLSC anticipates awarding transformational grants that enable non-profit organizations to implement new or expanded programming offered beyond the traditional school day, predominately serving underrepresented and/or low-income youth.

Investments made through this program seek to:

- Reinforce, complement, and supplement life sciences education offered by public schools.
- Provide students with new technical and professional skills development relevant for careers in the life sciences.
- Expose students to state-of-the-art life sciences equipment, tools, and technologies.
- Catalyze and grow innovative programming serving underresourced communities.
- Increase awareness of life sciences career opportunities.

1.2. About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) is an economic development and investment agency with a mission of supporting the growth and development of the life sciences in Massachusetts. Through public-private funding initiatives, the MLSC supports innovation, education, research and development, commercialization, and manufacturing activities in the fields of biopharma, medical device, diagnostics, and digital health. As a quasi-public agency, MLSC also offers programs that fund innovation-driven economic and workforce development initiatives in Massachusetts. The MLSC's mission is to serve as the "hub" of the Massachusetts life sciences ecosystem, encourage innovation through investments in good science and good business, strengthen and protect Massachusetts' global leadership position in the life sciences, accelerate the commercialization of promising treatments, therapies, and cures that will improve patient care, and create jobs and drive economic and STEM workforce development.

For more information, please visit www.masslifesciences.com.

2. Eligible Applicant Minimum Criteria

Applicant must demonstrate compliance with the following minimum criteria:

Criteria	Minimum Requirement
Applicant	<p>Must be a non-profit organization with a presence in Massachusetts delivering OST programming relevant to the life sciences.</p> <p>Past MLSC awardees are eligible to apply, however must make a compelling case as to the need for additional funding, particularly if funding is requested for the same program or if a prior award is not fully expended at the time of application submission. To be considered for funding, applicants must be in compliance with reporting requirements and all contractual obligations for any prior award(s) from the MLSC.</p>

<p>Program</p>	<p>Funding must be requested for programs that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Occur outside of the traditional school day (e.g. after-school, weekends, school vacation weeks, and summer). 2. Operate entirely within Massachusetts. 3. Primarily serve Massachusetts K-12 students/schools that meet any of the following descriptions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Vocational technical high school as determined by Chapter 74 of the General Laws of Massachusetts. b. Public school (including charter) located in one of the following “Gateway Cities” as determined by Section 3A of Chapter 23A of the General Laws of Massachusetts: Attleboro, Barnstable, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Peabody, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield, and Worcester. c. Public school (including charter) with a student population of at least 25% classified as “low income” by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). d. Tuition-free private school primarily serving low income/ underrepresented students. e. Enrolled in the METCO program, funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to expand educational opportunities, increase diversity, and reduce racial isolation, by permitting students residing in certain cities to attend public schools in other communities that have agreed to participate. f. Homeschooled residents of a “Gateway City” (as defined above) or a city/town where the public high school(s) has a student population of at least 25% classified as “low income” by DESE. 4. Prepare students with skills relevant for life sciences careers. The “life sciences” are defined in the MLSC’s enabling legislation as <i>“advanced and applied sciences that expand the understanding of human physiology and have the potential to lead to medical advances or therapeutic applications.”</i> Program activities/curricula and associated equipment, supplies, and technology should seek to enhance STEM skills relating to human biology/biomedical sciences, chemistry, engineering, robotics, and/or computer/data science that will prepare them for life sciences careers in sectors such as biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, medical device/technology, medical diagnostics, bioinformatics, and digital health. <p><i>Activities related to the following are NOT eligible for funding:</i> Earth and Space Science, Clean Tech/Energy, Environmental Science, Gardening/Botany, Animal Science/Veterinary Assisting, and allied health/healthcare.</p>
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3. Allowable Costs

Grant recipients can only request reimbursement for approved costs as itemized in their budget (post-award budget modifications are permissible with MLSC approval). Allowable costs include personnel, operations (marketing, food, etc.), stipends, equipment, supplies, materials, and technology. Non-allowable costs include travel, legal expenses, operating costs such as rent and utilities, other subscription fees, overhead/indirect costs, and activities funded by other funding sources.

The MLSC reserves the right to adjust the requested amount of funding for each proposal. Following execution of the Grant Agreement, funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis to awardees via electronic fund transfer (EFT) upon verification of costs incurred.

4. Review Process and Criteria

MLSC staff will conduct an initial administrative review to determine eligibility of all submitted applications. Eligible applicants will then be reviewed and scored by a panel of external independent reviewers consisting of life sciences educators and industry professionals. Funding recommendations will then be made to the MLSC Board of Directors based on reviewer feedback and scores. Grant recipients will be selected on a competitive basis according to the criteria presented below. These criteria will be used to: 1) identify applicants that meet minimum threshold criteria; and 2) compare and select an applicant that best meets the goals of the solicitation.

For this solicitation, the MLSC is particularly interested in supporting programs that will further its goal of building a robust and diverse workforce pipeline for the fast-growing life sciences industry. Programs are expected to develop both technical and professional skills, effectively increase awareness of and interest in life sciences careers, and inspire students through hands-on, engaging activities.

MLSC reserves the right to consider only applications that, in its sole judgment, meet the minimum threshold requirements. MLSC staff may contact the applicant to request supplemental information prior to formal review. In addition, MLSC reserves the right to make no awards, to award less than the applicant requests, and/or to award less than the maximum amount of funds potentially available through this solicitation.

Criteria	Sub-Criteria
Minimum Threshold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant meets the minimum requirements discussed in Section 2. • The application is complete and responsive to the solicitation's requirements. • The application is submitted prior to the posted deadline.
Program Description	<p>Description of program to be implemented/expanded, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the program curriculum, goals, and objectives (identification of any gaps the program seeks to fill). • Summary of requested items to be purchased and justification for why they are needed. • Target population, estimated/anticipated number of participating students, and plan for recruiting students. • Career awareness/exploration activities identifying real-world application of skills learned in the life sciences industry. May include exposure to life sciences professionals through field trips/site visits, guest speakers, etc. • Description of what constitutes successful outcomes. • Plan to evaluate the program and track both short and long-term outcomes. • Sustainability plan. • Cash or in-kind matching funds awarded or anticipated. Applicants are strongly encouraged to identify matching funds that leverage MLSC funding. Matching funds should directly relate to the proposal and can include other grants from state or private entities.
Team and Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names and titles of all personnel involved in program implementation. • To the extent possible, brief summaries of the qualifications, experience, and expertise of such individuals.

Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must demonstrate how they are working collaboratively with industry or non-profit partners in the development and implementation of the program. • MLSC encourages plans to include employer input in training development, delivery, and evaluation. • Applicants may partner with existing industry collaborators to meet this requirement.
Budget	<p>Applicants can request grant funding of up to \$50,000 for eligible expenses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An itemized list of all costs is required, and can include line items for personnel, operations, stipends, equipment, materials, supplies, and/or technology with the estimated cost for each item. • Budget cannot include “other” or “indirect” costs. • Justification of funding requested must be conveyed in the proposal. • Budget should also include any non-MLSC funding that will support the program/project (identified as such). • Applicants must use the Excel template provided in the application.

5. **Application Submission**

Applications will only be accepted through the MLSC’s online application portal, accessed via the program webpage: www.masslifesciences.com/programs/OST. Applicants are required to create an account and complete a user profile before starting the application. It is recommended that applicants carefully follow the online instructions and provide complete, clear, and concise responses to all required questions. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that its application is complete, meets minimum threshold requirements and is properly submitted to MLSC prior to the established deadline. Multiple users can be given access to the application. Applicants are asked to review the MLSC’s Public Disclosure policy (Section 7 below) prior to submitting their application.

6. **Program Schedule**

The solicitation process will proceed according to the schedule outlined below (target dates are subject to change). Applications cannot be submitted after the date and time specified.

Application Available:	November 12, 2024
Application Deadline:	February 13, 2025 at 5:00 P.M.
Awards Announced:	May 2025
Grant Period:	May 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

7. **General Request for Response Conditions**

7.1. **Notice of Public Disclosure**

As a public entity, the MLSC is subject to Massachusetts’ Public Records Law, codified at Chapter 66 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Thus, except for those documents exempted from disclosure, any documentary material, data, or other information received by the MLSC from an applicant is a public record subject to disclosure. Applicants are advised to review Chapter 66 prior to submitting any information to the MLSC.

Notwithstanding the above, certain kinds of information may be statutorily exempt from public disclosure

under the limited exemption at Chapter 23I, Section 3(l) of the Massachusetts General Laws. Specifically, materials that fall under one of the following categories may be determined to be not public records and thus not subject to disclosure:

- Information, documents, or data that consist of trade secrets,
- Information, documents, or data that consist of commercial or financial information regarding the operation of any business conducted by the applicant, and
- Information, documents, or data regarding the applicant's competitive position in a particular field of endeavor.

An applicant may assert a claim of confidentiality for part, or all of the information submitted to the MLSC. To make a claim of confidentiality, an applicant must:

- a) Clearly identify the documents, reports, or other information you wish to receive confidential treatment and mark such materials "CONFIDENTIAL". Where a portion of an otherwise non-confidential document is alleged to be confidential, the confidential portions should be clearly identified and marked.
- b) State the basis for your claim of confidentiality (whether trade secret, commercial or financial information, or competitive position information) and whether disclosure of the information would likely result in substantial harm to your business. If substantial harm would result from disclosure, state what those harmful effects would be and their causal connection to disclosure of the information.
- c) State the period for which confidential treatment is desired (e.g., until a certain date, until the occurrence of a specific event, or permanently).
- d) Submit non-confidential information (including any redacted versions of partially confidential documents) separate from all materials for which you request confidential treatment.

All confidentiality claims are subject to verification by the MLSC. If no confidentiality claim is made when information is received by the MLSC, then it may be made publicly available without further notice to you.

7.2. Contractual Requirements

MLSC intends to enter into an agreement with the selected applicant and reserves the right to amend the Agreement without further issuance of another solicitation.

Awardee agrees to complete an annual report for three (3) consecutive years beginning one year from contract commencement.

7.3. Waiver Authority

MLSC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, to request modifications of the application, to accept or reject any or all applications received, and/or to cancel all or part of this Solicitation at any time prior to awards.

7.4. Disclaimer

This Solicitation does not commit MLSC to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies. MLSC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified applicants, cancel or modify the Solicitation in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interest.