

REQUEST FOR QUOTE

Small Business Support Hubs Resource Navigation

Project Goals/ Purpose/ Objectives:

Small Business Support Hubs will ensure that entrepreneurs can navigate to and through Michigan's small business ecosystem and help increase awareness of federal, state, and local small business support resources. Support Hubs deploy a variety of small business support, including one-on-one coaching, workshops, seminars, cohort-based learning, business accelerator activities, mentor matchmaking, pitch competitions, networking events, partner referrals, as well as grants to businesses disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

This project will focus on assisting eligible small businesses understand the services available within the ecosystem and how to navigate them. The project will include:

- **Regional Hub Facilitation**
 - Coordinate one meeting in each Prosperity Region with Support Hubs and each of their strategic partners prior to 9/30/25. These roundtable discussions should result in building program awareness between participants and opportunities for improved referral paths.

- **Ecosystem Mapping**
 - Small Business Support Hubs
 - Identify and document the technical capabilities of each Hub & their strategic partners.
 - Develop and launch an online directory that maps Small Business Support Hubs & Strategic Partners, specific programs, and other relevant data such as jobs postings, events, etc. Directory will integrate into MichiganBusiness.org.

- **Small Business Personas & Custom Pathing**
 - Work with MEDC team and partners to collaborate on the development of Small Business personas and create custom pathways through available SBSH resources to meet specific growth needs. At least 4 personas should be created by business stage and should integrate how businesses can address emerging economic trends.
 - By Stage:
 - Start
 - Seed
 - Scale
 - Growth
 - Emerging Economic Trends; Small Businesses that are seeking resources to navigate the following trends:
 - Rising customer expectations for speed and convenience
 - Changing consumer demographics and purchasing power
 - Shift towards online, digital and contactless interactions
 - Increased automation and robotics improving efficiency
 - Sustainability demands transforming operations and products
 - New materials, production methods, and scientific advancements

- Personas will be developed from real business examples and will include stories that highlight business need and growth milestone for each persona and identify where the business can find the resources / expertise within the ecosystem. Elements of customer/ small business satisfaction (voice of the customer) with services and/or ecosystem navigation will be weaved into this work. Note: all needed resources may not exist or be inadequate in comparison to national best practices, these gaps should be identified and outlined in a final report.
- Persona & custom pathing work should also integrate the “voice of the customer” by including insights and feedback from small business owners regarding their experiences, expectations, preferences, and perceptions of their SBSH experience. This work should translate into a two-way customer discovery process and result in identifying specific pathways for small businesses to achieve their business goals as well as supporting the Hub in understanding their target audience.
- **Capital Access Mapping**
 - Identify opportunities for small businesses to seek funding and increase profitability including through the identification of ecosystem resources that will help with budgeting, decreasing expenses, increasing customer base, customer optimization, exploring corporations as customers, and increasing business acumen skills to support the business in becoming profitable. Additionally, capital access mapping will identify opportunities for funding through grants, pitch competitions, investors, traditional capital, etc. both within Michigan and nationally.

Project Deliverables Include:

- Coordination and Facilitation of 10 Regional Hub / Strategic Partner Meetings
- Final SBSH Resource Navigation Report that includes:
 - Technical Capabilities of all Hubs and Strategic Partners
 - Small Business Persona & Custom Pathing
 - Develop 12 Personas total
 - Conduct a minimum of 3 customer discovery interviews for each business stage
 - Capital Access Mapping
 - Digital Ecosystem Directory
- Deliver up to 5 Executive Briefings of final deliverables (Internal & External Stakeholders)

Background of Project:

On June 28, 2023, the MSF created the SBSH Program and approved program guidelines. This program is funded through a one-time appropriation of \$75 million using American Rescue Plan Act funds included in the FY2023 budget supplemental (PA 1 of 2023) that was signed into law on January 31, 2023.

The Program builds on the success of the MEDC’s twenty-member, tech-focused SmartZone network and provides critical funding to bolster the state’s small business ecosystem – the network of consultants, coaches, non-profit organizations, universities, lenders, and community and economic development partners that help our state’s small businesses launch, stabilize and grow. SBSH will cultivate a more inclusive, accessible, and integrated entrepreneurial ecosystem and will bring new and more comprehensive

resources to small businesses disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 by providing funding to entrepreneurial hubs for operations, programming, and direct support to small businesses.

In November 2023, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced that \$73 million in ARPA funding would be disbursed among 27 organizations to serve as Support Hubs in the state. This program prioritizes investments into the small business ecosystem to build organizational capacity, enhance and diversify operations, strengthen programming, and better meet distinct regional needs. Using a Hub-and-Spoke model that leverages a network of strategic implementation and outreach partners, each Support Hub offers a wide variety of programming that reflect unique regional needs such as food-based business incubation to artistic entrepreneurship support to hard-tech physical products and product development, as well as industry- and stage-specific resources.

Project Length/ Timeline:

Request for Quote Published	September 30, 2024
Proposals Due	October 15, 2024
Proposal Evaluation & Selection	October 18, 2024
Contract Development & Execution	Mid-October – December 2024
Contact State Date (anticipated):	January 1, 2025
Implementation of the Scope of Work	Jan. 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026
Final Report Due & Executive Briefings Scheduled	February 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026

Term: The anticipated start date for this contract is January 1, 2025. The term will end on March 31, 2026.

Budget / Range: Up to \$175,000

Proposals

Proposals should include a cover letter, statement of qualifications, a statement of work in alignment with this request and total cost for the term of the contract. Proposals are due no later than 5:00PM on Tuesday, October 15, 2024. Proposals should be emailed to Senior Vice President, Small Business Services & Solutions Amy Rencher at renchera@michigan.org and Small Business Services Coordinator Teri Hunter at huntert10@michigan.org.

Federal Requirements

This contract is funded through the American Rescue Plan and the selected contractor must comply with all federal requirements including registering in SAM.gov. A copy of the contractor’s UEI number must be provided before contract execution. Contracts must be executed by December 2024.