



## **Innovation Catalyst Grant Program**

# **Solicitation for Innovation Catalyst Partnership Proposals**

Issue Date: Friday, April 8, 2022

### **NOTICE**

A Prospective Applicant that wishes to assure receipt of any changes or additional materials related to this Solicitation should email [innovationcatalyst@ripl.org](mailto:innovationcatalyst@ripl.org) immediately and provide the Prospective Applicant's contact name, organizational affiliation, and email address.

## Research Improving People's Lives

# KEY INFORMATION SUMMARY SHEET

Solicitation for Proposals:	The RIPL Innovation Catalyst Grant Program
Solicitation Issue Date:	Friday, April 8, 2022
Solicitation Issuing Office:	Research Improving People's Lives – Executive Office <b>Mintaka Angell, Chief Operating Officer</b>
Submit Proposals To:	PDF proposals to <b>Mintaka Angell</b> at <a href="mailto:innovationcatalyst@ripl.org">innovationcatalyst@ripl.org</a>
Submission of Questions:	All questions related to this solicitation should be submitted via email to the following email address: <b>Mintaka Angell</b> at <a href="mailto:innovationcatalyst@ripl.org">innovationcatalyst@ripl.org</a>
Closing Date and Time:	<b>Rolling</b>
Awards Announced:	<b>Rolling</b>

The **contract period** for Innovation Catalyst Grant Program partnerships shall be established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between The Innovative Policy Lab, d/b/a Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL) and an awardee. For many Innovation Catalyst grantees, a signed Data Use Agreement (DUA) between RIPL and the organization(s) is also necessary to achieve the program goals.

An Innovation Catalyst Grant will result in a partnership between the grantee(s) and RIPL to build and launch the technical solution(s) scoped in the MOU. RIPL will maintain the solution(s) built during the initial contract period for an additional one to two years as agreed. RIPL Innovation Catalyst Grants typically include the following:

1. **Technical assistance from a full RIPL technical and project management team** to design, build, and deploy the solution(s) the solution and transition all tools and knowledge to partners. A RIPL Innovation Catalyst team includes project managers, user researchers, economists, data scientists, data engineers, computer scientists, and cloud architects.
2. **Training for partner staff to permanently build capacity to use and maintain all technologies**, and a long-term sustainability plan for partner ownership and extension of products. This can include consulting with the partner(s) on hiring staff with appropriate skills, and/or assisting the partner organization(s) with bidding, evaluating, and securing a contracted operations and maintenance partner.

Award values will vary based on the scoped work as described in the initial grant award MOU and the proposed solution(s). The estimated value of an Innovation Catalyst Grant Program award usually stands at between one and two million dollars.

## I. Description

### **About RIPL**

Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL) is a leading tech-for-social-impact nonprofit. Our mission is to work with governments to help them use data, science, and technology to equitably improve policy and lives.

Our approach is to bring together leading scientists and policy experts to provide powerful technology and scientific-grade policy solutions directly to policymakers at the speed they need to positively impact policy and lives. We partner with policy makers to use technology, data and science to solve pressing social challenges to improve government's own capacity to innovate and measure success going forward. We bring together trusted partners in the private and public sectors to ensure that our impact is lasting and meaningful.

RIPL is issuing this Solicitation for Innovation Catalyst Grant Program proposals partners that are committed to collaborating closely with RIPL to apply data, science, and technology to solve public sector challenges and improve lives.

### **Background**

From reducing poverty to increasing economic opportunity, from education to healthcare, policymakers at the state and local level are tackling some of the toughest problems facing society. They know that public policy needs to be economical and make measurable improvements in people's lives. It needs to deliver value, improving opportunity equitably, efficiently, and effectively.

Falling costs of data and computing are making it easier to measure impact and design and deliver products that meet diverse needs at lower cost. To innovate quickly, private sector leaders build "data lakes" of integrated information. They build insights teams; hiring leading economists, statisticians, and computer scientists from top research institutions to measure what works and develop products that work even better. Government leaders must similarly deploy impactful data, science, and technology to serve their communities better. Public policy will be similarly innovative and impactful when government develops data resources and harnesses expertise to routinely make decisions informed by data and science.

### **The Innovation Catalyst Grant Program**

**The Innovation Catalyst Grant Program is designed to assist governments with designing, building, and deploying innovative tech-and-science-driven solutions to public challenges.**

The goal of the program is to accelerate applying cloud and contemporary technology and science to real-world challenge to empower governments to use data and science to innovate.

Winners of Innovation Catalyst Grant Program partnership awards will receive full-service project management, technical, and scientific support to empower them to approach solving the public problem with which they are most familiar with the aid of contemporary technologies with which they may not be familiar.

Grantees of the Innovation Catalyst Grant Program will work closely with RIPL to define and implement programmatic proposals that meet the goals of this Solicitation. RIPL will work with its partners to assume primary responsibility for successfully developing and deploying the envisioned product(s) and/or solution(s). This support includes but is not limited to:

- Deployment of a secure cloud-based Research Data Lake, owned by partners, to optimize and join data for insights.
- Deployment of a portfolio of scientific policy solutions which can be effectively scaled across partners to improve lives.
- Design thinking workshops to develop human-centered solutions.
- Comprehensive user testing.
- Product design and development.
- Planning, stakeholder, and project management (including organizing and leading all sprints).
- Customized cloud architecture, cloud engineering, software engineering, creation and deployment of bespoke AI/ML algorithms, advanced econometric research, data science, data engineering and data visualization.
- Scientific causal analysis and evaluation of programs and policies.
- Additional technological and project management support as needed.

Award values will vary based on the scoped work as described in the initial grant award MOU and the proposed solution(s); however, the estimated value of an Innovation Catalyst Grant Program award is two million dollars. Award values are subject to funding available to RIPL.

Awards are made on a rolling basis and are scoped in project MOUs. These are often accompanied by a Data Use Agreement.

## II. Eligibility and Application

### Eligibility

The Lead Applicant is the organization that wins an Innovation Catalyst Grant Program partnership award. The Lead Applicant may be any of the following kind of organizations:

- A government entity (federal, state, local or another jurisdiction),
- Nonprofit organization,
- Educational institution,
- Local or regional workforce or economic development entity; or
- Another appropriate entity or public agency.

### Application Elements and Process

Proposals must be submitted with all required completed elements, including:

1. **Cover Letter (1 page maximum):** Include a one-page cover letter, signed by the proposed project sponsor, that contains a list of partners, a short summary of the proposed project, and a good-faith attestation of the veracity of the information in the application.

2. **Proposal Narrative (2 pages maximum):** Describe the public challenge and proposed solution. Include a description of how RIPL’s partnership will meaningfully, measurably, and sustainability help the Lead Applicant solve the challenge and improve lives.
3. **Partnership Description (1 page maximum):** Describe the team with whom RIPL would collaborate and demonstrate that the Lead Applicant’s leadership is supportive of the application for the Innovation Catalyst Grant Program. RIPL encourages submitting letters of support from key stakeholders to demonstrate support for projects and solutions.
4. **Data Use (1 page maximum):** Describe the data source(s) that may be used in the project, where those data reside, and what entity/representatives of said entity would approve a DUA for the appropriate use of these data sources.
5. **Ecosystem Description (1 page maximum):** Describe the technological governance structures of the organization, their involvement in the project, and whether they are supportive of the project. Describe the existing capacity the lead applicant has for data and research and whether they are supportive of the project. Finally, briefly identify legacy systems relevant to the project.
6. **Project Leadership (1 page maximum):** Describe, as specifically as possible, with whom RIPL will work on a day-to-day basis to facilitate this project.
7. **Communications (2 page maximum):** Assuming successful launch, describe how the political leadership of the organization (e.g., cabinet members, governors, mayors) might publicly promote the project.

Proposals should be sent in electronic format as a PDF to Mintaka Angell at [innovationcatalyst@ripl.org](mailto:innovationcatalyst@ripl.org).

### III. Proposal Award Review Process

RIPL staff will initially screen applications to ensure that submission requirements are met.

A Review Committee will review applications. The committee will be composed of RIPL staff. Mirroring the structure of the Application Elements, reviewers will be directed to consider, among other factors, the following:

Proposal Evaluation Criteria		
Category	Evaluation Goals	Questions for Evaluation
<b>Proposal Narrative</b>	Understand the policy challenge, the proposed solution to the challenge, and whether it is an impactful solution that will meaningfully improve lives at scale.	Is the opportunity for impact high? Is the project aligned with the Program’s mission to innovatively use technology, science, and data to improve lives?  Does the Lead Applicant have capacity to meaningfully lead and collaborate on a successful implementation of project?

		Will awarding an Innovation Catalyst Grant lead to development of a meaningful, sustainable, and measurable solution that can be scaled to improve lives?
<b>Partnership</b>	Determine whether the leadership of the organization is aligned with the vision of the proposed project.	<p>Does the Lead Applicant and project team demonstrate commitment to innovation for impact and the leadership to use data, science, and technology to solve key challenges?</p> <p>Does the proposal have buy-in from key influential decision-makers in the government or agency responsible for implementing the project?</p> <p>Will applicants be able to successfully and reliably solve common challenges to accomplishing impactful technological innovation in the public sector?</p>
<b>Data Sharing</b>	Determine a reliable and sustainable path to data-sharing to empower project success.	<p>Are the right data owners bought in to the project?</p> <p>Are there legal or ethical hurdles that need to be addressed in a solution, and have relevant leaders flagged them?</p>
<b>Ecosystem</b>	Determine what the IT governance structure is in the organization with whom RIPL will work to assess likelihood of success; assess the applicant's existing capacity to use data, and what legacy system are in use.	<p>Are key IT stakeholders on board as willing collaborators in the solution?</p> <p>What is the ease of integration with existing or legacy systems?</p> <p>Are there complex existing state vendor relationships that will increase the difficulty or feasibility of implementation? What proposed solutions are there to improving the chances of success?</p>
<b>Project Champion</b>	Determine if there is partner capacity to successfully implement the proposed project.	<p>What position would the Lead Applicant serve as the grantee's project sponsor/leader?</p> <p>What authority or pathway does the project sponsor/leader have to quickly and effectively advance project implementation and goals?</p> <p>Does the project sponsor/leader have experience or momentum needed to bring together stakeholders in their ecosystem for success?</p>

<b>Communications</b>	Determine whether the partnership is willing to promote the work done to spur further innovation.	<p>Are the stakeholders responsible for press and communications willing to engage?</p> <p>Are stakeholders and project leads willing to share their learnings and approach with other public sector leaders so that results can be scaled for success?</p>
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Final approval for each award shall be determined by the Chief Executive Officer of RIPL, based on the recommendations of the Review Committee.

Upon request, RIPL will provide feedback on proposals that are not awarded grants.