



Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program

Solicitation for the Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program Partnership Proposals

Issue Date: Wednesday, January 19, 2023

NOTICE

A Prospective Applicant that wishes to assure receipt of any changes or additional materials related to this Solicitation should email 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:	Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program
Solicitation Issue Date:	Wednesday, January 19, 2023
Solicitation Issuing Office:	Research Improving People's Lives – Executive Office Mintaka Angell, Chief Operating Officer
Submit Proposals Via:	The RIPL Grants Page through the file upload tool or text entry fields
Submission of Questions:	All questions related to this solicitation should be submitted via email to the following email address: Mintaka Angell at innovationcatalyst@ripl.org
Regular Application Deadline:	Rolling until program funds are exhausted

The contract period for the Opening Workforce DOORS 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 Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program grantees, a signed Data Use Agreement (DUA) between RIPL and the organization(s) is also necessary to achieve the program goals.

Opening Workforce DOORS 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 and for an additional one to two years as agreed upon in the MOU. Opening Workforce DOORS Grants typically include the following:

1. **Technical assistance from a RIPL technical and project management team** to design, build, and deploy a DOORS instance and transition all tools and knowledge to partners. An Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program 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 scope of work as described in the initial grant award MOU and the proposed DOORS instance. The estimated value of an Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program award is approximately 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 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 equitably impact policy and lives. We partner with policymakers to use technology, data, and science to solve pressing social challenges and 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 the Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program to partners that are committed to collaborating closely with RIPL to apply data, science, and technology to solve public sector challenges and improve lives.

Background

The Data for Opportunity in Occupational Reskilling Solution (DOORS) provides the tools that jobseekers need to discover, train, and transition into new and successful careers. DOORS is a suite of data-driven digital resources comprised of two key user-facing digital services that work collaboratively:

Recommendation Engine is a jobseeker facing service that unlocks previously inaccessible government administrative data and puts it to work for jobseekers using a three-staged approach to:

- (1) Deliver personalized career recommendations in growing industries;
- (2) Direct workers to workforce training programs proven to support employment in those industries; and
- (3) Match residents to best-fit available job opportunities and employers ready to hire.

Ready Hire is an employer facing service that uses scientifically grounded and ethical Machine Learning (ML) to match employers with ready-to-work jobseekers with the skills required to fill open positions.

Whereas existing career recommendation tools tend to rely on the user to conduct their own research to identify the next step in their career, Recommendation Engine delivers personalized recommendations to jobseekers by utilizing a RIPL-developed algorithm fueled by Artificial Intelligence (AI), ML, causal science, and secure cloud computing. The algorithm analyzes the jobseeker's state administrative data, extracts skills from their resume, and analyzes a user's survey responses to predict and recommend which new career transitions will best benefit the jobseeker.

RIPL's unique approach to utilizing a state's historical administrative data, is what allows the algorithm to measure which training programs and career transitions have resulted in the best employment and earnings outcomes for individuals. The algorithm then provides those data-driven recommendations to jobseekers with similar skills and experiences. Simply put, Recommendation Engine works like "Netflix for New Careers."

The result? Through Recommendation Engine, displaced workers are matched with new careers and reskilling and training programs already proven successful in the real world and employers eager to hire ready-to-work employees through Ready Hire.

Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program

The Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program is designed to assist governments with designing, building, and deploying DOORS and complementary tech and science-driven solutions to address public challenges in workforce development. The goal of the program is to accelerate applying cloud and contemporary technology and science to real-world challenges to empower governments to use data and science to innovate.

Grantees of the Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program 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 Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program will work closely with RIPL to define and implement programmatic DOORS 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 DOORS instance. This support includes but is not limited to:

- Design thinking workshops to develop the DOORS instance to uniquely fit the Grantees workforce landscape.
- Deployment of or integration into an existing secure cloud-based Research Data Lake (RDL), to optimize and join data for insights.
- Deployment of a customized DOORS instance which can be effectively iterated upon to include any additional functionalities the partner deems important.
- 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 DOORS 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 Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program award is approximately two million dollars. Award values are subject to funding available to RIPL.

Awards will be scoped out in project MOUs after they are announced. These are often accompanied by a Data Use Agreement.

II. Eligibility and Application

Eligibility

The Lead Applicant is the organization that wins an Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program 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, be no longer than 3 pages, and must include all the required completed elements below:

1. **Cover Letter (1 page maximum):** Include a one-page cover letter, signed by the proposed project sponsor, which contains a list of partners that will be working with the lead applicant organization, a brief summary of the proposed DOORS project, and a good-faith attestation of the veracity of the information in the application. An example of the good faith attestation is: "I attest to the truthfulness of all information in this letter and the attached proposal". The letter should be signed by the proposed Lead Applicant organization.
2. **Proposal Narrative (3 paragraphs maximum):** Describe the public challenge and proposed DOORS instance. 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 (2 paragraphs maximum):** Describe the team with whom RIPL would collaborate and demonstrate that the Lead Applicant's leadership is supportive of the application for the Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program. RIPL encourages submitting letters of support from key stakeholders to demonstrate support for projects and solutions.
4. **Data Use Description (1 paragraph 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 paragraph 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 Assignments (1 paragraph outline maximum):** Describe, as specifically as possible, with whom RIPL will work on a day-to-day basis to facilitate this project.
7. **Communications Plan (1 paragraph maximum):** Assuming successful launch, describe how the political leadership of the organization (e.g., cabinet members, governors, mayors) might publicly promote the project.

Proposals may be submitted through the [RIPL Grants Page](#) through the file upload tool or text entry fields.

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
Proposal Narrative	Understand the policy challenge, the proposed solution to the challenge, and whether it is an impactful solution that will meaningfully improve lives at scale.	<p>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?</p> <p>Does the Lead Applicant have capacity to meaningfully lead and collaborate on a successful implementation of project?</p> <p>Will awarding an Opening Workforce DOORS Grant Program lead to development of a meaningful, sustainable, and measurable solution for jobseekers that can be scaled to improve lives?</p>
Partnership	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>
Data Sharing	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>

<p>Ecosystem</p>	<p>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>	<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?</p> <p>What proposed solutions are there to improving the chances of success?</p>
<p>Project Champion</p>	<p>Determine if there is partner capacity to successfully implement the proposed project.</p>	<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>
<p>Communications</p>	<p>Determine whether the partnership is willing to promote the work done to spur further innovation.</p>	<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>

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.