

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

MICHIGAN STRATEGIC FUND

University Early Stage Proof of Concept – ADVANCE Fund

RFP-CASE-317360

REMINDER

Please check your proposal to make sure you have included all of the specifications in the Request for Proposals. In addition, please submit an electronic version of each of the following:

- Proposal (Section ii-A);
- Conflicts of Interest Disclosure (if applicable) (Section II-G).

APPLICANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING THAT THE FOLLOWING IDENTIFYING INFORMATION APPEARS IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF YOUR EMAIL: “*RFP-CASE-317360 Technical Proposal*” with *Applicant Name*, and “*message 1 of 3*” as appropriate if the application consists of multiple emails.

The Michigan Strategic Fund (the “MSF”) will not respond to telephone inquiries, or visitation by Applicants or their representatives. Applicant’s sole point of contact concerning the RFP is below and any communication outside of this process may result in disqualification.

Contract Services
Michigan Strategic Fund
300 North Washington Square, 3rd Floor
Lansing, Michigan 48913
contractsandgrants@michigan.org

IMPORTANT DUE DATES

- **February 1, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.:** Questions from potential Applicants are due via email to contractsandgrants@michigan.org. Please note: The MSF will not respond to questions that are not received by the above date and time. In addition, questions that are phoned, faxed or sent through regular mail will not be accepted.
- **February 5, 2021, by close of business:** Responses to all qualifying questions will be posted on the MSF’s website, michiganbusiness.org/317360.
- **February 19, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.:** Electronic versions of your Proposal is due to the MSF via email to contractsandgrants@michigan.org. **Proposals will not be accepted via U.S. Mail or any other delivery method.**

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
University Early Stage Proof of Concept- ADVANCE Fund
RFP-CASE-317360

This Request for Proposals (the “RFP”) is issued by the Michigan Strategic Fund (the “MSF”), Contract Services unit (the “CS”). The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (the “MEDC”) provides administrative services associated with the programs and activities of the Michigan Strategic Fund Act on behalf of the MSF. CS is the sole point of contact with regard to all application and contractual matters relating to the services described in this RFP. CS is the only office authorized to change, modify, amend, alter, clarify, etc. the specifications, terms and conditions of this RFP and any contract(s) awarded as a result of this RFP (the “Contract”). CS will remain the SOLE POINT OF CONTACT throughout the application process. ***The MSF will not respond to telephone inquiries, or visitation by Applicants or their representatives. Applicant’s sole point of contact concerning the RFP is below and any communication outside of this process may result in disqualification.***

Contract Services
Michigan Strategic Fund
300 North Washington Square
Lansing, Michigan 48913
contractsandgrants@michigan.org

SECTION I STATEMENT OF WORK

A) PURPOSE

Through this 2021 University Early Stage Proof of Concept-ADVANCE Fund Request for Proposal (the “RFP”), the MSF Board desires to allocate up to \$250,000 (“Award Amount”), disbursed over one year to a Michigan institution of higher education that provides resources and specialized services, with matching funds, to assist university projects in the transition from scientific research to applied research to translational research into the commercial market by analyzing the market application, proving out the concept validation, demonstrating technical feasibility and developing a prototype in the preparation for implementation and testing.

B) BACKGROUND STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

Background: The MSF has provided funding to non-profit organizations and universities to operate programs to assist university projects in advancing their research, translating research into the commercial market, as well as, assisting startup companies with commercializing competitive-edge technologies, building successful, innovation businesses with the potential for high-growth and job retention; promoting a culture of entrepreneurship in Michigan.

Objectives: The MSF, through this RFP, continues to encourage this activity. Funding of up to \$250,000 for one year, (in the form of a grant) will be awarded to a Michigan university through a competitive process in which all submitted proposals will be reviewed by a Joint Evaluation Committee (“JEC”). Results from the JEC review will be provided, in the form of numerical scores and award recommendation(s), to the MSF Board.

C) QUALIFICATIONS

The proposals submitted in response to this RFP should demonstrate the Applicant’s ability to provide resources and assistance to researchers on technology projects through the university technology transfer offices at all Michigan institutions of higher education. This will accelerate the process of technology transfer through the assessment of the technology for use in the commercial market related to a license to industry or a startup company. The university projects through this process will request matching funds, via a proposal process, for completion of key milestones over a 6 to 12-month period to advance their technologies towards commercialization.

Institutions of Higher Education – Only Michigan institutions of higher education are eligible to receive funding through this RFP. Applicants may be either a university technology transfer office with measurable experience in vetting, de-risking and advancing projects for commercial market application or have a demonstrated ability to operate within a university setting, working with faculty to advance their research into the commercial market.

If eligible, the Applicant must have a demonstrated ability to perform the following activities:

- Encourage and work with the State's institutions of higher education to identify the commercial potential in advanced technologies from individual institutions of higher education; AND
- Facilitate the bundling of inventions from individual institutions of higher education into packages that could be of interest to private sector firms looking for commercialization opportunities; AND
- Work with institutions of higher education in encouraging the institutions to provide their faculty with incentives for participating in technology transfer and commercialization activities.

D) DELIVERABLES

Applicant must demonstrate a plan of action to support the following:

1. Assist university technology transfer offices with vetting, de-risking and advancing projects for commercial market application; demonstrate the ability to operate within a university setting, working with faculty to advance their research into the commercial market;
2. Support the ability for university technology transfer offices to discover, screen, protect, market and advance university projects/portfolio technologies into the commercial market, pivot the technology or remove the technology from the commercial pipeline;
3. Collaborate with the university technology transfer offices demonstrating the ability to build talent around and commercialize university intellectual property, taking ideas and inventions from the research stage to the prototype stage; providing the inventors and managers the time, focus and resources to move closer to additional investment capital and market entrance;
4. Knowledge and proven experience of the ecosystem in which university projects can advance into the commercial market by way of introducing and making use of additional complimentary programs to increase the flow and quality of opportunities that will become a license to an industry partner or a Michigan startup; and
5. Ability to work with institutions of higher education throughout Michigan to financially support (by way of matching funds) and administer the program.

SECTION II PROPOSAL FORMAT

To be considered, each Applicant must submit a COMPLETE proposal in response to this RFP using the format specified. Applicants proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. There should be no attachments, enclosures, or exhibits other than those required in the RFP or considered by the Applicant to be essential to a complete understanding of the proposal. Each section of the proposal should be clearly identified with appropriate headings:

A) **COMPLETE PROPOSAL**

1. **Contact Page** – State the Institutions full name, address, and phone and facsimile number. Also included should be contact information, including phone number, email, cell number and fax numbers. Please also include signature of the authorized signor of the applicant organization.

2. **Proposal** – (up to 10 pages) – provide a proposal and include the required elements a-h, as described here. **In the Proposal clearly identify the following sections as headers.**

a. **Eligibility** – the Applicant must clearly identify how they are eligible to apply and fulfill the criteria identified in Section I.C. above.

b. **Executive Summary** – the Executive Summary should summarize the information provided in response to paragraphs (a) above and (c) through (h) below. And specifically indicate:

- THE NAME OF THE APPLICANT INSTITUTION
- THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (See Section I. C. above)
- THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS REQUESTED
- THE AMOUNT OF MATCHING FUNDS, if available
- THE TERM (one year)
- THE PURPOSE OF THE FUNDING

c. **Purpose of Funds** – the Applicant must clearly indicate that the organization is an institution of higher education. The Applicant must clearly describe how the proposed use of funds will foster the growth of Michigan’s technology-based economy and clearly identify the specific competitive edge technology sectors that the Applicant will serve.

d. **Past Experience** – the Applicant should indicate past experience with vetting, de-risking and advancing early stage research projects to the commercial market within a university setting.

e. **Team** – Summarize key personnel, time commitment to the project, specific responsibilities, and value. Identify collaborative partners, responsibilities, and value.

f. Milestones/Deliverables - Identify semi-annual milestones/deliverables that the Applicant will commit to as a result of providing the proposed services. If Applicant is awarded funding, Progress Reports are due April 15 and October 15 every year throughout the award, therefore provide milestones/deliverables that will be completed in April and October over the course of the proposal. Include a “targeted metrics” milestone for the term of the program awarded. For this milestone, the applicant should indicate a targeted number for each of the following metrics: projects funded, ended and redirected, # of universities applying and funded and follow on funding for projects that received funding. Identify how milestone completion will result in specific Economic Impact identified in (h).

g. Budget Request - Attach a schedule of all expenses covering each of the services and activities identified in your proposal. Specifically identify THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS REQUESTED, the TERM REQUESTED, PUBLIC AND/OR PRIVATE LEVERAGED FUNDS (identify the 1:1 match), and what the Applicant proposes to do with FUNDS APPLIED THROUGH THIS RFP and the TIMING OF THE FUNDS. Progress Reports are due in April and October so proposals should include 6-month budgets of relevant line items that align with these dates. Include the budget in a table format with column headings. Preference is that this funding should not overlap other MSF Board approved funding, and this grant starts at the end of any previous existing grant/s.

h. Economic Impact - Identify the targeted number of companies created, jobs created, and follow on funding or increases in investment/revenue resulting from the services, if applicable. Include justification and assumptions related to these expectations. You will be held responsible for delivering these specific numbers in your semi-annual Progress Reports and targeted numbers must be achieved to receive disbursements of grant funding. Explain how you define success and will deliver a successful program. Identify how you will make an economic development impact.

B) PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

Submit your Proposal to the MSF via email to contractsandgrants@michigan.org not later than **3:00 p.m. on February 19, 2021**. The MSF has no obligation to consider any proposal that is not timely received. **Proposals will not be accepted via U.S. Mail or any other delivery method.**

APPLICANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING THAT THE FOLLOWING IDENTIFYING INFORMATION APPEARS IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF YOUR EMAIL: “*RFP-CASE-317360 Proposal*” with *Institution Name*.

**SECTION III
RFP PROCESS AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

A) PRE-SUBMISSION MEETING/QUESTIONS

A pre-submission meeting will not be held. Questions from Applicants concerning the specifications in this RFP must be received via e-mail no later than **3:00 pm on February 1, 2021**. Questions must be submitted to:

Contract Services
contractsandgrants@michigan.org

B) PROPOSALS

To be considered, Applicants must submit a complete response to this RFP, using the format provided in Section II of this RFP, by **3:00 p.m. on February 19, 2021**. No other distribution of proposals is to be made by the Applicant.

C) ECONOMY OF PREPARATION

The proposal should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Applicants ability to meet the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

D) SELECTION CRITERIA

Responses to this RFP will be evaluated based upon a three-step selection process. The proposal must address the requirements described in Section II of this RFP.

The first step is an evaluation of which proposals satisfactorily meet the requirements of this RFP as stated in Section II.

1) Step I – Initial evaluation for compliance

a) *Proposal Content* – Contract Services will screen the proposals for technical compliance to include but not be limited to:

- Timely submission of the proposal
- Eligibility
- Executive Summary
- Purpose
- Past Experience
- Team
- Milestones/Deliverables
- Budget
- Economic Impact
- Proposal signed physically or electronically by an official of the Applicant

- authorized to bind the Applicant to its provisions.
- Proposals satisfy the form and content requirements of this RFP.

2) Step II – Criteria for Satisfactory Proposals

- a.) During the second step of the selection process, proposals will be considered by a Joint Evaluation Committee (the “JEC”) comprised of individuals selected by the MSF. Only those proposals that satisfy the requirements described in this RFP, as determined in the sole discretion of the JEC, will be considered for evaluation in Step II. The JEC reserves the right to request additional information from any Applicant.
- b.) *Purpose, Economic Impact and Competence of Personnel* – The proposal should indicate the ability of the Applicant to meet the eligibility requirements of this RFP and achieve the economic impact. The proposal should indicate the competence of the personnel whom the Applicant intends to assign to the project, including education and experience.

		Weight
1.	Eligibility	Yes or No
2.	Executive Summary	5
3.	Purpose	10
4.	Past Experience	20
5.	Team	15
6.	Milestones/deliverables	20
7.	Budget	10
8.	Economic Impact	20
TOTAL		100

- c.) During the JEC’s review, Applicants may be required to make oral presentations of their proposals to the JEC. These presentations provide an opportunity for the Applicants to clarify the proposals. The MEDC will schedule these presentations, if required by the JEC. Only those Applicants that score 70 points or higher on the written review will be invited for an oral presentation if the JEC determines that an oral presentation is necessary.

E) APPLICANTS COSTS

The MSF is not liable for any costs incurred by any Applicant prior to signing of the Contract by all parties.

F) TAXES

The MSF may refuse to award a contract to any Applicant who has failed to pay any applicable taxes or if the Applicant has an outstanding debt to the State of Michigan or the MSF.

Except as otherwise disclosed in an exhibit to the Proposal, Applicant certifies that all applicable taxes are paid as of the date the Applicant’s Proposal was submitted to the MSF and the Applicant owes no outstanding debt to the State of Michigan or the MSF.

G) CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Applicant must disclose, in an exhibit to the proposal, any possible conflicts of interest that may result from the award of the Contract or the services provided under the Contract.

Except as otherwise disclosed in the proposal, the Applicant affirms that to the best of its knowledge there exists no actual or potential conflict between the Applicant, the Applicant's project manager(s) or its family's business or financial interests ("Interests") and the services provided under the Contract. In the event of any change in either Interests or the services provided under the Contract, the Applicant will inform the MSF regarding possible conflicts of interest which may arise as a result of such change and agrees that all conflicts shall be resolved to the MSF's satisfaction or the Applicant may be disqualified from consideration under this RFP. As used in this Section, "conflict of interest" shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1) Giving or offering a gratuity, kickback, money, gift, or anything of value to a MSF official, officer, or employee with the intent of receiving a contract from the MSF or favorable treatment under a contract;
- 2) Having or acquiring at any point during the RFP process or during the term of the Contract, any contractual, financial, business or other interest, direct or indirect, that would conflict in any manner or degree with Applicant's performance of its duties and responsibilities to the MSF under the Contract or otherwise create the appearance of impropriety with respect to the award or performance of the Contract; or
- 3) Currently in possession of or accepting during the RFP process or the term of the Contract anything of value based on an understanding that the actions of the Applicant or its affiliates or Interests on behalf of the MSF will be influenced.

H) BREACH OF CONTRACT

Except as otherwise disclosed in an exhibit to Applicant's proposal, Applicant is not in material default or breach of any contract or agreement that it may have with the State of Michigan or any of its departments, commissions, boards or agencies, or any other public body in the State of Michigan. Further, Applicant represents and warrants that it has not been a party to any contract with the State of Michigan or any public body that was terminated within the previous five (5) years because the Applicant failed to perform or otherwise breached an obligation of such contract.

I) DISCLOSURE OF LITIGATION

Except as otherwise disclosed in an exhibit to Applicant's proposal, there is no criminal litigation, investigations or proceedings involving the Applicant (and each subcontractor, if subcontractors will be used to provide the goods/services requested under this RFP) or any of the Applicant's officers or directors or any litigation or proceedings under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. In addition, Applicants must disclose in the exhibit requested under this Section of the RFP any civil litigation, arbitration or proceeding to which the Applicant (or, to the extent Applicant is aware, any subcontractor) is a party and which involves: (1) disputes that might reasonably be expected to adversely affect the viability or financial stability of the Applicant (or subcontractor);

or (2) a claim or written allegation of fraud or breach of contract against Applicant (or, to the extent Applicant is aware, subcontractor), by a governmental or public entity arising out of their business dealings with governmental or public entities. Details of any settlements which Applicant is prevented from disclosing under the terms of the settlement may be annotated as such. Applicants must also disclose any investigations by the Internal Revenue Service or any other federal or state taxing body or court.

J) FALSE INFORMATION

If the MSF determines that a Applicant purposefully or willfully submitted false information in response to this RFP, the Applicant will not be considered for an award and any resulting Contract that may have been executed may be terminated.

K) ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURE

All Applicants should be aware that proposals submitted to the MSF in response to this RFP may be subject to disclosure under the provisions of Public Act 442 of 1976, as amended, known as the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"). Accordingly, confidential information should be excluded from Applicants' proposals. Applicants, however, are encouraged to provide sufficient information to enable the MSF to determine the Applicant's qualifications and to understand or identify areas where confidential information exists and could be provided. The FOIA also provides for the complete disclosure of the Contract and any attachments or exhibits thereto.

L) CLARIFICATION/CHANGES IN THE RFP

Changes made to the RFP as the result of responses made to qualifying questions or concerns will be posted on michiganbusiness.org/317360. Applicants are encouraged to regularly check this site for changes or other information related to the RFP.

M) ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL RECEIPT

ELECTRONIC VERSIONS OF EACH OF YOUR PROPOSAL SENT SEPARATELY MUST BE RECEIVED AND TIME-STAMPED BY THE MSF TO contractsandgrants@michigan.org, ON OR BEFORE **3:00 p.m. on February 19, 2021**. Applicants are responsible for timely submission of their proposal. THE MSF HAS NO OBLIGATION TO CONSIDER ANY PROPOSAL THAT IS NOT RECEIVED BY THE APPOINTED TIME.

N) RESERVATION OF MSF DISCRETION

Notwithstanding any other statement in this RFP, the MSF reserves the right to:

- 1) reject any and all proposals;
- 2) waive any errors or irregularities in the application process or in any proposal;
- 3) negotiate with any Applicant for a reduced award;

- 4) reduce the scope of the project, and negotiate with any Applicant regarding the revised project; or
- 5) defer or abandon the project.

The MSF's decision is final and not subject to appeal. Any attempt by an applicant, collaborating entity, or other party of interest to the project to influence the awards process, to appeal, and/or take any action, including, but not limited to, legal action, regarding the proposal or awards process in general may result in the applicant's disqualification and elimination from the award process.

O) JURISDICTION

Any legal action arising from or concerning this RFP shall be brought in the Michigan Court of Claims or, as appropriate, the Ingham County Circuit Court in Ingham County, Michigan. Nothing in this RFP shall be construed to limit the rights and remedies of the MSF that are otherwise available.

P) ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to Public Act 517 of 2012, an Iran linked business is not eligible to submit a bid on a request for proposal, with a public entity.

Applicants must include the following certification in the proposal:

“Applicant certifies that it is not an Iran-linked business as defined in MCL 129.312.”

Failure to submit this certification will result in disqualification from consideration.