



Request for Proposals

Congregate Solutions Accelerator

Introduction

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) was awarded federal funding through the Economic Development Administration (EDA) Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (OIE) Scaling Pandemic Resilience through Innovation and Technology (SPRINT) Challenge to develop an accelerator focused on scaling solutions that help safely re-open tourism, performing arts, travel, and hospitality (TPATH). This project will drive the economy forward by being a catalyst for innovation in biotechnology, health security, and supply-chain solutions; increasing regional, national, and public and private connectivity across innovation clusters to support entrepreneurship; and scaling models to address the new congregation environments that the emerging pandemic and post-pandemic have brought us. The tourism industry in the states of Washington and Alaska have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. As the fourth largest industry in Washington State, the tourism sector employed more than 182,700 workers and generated \$21.4 billion in annual spending in 2019. As of the three-month period from June-August 2020, the state's leisure and hospitality revenue is down by \$2,816 million, about 40% of the previous year's levels. Since the start of COVID-19, the State of Alaska's tourism and arts sector has experienced massive revenue loss. Coupled with low oil prices, a decrease in restaurant dining, and the related decreased demand for seafood, this loss of tourism revenue has proven catastrophic for the state. Consequently, jump starting the tourism sector is vital for continued post-pandemic economic recovery in Alaska and Washington State. Applicants will be required to be compliant with all U.S. federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Overall Purpose

The Congregate Solutions Accelerator will develop industry challenges and produce two cohorts of business solution providers to address those challenges. The Solutions Accelerator will operate virtually, and focus on solutions that can scale and address solutions throughout tourism-dependent regions of the State of Alaska and Washington State. These two regions are connected by economic, cultural, historical, and medical ties—of particular importance to this project are the connected tourism, cruise and commercial fishing linkages. The project will leverage these linkages to accelerate solutions across partner organizations in the Southeast Region of Alaska and the Central Puget Sound Region of Washington with an effort on

establishing demonstration pilots that can scale to other industries and regions. The objective of *Congregate* is to accelerate adoption of technological solutions that can help Tourism, Performing Arts, Transportation, and Hospitality (TPATH) industries reopen in a safe manner. Specifically, this program will:

- Identify potential solutions for the top challenge areas impacting TPATH industries;
- Gather industry, regulators, and public health experts to develop a framework for reopening in light of the potential public health risk;
- Help the innovation economy better understand the requirements to reopen, risks posed, and what needs to be addressed to move from proof of concept to pilot and pilot to program;
- Establish liaisons in industry that can serve as a catalyst to accelerate adoption of proven solutions in the TPATH sectors.

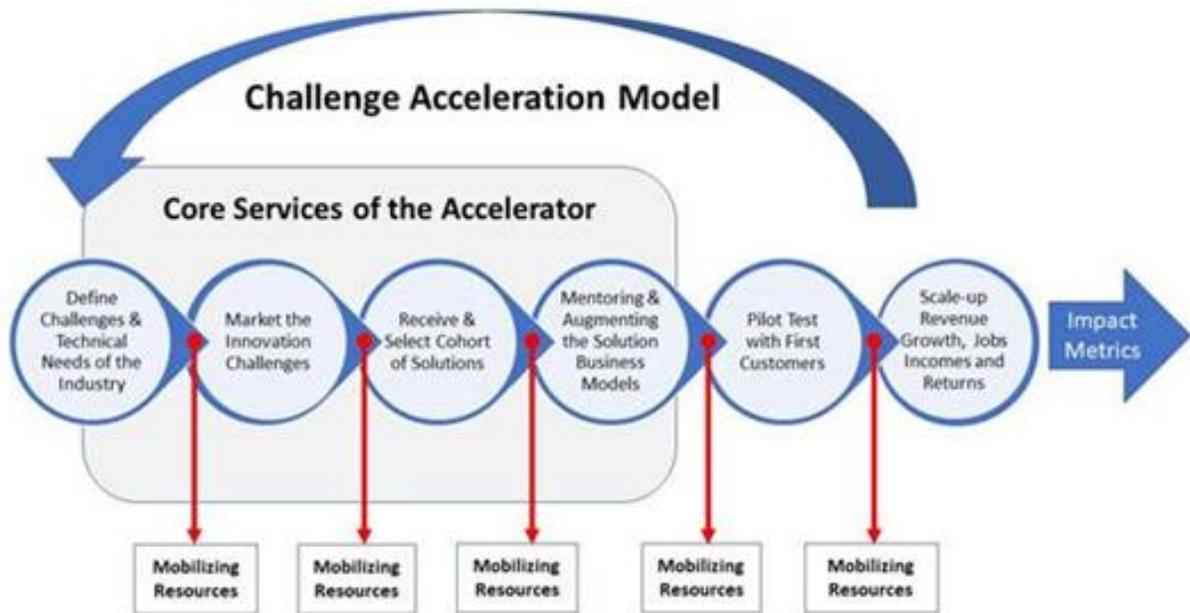
To reopen these industries, a quick response is needed in the way of policy and technology development that will allow people to congregate safely. Even when vaccines are widely distributed, all industries may require some sort of digital health certification and other technologies to ensure customer safety. Such technologies include: (1) health pre-clearance including a methodology for vaccine or negative COVID test certification, (2) air filtration, and (3) touchless and disease-resistant surfaces.

Though technology will be a pivotal part of reopening the TPATH industries, collaboration across the region and various entities such as local governments, health regulators, entrepreneurs, and business leaders are needed to have the impact necessary to reopen tourism and hospitality in Washington and Alaska. Grant guidelines require non-federal funding match contributions worth \$195,000, which can include mentor time, partner contributions,

etc. The focus area is the Northwest, but organizations from across the United States are open to being a part of this initiative.

Roles

This program will also have three sub-recipient award partners, the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), the Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA), the Future Borders Coalition (FBC) as well as dozens of industry and government partners. Contractors will be



expected to engage these partnerships during the project with the goal of enhancing the curriculum, developing industry challenges, and scaling cohort solutions during the course of the project. Partner roles described below.

FBC will support PNWER in the Congregate solutions accelerator in the following ways:

- Identify key industry opportunities for proof of concept implementation and facilitate one-on-one meetings with industry
- Identify relevant scaling opportunities for Congregate Accelerator Solutions and arrange for virtual meetings with industry and cohort members

ATIA will support PNWER in the Congregate solutions accelerator in the following ways:

- Support Alaska activities and curriculum related to the accelerator
- Identify experts and partner organizations in Alaska to inform the accelerator
- Host virtual meetings with Alaska organizations for the project

WTIA will support the Congregate solutions accelerator in the following ways:

- Support in-program activities and curriculum
- Support Program Manager in sourcing candidate companies
- Support by recruiting from WTIA’s network of subject matter experts and mentors to support companies in and of the following: marketing, incorporation, IP planning, insurance, hiring, etc.
- Support for investor connections to accepted cohort companies
- Membership in WTIA’s startup support program

Level of Engagement

Entire Scope of work to be completed between June 1, 2021 and October 1, 2022 and not to exceed \$270,000.

Scope of Work

PNWER is seeking a contractor to provide design, administration, and management of the Solutions Accelerator Curriculum and Cohorts One and Two. This will include identification of industry partners, development of industry challenge sponsors, assisting the PNWER Program Manager in recruitment of industry mentors for the Accelerator Program, and development of Accelerator curriculum, coordination of mentors, and overall management of Cohorts One and Two.

Awarded contractor will be responsible for developing and managing the following tasks. *Congregate* will follow the structure outlined in the figure above. Successful applicant will work with Project Manager at PNWER and will be responsible to deliver the following activities:

| Cohort | Phase | Activity |
|--------|-------|--|
| 1 | 1.1 | <p>Industry coordination and challenge identification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Coordinate TPATH industry working sessions with industry and technology advisors · Engage the investment community and industry partners to secure participation in pilots <p>Deliverables: Cohort 1 Develop Industry Challenge Narrative, and develop Pilot/Proof-of-Concept Plan; develop and manage a system for tracking match contributions to the program</p> |

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| 1.2 | <p>Capability identification and company recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Identify candidate members, issue challenges, and socialize candidates with advisors · Evaluate candidates to determine viability of solutions and acceleration needs · Ensure diversity, particularly looking for SBA-designated minority applicant · Evaluate and Recommend software to Program Manager to procure technology scouting and Accelerator communications and management <p>Deliverables: Selection of 8-12 companies for Cohort 1; competitive analysis related to companies selected</p> |
| 1.3 | <p>Acceleration -- instruction and piloting - Develop core Curriculum based on Cohort Companies and Industry Challenges identified in 1.1, recruit speakers, mentors, and manage online course schedule.</p> <p>Develop Core programming customized based on the companies selected and where they most need assistance in collaboration with our diverse partners and government supporters. Contractor will work with Project Manager and provide service to ensure that programming includes:</p> <p>Public Health Risk Management: Instruction from government health managers on assessing risk</p> <p>Business Sector Deep Dives: Sessions on key business factors in TPATH sectors</p> <p>Acquisition 101: Instruction on selling to critical travel infrastructure players like ports and venues</p> <p>Business Model Canvas: Facilitate sessions to help innovators develop scalable business plan</p> <p>Fundraising 101: Develop sessions on engaging with angels, VCs, and sources of undiluted investment.</p> <p>Operations: Workshops on topics like managing intellectual property, risk, accounting, etc.</p> <p>Regulations Management: Sessions with regulators on potential impediments to scaling solutions</p> <p>Deliverables: Implementation of Cohort 1 curriculum; Cohort progress report highlighting metrics on progress of each company</p> |

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| | 1.4 | <p>Spin-out and scale - Contractor will plan and execute the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Host a virtual demo day and establish an alumni program (continued support for graduates) · Provide and manage support to companies through cloud credits, continued mentorship, opportunity identification, pitch opportunities, and investor recommendations from Congregate sponsors. <p>Deliverables: After-Action Review for Cohort 1, Preliminary Economic Impact Report, Summary of match contributions to Cohort 1 including mentor, partner time</p> |
| 2 | 2.1 | <p>Industry coordination and challenge identification - Benchmark: Contractor will provide Advisory Committee with report and recommendations for Cohort 2</p> <p>This phase will be like phase 1.1, only with the after-action review from Cohort 1</p> <p>Deliverables: Develop Cohort 2 Challenge Narrative; Develop Pilot/Proof-of-Concept plan; Contractor provides recommendations to PNWER and Advisory Committee</p> |
| | 2.2 | <p>Capability identification and company recruitment</p> <p>Engage partners to find companies, issue challenges, and socialize candidates with advisors</p> <p>Deliverables: Selection of 8-12 companies for Cohort 2; competitive analysis related to companies selected</p> |
| | 2.3 | <p>Acceleration -- instruction and piloting - Develop core Curriculum based on Cohort Companies and Industry Challenges identified in 1.1, recruit speakers, mentors, and manage online course schedule.</p> <p>Core programming similar to Phase 1.3, updated as needed based on needs of selected companies and new Industry Challenges for Cohort 2.</p> <p>Deliverables: Cohort 1 and 2 progress report highlighting metrics on progress of each company</p> |
| | 2.4 | <p>Spin-out and scale: Contractor to plan report based on Cohort 1 and 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Host a virtual demo day and establish an alumni program (continued support for graduates) · Provide and manage support to companies through cloud credits, continued mentorship, opportunity identification, pitch opportunities, and investor recommendations from Congregate sponsors. <p>Final report to include metrics</p> <p>Deliverables: After-Action Review for Cohort 1 and 2, Preliminary Economic Impact Report, Summary of match contributions to Cohort 1 including mentor, partner time</p> |

Applicants to describe their methodology to accomplish the above tasks and activities within the timeline below:

Timeline

| TASKS | START | END |
|--|---------|----------|
| Phase 1.1: Program development-contracting, and identification of key industry challenge topics, scout for innovative technologies | 6/1/21 | 7/30/21 |
| COHORT 1 | 7/1/21 | 12/31/21 |
| Phase 1.2: Program implementation – Venture capital and stakeholder engagement, scouting and selection of startups | 7/1/21 | 8/31/21 |
| Phase 1.3: PNWER Annual Summit Virtual Briefing to regional policy makers | 8/15/21 | 8/18/21 |
| Phase 1.4: Accelerator programming, mentor workshops and matching industry experts with technology expertise, pitching solutions | 9/1/21 | 11/30/21 |
| Phase 1.5: Accelerator programming, mentor workshops and matching industry experts with technology expertise, pitching solutions | 10/1/21 | 10/31/21 |
| Phase 1.6: Programmatic updates and retooling based on stakeholder feedback | 10/1/21 | 12/31/21 |
| Phase 1.7: Continued support to participating companies - cloud credits, continued mentorship, opportunity identification, pitch opportunities and investor recommendations. Track pilots implemented | 1/1/22 | 9/30/22 |
| COHORT 2 | 1/1/22 | 9/30/22 |
| Phase 2.1: Based on after-action review from cohort 1- identification of cohort 2 challenges, scouting for startups | 1/1/22 | 3/30/22 |
| Phase 2.2: Venture capital and stakeholder engagement, company selection | 4/1/21 | 4/30/22 |

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| Phase 2.3: Accelerator programming, PNWER Annual Summit Briefing to regional policy makers | 5/1/22 | 7/31/22 |
| Phase 2.4: Sustainability Plan implementation; analysis of success, economic impacts of cohorts, impact report | 8/1/22 | 9/30/22 |
| Phase 2.5: Continued support to participating companies - cloud credits, continued mentorship, opportunity identification, pitch opportunities and investor recommendations. Evaluation and final tracking of non-federal match. | 9/1/22 | 9/30/22 |

Submission Materials

Please submit your responses typed, using standard fonts no smaller than 12 point, with 1-inch margins.

Introductory letter of intent (one page)

Proposal Narrative (10 pages max)

Detailed description of how you plan to deliver the activities, benchmarks, and deliverables described in the RFP. Include some background of your organization’s experience in this capacity, and/or your experience with incubators or accelerator programs. Please include your familiarity and any experience with Microsoft for Startups or Amazon Activate program in the past, as the Congregate Solutions Accelerator will be working with both these programs.

- a. Describe how your organization has worked with technology companies to accelerate and scale solutions, and your plan to engage industry stakeholders, both as challenge sponsors, and as mentors.
- b. Explain how you plan to communicate with mentors, industry challenge sponsors, tech talent, and health officials in the course of delivering the curriculum.
- c. Describe how you will meet the deliverables in each section above, 1.1 - 2.4. How will you deliver content, both virtually and in person? What methodology will you use to provide a platform for collaboration among the various stakeholders to make this project successful?
- d. How do you propose to attract or reach out to VC’s and investors to play a role in the Accelerator?
- e. How will you work with PNWER to build the Industry Council and promote Cohort solutions to a broader audience?

- f. Explain how you will coordinate and engage with ATIA, WTIA, and FBC partners during the project with the goal of enhancing the curriculum, developing industry challenges, and scaling cohort solutions during the course of the project.
- g. PNWER's application emphasized the need to recruit minority and women owned businesses for the program. Describe your strategy for engaging minority and women owned businesses.
- h. The success of this program will be measured by several criteria which the successful applicant will be asked to track and include in the final report. Please describe how you plan to track these. Criteria include, but are not limited to;
 - i. Dollar revenue generated by successful cohort companies
 - ii. Dollar revenue invested in cohort members
 - iii. Number of projects or technologies accelerated

Budget and Budget Narrative (3 pages)

Basic budget narrative identifying personnel, any subscriptions, tools, platforms you are proposing to utilize to accomplish the tasks outlined in your proposal. Include project rates sheet for budget, identifying members of project team hourly rates, including fringe benefits and indirect/overhead or provide rates in the narrative. Include travel, equipment, software, telecommunications, and any other costs required to deliver the project.

References (1 page)

Please provide at least three references from past projects.

Resumes of personnel working on the project (no page limit)

Resumes of each member of the project team outlining experience on similar projects (no page limit)

Deadline

Submissions will be accepted until **June 4, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time**. Proposals will only be accepted by email. Late submissions will not be accepted. Please send proposals by email to steve.myers@pnwer.org

Questions should be submitted by May 21, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time by email to Steve Myers at PNWER: steve.myers@pnwer.org All interested applicants may obtain a copy of the questions and responses by submitting a written request by email.

PNWER reserves the right to extend the RFP deadline if determined to be in the best interest of the project.

Proposal Evaluation and Scoring

A. Each proposal has a total possible score of 140 points with the points assigned as follows:

| Proposal Evaluation Criteria | Points |
|--|------------|
| Overall ability of applicant and described methodology to deliver on key elements of the Congregate Solutions Accelerator, the RFP activities, benchmarks, and deliverables | 40 |
| Innovative approach of the applicant to address the challenges of developing this Accelerator in the COVID and post COVID environment, with a plan to develop collaborative mechanisms for communication among all partners, cohort participants, mentors, and sponsors. | 30 |
| Applicant's team experience in working with incubators, accelerators, and the start-up ecosystem, including VC's, investor community, and industry partners | 20 |
| Demonstration of clear methodology to achieve the purpose of the RFP activities according to the project timeline within cost. | 10 |
| Total | 100 |
| Oral Interview Criteria (Following proposal evaluation, oral interviews may be held for finalists) | |
| Ability to begin according to our timeline, and has current capacity to deliver all aspects of the program. | 20 |
| Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the region's economy, and has existing relationships with key industry partners, mentors, sponsors, and manage these relationships along with tech talent, the regional start up | 20 |

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| ecosystem, and has a plan to engage health professionals, regulators, and policymakers in the Solutions Accelerator. | |
| Total Evaluation (Written and Oral) | 140 |

PNWER is an equal opportunity employer and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any classification protected by federal, state, or local law.