

# MBTA INNOVATION PROPOSAL POLICY FAQs

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1. What is an Innovation Proposal?

- a. An Innovation Proposal is a written offer that is submitted to the MBTA on the initiative of the submitter for the purpose of developing a relationship, contract or partnership which is not in response to a currently open solicitation issued by the MBTA. A list of currently open solicitations issued by the MBTA can be found here:

[www.mbta.com/business\\_center/](http://www.mbta.com/business_center/).

2. Who should submit an Innovation Proposal?

- a. The MBTA welcomes proposals from any vendor with the technical and financial resources to provide the services proposed or the ability to contract with the MBTA and/or serve as a partner in a contract resulting from the adoption of the proposal. The MBTA encourages and welcomes innovative submissions from private sector businesses (including startups and small businesses), labor unions, municipalities, academic institutions, philanthropic foundations and non-profit organizations.

The MBTA encourages vendors who operate in a priority area of interest for the MBTA to submit proposals (see below for details on priority areas in “What makes for a successful Innovation Proposal?”), but will also entertain proposals in other areas.

Vendors should consider submitting an Innovation Proposal if they believe they have a unique capability to provide the specific property or services proposed and/or if they have a unique idea that they would like to put forth to the MBTA.

3. What is the advantage of submitting an Innovation Proposal?

- a. Innovation Proposals introduce the MBTA to unique opportunities not currently under consideration. Thus, the advantage of submitting an Innovation Proposal is to get the MBTA to consider at this time opportunities that the proposer can provide. However, submission of an Innovation Proposal does not guarantee a relationship with the MBTA, even if the idea is accepted or of interest to the MBTA.

4. How is this different from the traditional procurement process?

- a. An Innovation Proposal may represent a new service or improvement to an existing service or process that is not being actively solicited by the

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MBTA. Any solicitation relating to an existing MBTA request should be submitted through existing MBTA-led procurement processes. A list of currently open solicitations issued by the MBTA can be found here: [www.mbta.com/business\\_center/](http://www.mbta.com/business_center/).

5. If the MBTA is interested in the idea, will I be rewarded a contract without needing to submit a bid?
  - a. No, the MBTA maintains its commitment to fair and open competition in all procurements. In order to qualify for sole-source procurement (without a competitive bidding process) the vendor will have to prove that they are the only entity capable of providing a particular good or service. Otherwise, the MBTA will facilitate a competitive bidding process to ensure a fair playing field for vendors and the best value for the taxpayer.

That said, a successful Innovation Proposal will create an opportunity that would not otherwise exist. Therefore, as the originator of the idea, you will have a fair competitive advantage.

6. Why should I put effort into a proposal when it may result in a competitive bidding process?
  - a. By submitting an Innovation Proposal, you have the opportunity to help inform the future strategy of the MBTA and to create opportunities that would otherwise not exist. The Innovation Proposal Policy offers a unique opportunity to educate the MBTA about unique opportunities that would otherwise never be considered through regular business.
7. What makes for a successful Innovation Proposal?
  - a. Successful proposals clearly articulate the proposed benefit to the MBTA in its priority areas. The MBTA's priorities for Innovation Proposals are to identify the following:
    - i. Cost-saving measures that impact the operating budget
    - ii. Acceleration of capital projects
    - iii. Improvement of existing customer service and experiences
    - iv. Introduction of new services that improve the customer experience

An Innovation Proposal is not:

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- v. An offer or alternative to a currently open RFP or IFB by the MBTA or proposal for property or services that the MBTA is currently procuring through competitive methods
  - vi. A policy or operating procedure recommendation
8. What are the possible results of submitting an Innovation Proposal? What is the timeframe for this process?
- a. Submission of an Innovation Proposal does not guarantee a relationship with the MBTA, even if the idea is accepted or of interest to the MBTA. Submitted ideas are subject to public disclosure, and accepted ideas are subject to competitive bid. There are three possible results from submission of a Conceptual Proposal:

RESULT	DESCRIPTION
Rejection	Proposals which would not provide substantial value for the required resources.
Request for Detailed Proposal	Proposals which are not currently part of MBTA operations or services, are not in consideration for a possible RFP, are within a new market and are not traditional goods or services for which there is an active market. Scope, outcomes, budget and/or process are unclear, but there is potential value which should be further investigated.
Move to RFP	Proposals which may replace, supplement or otherwise change an existing MBTA operation or service, or provide a new service which the MBTA is not actively considering but for which there is an active, competitive market. The scope of the proposal is clear, and the outcomes are evident and align with the MBTA's priorities (above).

The MBTA will make its best effort to complete a review of the Conceptual Proposal and provide a decision within 60 days of acknowledgment. If the proposal proceeds to a Detailed Proposal or RFP, the timeline thereafter will be determined on a case by case basis.

9. Will I be notified if the MBTA decides not to consider my proposal?
- a. Yes. The MBTA will follow up on the result of all proposals, including the decision to terminate the review process or move forward with a

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subsequent phase of the process. The MBTA will provide a general explanation for its decision.

10. Can I withdraw my proposal?

- a. Yes, you can discontinue review at any time by notifying the MBTA proposal administrator at [Innovation@mbta.com](mailto:Innovation@mbta.com).