



Public Participation Request: Innovation Cluster Accelerator Program

1. Announcement

The Office of Economic Development & Competitiveness (OEDC) of the Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) is requesting information from Washington State organizations interested in participating in a program to strengthen industry ecosystems and accelerate economic development in key industries.

2. Program Specifics (Background)

The Innovation Cluster Accelerator Program (ICAP) is a long-term economic development program designed to help Washington industries better compete for the future. We will develop, support and scale a pilot cohort of innovation clusters beginning in 2021 and expand the program over the coming decade.

Innovation clusters are member-based organizations where industry leaders come together with academic and government partners, entrepreneurs and investors to speed up the pace of innovation, solve common industry challenges, attract capital and increase market access.

There are approximately 7,000 innovation clusters worldwide, including Washington's own Maritime Blue (www.maritimeblue.org), Canada's Digital Supercluster (www.digitalsupercluster.ca), and the Queensland Robotics Cluster in Australia (www.qldrobo.org). Around the world, clusters are used to grow existing industries, transform legacy industries and build entirely new industries.

Following a highly competitive application process in the fall of 2021, Commerce selected 6 organizations to lead innovation clusters across key industries, including hydrogen energy, clean technology in the built environment, carbon reduction with an initial focus on advanced nuclear reactors, 5g and edge computing, advanced technologies with an initial focus on quantum computing and blockchain, and aerospace manufacturing.

In early December, Commerce will release a second request for proposals (RFP) to select three additional clusters to increase ICAP's geographical and industry representation. These organizations will receive resources and support to develop and mature innovation clusters, including:

- Funding of up to \$500,000 to support cluster operation and development
- Participation in the Cluster Strategy and Leadership Development Program
- Networking with statewide and global cluster leaders

For more information, visit www.icapwashington.org.

3. Public Engagement Goals

We are looking to learn more about industry ecosystems throughout Washington. In addition, we want

to give interested organizations with an opportunity to learn more about innovation clusters and help them assess their fit for the program and prepare to respond to the upcoming RFP.

4. How to Participate

We welcome both established networks, alliances and associations, as well as new, emerging and potential clusters to participate in the public participation process. Leaders from industry ecosystems in Central and Eastern Washington, the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas, and Southwest Washington are also highly encouraged to participate.

Interested organizations are invited to:

- **Attend the Public Engagement Workshop** on 11/30/2021 from 10:00-11:30 am PST. Workshop will include an overview of innovation clusters, details about ICAP, and time for questions. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/icap-public-engagement-workshop-tickets-214413485507>. Workshop will be recorded and posted to www.icapwashington.org.
- **Schedule a working session.** Receive guidance on early development of your cluster initiative (cluster strategy, governance model, preparing for the RFP, etc.) and help preparing to respond to the RFP. These sessions are available through December 9, 2021. Book your 1:1 working session via email to liliane.eriksen@commerce.wa.gov. We encourage you to invite key partners to the session.

Questions concerning this opportunity may be directed to:

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Participation in Public Engagement is completely voluntary and will not result in any preference or selection for any State or Federally funded contract or grant through Washington State Department of Commerce.

5. Summary

OEDC appreciates your thoughts and participation as we work together to increase our positive economic impact within Washington communities.