



**Greater Bangor, Maine**  
**ECOSYSTEM BUILDER**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**  
*Response Due Date: August 16, 2020<sup>1</sup>*

## **Background:**

Upstart Maine, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit formed in October of 2016 for the purposes of outreach, fundraising, and promoting public awareness on behalf of entrepreneurial support organizations and programs in the greater Bangor, Maine, region. The volunteer-based Board of Directors is comprised of area professionals representing various sectors of business, education, law, and entrepreneurial support organizations. Through the support of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Maine Community Foundation (MCF), UpStart is seeking proposals for a contracted ecosystem builder to help the organization achieve the outcome of connecting to community resources.

## **Ecosystem Builder Definition:**

An entrepreneurial ecosystem builder is someone who works to build, grow, support, and nurture the whole network of people, programs, and resources in the community by connecting the dots between people in an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## **Scope of Work:**

The following activities are the focus of the ecosystem builder contract position.

- *Connect to human resources:* **Work with established businesses and institutions to share their expertise with startups** in the marketing, planning, accounting, hiring, and other decision-making matters needed to grow the startup from the idea and prototyping stage to commercial viability and investor-worthiness. Have at least **40+ one-on-one meetings with business and community leaders and seasoned entrepreneurs.**
- *Connect to market resources:* Foster and build relationships with existing companies and institutions as potential early customers. This will enable entrepreneurs to access industry leads so that the entrepreneurs can be more confident that they understand market needs.
- **Set up and support and/or deliver presentations to 10+ groups to recruit founders and C-suite members** to support coalition members' programs
- **Through the coalition members' programs, match 20+ mentors and advisors to startups** based on need, stage of growth, and availability; conduct orientation sessions and prepare written guidelines and understandings for what the startup and the mentor should expect from each other
- *Connect to financial resources:* Connect with investors quarterly and engage in **One-on-one meetings to introduce or update angel and venture capital investors in Maine and New England** on the existing and projected growth of the Bangor Region's startup economy. Highlight the incubation and acceleration programs that are helping startups move up the growth curves to the level of interest to investors. This will particularly aid the region's accelerators –

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<sup>1</sup> If you plan to respond, but cannot do so by August 16<sup>th</sup>, please let us know

Scratchpad and Bangor Region Top Gun – in connecting the startups in their programs with potential investors.

- **Connecting entrepreneur to entrepreneur:** Coordinate the **Fall 2020 daylong Blitz Bangor conference** with opportunities for startup founders to connect informally with each other as well as a variety of entities with potential community resources.
- **Connect inbound entrepreneurial interest with UpStart Maine coalition programs as needed.**

## **Milestones:**

- End of Sept 2020 – Assist in the running of Blitz on September 24, 2020
- End of Oct 2020 – Initial contacts with at least ten businesses/institutions and at least 1 investor group (e.g. Maine Angels, Maine Venture Fund) completed
- End of Jan 2021 – Engage three or four of the region’s major health care, higher education, research labs, media and financial institutions and gain their commitments to have assigned “champions” in their organizations to help us build a pool of high-level talent to connect to startups and coalition member programs and facilities.
- End of Feb 2021 – Identify at least five target funding opportunities to continue (ideally expand) support for ecosystem building by UpStart Maine
- End of June 2021 – Grow engaged businesses/institutions to eight to ten.
- First quarter of 2021 – Have meetings with targeted group of larger corporate and non-profit entities throughout state to cultivate willing partners in their industries to create first-customer opportunities

## **Desired Qualifications of the Individual or Team:**

- Demonstrated experience building networks to support an issue, cause or entrepreneurial venture
- Strong written and oral communicator, including public speaking
- Ability to work independently as well as with a team
- Good organizational skills
- Willingness to travel and utilize technology to conduct remote meetings
- Interest/ability to work with start-ups, requiring multiple roles and flexibility to adjust to needs of the region
- Ability to effectively engage with private and non-profit executives and high-net-worth individuals
- Three years of experience working in or with innovation driven startups
- Preferred prior experience building entrepreneurial ecosystems

## **Cost Estimate/Quote:** *(maximum budget of \$54,000 for services and \$3,500 for travel)*

- Please note whether your proposal is based on hourly rates or a fixed/flat rate for the scope of work and milestones
- Feel free to add options of different levels of service/outputs for the scope of work with a quoted cost for each level

## **Proposal Details:**

All proposals (maximum five pages) should include:

- A description of how the activities for each bullet point in the scope of work will be carried out
- If a firm or team application, please describe the roles for each member of the team
- A description of the qualifications of the team/individual
- Rates and/or total cost to deliver the scope of work
- Names and contact information for two professional references

Submit all questions and proposals to:

UpStart Maine

[innovation@upstartmaine.org](mailto:innovation@upstartmaine.org)

207-891-9195

NOTE: all submittals will be acknowledged via return email; if you do not receive a confirmation within 36 hours, please call Jason Harkins at (207) 891-9195.