

Request for Proposals (RFP)
Strategic Planning Facilitation
Updated on

Issued by: Boston Private Industry Council

RFP release date: January 30, 2026

Questions on RFP due date: February 20, 2026

Proposal due date: **Extended to March 4, 2026**

Interviews: March 9-13, 2026

Anticipated project start date: March 30, 2026

Organization background

The Boston Private Industry Council is a public-private partnership that connects Boston's youth and adults with education, job opportunities, and career pathways. For over 45 years, the PIC has partnered with schools, business, government, and community partners to align education and workforce systems. The PIC's work is grounded in the belief that meaningful employment changes lives, lifts people out of poverty, and strengthens the local economy.

The PIC serves as the MassHire Boston Workforce Board, appointed by Mayor Wu, and oversees the city's career center operations and job training resources funded under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The PIC collaborates closely with the state's Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the city's Worker Empowerment Cabinet to implement workforce development priorities and sector strategies in Boston.

As a nonprofit school-to-career intermediary, the PIC partners with Boston Public Schools, the Mayor's Office, and employers to provide career readiness and career exploration activities, paid jobs and internships, and pathways into early careers. Over the past 15 years, the PIC has expanded its work to include high school dropout reengagement and reenrollment services, postsecondary transition coaching, and education and job training navigation supports for young adults (18-24 years old) without a college degree. The PIC deploys a diverse front-line staff to work directly with its priority populations in order to create a tight loop between policy and practice, continuously informed by data analysis, research, and collective impact strategies.

The PIC is led by a 12-member Board of Directors. The PIC's Board of Directors joins with representatives across business, labor, education and community-based organization to serve on the MassHire Boston Workforce Board (29 members). The PIC's staffing headcount in FY26 is 59.

Purpose of this RFP

On January 5, 2026, Michael O'Neill became the new Executive Director of the PIC, succeeding Neil Sullivan, who served in this role for the past 33 years. Michael brings deep private sector experience to this role and knowledge of the PIC's impact having served as Chair of the PIC's Youth Council and a

member of the Boston School Committee. The PIC Board of Directors approved O’Neill as the organization’s next executive director following a recommendation by a search and selection committee comprised of PIC Board members and city officials, supported by the executive search firm of Isaacson, Miller. While developing the executive director [job posting](#) with the hiring committee and search firm, the PIC’s Board and senior leadership identified the need to create a strategic plan to address an evolving policy and funding landscape and to chart the course for the organization over the next 3-5 years. With its new Executive Director in place, the PIC seeks an experienced firm and/or independent consultant to facilitate a strategic planning process to guide the organization’s activities and impact over the next 3-5 years. We invite proposals from practitioners with experience facilitating strategic planning discussions with board leadership, staff, and key stakeholders, and in using a data and equity-informed approach to identifying strategic objectives.

Planning goals and key questions

The PIC has identified the following goals for this project and questions to address.

Goals and desired outcomes

- Confirm/ refine the organization’s mission, vision, and theory of change.
- Conduct a landscape analysis to understand where the PIC is positioned in the education and workforce development ecosystems.
- Identify/ update strategic priorities for the next 3-5 years.
- Align governance, staffing, fundraising, and operating model to support strategies.
- Create a practical implementation and action plan with clear measures, milestones and accountability.

Questions to address in this strategic planning process

- What education and workforce development challenges is the PIC uniquely positioned to address?
- Where can the PIC have the greatest impact in the next 3–5 years?
- How can we enhance board membership and engagement to help move the organization forward?
- How should we grow and diversify revenue to sustain the work? What opportunities should be considered?
- How can we strengthen the connections between practice areas in the PIC so that they are part of a more unified organization-wide strategy?
- Which practice areas should be expanded, improved, or potentially “sunset” to better align with strategy? In terms of expansion, the PIC is currently exploring offering career exploration in the middle grades and envisions incorporating the findings from that specific analysis into this organization-wide strategic plan.
- How PIC resources—staff, financial, and operational—can be aligned with strategic priorities and organizational values, including equity and sustainable impact?

Proposed Scope of work

The PIC seeks a collaborative consultant/firm to facilitate a comprehensive strategic planning process that will include the following.

- Project design and launch plan
 - Refine scope and timeline
 - Identify and confirm stakeholder engagement plans and timeline. The PIC will play an active role with the selected consultant(s) in outreach to stakeholders and scheduling meetings.
- Discovery and assessment
 - Review the PIC’s current mission, vision, theory of action, strategic priorities, budget, organizational structure, annual reports and board memos, as well as key program data and funding.
 - Conduct stakeholder engagement through focus groups, surveys, and brief interviews with PIC Board, PIC staff, partners and funders.
 - Conduct environmental scan and needs assessment. This scan can build off of work that was completed for the Executive Director job search and recently completed by senior team members in preparation for a more comprehensive planning process.
- Strategy development and implementation plan: Facilitate work groups/ sessions with PIC senior team and stakeholders to articulate:
 - Mission, vision, and theory of action
 - Strategic priorities and goal statements
 - Revenue and resource strategies
 - An implementation plan with clear objectives, timeline, owners, and measures to evaluate progress

Timeline and Budget

The strategic planning process is expected to take 5-6 months, with an anticipated start date in late March/ early April. The budget available for facilitation, research, and development of strategic planning and implementation materials and tools is \$65,000-70,000.

Proposal Requirements and Submission Instructions

Proposals should include:

- **Approach to the Planning Goals and Key Questions:** Description of how the consultant would support the PIC in addressing the goals and key questions outlined above.
- **Methodology and Work Plan:** Overview of the approach to strategic planning—initial steps, collaborative processes, stakeholder engagement, facilitation methods, and expected deliverables (strategic plan, implementation action plan, communication materials, etc.). We are interested in the proposed process for the strategic plan and also how you would develop an implementation plan with the senior team. If there is a phased approach to this work, please describe the timeline for each.
- **Relevant Experience:** Examples of similar strategic planning work with nonprofit, public, workforce, or education organizations.
- **Budget:** Detailed budget including tasks, hours per task for each deliverable, hourly rate/fees and any additional costs.

- **Consultant Qualifications:** Resumes of principal consultant(s) and 2–3 client references for comparable projects. Please also include an example of a strategic plan from a previous engagement and the process/timeline that was used.

Please send the proposal (narrative and budget) and relevant attachments (resume, bios, work samples) to Joseph McLaughlin, Director of Research & Strategy to joseph.mclaughlin@bostonpic.org by February 27, 2026 for consideration. Please email any questions on this RFP to Joseph. We will respond to questions on an ongoing basis. The deadline for submitting questions is February 20, 2026.

Evaluation Criteria

The PIC will assess proposals for the clarity of the responses to the questions above and the methodology and work plan. We also will factor in relevant experience, demonstrated examples of similar work, and budget clarity and value given the proposed deliverables. Finalists will be invited to participate in an interview with the selection team and those not selected to move on will be informed by email.