



IW+MC

BOOST

FAQs

PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

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ABOUT INNOVATION WORKS

Innovation Works is a Baltimore-based social enterprise teaching and accompanying members of disinvested communities how to build and own successful social enterprises with the goal of reducing Baltimore's neighborhood, racial, and wealth divide. Social enterprise creation leads to sustainable neighborhood economies and results in better family living, more resilient neighborhoods, and a safer, more vibrant city.

ABOUT MILLER CENTER

Founded in 1997, Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship is one of three Centers of Distinction at Santa Clara University in California. Miller Center accelerates global, innovation-based entrepreneurship in service to humanity.

ABOUT IW+MC BOOST

The Boost program is a joint entrepreneurial development workshop between Innovation Works and Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship. The program packs core business lessons into a powerful four-day workshop to help local, established nonprofit, for-profit and hybrid social enterprise leaders learn business fundamentals, improve their strategic thinking, and articulate a business plan that demonstrates impact, growth, and long-term financial sustainability. By the end of the workshop, participating enterprises will have the strategies and materials to grow their enterprise in a financially sustainable manner and apply for the funding and capacity building programs they need to reach the next level of growth.

WHO ARE THE IDEAL IW+MC BOOST PARTICIPANTS?

Boost participants are leaders and decision-makers from 20-30 social enterprises who are familiar with and able to direct their organization's business strategy. IW looks specifically for organizations that are based in Baltimore City and have a social mission as a foundational component of their business.

WHAT WILL BE COVERED DURING IW+MC BOOST?

Participants will engage in hands-on training focused on critical learning outcomes necessary to optimize social impact while becoming more financially sustainable. Seasoned social enterprise development leaders from Miller Center and Innovation Works will lead training sessions. Executive-level and Founder-level mentors will also be present to support participants throughout the four days.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants will have the opportunity to present their work from the four days to the cohort. Participants will:

- Have completed actionable templates, including tables, worksheets, and a slide deck that can be used internally for organizational planning or externally for proposals and communications.
- Have completed an executive summary/"elevator pitch" illustrating their organization's business and growth strategy for use beyond the workshop.
- Establish action plans that will guide follow-on support for subsequent months.

KEY BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATING IN IW+MC BOOST

- **PROVEN PROGRAM:** Miller Center's structured, validated curriculum has helped over 1300 social enterprises attain operational excellence and prepare for investment.
- **IW MENTOR NETWORK:** Participants will be accompanied by Baltimore mentors with expertise in innovation and entrepreneurship; mentors will serve as trusted advisors.
- **RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:** Not only will participants work directly with Baltimore-based mentors, but you will work alongside other leaders working towards the ultimate goal of a thriving Baltimore.
- **NO CHARGE:** All Innovation Works programs are offered free of charge to selected organizations.
- **FOLLOW-ON SUPPORT:** IW provides many opportunities to continue a working partnership in collaboration with many of IW's stakeholders who share a common mission and values.

HOW ARE MENTORS INVOLVED IN IW+MCBOOST?

Two to three IW Boost participants are paired with one executive mentor for the duration of the program. Assigned mentors will support participants in completing each module, helping them to apply critical lessons to each of their organizations' business plans and work through actionable next steps post-Boost.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Must be an already established organization with ongoing operations.
- Must be mission-driven and focused on serving Baltimore's most vulnerable populations.
- Must be seeking opportunities aimed at strengthening its social impact, strategic growth, and or long term financial sustainability.
- Must be able to allow its leader (CEO, Executive Director, etc.) to attend the entire workshop. An optional second representative from the organization should be a senior leader or board member of the organization.
- Must be willing to report impact and progress over time to the broader IW network.
- Can be a nonprofit, traditional business (i.e., LLC), B-Corps, or hybrid enterprise.
- Can be a fiscally-sponsored organization or part of a larger organizational structure.
- Can be support service providers, product designers, makers, faith-based organizations, community-based, etc.

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM TIMELINE?

- Application opens → Tuesday, August 18, 2026
- Application deadline → Friday, September 18, 2026
- Fall Boost 2026 Program → Monday, October 26 through Friday, October 30, 2026

HOW ARE PARTICIPANTS SELECTED?

Boost participants are selected by a committee of IW stakeholders, which include community leaders, social sector leaders, and other institutional partners. Participants will be assessed in two rounds, with different stakeholders at each round.

IS IW+MC BOOST FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC NEIGHBORHOODS?

No, not at this stage. Ignite, IW's 1st stage, powers our Neighborhood Strategy. However, eligible organizations are expected to impact the well-being of vulnerable neighborhoods in their given locality.

POST-BOOST SUPPORT

After IW+MC Boost, participants will have the opportunity to continue a strategic relationship with Innovation Works and Miller Center over a six-month period when leaders will:

- Refine and work towards the top line goals of the agreed-upon action plans.
- Be assigned a mentor who will provide weekly support. Mentors will have the opportunity to tap into the broader Innovation Works and Miller Center support systems, and access subject-matter mentors and curriculum, as needed, to address specific challenges.
- Work with IW staff to develop specific learning tracks designed to strengthen competencies in specific growth areas in alignment with the leader and organizational action plans. IW will provide access to Master Class course materials on particular topics. Leaders and assigned mentors will work together weekly to complete courses and applied-learning throughout the six months.
- Upon successful completion of goals associated with action plans over the six months, the IW team will work with leaders and assigned mentors to establish new milestones, including operational, strategic, and investment-related milestones.

WILL PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS BE COMPENSATED FOR THE FOUR DAYS?

No, however, IW does not want financial resources to be a barrier. We are happy to discuss any specific cases; this will not impact the selection process.

WILL ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE FUNDING IF SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE?

No, not as a result of attending the IW Boost. However, IW's goal is to support organizations after the program to prepare them to deepen impact, grow, and scale. During the six-month post-Boost period, IW will support organizations on a case-by-case basis to remove barriers that will impact the successful implementation of its action plan. After the six months, IW will continue working with partner organizations to prepare for investment opportunities through IW and its investment partners.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM NOT READY FOR BOOST?

If you feel you meet most but not all of the Boost requirements, we still encourage you to fill out the application. We can offer additional support resources outside of structured programming to help your enterprise reach a point that it would benefit from Boost.

QUESTIONS?

ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS CAN BE DIRECTED TO [KELSEY@IWBMORE.ORG](mailto:kelsey@iwbmore.org)