Missouri Technology Corporation

MTC

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Fiscal Year 2026

Catalyzing Innovation

Strategies for Supporting Entrepreneurs and Fostering Innovation in Missouri

MISSOURI TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION

Core Values

Integrity

Honesty and candor are the foundation on which MTC builds long-term, trusting relationships with stakeholders.

Transparency

MTC is committed to openness in its operations and active communication with stakeholders.

Accountability

MTC recognizes that it holds a position of public trust and is the steward of public funds. MTC makes informed decisions, takes responsibility for its actions, and tracks the outcomes of its investments.

Independence

The governance, policies, programs, and funding decisions of MTC are nonpartisan and merit-based.

Collaboration

Meaningful partnerships can produce game-changing results for Missouri. MTC is committed to actively collaborating with strategic partners.

Mission

Our mission is to provide leadership and make strategic investments that help entrepreneurs create and grow technology-based Missouri businesses.

Vision

Our vision is to transform Missouri through the power of entrepreneurship by serving as a catalyst for technology-based innovation to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Executive Summary

Missouri Technology Corporation (MTC) is a public-private partnership created by the Missouri General Assembly to catalyze innovation and entrepreneurship within the State of Missouri by fostering the growth of Missouri-based high-tech companies. Through direct appropriations from the state budget and access to federally funded programs, MTC receives public funding to fulfill its mission of making strategic investments that help create and grow Missouri-based technology-based businesses. MTC advances its mission through two primary activities. First, it supports entrepreneurial ecosystem development by providing competitive-based grant funding to organizations that expand entrepreneurial capacity across the state. Second, it manages the state-sponsored venture capital program, the IDEA Fund, which makes direct equity investments in high-growth startups developing innovative science and proprietary technology.

Building on increased programmatic activity over the past several years, MTC continued in FY25 to advance Missouri's innovation economy. Over the past three fiscal years, MTC has awarded over $67 million in public funding (an average of over $22.5 million per fiscal year) and has distributed nearly $40 million in public funding (an average of almost $13 million per fiscal year) through our various programs. This represents a significant increase in programmatic activity compared to FY21 and FY22.

Developed in alignment with the recommendations in the Catalyzing Innovation report, MTC's competitive-based grant programs provide financial support to entrepreneur support organizations to expand the entrepreneurial capacity in the state. Since FY23, MTC has awarded more than $14 million in competitive grants. In FY25, it awarded nearly $5 million in competitive-based grant funding, including the launch of a new Investor Education Grant Program and the award of an additional Regional Node grant, which extended regional node coverage to 86 counties, nearly 75% of the state.

Through its state-sponsored venture capital program (IDEA Fund), MTC has leveraged public funding to support technology-driven entrepreneurship and accelerate private investment in Missouri-based startups. Since FY23, the IDEA Fund has awarded $29 million in investment awards to 96 high-growth potential companies, leveraging public funds (both state and federal), helping to catalyze technology-based economic development and strengthen the state's entrepreneurial ecosystem. In FY25 alone, the program awarded over $13 million in investments to 44 early-stage companies, closing nearly $5.5 million into 13 companies.

The absence of a state appropriation in FY26 presents a major challenge. To sustain operations, MTC will rely on unobligated state funds, reserve funds, and access to the federal SSBCI 2.0 Capital Program funding to continue its programmatic activities. As a result, for FY26, several state-funded programmatic activities will be suspended, including the Physical Infrastructure and Regional Node Grant Programs and the Proof of Concept IDEA Fund program. Despite these challenges, MTC remains steadfast in promoting technology-based economic development by acting as a catalyst for innovation and high-growth potential entrepreneurship in Missouri.

Guiding Framework

The Missouri Technology Corporation (MTC) released a report titled “Catalyzing Innovation: Strategies for Missouri to Drive Innovation and Entrepreneurship” in February 2022. The report developed by TEConomy Partners, LLC (TEConomy) was informed by a robust, six-month planning process with guidance from a 16-member statewide steering committee and engagement from over 500 individuals across the state through a digital survey and virtual regional and statewide engagement meetings. Based on a data-driven analysis of the insights collected, TEConomy identified five bold and compelling strategies. They recommended a total of 16 action items*, categorized under five strategic approaches, to catalyze the state's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems to drive economic development over the next decade.

Additionally, TEConomy's analysis revealed that MTC has been an essential asset in driving economic development through entrepreneurship over the last decade. The organization's success resulted from strategic planning and execution surrounding the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation within the state's agrotechnology and biosciences industries and emerging high-growth technology markets. For Missouri to continue to maximize the economic development gains from the state's entrepreneurs, MTC proposes to lead the state in determining how to promote entrepreneurship and support the advancement of innovation and technology to continue to drive economic growth through the next decade.

This Implementation Plan outlines how MTC will execute the strategies suggested by TEConomy. It considers available resources, capabilities, and alignment with the organization's mission. MTC will lead some actions and provide support to others. The plan will be publicly released and updated annually for transparency and accountability.

**While there are a total of 16 action items recommended by TEConomy, it should be noted that not all of these actions will be led by MTC or prioritized for FY26.*

Strategy 1: Fund

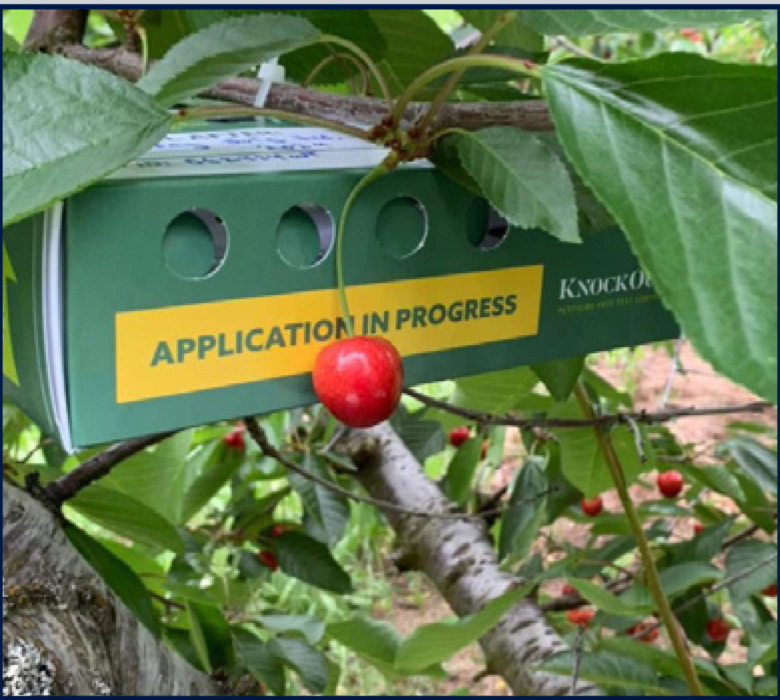
STRATEGY 1: FUND

Deploy greater investment capital to help meet the demands of the growing entrepreneurial base.

Overview

While recognizing that the amount of risk capital dollars invested in Missouri has grown, it is also important to note that the number of deals has declined. This suggests a shift toward larger, later-stage investments and away from early-stage deals, making it difficult for many entrepreneurs across Missouri to access risk capital. Outreach across Missouri's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem revealed a range of challenges.

Photo Source: Agragene



FY25 HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESS

Driving Progress & Delivering Results

To facilitate the distribution of risk capital across the state, MTC plans to leverage the federal State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) program. Originally established in 2010 as a recovery program during the previous recession, the initiative allocated around $27 million to Missouri in 2011, with $24 million specifically designated for MTC's state-sponsored venture capital program. Under the American Rescue Plan Act, the Biden administration has authorized $10 billion for the program's reauthorization (SSBCI 2.0). Missouri's SSBCI 2.0 allocation was approximately $95 million and is expected to be deployed over eight to ten years starting in FY23. This funding can only be utilized for five specific program types, including state-sponsored venture capital programs. This program is the sole federal relief program authorized to support venture capital activities.

On behalf of the State of Missouri, MTC worked with the Department of Economic Development (DED) to develop a proposal for the deployment of the state's $95 million allocation from the federally funded SSBCI 2.0 program. Treasury has approved two programs to distribute the federal funding - MTC's state-sponsored venture capital program (IDEA Fund Co-Investment Program) and the IgniteMO Loan Participation program, operated by Justine PETERSEN.

Between FY23–FY25, MTC awarded $28 million in SSBCI-funded equity-based investment awards to 80 Missouri-based high-growth potential early-stage companies. This includes $12.275 million in SSBCI-funded equity-based investment awards to 26 Missouri-based companies in FY25. From the awards, MTC has closed nearly $9.5 million in investments to 28 early-stage companies, including nearly $5.5 million in investments to 13 companies in FY25. Additionally, the IgniteMO loan participation program operated by Justine PETERSEN participated in $4.72 million of loans to nearly 100 businesses.

In FY25, MTC launched the Proof of Concept pilot program under the IDEA Fund, offering $50,000 equity-based investments to the state's most promising high-growth potential companies seeking capital to validate their concept, develop or launch a minimum viable product (MVP). MTC awarded $875,000 in state-funded equity-based investments to 18 Missouri-based high growth potential companies. Unfortunately, due to a loss of funding from the state for FY26, the Proof of Concept program has been suspended.

Additionally, MTC continued to provide feedback and support for the Angel Tax Credit bills that were passed by committees in both chambers during the 2025 legislative session.

Strategy 1: Fund

ACTION	FY26 DELIVERABLES

1. Catalyze additional investment capital funds across the capital stack.	• MTC will continue to manage the federally funded State Small Business Credit Initiative Program on behalf of the State of Missouri.
	  • MTC anticipates awarding \$8–10 million worth of equity-based investments to approximately 30 Missouri-based high-growth potential early-stage companies.
	  • Justine PETERSEN will continue to manage the \$15 million SSBCI-funded IgniteMO loan participation program, providing traditional growth capital to businesses owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals (SEDI-owned businesses).

2. Incentivize angel investments.	• MTC will continue the Investor Education Grant Program following its launch as pilot grant program in FY25. The grant program seeks to foster early-stage investment through investor education initiatives throughout the state. More specifically, it is intended to increase the number of active early-stage investors in Missouri by providing grant-based financial support to facilitate angel investor-specific education and training programs.
3. Evaluate the creation of Missouri Rural Vitality Funds to provide collateral for entrepreneurial loans.	• MTC has engaged several external consultants to assist in the evaluation of the feasibility of a Missouri Rural Vitality fund as described in the Catalyzing Innovation Report. Unfortunately, the consultants were unable to identify similar active programs to serve as a model and identified several significant challenges with the foundational elements of the proposed fund. MTC will provide access to the completed feasibility studies if any organization is interested in launching a similar program and will continue to assess opportunities to provide access to capital for the state's rural entrepreneurs in alignment with the organization's mission, instead of dedicating additional resources to this specific recommendation.

Strategic and Operational Initiatives

Strategy 2: Grow & Scale

STRATEGY 2: GROW & SCALE

Increase access to quality entrepreneurial support services throughout Missouri to ensure companies are able to grow and scale.

Overview

Over the past decade, Missouri has experienced a significant startup formation rate of traded-sector firms. Although Missouri has made many strides in recent years to support these new establishments, there are many concerns that the entrepreneurial support assets and resources are not always equally available. Those Missourians living in rural areas and those considered underserved entrepreneurs, including women, veterans, immigrants, rural entrepreneurs, and LGBQTIA+ individuals, face challenges in accessing essential ecosystem services.

Photo Source: 39 North AgTech Innovation District

FY25 HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESS

Driving Progress & Delivering Results

In FY25, MTC continued to strengthen the state's entrepreneurial ecosystem through its three core grant programs – MOBEC, Physical Infrastructure, and Regional Node – while also piloting new initiatives to address additional ecosystem needs. Building on the momentum from prior years, MTC launched the Investor Education Grant Program to increase the number of active early-stage investors in Missouri by providing financial support for angel investor education and training programs. In addition, MTC awarded a contract to Capital Innovators through the new Investor Readiness Program, to fund the Venture Ready Missouri (VRM). VRM is a free statewide investor readiness program that provides training, mentorship, and resources to help early-stage entrepreneurs become 'investor-ready'.

After the release of the Catalyzing Innovation Report in 2022, the total amount of competitive-based grant funding awarded by MTC grew significantly from a cumulative total of approximately $4 million for FY21–FY22 to more than $17 million awarded across FY23–FY25 which includes nearly $5 million in FY25. The significant growth in funding awarded was enabled by the launch of several new grant programs that align with the recommendations within the Catalyzing Innovation Report. To help build the state's entrepreneurial capacity, MTC has awarded over $7 million since FY23 to 20 nonprofit entrepreneurial support organizations through the MOBEC Grant Program, enabling them to deliver programs and services that directly support Missouri's entrepreneurs.

Launched as a pilot in FY23, the Physical Infrastructure Grant Program has provided nearly $4.8 million to 13 entrepreneurial hubs across the state, giving entrepreneurs access to co-working spaces, meeting rooms, and other critical infrastructure that foster collaboration, innovation, and business growth. Similarly, the Regional Node Grant Program, launched in FY24 as a planning initiative, has awarded nearly $1.7 million in total funding to seven regional nodes that include nearly 75% of Missouri's counties. Most recently, the Investor Education Grant Program, launched in FY25, has provided over half a million dollars to support new angel investor education programs across the state.

Strategy 2: Grow & Scale

ACTION	FY26 DELIVERABLES
4. Develop a statewide Entrepreneurial Pathways Program.	• MTC will continue to review the current landscape of commercially available platforms that align with the goals of an Entrepreneurial Pathways Program. This assessment will help ensure future efforts are not duplicative of the recently launched Show-Me Network, funded through the federal SSBCI Technical Assistance Grant Program.
5. Foster regional efforts to provide quality entrepreneurial support services to high-potential, high-growth, traded-sector startups.	Competitive Grant Programs • MTC will continue to offer its MOBEC Grant Program to help build entrepreneurial capacity across Missouri. • Additionally, MTC will continue the Investor Education Grant Program, supporting angel investor-specific education and training programs to increase the number of active early-stage investors in the state. • The Physical Infrastructure and Regional Node Grant Programs have been suspended for FY26 due to the loss of state funding. Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) Program • MTC will evaluate the practicality of implementing Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) Programs on a statewide or regional level. • In FY26 or beyond, based on the feasibility assessment, an EIR Program will be designed and piloted.
6. Connect Missouri's corporate partners and anchor institutions with startups, thereby creating a "stickiness" to Missouri for the entrepreneurial endeavor's ultimate success.	• MTC will identify best practices by studying similar programs. • In FY26 or beyond, after conducting a feasibility assessment, MTC will initiate a pilot program.

Strategy 3: Launch & Cultivate

STRATEGY 3: LAUNCH & CULTIVATE

Take advantage of Missouri's research strengths by converting the intellectual assets into market opportunities.

Overview

Developing a vibrant environment that encourages basic and applied research at colleges, universities, and within industry is essential if Missouri is to catalyze further innovation-led economic growth. It is also critical that Missouri can transfer the intellectual property developed at its colleges and universities into new products, services, and businesses, and ultimately, into new jobs and investments. There is untapped innovation and entrepreneurial potential within Missouri's research institutions.

FY25 HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESS

Driving Progress & Delivering Results

The Research Alliance of Missouri (RAM) Committee was established in 2003 with the aim of fostering collaboration between businesses and universities in Missouri. Its primary goals were to coordinate research efforts and enhance technology accessibility for local businesses. After a period of inactivity, the Committee was briefly reconvened in 2017. Throughout its history, the RAM Committee has been led by the Executive Director of the MTC.

In July of 2022, MTC organized a meeting with the Vice-Chancellors for Research (or equivalent) from Washington University, University of Missouri - Columbia, Saint Louis University, University of Missouri - Kansas City, University of Missouri - St. Louis, and Missouri State University. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the revival of the RAM Committee. As a result, it was determined that the RAM Committee will meet twice a year with the mission of providing the leadership and strategic vision required to develop and support efforts to effectively convert the intellectual assets of Missouri's research institutions into market opportunities.

Over the past three years, MTC has worked to bring the group together around a shared mission or vision that would enable it to address the gaps identified by TEConomy in the Catalyzing Innovation Report that if resolved could unlock the untapped innovation and entrepreneurial potential within Missouri's research institutions allowing innovation to prosper and drive economic development.

Unfortunately, due to recent shifts in the academic research landscape, it has been challenging to achieve consensus or alignment among committee members regarding how the group can best advance the commercialization of the assets of the state's research universities. Subsequently, for FY26, MTC is suspending all activities related to leading the RAM Committee.

ACTION	FY26 DELIVERABLES
7. Reenergize the Research Alliance of Missouri (RAM) as a mechanism for bringing together the major research institutions of the state to solve common innovation continuum challenges.	• MTC is suspending all activities related to leading the RAM Committee. If the academic research landscape stabilizes, MTC may consider resuming activities with the RAM Committee in FY27 or FY28.
8. Leverage the federal I-Corps program and provide startup services statewide to encourage commercialization activity.	• MTC will conduct further research on the existing I-Corps Programs in Missouri, as well as other statewide I-Corps programs, in order to identify best practices for possible implementation.

Strategy 4: Inspire

STRATEGY 4: INSPIRE

Encourage more Missourians to participate in innovation and entrepreneurship.

FY25 HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESS

Driving Progress & Delivering Results

The efforts made in FY24 laid the groundwork for greater visibility and engagement improving MTC's image and storytelling in FY25. MTC continued its Impact-Based Storytelling Project and gathered video content, both of which will be used to support future storytelling efforts in FY25. The organization also continued quarterly newsletters, including a dedicated newsletter highlighting MTC funding opportunities. Looking ahead, FY26 will explore new external visual communications such as website redesign and rebranding.

Overview

Few things are as vital to the long-term prosperity of Missouri's entrepreneurial ecosystem as having access to the talent needed to grow and scale high-potential, high-growth firms. Interviews with key stakeholders suggest that not enough Missourians participate in innovative and entrepreneurial endeavors, either because they have never been connected to these firms and are unaware that they exist, or because they believe they are not a fit for an entrepreneurial opportunity. Developing these connections will be critical in the state's efforts to support the formation and growth of entrepreneurial firms.

ACTION	FY26 DELIVERABLES
10. Improve access to entrepreneurial programming for students in middle/high school and at community colleges and universities.	• MTC will conduct research on potential partner organizations and evaluate the possibility of providing funding for mentorship opportunities. These opportunities aim to connect students with accomplished entrepreneurs, enhancing their learning experience.
11. Fund an internship program that connects startups to talent.	• MTC will conduct research on the best practices and compile an inventory of existing internship programs that specifically emphasize entrepreneurship in the state of Missouri.
13. Enhance Missouri's storytelling capacity to encourage more Missourians to be entrepreneurial.	• MTC will utilize digital platforms and social media to increase and enhance storytelling capabilities statewide. • MTC will research new branding and communication initiatives, including redesigning the website to serve as a centralized online platform showcasing entrepreneurial resources and functioning as a hub for entrepreneurs. • MTC will finalize an impact-based storytelling project that will capture the stories of how MTC has catalyzed and supported entrepreneurship throughout Missouri for more than a decade. • MTC will leverage its digital storytelling project to showcase state-sponsored venture capital's role in the growth of Missouri's biotech and agtech sectors, using produced media to highlight MTC's impact on innovation and entrepreneurship.

Strategic and Operational Initiatives

Strategy 5: Connect

Overview

Connectivity is missing between the various components of Missouri's innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem, literally (e.g., broadband) and figuratively (e.g., perceived competition and siloed efforts). Over the last ten years, while Missouri has made significant strides in entrepreneurship/innovation, there is still a sense that the state is not reaching its full potential due to a range of disconnects and other environmental factors that impede further growth.

STRATEGY 5: CONNECT

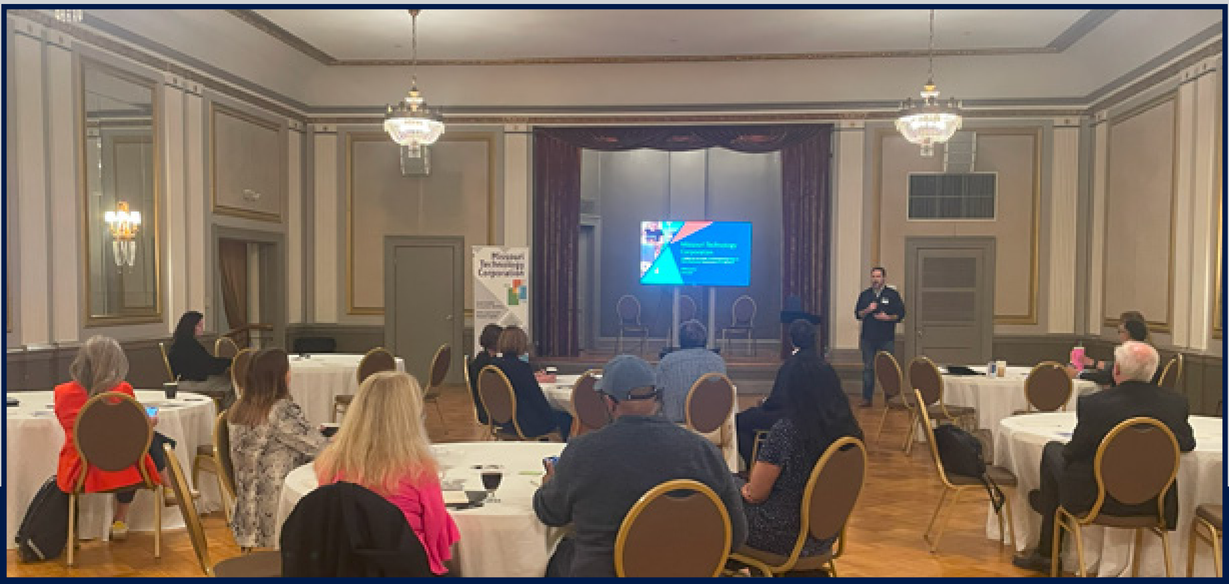
Overcome physical and cultural barriers to better connect Missouri's communities with each other and with the world.

FY25 HIGHLIGHTING SUCCESS

Driving Progress & Delivering Results

In FY25, MTC strengthened connections among ecosystem partners by hosting its inaugural Grants Day in Columbia, MO. This event brought together entrepreneurial support organizations, nonprofits, and higher education institutions from across the state to network, share best practices, and explore strategies to advance innovation and support entrepreneurs.

ACTION	FY26 DELIVERABLES
14. Realize One Missouri: Improve connectivity within and between regions.	• MTC will expand Grants Day to create more opportunities for participant connectivity and explore establishing peer groups for ongoing support beyond the event



MTC Photo:
Grants Day 2025

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