For Discussion Purposes Only

WORKER EMPOWERMENT

EDA AI Upskill Accelerator Pilot

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Overview of the EDA AI Upskill Accelerator Pilot Program
3. Eligibility and the Sectoral Partnership Model
4. What the Grant Funds and Does Not Fund
5. Why Healthcare: Demonstrating Special Need
6. Boston's Proposed Approach
7. The RFGA: What We Are Requesting and How to Respond
8. Key Dates and Next Steps
9. Questions and Discussion

What is the EDA AI Upskill Accelerator Pilot?

$25M competitive grant pilot from EDA's Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

GOAL Support employer-led regional workforce training systems that equip workers with practical, job-ready AI skills for immediate application in industries adopting AI.

Key parameters

4–8 awards expected $1M–$8M each	**Project duration** 24–36 months
Training start within 1 year of award	**Cost-share** 40% non-federal (60% max federal)
Application due July 10, 2026, 4:59 PM ET	**Awards anticipated** Fall 2026

Eligibility

Eligible applicants: cities, states, counties, nonprofits, higher ed, economic development orgs, public-private partnerships.

For-profits cannot be applicants or subrecipients — but can be employer partners, contribute match, and benefit.

Grounded in America's AI Action Plan, *which calls for new approaches to workforce challenges created by AI — including rapid retraining and addressing shifting skill requirements.*

"The bottleneck to harnessing AI's full potential is not the availability of models, tools, or applications. Rather, it is the limited and slow adoption of AI, particularly within large, established organizations. ***Many of America's most critical sectors, such as healthcare, are especially slow to adopt*** *— due to distrust or lack of understanding of the technology, a complex regulatory landscape, a lack of clear governance and risk standards, and a workforce not yet equipped to shape the AI transformation."* — AI Addendum, p. 42

What EDA is asking us to build

> ***"Propose a sectoral partnership between entities eligible for funding under the AI Addendum and employers that will design and provide training to incumbent workers and new hires in industry-aligned AI skills."*** — EDA AI Upskill Technical Assistance Webinar, May 19, 2026

A sectoral partnership is:

A partnership of employers from the same industry who join with strategic partners — training providers, workforce boards, community organizations, government — to design and deliver training for jobs the employers need filled and intend to fill through the partnership.

The partnership leads a training pipeline that:

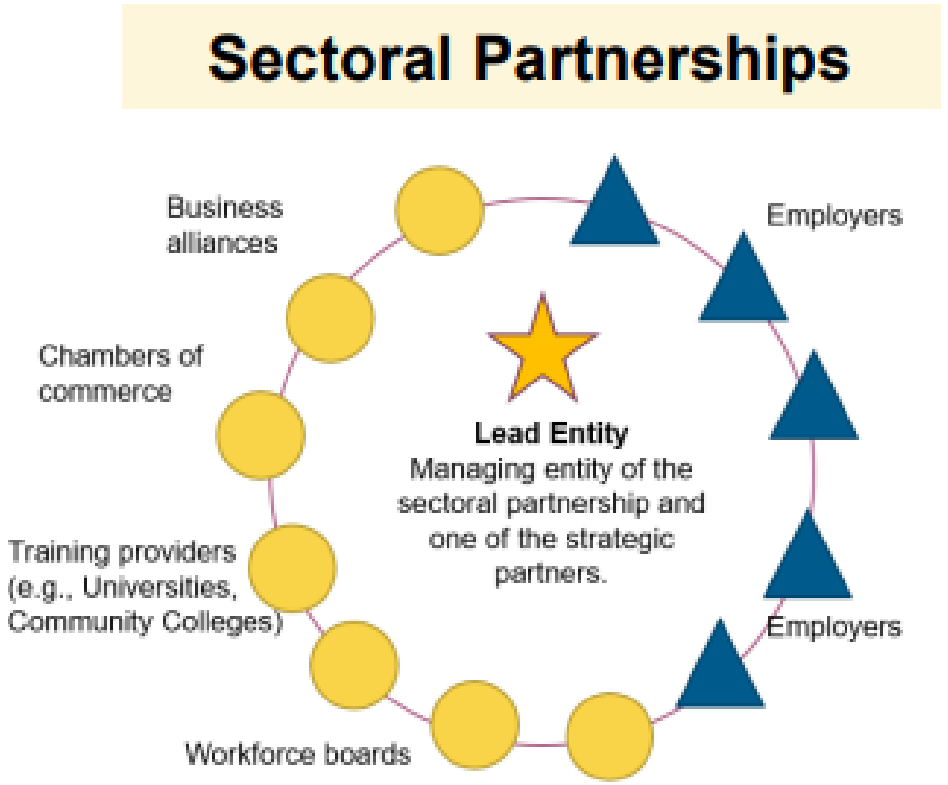
Identifies the AI skills healthcare employers need now and over the next 36 months

Designs & delivers training for AI-augmented roles — through existing, customized, or new programs built with employers

Recruits & supports incumbent workers and new hires, including those underemployed, unemployed, or at risk of layoff

Places trained workers into hiring commitments from employer partners

Measures worker outcomes (completion, placement, wages) and employer outcomes (productivity, AI adoption)



Overview of the Grant — What it Funds

Phase I — Optional

up to $500K Systems Development

Phase II — Optional

up to $2M Program Design

Phase III — Required

up to ~$8M Program Implementation

Systems Development

- Convene the sectoral partnership
- Hire staff, contractors, or subawards for Lead Entity functions
- Identify worker skills needed to use employer-supported AI tools
- Structured conversations with employers, training providers, CBOs, workforce boards, and state/local WDBs to plan strategy

Program Design

Design employer-driven skills training and make investments to enable implementation.

- Training models and curricula aligned to employer-validated competencies and industry-recognized credentials
- Accessible information for job seekers on in-demand occupations, training, and supports
- Processes to translate employer-validated skill needs into training models, including complementary skills for AI adoption
- Measurement and tracking infrastructure for participants, completers, placements, and business outcomes
- Flexible hiring (skills-based) and educational practices (credit for prior learning) that reduce barriers for applicants without four-year degrees

Program Implementation

Deliver employer-driven skills training — specific to region, industry, and worker role.

Implement industry-aligned AI training that places workers into high-paying jobs

Recruit and train unemployed, underemployed, or at-risk workers for high-paying skilled jobs

Provide participant supports such as technology, paid training time, and materials

Conduct worker outreach and recruitment

Use skills-based assessments and federal tools to track training outcomes and effectiveness

Working with employers to adopt high-wage, high-skill workforce strategie

What it Will Fund and Not Fund

What this grant funds:

- The award can fund occupational training programs as long as the programs prepare workers for roles that employer partners have identified as AI-augmented.
- Per EDA, a participant is anyone "enrolled in a training program that is fully or partly funded by the AI Upskill project," benefiting through "tuition or reduced or no training program costs."
- Curriculum development or adaptation by training providers, including embedding AI and digital skills into existing occupational training
- Development of new training pathways and credentials, including Registered Apprenticeships in AI-augmented healthcare roles
- Equipment, supplies, and infrastructure necessary to deliver training
- Securing and offering participant supports that enable workers to participate in the sectoral partnership's developed skills training programs. Examples include costs that are necessary for participation in the program, such as transportation, financial coaching, childcare, and career navigation and coaching.

The training must prepare workers for AI-augmented roles in healthcare, but the AI competencies can be integrated throughout an occupational program rather than taught as a standalone AI-only course.

What the grant won't fund:

- Cash payments or stipends directly to participants
- Subsidies or payments to employers
- Construction or capital improvements
- Cloud service credits distributed to companies
- General advertising or promotional materials beyond participant recruitment

Healthcare & Special Need

To be eligible for this grant, applicants must demonstrate Special Need.

- Is the focus industry and its associated employers a significant part of the region or project service area?
- Is AI currently being used by the relevant industry and the employers associated with the project?
- Is AI currently in use by employers in the relevant industry is important to the future competitiveness of the industry and the economy in the region?
- Is there an existing need for training in AI with the employer partners in this project that is necessary to preserve and/or enhance their competitiveness and benefit to the region?

Why Healthcare

To be eligible for this grant, applicants must demonstrate Special Need. Healthcare in Greater Boston meets every criterion.

1. Significant part of the regional economy

22.6%

of City of Boston jobs

17.2% of regional employment (more than 1 in 5 Boston jobs), projected to grow faster than total employment across the region.

Source: Forthcoming Healthcare Labor Market Analysis, 2026

2. AI is already in use across the industry

+282%

YoY growth in AI postings

Top sector for AI and digital literacy skill demand in BA-and-below roles — 45,000 job postings in the last year.

Source: Lightcast, 2025

3. Central to the industry's competitiveness

#2

nationally in AI healthcare postings

Massachusetts ranks #2 nationally in relative share of AI job postings in healthcare

85%+ of MA AI jobs are in Greater Boston, and a single health system drives 32% of AI postings — leaving CHCs, public-sector employers, and smaller hospitals without the infrastructure to participate.

Source: MHTC & BCG, 2025 (p. 9)

4. Employers need training

~55%

of top-role skills face disruption

MA produces the most AI graduates per capita but retains only ~40% (vs. ~80% in peer states). The MA AI Task Force calls for apprenticeships, work-based learning, and micro-credentialing.

Source: MHTC & BCG, 2025; MA AI Strategic Task Force, 2024

Healthcare occupations with high digital skill demand in Greater Boston

These 30 occupations had the highest digital skill demand in Boston healthcare job postings over the past year. Because AI capabilities are increasingly embedded in digital tools, these roles are the most likely to be reshaped by AI adoption — and the strongest candidates for AI upskilling.

This is a starting point, not a limit. EDA does not restrict the grant to specific occupations. This list reflects what our labor market research surfaced; employer partners will identify additional or different roles through the RFGA.

Clinical roles

- Registered Nurses
- Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses
- Nursing Assistants
- Medical Assistants
- Home Health & Personal Care Aides
- Phlebotomists
- Pharmacy Technicians
- Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder & Mental Health Counselors
- Dietitians & Nutritionists

Diagnostic & technical

- Health Technologists & Technicians, All Other
- Radiologic Technologists & Technicians
- Clinical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians
- MRI Technologists
- Cardiovascular Technologists & Technicians
- Diagnostic Medical Sonographers

Administrative & operations

- Medical & Health Services Managers
- General & Operations Managers
- First-Line Supervisors of Office & Admin Support
- Medical Secretaries & Admin Assistants
- Secretaries & Admin Assistants (non-medical)
- Receptionists & Information Clerks
- Customer Service Representatives
- Medical Records Specialists
- Production, Planning & Expediting Clerks

IT & data

- Data Scientists
- Software Developers
- Computer Systems Analysts
- Computer Occupations, All Other

Artificial Intelligence" (AI) is defined as a machine-based system that can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments. AI systems use machine and human-based inputs to:
a) Perceive real and virtual environments;
b) Abstract such perceptions into models through analysis in an automated manner; and
c) Use model inference to formulate options for information or action

Note: The Lightcast (2026) analysis conducted by the Worker Empowerment Cabinet focused on occupations requiring a BA or less. BA-level occupations were included because many AI- and tech-related roles formally require a BA but are often accessible through skill-based pathways.

What success looks like

Per EDA, outcomes fall into two buckets

1. Worker outcomes

Participants enrolled and completing training; total new hires or incumbent workers trained.

2. Employer-level benefits

Cost savings, productivity gains, revenue growth, and other business outcomes from AI adoption.

What we will track and report

- **Worker outcomes**
  - Individuals enrolled in training
  - Individuals who complete training
  - Participants placed and/or retained in employment
- **By occupation**
  - Participants by occupation type
  - Average wages and benefits per occupation in the region
- **Employer-level benefits**
  - Anticipated employer benefits from incorporating AI into business processes and training workers
  - Business outcomes from AI adoption and training (e.g., productivity, cost savings)
- **Worker-level benefits** (*Describe how the training will benefit workers –sample indicators*)
  - Workers accomplish tasks more effectively
  - Workers freed up for new tasks
  - Workers master new expertise required for new work

Match strategy - what we have and what we would need

Types of Match

1. Cash → e.g., donations from private foundations
2. Loans
3. Bonds
4. In-kind → e.g.,OWD project management staff time, staff time of partners (e.g., HCC staff, training provider staff, clinical instructors), training providers, or subrecipients, use of facilities (e.g., employer training spaces), development or enhancement of AI-integrated curriculum, equipment or supplies needed for training, employer contributions, project evaluation (encouraged), wraparound supports for program participants

Documentation Requirements

- Letter of Commitment
  - Identify type of cost share (ALL TYPES)
  - Confirm that it will be **unencumbered, unrestricted, and committed** at time of award (ALL TYPES)
  - Signed by authorized representative (ALL TYPES)
  - Valuation for the in-kind contribution (IN-KIND ONLY)
  - Contributions must be directly related to the proposed project (IN-KIND ONLY)
    - Other federal awards can contribute to match **only if authorized by statute, subject to EDA interpretation**

Limitations

- Providers of match are not eligible to serve as contractors under this award.

Request for Grant Applications: Building the Partnership

To shape Boston's application, OWD has issued a Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) to healthcare employers and healthcare training providers across the region.

What we're asking:

The RFGA helps us understand current and anticipated AI adoption across healthcare settings, the workforce and training needs emerging from those changes, and the capacity of training providers to integrate AI competencies into healthcare career pathways.

Who we want to hear from:

- **Healthcare employers** — hospitals, community health centers, EMS providers, public health agencies, ambulatory and post-acute care, and other healthcare organizations across Greater Boston
- **Healthcare training providers** — community colleges, labor management training funds, workforce training organizations, Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, universities, and other education and training partners

Why participate:

The RFGA identifies the partners — both employers and training providers — who will collaborate with OWD on the EDA application. Strong partners are those with demonstrated employer demand, training capacity, existing employer–provider relationships, and the ability to contribute match.

What we're asking employers to share

The basics

- Organization name
- Rough employee count (Greater Boston facilities)
- Primary contact

Where AI shows up

- Where AI is deployed or planned — functions, departments, workflows (a sentence or two)

Readiness & barriers

- Workforce readiness self-assessment on three things: **foundational digital literacy**, **general AI literacy**, **role-specific AI tool use**
- How big a barrier skill readiness is to AI adoption

Worker benefits & willingness

- Expected worker benefits — wage gains, advancement, reduced repetitive burden (check all that apply)
- Willingness to **help develop/adapt training**
- Willingness to **contribute in-kind or cash**
- Willingness to **sign a Letter of Commitment** ("need more info" option available)

Spreadsheet

Tab 1: preliminary occupation list (review)

Tab 2, for each AI-affected role:

- Role + education requirement
- Specific AI tools/workflows needing training
- **incumbent workers needing upskilling (next 36 months) you'd release for training**
- **new hires you might commit to**
- Average salary + any wage progression tied to AI skills
- Current training provider + whether they're meeting the need
- Whether you'd consider sponsoring a Registered Apprenticeship

What we're asking training programs to share

The basics

- Organization name
- Rough employee count (Greater Boston facilities)
- Primary contact

What AI you already teach

- AI/digital skills currently taught in healthcare programs ("none currently" is fine)

Who you serve & partnership

- Who programs serve — incumbent workers, new entrants, career changers
- Wrap-around supports students most need
- Which employers your students place into
- Which employers currently sponsor incumbent workers with you i

Willingness & match

- Participate in the partnership — and in what role
- Contribute in-kind or cash — faculty time, facilities, tuition discounts
- Sign a Letter of Commitment

Spreadsheet

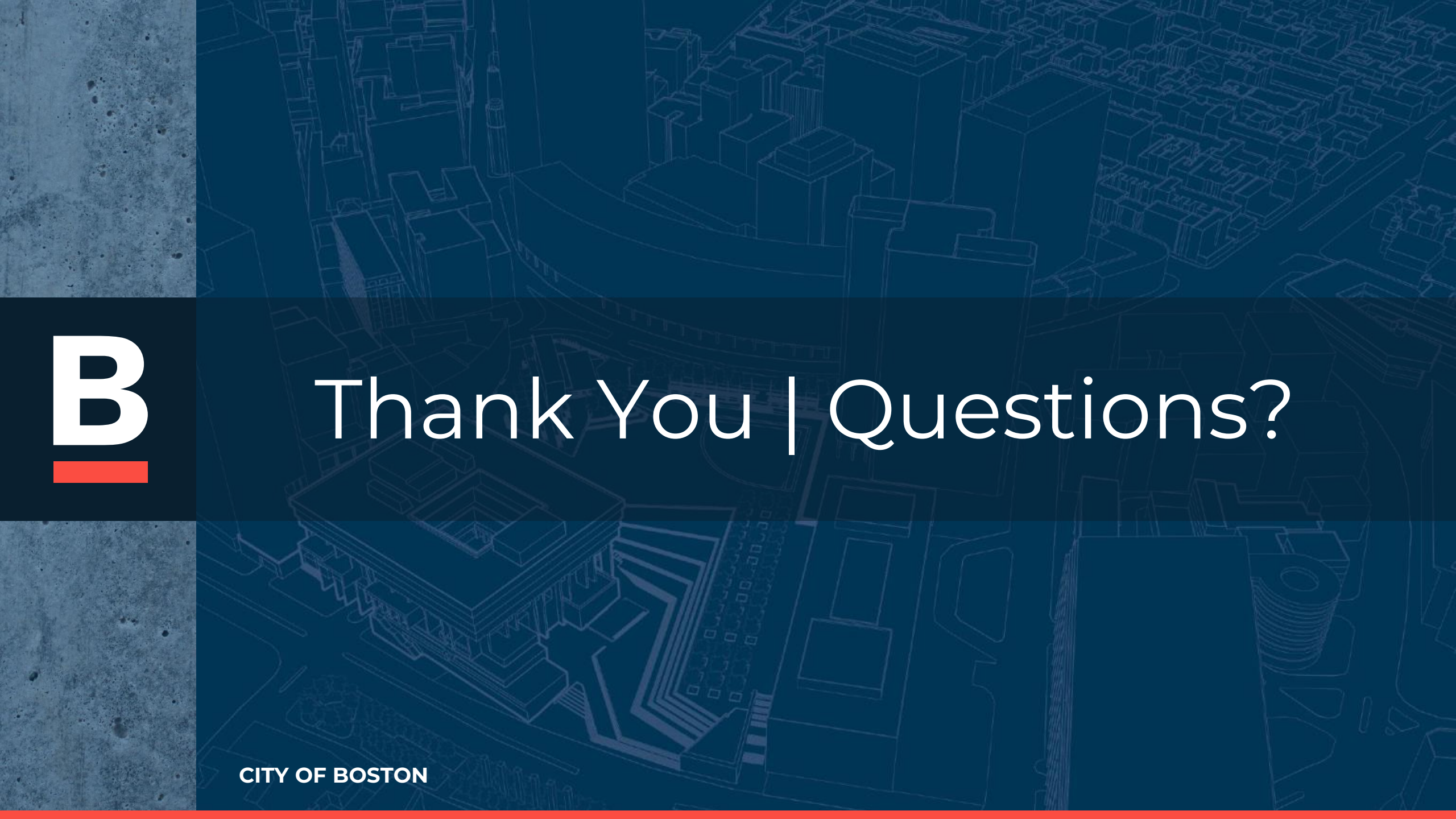
For each program you see as a strong candidate for AI integration, expansion, or new development:

- Program name + role titles it targets
- AI tools workers would use (AI-assisted coding, clinical decision support, ambient documentation)
- AI competencies taught now + what should be added
- Program status: existing / ready to modify / needs substantial redesign / brand new
- Credential awarded — industry-recognized? stackable?
- Tuition cost
- Max annual capacity if fully funded
- Full per-participant cost (fees, materials, supportive services)
- Months from award to first enrolled cohort (assume Oct 1 start)

Key Dates

Key dates:

- RFGA released: May 29, 2026
- Information sessions: June 3 (12:00 PM) and June 5 (3:00 PM)
- Questions due: TODAY, June 5, 2026
- **RFGA responses due: June 8, 2026 by 5:00 PM**
- Partnership development begins: June 16, 2026
- *Contact: sarah.soroui@boston.gov*



Thank You | Questions?

CITY OF BOSTON