



Purchasing Department  
4400 University Drive, MS 3C1, Fairfax, VA 22030  
Phone: 703.993.2580; http://fiscal.gmu.edu/purchasing/

**CONTRACT RENEWAL**  
**(3) of 4**

**DATE:** February 20, 2026  
**CONTRACT TITLE:** Program Design and Event Management Services  
**CONTRACT NO:** GMU-1821-22  
**CONTRACTOR:** Growth Capital Network (GCN)  
**SCOPE OF WORK:** Contractor shall provide program design and event management services in accordance with the terms and conditions of GMU-1821-22.  
**PERIOD OF RENEWAL:** January 5, 2026 to January 4, 2027. There is one (1) one-year renewal remaining.  
**PRICING:** The flat project rate of \$120,000, as outlined in the attached Scope of Work. Expenses are not included in this Contract and shall not be invoiced by the Contractor to George Mason University. Contractor shall invoice in 3 separate payments upon completion of each phase of the project.

All other terms and conditions of GMU-1821-22 shall remain unchanged and in full force and effect.

**AGREED BY:**

**Growth Capital Network**

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*Lauren Bigelow*  
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Signature  
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Lauren Bigelow  
Name  
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CEO, GCN  
Title  
\_\_\_\_\_  
2/23/2026  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_

**George Mason University**

Signed by:  
*Erin Rauch*  
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Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Erin Rauch  
Name  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Strategic Sourcing, Purchasing  
Title  
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2/23/2026  
Date  
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## SCOPE OF WORK

The overarching aim for this project is to provide an effective platform for George Mason University to launch the creation of a public/private innovation community that engages GMU with other educational institutions, municipalities, and policy makers as well as corporations and industry thought leaders. In this project we will bring together a strong pipeline of educational opportunities, engaging discussions, and potential keynotes for its programmatic sections as well as relevant companies, judges, and attendees for its company and student pitch competitions. GCN will work alongside the GMU internal team and assets to coordinate the website, marketing, social media, PR, logistics, development, signage/printing, logistics, and vendors.

In order to achieve this goal, GCN will take responsibility for the project management to:

- Develop an efficient approach for GMU to build and efficiently execute the 2-day event
- Work with the GMU team to determine the calendar milestones and program deliverables
- Create a project plan/calendar with responsibilities, dates, and deliverables
- Select menus, oversee vendors, manage program budget and volunteer + paid staff.
- Work with GMU team to identify and secure speakers consistent with investor interests.
- Ensure that the key messaging highlights key domains consistent with Mason priorities.
- Act as the information nexus for applicants, competitors, vendors, and judges for the competitions
- Meet with Mason team and funders to deliver sponsor packages.
- Coordinate with GMU on all VIP access and needs.

**AGENDA/PROGRAM CREATION** – GCN will set a tentative agenda for onsite portion of event and work with partners to identify and create outreach to potential keynotes and panel sessions. After the initial speaker outreach from the closest contact, GCN will facilitate pre-event communications and coordinate with the event manager who handles onsite travel, registration, and hotel. GCN will coordinate with GMU around thank you gifts.

**STARTUP ENGAGEMENT** – Recruitment/engagement of a diverse set of Mid-Atlantic startups to apply and participate in the company competition. Create the application process with the event manager, market through partners and direct outreach, and work with SBDC on coaching/prepping the companies and engage them onsite at the event.

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT** – Recruitment of a diverse set of students to apply and participate in the Accelerate Student competition. Create the application process, market through direct outreach to a database of schools across the DMV, and work with Mason/key companies on coaching/prepping the students and engaging them onsite at the event.

**INVESTOR ENGAGEMENT** – Recruitment of a diverse set of angel, venture, and PE investors to judge the early phases and attend the Accelerate company competition and event. Market through direct outreach and partner engagement to a personal database of investors contacts from across North America, creating onsite peer to peer networking opportunities, and engaging them onsite at the event.

**PR/MARKETING** – GCN will work with GMU marketing and an external PR team to ensure coordinated outreach to the varied constituents and a consistent flow of information to the relevant audiences. We will work with the team on the different entrepreneur and investor channels as well as journalists that may have interest in the area. GCN will outsource the management of the event website and evaluation/judging software for the student and company competitions.

**SPONSORSHIP** – In partnership with GMU development and the event manager, GCN will coordinate and manage sponsorship opportunities. When sponsorships are confirmed, we will work with the event manager as the conduit to the promotion arm, coordinating with the GMU Foundation team. We will ensure that we have their ads, logos and any other relevant information for their onsite event visibility (booths, exhibits). GCN will then coordinate this with GMU, the onsite event manager (who will take care of registration, ribbons, etc.)

**FACILITY/CATERING** – After the full needs are determined, GCN will work with GMU to negotiate contracts. Should GMU have out of town speakers, GCN will negotiate judge/participant room rates and blocks with a designated hotel. We will also coordinate with the GMU event staff to take care of contracting catering – menus completed, site visits, food tastings.

**VENDORS** – GCN will help to choose vendors, negotiate contracts, and pass to GMU to execute and pay the contracts.

**ATTENDEE MATERIALS** – GCN will work with GMU to produce attendee programs, registration materials, banners, signage and onsite visuals to ensure consistency. Local signage production will be the responsibility of the GMU team. GCN will work with both the marketing team and the event manager to coordinate custom event pieces (checks, awards, and judge/speaker gifts.)

**VOLUNTEERS** – GCN will work with GMU to train volunteers. We will put together the schedule, do a pre-event training call and create volunteer packets.

**Activity timeline – October 2025 – October 2026 Full project completion: November 2026**

### Phase 1 – Prep

- Work with GMU to define parameters and project goals
- Identify critical deliverables and activities
- Finalize the project plan and timeline



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- Create draft agenda
- Help the GMU team to identify non-profit partners and innovation targets
- Work with GMU team to create value prop for corporate partners and sponsors

**Phase 2 – Finalize Agenda/Launch Outreach**

- Finalize event agenda flow – focus on target industries and top thought leaders
  - Work with GMU team to identify local list of targeted panels and speakers
  - Define event venues and complete contracts
- Work with GMU development to overlay sponsor targets with agenda items
- Work with GMU marketing and PR to coordinate budget, outreach and schedule
  - Launch website and other PR assets
- Create sponsor packets and outreach
- Draft text and outreach for speaker, panelist, and keynote invites; coordinate with GMU
- Choose and customize competition judging software

**Phase 3 – Event Outreach/Launch Company Competition**

**May – June 2026**

- Continue sponsor/speaker/partner outreach in coordination with GMU
- Open the company competition
- Initiate recruitment to pipeline of targeted applicants
- Coordinate marketing and PR outreach
- Navigate high potential applicants through the system
- Provide tech assistance and quality assurance for applications
- Work with core GMU team to select and prep judges

**Phase 4 – Event Outreach/Company Selection**

**July – Aug 2026**

- Continue sponsor/speaker/partner outreach in coordination with GMU
- Work with GMU to finalize selection criteria and set up judging panels
- Continue to coordinate with GMU marcomm team, messaging now focused on the chosen companies
- Weekly communication with competitors on the deliverables, dates, presentation reviews
- Schedule local talent (SBDC) and teams with presentation boot camp

**Phase 5 – Launch Student Competition**

- Open the student competition
- Initiate recruitment to pipeline of targeted applicants
- Coordinate outreach to on-campus assets
- Provide tech assistance and quality assurance for applications
- Work with core GMU team to select and prep judges (local angels, sponsors)
- Draft onsite materials, signage

**Phase 6 – Two Days of Onsite Events/Winner Selection**

**October 2026**

- Continue communication and engagement with all presenting companies, judges, and sponsors
- Wrap up all onsite materials; coordinate with GMU on production
- Finalize all divisions of labor between GCN, GMU, event manager, and vendors
- Assist with the training of volunteers

**Phase 7 – Debrief and Reporting**

- Provide attendee data that GMU, partners and sponsors need