



PROGRAM SOLICITATION

An Initiative of the Ohio Department of Higher Education

2017

INTRODUCTION

I-Corps@Ohio is a statewide program developed to assist faculty, staff and students from Ohio universities, colleges and community colleges in validating the market potential of technologies and launching startup companies. I-Corps@Ohio is modeled after the National Science Foundation's (NSF) successful I-Corps (Innovation Corps) program, which has been proven to increase innovation, entrepreneurship, and industry collaboration. The I-Corps@Ohio program incorporates lean launch, customer discovery and business model innovation methodologies to assess technologies and enhance the business acumen and networks of research faculty and students.

The long-term objective is to drive sustainable technology-based, entrepreneurial economic development in Ohio. I-Corps@Ohio is offered on a competitive basis to teams comprised of research faculty or staff members, student(s) and executive mentor(s). Teams develop market-driven value propositions and scalable business models that attract seed, angel and venture funding to support company formation, market entry, and accelerate the growth of income and jobs in Ohio.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The primary goal of the I-Corps@Ohio program are to advance the translation of fundamental research to innovative products and services that drive scalable business models that serve as the basis for startup companies. Furthermore, the program recognizes that these new ventures must be of sufficient merit to attract subsequent third-party funding, to encourage collaboration between academia and industry, and to train students and faculty in the practice of innovation and entrepreneurship. Teams that receive I-Corps@Ohio funding are required to complete an intensive 7-week, hands-on training program. The curriculum is designed to help aspiring entrepreneurial teams understand the market for their technology, develop a compelling commercialization strategy and attain new skills that will be very useful to a long-term career in research and development.

During the 7-week program, I-Corps@Ohio teams will:

- (1) learn key business modeling concepts and how they are relevant to startup efforts, including problem-solution fit, customer/market segments, value propositions, channels, and revenue streams;
- (2) assess their core assumptions by developing and testing hypotheses about each critical aspect of the total commercial opportunity;
- (3) conduct numerous interviews (up to 100) with customers, end-users, purchasers and channel partners to develop a rich understanding about the customer market and the actual needs for the proposed products and services; and

- (4) learn from executive mentors and program instructors with relevant industry, scientific and startup expertise.

Team outcomes will include a clear go/no go decision regarding market viability, a development and transition plan should the decision be to move forward, and a project presentation/demonstration for potential investors, collaborators and industry partners.

A. Requirements

Teams: An I-Corps@Ohio team must be established prior to the deadline to submit full proposals and identified by team member role in the full proposal. An I-Corps@Ohio team consists of at least three participants fulfilling the following three roles.

1. Principal Investigator(s)
2. Entrepreneurial Lead(s)
3. Executive/Entrepreneurial Mentor(s)

The **Principal Investigator(s) (PI)** must be an employee (faculty, staff, or graduate student) at an eligible Ohio university or college with a strong passion to see his/her invention commercialized. The PI is primarily responsible for overall grant management and assisting the Entrepreneurial Lead with completing weekly team assignments. Attendance at all program workshops is required. The PI is expected to spend approximately 8-10 hours a week on I-Corps@Ohio activities. The PI is also required to submit a final project report and complete semi-annual surveys for two years following the completion of the grant program.

The **Entrepreneurial Lead(s) (EL)** is typically a post-doctoral scholar or graduate, undergraduate or community college student with relevant knowledge of the underlying technology and a strong commitment to pursuing the commercial entrepreneurial opportunities. There may be more than one EL on a team and I-Corps@Ohio highly encourages teams to include graduate business students, in addition to graduate STEM students, as ELs. The EL is responsible for leading the due diligence during the customer discovery process and presenting the team's lessons learned each week during the training program. ELs conduct most of the customer interviews and capture the lessons learned in the project management tool. Each EL(s) is expected to commit at least 25 hours a week to complete program assignments. The I-Corps@Ohio program highly encourages teams to select ELs that are potentially capable of commercializing the technology if the team is able to validate the commercial opportunity during the training program.

The **Executive/Entrepreneurial Mentor(s) (EM)** is typically an experienced entrepreneur or industry leader with close proximity to the research institution and experience in new venture startups, new product development and/or commercializing technology out of universities. The EM may be, but is typically not, a member of the research institution. The EM's primary responsibility is to coach, guide and mentor the team through the challenging search for a repeatable and scalable business model on which to launch a startup company around the subject technology. The EM is also expected to share contacts with the team for customer interviews and to participate in interviews as much as possible. Furthermore, the EM is expected to regularly communicate with the I-Corps@Ohio instructional team and program staff regarding the progress of the team. I-Corps@Ohio is especially interested in EMs that are passionate about the technology, have strong interests in participating in commercialization,

and have relevant experience in launching new ventures or similar roles in industry. Due to the level of commitment required of the EM, each mentor can assist only one team per cohort. If the proposing team does not have an EM, the I-Corps@Ohio program staff is pleased to assist with finding a suitable person to serve in that role, including members of the national NSF I-Corps and Ohio I-Corps networks.

Intellectual Property: The technology the team seeks to commercialize is typically based on concepts, patents (issued or filed), copyrights or trade secrets owned and held by the PI or by an Ohio institution of higher education, including universities, colleges and community colleges. PIs are required to discuss the stage of the technology and the commercial readiness of their project with the designated technology transfer representative and I-Corps@Ohio liaison at his/her university or college to determine if the proposed project is appropriate for I-Corps@Ohio funding.

No Previous I-Corps Award: Teams that have already received funding from the I-Corps@Ohio program or NSF's national I-Corps Teams program *are not* eligible for funding from the I-Corps@Ohio program **for the same technology**. Teams that have participated in a comparable regional I-Corps program, any NSF I-Corps Sites program or any other university- or community-based accelerator or similar training program *are* eligible for funding from the I-Corps@Ohio program for the same technology or others.

Attendance and Participation: All Team members must attend the Program Orientation, Program Launch, all WebEx Workshops, and the Program Finale. If you anticipate missing more than one workshop/class, we recommend that you wait to apply to I-Corps@Ohio when you can commit the required time.

Commitment to Course Design and Learning Objectives: Each team must commit to following the course strategy and process. This includes coming to the training sessions fully prepared, having read the new material, watched the training videos, completed the weekly customer interviews, and prepared for the weekly team presentation against the targeted objectives each week. Teams must agree to conduct a standard hypothesis-validation approach to identify and mitigate gaps in their knowledge of the basic business model concepts, including problem-solution fit, value proposition of the proposed product or service, customer segment/customer archetype, demand creation/customer relationships, channel development and revenue model.

B. Program Design and Award Information

The goal of the I-Corps@Ohio training program is for each team to find a repeatable and scalable business model for the commercialization of the proposed technology. Teams will test their core assumptions about the underlying business model and the importance of solving big problems for large markets. Teams will be required to interview at least 100 potential customers and market intermediaries to test the initial hypotheses. This is referred to as customer discovery, and it is used in I-Corps@Ohio to collect data to test the validity of the business hypotheses.

Orientation: The program starts with a mandatory Program Orientation, which is typically scheduled about 30 days before the start of the annual cohort. At the Program Orientation, teams will meet each other and the instructional team, develop their first business model canvas, conduct trial interviews to

hone their interviewing technique, receive the course syllabus and the instructional materials and will review the online project management tool (Launchpad Central) for the program. Following the Orientation and prior to the launch of the cohort, teams will be expected to complete six (6) interviews with customer contacts in their home areas and schedule 15 interviews with customer contacts located in and around Central Ohio. These interviews will be conducted onsite during the week of the Program Launch in Columbus, Ohio.

Launch Week: Approximately 30 days after the Program Orientation, teams are required to come to the 3-day Program Launch at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. During the Program Launch, teams will test core assumptions about different components of the business model by making hypotheses and then completing the 15 customer interviews that were previously scheduled. The curricular instruction will focus on identifying the customer segment, validating the problem solution fit, modeling the workflow process and clarifying the compelling value proposition.

Weekly WebEx Workshops: Following Launch Week, each week for five weeks, teams are required to participate in the weekly WebEx Workshops. During these meetings, each team will report to the instructional team how many interviews were completed, what hypotheses were tested, what key insights were learned and what plans were made for the following week. All team members are required to participate in the weekly Webex meetings. Details about what information is required from week to week will be provided in the program syllabus at the beginning of the program.

Finale: Following the six weeks of training workshops and customer discovery interviews, the teams will return to Columbus, Ohio for the 2-day Program Finale where teams will deliver their lessons learned presentations. Details about what information is required in the final presentation will be provided in the program syllabus at the beginning of the program.

Final Reports: The PI must submit a final project report to the I-Corps@Ohio program staff within 12 weeks following the completion of the training program. Requirements for the final report will be made available on the I-Corps@Ohio website and/or sent to Principal Investigators via email.

Estimated Number of Annual Awards and Cohorts: The program staff will make 20-24 awards each year; 8-10 awards per cohort; 2-3 cohorts each year. The duration of each award is one year.

Anticipated Funding Amount: Awards will not exceed \$15,000 (US\$).

Expectations From the I-Corps@Ohio Program: Successful completion of the I-Corps@Ohio program is expected to contribute to one or more of the following outcomes: license the subject technology; start a new business; complete a business plan suitable for review by third-party investors; submit TVSF/SBIR/STTR grant proposals; present in the Ohio Collegiate Venture Showcase approximately 8-12 weeks after completing the training program, and prepare faculty and students to be entrepreneurially competitive.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Organizational Limit: Proposals may only be submitted by faculty, staff and students of eligible universities, colleges and community colleges accredited in, and having a campus located in, the State of Ohio. (For a list of eligible Ohio institutions, visit <http://icorpsohio.org>.)

Limit on Number of Proposals per Institution: None.

Limit on Number of Proposals per Principal Investigator: A PI is limited to one I-Corps@Ohio proposal during each open solicitation.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Registration, Application and Proposal Preparation Instructions

The I-Corps@Ohio proposal submission process consists of five steps:

1. mandatory meeting with the appropriate representative(s) at the PI's institution;
2. team selection of technology track;
3. team registration and Executive Summary (pre-submission);
4. full proposal submission (by invitation only), and
5. full team interview with I-Corps@Ohio program representatives.

B. Mandatory Meeting with Institutional Representative(s)

Before submitting an Executive Summary to I-Corps@Ohio, PIs are required to discuss the stage of the technology and commercial readiness of their project with the designated technology transfer representative and I-Corps@Ohio liaison at his/her university or college to determine if the proposed project is appropriate for I-Corps@Ohio funding. A full list of institutional representatives can be found on the I-Corps@Ohio website at <http://icorpsohio.org>. If your institution is not listed or you are unsure whom to contact, please contact the I-Corps@Ohio Program Manager, Nikki Modlich, at modlich.5@osu.edu or (614) 247-4695.

C. Team Selection of Technology Track

Grant funds will be made available through two technology tracks. Teams are required to select the most appropriate track during registration based on the unique characteristics of the subject technology and the specific application the team seeks to commercialize.

Medtech Track:

Teams will select Medtech Track if the subject technology is in the form of devices, diagnostics, medicines, vaccines, testing procedures and systems and is developed to solve a health/clinical problem and improve the quality of human life.

Science and Engineering (S&E) Track:

Teams will select S&E Track if the technology does not fit into the Medtech category.

D. Team Registration and Executive Summary (Pre-Submission)

All teams are required to complete the online profile and answer the executive summary questions in the online portal at <http://icorpsohio.org>. Registration and submission questions (250 word response each) are **DUE by January 10, 2017**. The information that will be requested is listed below. The I-Corps@Ohio Selection Committee will review each Executive Summary to determine if it qualifies for I-Corps@Ohio funding. Only those teams that receive approval of their Executive Summaries will receive authorization to submit a Full Proposal.

Questions #2 - #5 will allow for a 250-word response.

Medtech Track:

1. Title of the proposed project and name of Principal Investigator(s) (with contact information).
2. Brief description of the technology including: stage of development; any commercial product/service activity; relevant research results demonstrating the validity of the technology; and the intellectual property status.
3. Brief description of the market opportunity including: what specific clinical indication the technology targets; how big the clinical problem is; who will directly benefit from your technology; and what is the competitive advantage that is offered by your product or service.
4. Brief description of the team including: expertise with the technology; familiarity with commercializing university inventions; and experience with startup ventures. Explain who plays the specific roles of PI, EL and EM and how long the team has worked on this project. Please state if you are seeking assistance to fill the EL or EM roles.
5. Do you plan to commercialize your technology through founding a new startup or licensing to an existing company? Despite the merits of your technology, why should your team be selected for this award in the I-Corps@Ohio Program?

S&E Track:

1. Title of the proposed project and name of Principal Investigator(s) with contact information.
2. Brief description of the technology including: stage of development; any commercial product/service activity; relevant research results demonstrating the validity of the technology; and the intellectual property status.
3. Brief description of the market opportunity including: what specific problem the technology solves; how big the problem is; what specific market/industry your technology directly benefits; and how your technology is better than other products and services already on the market.
4. Brief description of the team including: expertise with the technology; familiarity with commercializing university inventions; and experience with startup ventures. Explain who plays the specific roles of PI, EL and EM and how long the team has worked on this project. Please state if you are seeking assistance to fill the EL or EM roles.
5. Do you plan to commercialize your technology through founding a new startup or licensing to an existing company? Despite the merits of your technology, why should your team be selected for this award in the I-Corps@Ohio Program?

E. Full Proposal Submission

Only those teams for which the I-Corps@Ohio Selection Committee has approved the Executive Summaries will be authorized to submit a Full Proposal. PIs will be informed of the submission instructions when they are informed of the approval of their Executive Summary.

Cover Sheet: A cover sheet will be sent directly to the PI upon approval to submit a Full Proposal.

Project Description: The project description is limited to five (5) pages, single-spaced and should be no less than 11-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides. Suggestions on space allocations are included for each area; however, applicants may use the space in any way that they feel appropriate to best present the opportunity. The following information should be included.

Medtech Track

1. Provide a Target Product Profile (TPP) that summarizes the minimal/ideal profile of the final marketed product and shows the ultimate goals of the proposed drug/device development effort, such as disease indication, patient population, delivery mode, treatment duration, treatment regimen, and standards for clinical efficacy. (suggestion: 1 page)
2. Discuss how the drug/device would be an improvement over the currently available products. Indicate target clinical population and specific stage of disease in which the treatment/diagnosis would be most effective. (suggestion: 1/2 page)
3. Brief description of the market opportunity including the size and growth of the total addressable market, the specific target market, the projected commercial impact and what activities you have completed in the last 24 months to exploit the commercial potential. (suggestion: 1-1/2 pages)
4. Brief description of the current stage of development and anticipated regulatory pathway to bring the technology to the market. Be sure to include how much development funding has been allocated to date and how much additional funding is available at the time of the application. (suggestion: 1/2 page)
5. Brief description of the intellectual property position and how the intellectual property strengthens or enhances the potential commercial opportunity. (suggestion: 1/2 page)
6. Brief description of the experience and commitment of the team including the Entrepreneurial Lead(s), Executive Mentor(s), and Principal Investigator(s). Be sure to include specific references to each team member's experience with starting entrepreneurial ventures and licensing university technologies and how the team has worked together and the goals the team has for success in the I-Corps@Ohio program. (suggestion: 1 page)

S&E Track

1. Brief description of the technology/product/service and how it is superior to existing competitive offers already available in the commercial market. (suggestion: 1 page)
2. Brief description of the market opportunity including the size and growth of the total addressable market, the specific target market, the projected commercial impact and what activities you have completed in the last 24 months to exploit the commercial potential. (suggestion: 2 pages)

3. Brief description of the current stage of development and anticipated time and cost to prepare the technology for market entry. Be sure to include how much development funding has been allocated to date and how much additional funding is available at the time of the application. (suggestion: 1/2 page)
4. Brief description of the intellectual property position and how the intellectual property strengthens or enhances the potential commercial opportunity. (suggestion: 1/2 page)
5. Brief description of the experience and commitment of the team including the Entrepreneurial Lead(s), Executive Mentor(s), and Principal Investigator(s). Be sure to include specific references to each team member's experience with starting entrepreneurial ventures and licensing university technologies and how the team has worked together and the goals the team has for success in the I-Corps@Ohio program. (suggestion: 1 page)

Biographical Sketches: A biographical sketch for each team member (2 pages maximum per team member) must be provided, highlighting technical expertise and track records in successful technology and business development (as applicable).

Budget Form: A budget form will be sent directly to the PI(s) upon approval to submit a full proposal. Space is provided for a brief narrative explaining all budget line items. Funding for the I-Corps@Ohio Teams is \$15,000 per award. Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited. From the award of \$15,000, funds must be allocated for all team members for mandatory attendance at the I-Corps@Ohio program sessions in Columbus, Ohio. Proposers should estimate \$1,500 per person to cover the travel expenses. I-Corps@Ohio award funds can be used to cover EL release time and stipends, mentor compensation, travel, and most other project related expenses.

Any submission that exceeds the page or space limits listed above will be eliminated from the Full Proposal before it is sent to the Selection Committee for review and evaluation. Appendices, attachments, reports, quotations, or other methods to augment the information presented in the Full Proposal are not allowed. Reference to web-based information to supplement the Full Proposal is not permitted, and such references will not be considered in the evaluation.

Cost Sharing: Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited. Recovery of indirect costs (F&A) shall be limited to \$1,500.

F. Team Interview

Representatives from the I-Corps@Ohio Program Staff will schedule interviews (in person or via web) with those teams that are being considered for funding and admission to the I-Corps@Ohio program. Applicants should respond timely to requests for interviews and to ensure that all team members are available to participate in the interview. *Inability to schedule an interview with the entire team will result in the team being removed from consideration; please see dates below to ensure your availability.*

G. Important Dates

This RFP is soliciting teams for two separate tracks during the summer of 2017. Though you are required to select the track to which you are applying at the time of application, the I-Corps@Ohio Program Staff

maintains the right to reassign a team that is accepted into the program to a different track if it feels a different track is more appropriate. Dates for each track are listed below.

Registration and Executive Summary Pre-Submission Due	January 10, 2017 (11:59PM)
Call for Full Proposals (Invitation Only)	January 25, 2017
Full Proposal Submission Due	February 15, 2017 (11:59PM)
Team Interviews (Scheduling to begin February 16)	March 14 – 17, 2017
Announce the 2017 I-Corps@Ohio Cohort	March 20, 2017

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM DATES:

Program Orientation	April 21 – 22, 2017
Program Launch – Workshop 1-3	May 22 – 25, 2017
WebEx – Workshop 4	May 31, 2017
WebEx – Workshop 5	June 7, 2017
WebEx – Workshop 6	June 14, 2017
WebEx – Workshop 7	June 21, 2017
WebEx – Workshop 8	June 28, 2017
Program Finale	July 10 – 12, 2017

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCEDURES

The I-Corps@Ohio Selection Committee will make final recommendations regarding which teams receive I-Corps@Ohio funding based on the Executive Summary, Full Proposal, and the outcome of Team Interviews. Review criteria will include:

- team composition with preference given to teams that have a strong and committed Principal Investigator, Entrepreneurial Lead(s) and Executive Mentor(s);
- degree to which the intellectual property is protected and will defend the expected business model of a startup;
- level of technology validation with preference given to teams that can demonstrate proof-of-concept (i.e., preliminary data, prototype, etc.) indicating feasibility based on scientifically sound, peer-reviewed or federally-funded research;
- extent to which the technology fits with Ohio’s industry base and supply chains and the team plans to remain in Ohio after the I-Corps@Ohio program;
- commercial viability, size of market and reasonable path to market;
- likelihood that the proposed project will lead to a startup company; and
- stage of commercial development.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. Notification of the Award

The I-Corps@Ohio Program Staff will send email notification of the award to the submitting organization and the Principal Investigator by March 22, 2017.

B. Award Conditions

An award consists of: (1) an award letter which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which I-Corps@Ohio has based its support; (3) the proposal referenced in the award letter; (4) the applicable award conditions; and (5) any announcement or other issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter.

C. Reporting Requirements

The Principal Investigator must submit a final project report to the I-Corps@Ohio program staff within 12 weeks following the completion of the training program. Requirements for the final report will be made available on the I-Corps@Ohio website and/or sent to Principal Investigators via email. Principal Investigators should examine the requirements in advance to assure availability and collection of required performance data. The Principal Investigator is also required to complete semi-annual surveys for two years following the completion of the grant program. The survey is not meant to be onerous, but will help I-Corps@Ohio keep track of team progress in areas such as options or licenses executed, new start-ups formed, state or federal funding received, private capital raised and product introductions or sales.

CONTACTS

Inquiries regarding how to apply to this program, including timelines, eligibility, and proposal requirements should be directed to the I-Corps@Ohio Program Manager, Nikki Modlich, at modlich.5@osu.edu or (614) 247-4695. General inquiries about the I-Corps@Ohio program can be made to I-Corps@Ohio representatives in the following regions:

- Northwest Ohio – Stephen Snider, University of Toledo - Stephen.snider@utoledo.edu
- Northeast Ohio – Elyse Ball, University of Akron - eball@uakron.edu
- Southwest Ohio – Dorothy Air, University of Cincinnati – AIRDH@ucmail.uc.edu
- Southeast Ohio – Faith Knutsen, Ohio University - knutsenf@ohio.edu
- Central Ohio – Nikki Modlich, The Ohio State University - modlich.5@osu.edu
- Community Colleges – Rosa Hainaj, Lorain County Community College - rhainaj@lorainccc.edu