

The Ohio State University Accelerator Awards

Request for Applications

Submission Deadlines

Refer to [Accelerator Awards website](#) for key submission due dates.
Contact Information: accelerator_awards@osu.edu

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Award Summary

Funding mechanism	Sponsored grant administered through the Office of Sponsored Programs, with a 1:1 cost share. Cost-share funds are provided through the Accelerator Awards Program.
Total program funding available	\$1,000,000 per year.
Anticipated number of projects funded	8-12 projects annually.
Funding amount per project	Applicants should only request the funds necessary to meaningfully advance the technology towards commercialization. All proposals may request up to \$100,000. Biomedical proposals developing FDA regulated products may require greater resources and may be eligible to request up to \$150,000.
Project funding period	Projects must start within three months of a funding notification and must be successfully completed within 6-12 months.
Types of Technology Funded	Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Materials, Biomedical/Life Sciences, Energy, Sensors, Software/IT
Grant Reimbursement Notice	If a funded technology is licensed to a company outside of Ohio within five years of the award notice, the university may be required to repay the funds to the Ohio Third Frontier.

Accelerator Awards Overview

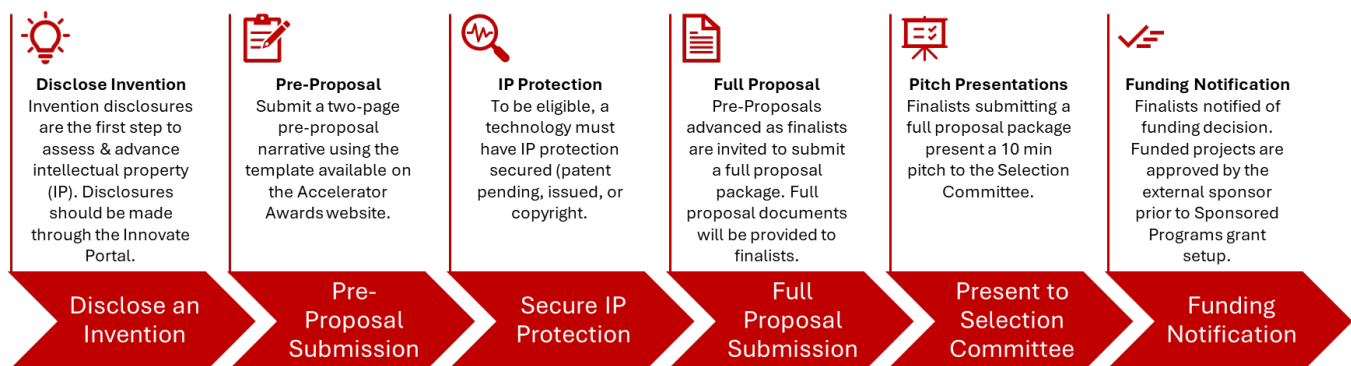
The Ohio State University Accelerator Awards provides annual \$1 million in funding to help translate innovations towards the marketplace through commercialization to Ohio-based startup companies. Funding is provided by Ohio State and the State of Ohio, through the Ohio Third Frontier Technology Validation and Startup Fund (TVSF). The Ohio Third Frontier aims to foster creation of Ohio-based startup companies commercializing technologies and driving economic growth in the region.

Administered by Innovation and Commercialization, funding supports milestone-based projects to advance innovative technologies that offer compelling solutions to address unmet needs. Projects should be based on technologies that have advanced beyond basic research but are not yet ready to commercialize and require additional development beyond what research grants support. Funding is used to validate or demonstrate the proof needed to positively impact the commercial viability of the technology.

Many applicants find value in participating in customer discovery programs to gain insights into challenges, needs, and pain points from the customer's perspective, aiding in the validation of the problem and market demand. For information on customer discovery programs please email accelerator_awards@osu.edu

Application Process

Application cycles take place twice a year, in the spring and fall. The multi-stage application process begins with a pre-proposal. Selected finalists are then invited to submit a full proposal and deliver a pitch presentation.



General Eligibility Requirements

- **Who:** Faculty and staff of The Ohio State University with PI status that are inventors on an invention disclosure.
- **Intellectual Property:** Projects must advance the commercialization of university-owned intellectual property (IP) disclosed to the university through [Cayuse Inventions](#).
- **Project Scope and Focus:**
 - Projects are milestone-driven and focus on achieving key deliverables that objectively and quantitatively demonstrate success.
 - Projects should be industry-informed and designed to validate the technology for a proposed commercial application and demonstrate the proof needed to advance the technology towards commercialization.
 - Technologies should already have demonstrated proof-of-concept at the laboratory scale.
 - Projects pursuing basic or discovery research are too early to be eligible for funding.

Examples of activities too early for the Accelerator Awards	Examples of activities appropriate for the Accelerator Awards	Examples of activities too advanced for the Accelerator Awards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Basic science research ○ Preliminary/pilot data ○ Generate laboratory-scale proof of concept ○ Customer Discovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prototype design and development/fabrication ○ Pre-clinical studies supporting IND or FDA goals ○ Technical validation, testing critical failure points ○ Outsourcing tasks to external vendors ○ Scale-up pilot studies ○ Regulatory assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beta prototype development ○ Deployment of beta prototypes to potential customers for testing and evaluation ○ Business development activities

Specific Eligibility Requirements by Application Stage

Principal Investigator & Team Requirements

- PI status must be secured by the full application submission.
- Applicants can submit one (1) proposal as the PI or co-PI per application cycle.
- Awardees may only be PI OR Co-PI on one (1) Accelerator Award project at a time. If a previously funded project is complete and all requirements and reporting deliverables have been met, the PI is eligible to submit a new application in a subsequent round. This can be for the same technology, provided it addresses a different market application and represents a different startup opportunity, or for a new technology that represents a separate startup opportunity.
- If a PI transfers from The Ohio State University to another institution, Accelerator Award funds cannot be transferred. If a co-inventor cannot assume the role of PI, the project will be closed.
- All team members should be dedicated to commercialization goals and be receptive to coaching and guidance.

Intellectual Property Requirements

Pre-Proposal IP Requirements:

- Technologies must be the subject of an invention disclosure filed 15 days in advance of the pre-proposal submission deadline and be actively managed by a licensing officer. Applicants should discuss their intent to submit a pre-proposal with the licensing officer.

Full Proposal IP Requirements:

- Technologies must have IP protection, defined as provisional patent filed, patent pending or patent issued, by the full proposal submission deadline. For software/IT technologies, trade secret, or copyright protection associated with the technology are eligible if OSIF has the right to commercialize the IP through an exclusive license agreement.
- If the technology is jointly owned by another academic institution, an inter-institutional agreement must be executed that designates OSIF as the lead in commercializing the technology.
- The technology must be unencumbered and available to exclusively license in the applicable field of use at the time of the award notice and it must remain unlicensed throughout the funded project period.
- Intellectual property rights must not be encumbered by any prior obligation, such as an industry sponsored research agreement or consultant agreement.
- Technologies under a license agreement in the applicable field of use are NOT eligible for funding.

Funding Guidelines and Criteria

- Proposed project activities that are duplicated or substantially overlapping and are supported by research grant support, industry sponsorship, co-development or investment partners are not eligible for funding. Technologies that are the subject of a TVSF Phase 2 award, or similar stage funding, are considered too far developed and are ineligible for funding.
- Funding for the project is released stages, with each tranche tied to a specific milestone. Successful

achievement of a milestone is a pre-requisite for starting the next milestone and release of the next tranche of funds and hence milestones should be staged sequentially over time. A general guide is to propose one milestone per quarter. Milestone progress is evaluated upon milestone completed or at minimum on a quarterly reporting schedule.

- The Program reserves the right to halt financial support for reasons including, but not limited to:
 - Technology is no longer available to OSIF for licensing (e.g. active license agreement is entered into, IIA lead is transferred to another institution).
 - PI leaves Ohio State.
 - IP protection cannot be secured or offers limited protection to support a potential business model.
 - Startup opportunity becomes limited due to changes in the market or competitive landscape.
 - Failure to meaningfully progress a project or meet reporting requirements.
 - Technology is unable to demonstrate feasibility, and the proof needed to support commercialization.
 - Technology is deemed ready for commercialization. An opportunity to license can be pursued, eliminating the need for further development through the Accelerator Awards.

Use of Funds

The purpose of funding is to validate and demonstrate proof that will impact and enhance commercial viability and support licensing a technology to an OH-based startup company. Funds are not provided to support general research or administrative activities, discovery or basic research. Funds should be predominantly directed towards using off-campus vendors and it is expected that a minimal amount of funds will be used to support in-lab efforts. Funds used this way can provide access to the expertise, capabilities, and resources necessary to provide independent validation the technology is feasible and can demonstrate commercial viability. This can help reduce risks and validate the technology's potential. The table below outlines eligible and ineligible expense categories.

<u>Expense Categories</u>	<u>Eligibility</u>
Purchased services	Yes
Materials and Supplies	Yes
Equipment	Limited, may be requested but large equipment purchases are unlikely to be approved.
Personnel salary and fringe benefits (Ohio State non-faculty employees)	May be requested, approval required
Bonuses, incentives or rewards	No
Faculty salary/fringes	No
Indirect costs	No
Industry expert payments	No
IP protection costs, legal fees, professional affiliations, membership dues, conference fees, publications costs, or reprints, developing grant proposals	No
Research subject payments	No
Student stipends tuition or fees	No
Subawards to other institutions	No
Travel	No

- Budget requests must reflect project specific costs necessary to achieve the project milestones. For full proposal submission, evidence, such as vendor quotes, will be required to as supporting documentation.
- A minimum of 75% of the total budget should be allocated to work completed outside of the research lab using external off-campus vendors/service providers. There is a strong preference for the use of Ohio-based vendors.
- A maximum of 25% of the total project budget may be allocated to support limited in-lab work. Personnel costs must be for specific time-bound technical work needed to achieve milestones. Funding is not

intended to provide full-time ongoing support for personnel for the duration of a project.

- Ohio State Core Facilities that offer services to external customers may be requested. Justification explaining the critical or specialized need the facility fulfills that cannot be met by an external vendor will be required. The work must be conducted independently of the PI lab and personnel.

Industry Experts

- Applicants must engage with an industry expert prior to submitting a full proposal and are encouraged to proactively identify potential industry experts early in the application process.
- Industry experts are external individuals who volunteer time and expertise to provide guidance on the commercialization needs within the applicable market space and/or appropriate milestones. Applicants are encouraged to leverage this expertise to clarify the proof needed to support commercialization and develop commercialization-focused milestones. Industry experts may provide guidance on the technology's potential market impact, corroborate the market need, and appropriateness of the milestones to demonstrate commercialization potential.
- Industry experts cannot be paid or have a financial relationship with the PI, or function as a paid consultant/vendors for the project.

Awardee Requirements if Funded

- Attend a project kickoff meeting with the program manager.
- Monitor progress and provide required milestone updates and participate in discussion and review of project progress.
- Engage regularly with the Innovation and Commercialization team.
- Submit a final report within 30 days of the end of the project period.
- Failure to meet reporting requirements or meaningfully progress the project may result in early termination of the project and preclude the PI from being eligible for Accelerator Awards or Ohio Third Frontier funding in the future.
- New intellectual property generated during an Accelerator Award, including discoveries, inventions, patents, and copyrighted materials, must be promptly disclosed and is subject to The Ohio State University [Intellectual Property Policy](#).

Review Process

- All proposals are checked for eligibility requirements and alignment with the program's goals prior to distribution to an external Selection Committee.
- Applications are reviewed based on defined rubrics and criteria that align with the sections and content of the proposals. Consequently, full proposals have an expanded set of criteria.
- Pre-Proposals that best fit the evaluation criteria are invited to advance as finalists and submit a full proposal and present a pitch presentation to the committee. For full proposals and pitch presentations the committee evaluates full proposals and pitch presentations using defined rubrics and criteria. Proposals are discussed before funding recommendations are determined. All applicants will receive an evaluation summary.
- The selection committee is composed of external members with broad expertise in startups, entrepreneurship, venture capital, investment, and industry/market sectors. The committee is chaired by the Director of Strategic Development and Operations within Innovation and Commercialization.

Award Decisions

- Final funding decisions are confirmed by the chair of the selection committee, based on committee recommendations. Proposals may be funded as proposed or with modifications to the budget and/or milestones. Review outcomes will be communicated to all finalists. Projects recommended for funding along with their associated milestones and budgets are subject to approval by the external sponsor.

Evaluation Criteria Overview

- **Problem and Solution:** A clear unmet need is identified that articulates a significant challenge with clear pain points. Degree to which the proposal articulates the magnitude of the challenge and proposes a solution that presents potential to impact and address the unmet need.
- **Competitive Landscape:** The application identifies current and anticipated players in the space. Degree to which the technology has a competitive advantage, is disruptive and offers a compelling value proposition that surpasses current standard practice in performance, cost, scalability, or other value driver.
- **Technology/Proof-of-Concept:** Degree to which proof-of-concept has been demonstrated that supports technical feasibility and viability.
- **Market Opportunity:** Degree of articulation of the market, segments, monetary value, customer adoption, projected trends, growth, barriers to entry and why the solution is likely to succeed now.
- **Commercialization Potential:** The proposed solution is a product or service to be commercialized; the technical solution is scalable to achieve commercialization objectives. Degree to which there is a roadmap for further development and scalability that aligns with startup opportunity.
- **Project Milestones:** Proposed milestones are well described, with clear deliverables and success criteria to achieve appropriate validation of the technology. Achievement of milestones will generate the proof needed to commercialize the technology or determine unfeasible for commercialization. Strategy to execute milestones is effective with potential risks addressed. Degree to which technical validation activities will be conducted or overseen by an independent party are considered.
- **Startup Opportunity:** Success of the project will increase the value of the innovation and reduce risk to support advancing towards launch of an Ohio-based startup company. There is opportunity to sustain a startup company within a reasonable time (3–5 years). There is a reasonable opportunity to pursue follow-on funding through grant-based, partner-offered, customer-based or venture capital avenues. The amount of funding required aligns well with anticipated market opportunity.
- **Intellectual Property:** The intellectual property (IP) status is clearly described. The IP strategy is appropriate and how the IP fits into the landscape and potential impact to the business model is reasonably described.
- **Team:** The qualifications, roles, and experience of the project team, including engagement of collaborators, vendors, and industry expert(s) is appropriate to develop the technology. There is commitment to successfully execute the project plan.

Projects Involving Human Subjects and/or Animal Subjects

- The PI must determine whether activities involve human subjects and require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption. Documentation confirming IRB approval, pending approval, or exempt study, is required in the full proposal submission. IRB approval for the project must be current within one (1) year of the award notice.
- If a project involves animal subjects, the PI must obtain Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval. Documentation confirming IACUC approval or pending approval is required in the full proposal submission. IACUC approvals must be current within three (3) years of the award notice.
- Awarded projects must have IRB/IACUC approval prior to the release of any funds. Funds may not be awarded if the necessary IRB/IACUC approvals are not obtained within 3 months of the award notice.

Confidential Information

Confidential proprietary information that has not been protected through the technology commercialization office should not be publicly disclosed. Applicants should request a confidentiality disclosure agreement (also known as a non-disclosure agreement) prior to sharing proprietary information with industry experts or other external parties including vendors. Applicants should contact the Licensing Officer managing the technology for questions or guidance.