

The Ohio State University Accelerator Awards

Request for Applications

Pre-Proposal Deadlines

Fall 2024: November 1, 2024

Refer to the website for key submission due dates for all stages of Accelerator Award applications

<https://keenan.osu.edu/accelerator-awards>

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Table of Contents

Accelerator Awards Overview	2
Award Information.....	2
Application Process	2
Key Eligibility Summary	3
FULL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	3
Principal Investigator & Team Requirements	3
Intellectual Property Requirements	4
Funding Requirements.....	4
Use of Funds	5
Industry Experts.....	5
Awardee Requirements	6
Review process	6
Award Decisions	6
General Evaluation Criteria	6
Confidential Information	7
Projects Involving Human Subjects and/or Animal Subjects.....	7

Accelerator Awards Overview

The Ohio State University Accelerator Awards is an annual \$1 million pool of funds awarded on a competitive basis to advance the translation of Ohio State innovations from the university to the marketplace through commercialization to Ohio-based startup companies. Funded through both 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 that will lead to greater economic growth in the region.

Funding is intended to support innovative technologies that propose compelling solutions to address an unmet need but are not ready for commercialization. Funding will be used to validate or demonstrate the proof needed to impact the commercial viability of the technology.

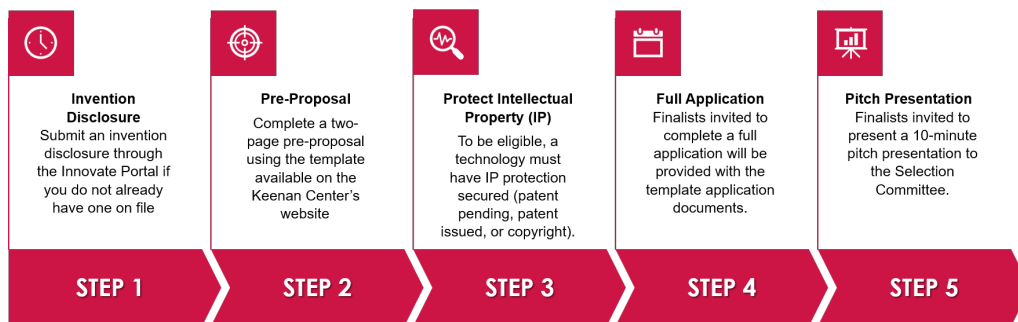
Applicants may be interested in participating in customer discovery programs that help validate the problem and market need. For information on customer discovery programs please email acceleratorawards@osu.edu

Award Information

- **Total program funding available:** \$1,000,000 per year.
- **Funding mechanism:** Sponsored grant with a 1:1 cost share. Cost share funds are provided through the Accelerator Awards Program.
- **Anticipated number of Awards:** 8-12 awards annually
- **Funding amount:** Individual project budgets may request up to a maximum of \$100,000 in funds. However, funding requests for individual projects are anticipated to be varied and should be aligned with validation work required. Biomedical solutions that will be regulated by the FDA may require greater resources and may be eligible to request up to \$150,000.
- **Project funding period:** Projects must be achievable and completed within 6-12 months.
- **Grant reimbursement:** the objective of the Ohio Third Frontier, in supporting the Accelerator Awards, is to create jobs and business opportunities in Ohio. If a technology developed through Accelerator Awards funding is licensed to a company outside of Ohio within five years of the award notice, the university may be required to repay the Accelerator Awards grant funds to the Ohio Third Frontier.

Application Process

There are two funding cycles a year occurring in the spring and fall. The application process consists of three stages: a pre-proposal, full application and a pitch presentation (by invitation). Submission dates for each stage can be found on our website: <https://keenan.osu.edu/accelerator-awards>



Key Eligibility Summary

- **Who:** Faculty and staff of The Ohio State University that are inventors on an invention disclosure submitted 15 days prior to the pre-proposal deadline.
- **Intellectual Property:** Intellectual property (IP) protection must be secured by the full application deadline.
- **Types of technology funded:** All proposals must fall within the following technology focus areas.
 - Software/Information Technology
 - Biomedical/Life Sciences
 - Advanced Materials
 - Sensors
 - Energy
 - Advanced Manufacturing
- **Project Requirements:**
 - Validation activities increase the value of the technology and reduce risk for commercialization.
 - Specific milestones are industry informed and demonstrate the commercial viability of a technology.
 - Technologies should have laboratory-scale proof of concept established.
 - 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 ○ Research customer demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prototype development ○ Pre-clinical or clinical development ○ Technical validation ○ Outsourcing of tasks to external vendors ○ Scale-up pilot studies ○ Validate markets ○ Regulatory assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beta prototype development ○ Deployment of beta prototype to potential customers for testing and evaluation ○ Business development activities

FULL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Principal Investigator & Team Requirements

- The principal investigator (PI) must be faculty or staff at The Ohio State University with PI status to serve as PI on an externally sponsored grant. The PI must be an inventor on the associated invention disclosure.
- Applicants can submit one (1) application as PI or co-PI per application cycle.
- Awardees may only serve as PI on one (1) Accelerator Award project at a time. Once an awarded project is completed, investigators are eligible to apply for funding for a different market application of the same technology or for new technologies that present an independent commercialization opportunity. Investigators must be compliant and in good standing with all previous award requirements.
- If a PI transfers from The Ohio State University to another institution, Accelerator Award funds cannot be transferred to the new institution. If a co-inventor is unable to take on the role as the new principal investigator, the award will be terminated. The principal investigator should notify the Accelerator Awards program and provide contact information at the new institution.
- All members of the team should be committed to the commercialization objectives of the project and be open to receiving coaching and oversight of their projects.

Intellectual Property Requirements

- Projects must advance the commercialization of university-owned intellectual property. New intellectual property generated during the performance of an Accelerator Award including, but not limited to, discoveries, inventions, patents, and copyrighted materials is subject to ownership by The Ohio State University [Intellectual Property Policy](#) and must be promptly disclosed. Invention disclosures are submitted through Cayuse Inventions https://innovate.osu.edu/log_in/
- Applicants should reach out to their licensing officer with any questions related to IP.

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 under active management by a licensing officer. **Please reach out to the licensing officer assigned to your technology if you intend to submit a pre-proposal.**

Full application IP Requirements:

- Technologies must have IP protection, defined as patent pending or patent issued, by the full application submission deadline. Copyrighted materials, including software, are eligible if OSIF has the right to commercialize the copyrighted materials via an exclusive license agreement.
- If a technology is jointly owned with another academic institution, OSIF must be designated as the lead institution in commercializing the technology under a fully executed inter-institutional agreement (IIA).
- The technology must be available for OSIF to exclusively license at the time of the award notice and remain unlicensed during 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 an option agreement in the applicable field of use are NOT eligible for Accelerator Awards funding.
 - Technologies under a license agreement in the applicable field of use are NOT eligible for Accelerator Awards funding.

Funding Requirements

- Proposed work that is funded through industry sponsorship, research grant support, or investment partners is not eligible for funding. Technologies that are the subject of a TVSF Phase 2 award are considered too far developed and ineligible for funding.
- Projects are funded in tranches aligned with project milestones. At least one milestone must be proposed per quarter. Quarterly milestone progress is evaluated through report submission and a meeting. Meaningful progress must be achieved for approval and release the next tranche of funds.
- 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 of the technology or potential business model.
 - Opportunity for the startup is limited, including market size.
 - Failure to complete project milestones on time or with affirmative results.
 - Failure of PI to comply on time with all Accelerator Awards reporting requirements.
 - Technology is deemed ready for commercialization. License to a startup with an identified business lead can be pursued and precludes the need for further development through the Accelerator Awards.

Use of Funds

Accelerator Awards funds are used to validate and demonstrate the viability of a technology. Given the technology transfer goals of the program, emphasis is placed on validating the technology outside of the lab.

- At least of 75% of the total budget should be allocated to work performed outside of the originating lab by independent third-party vendors. In line with wider economic development goals, there is a preference for use of Ohio-based vendors.
- Ohio State Core Facilities that provide services to external customers may be requested but require justification describing the critical or specialized need(s) the facility fulfills that is otherwise inaccessible through an external vendor. The work must be performed independently of the PI lab and personnel.
- Funds requested should align with the cost required to achieve specific milestones and for a full application submission, supporting quotes will be required.
- A maximum of 25% of the total project budget may be allocated to support work that may necessitate limited personnel and materials and supplies expenses for in lab work.

<u>Expense Categories</u>	<u>Allowable?</u>
Purchased services	Yes
Supplies	Yes
Equipment	May be requested, approval required
Ohio State non-faculty employees	May be requested, approval required
Basic research	No
Bonuses, incentives or rewards	No
Faculty salary/fringes	No
Indirect costs	No
Industry expert payments	No
IP protection costs	No
Legal fees	No
Professional affiliations or membership dues	No
Publication costs or reprints	No
Research subject payments	No
Student stipends, tuition or fees	No
Subawards to other institutions	No
Travel expenses including conference fees	No
Any activity determined to not be consistent with the intent, goal, or rules of the Program	No

Industry Experts

- Applicants must engage with an industry expert during the full application stage and are encouraged to proactively identify potential industry experts early in the application process.
- Industry experts are valuable contributors who volunteer their time and expertise. Applicants are encouraged to leverage relevant industry and entrepreneurial experience to inform development of a commercialization focused project scope and milestones. This helps to ensure that proposed milestones align with the proof needed to demonstrate the technology is viable for commercialization.
- Industry experts cannot be paid or have a financial relationship with the PI, or any consultants and vendors

funded by the Accelerator Awards.

- Please refer to the [industry experts webpage](#) for additional guidance.

Awardee Requirements

Given the commercialization focus of the program, awardees will be expected to:

- Attend a project kickoff meeting.
- Submit quarterly milestone progress reports.
- Participate in quarterly discussion and review of project progress and ad-hoc meetings as required.
- Engage regularly with technology licensing and venture development team members to facilitate commercialization efforts.
- Submit a final report within 30 days of the end of the project period.
- Failure to provide timely progress updates and complete reporting requirements may result in early termination of the project and may preclude the PI from being eligible for any Ohio Third Frontier funding in the future.

Review process

- **Pre-Proposals** will be reviewed for compliance with the program's requirements and alignment with the goals of the program. Pre-proposals that meet the screening requirements will be reviewed by an external selection committee and those that best fit the evaluation criteria will advance as a finalist and will be invited to submit a full application and present a pitch presentation to the committee.
- All applicants who submit a pre-proposal will be notified of the outcome and provided a review summary.
- **Full Application and Pitch Presentation (by invitation). Instructions will be provided to finalists.** The committee discuss and review full applications and pitch presentations and determine funding recommendations.
- The selection committee consists of external members with startup, entrepreneurial, venture capital investment, and technical expertise across a broad range of technology sectors.

Award Decisions

- Final funding decisions will be made by the Ohio Third Frontier based selection committee recommendations. Funding recommendation decisions will be communicated to all finalists.

General Evaluation Criteria

- **Problem and Solution:** Clear unmet need is identified and articulates the problem the technology will solve. A product/solution is presented that is intended to solve the unmet need.
- **Competition:** Current and anticipated competitors identified. Degree to which the technology is disruptive and offers a compelling value proposition. Describes superiority to current standard practice and solves the need better than current solutions.
- **Market Opportunity:** Demonstrates an understanding of the relevant market segments and customer profiles with respect to customer adoption, projected trends, and monetary value.
- **Commercialization:** Solution is a product or service to be commercialized; scalable to achieve commercialization objectives. Completion of the Accelerator Award will generate the proof needed to commercialize the technology.
- **Project Plan:** Project milestones and plan validate/de-risk the technology for the proposed commercial

application(s). Achievement of the milestones would increase the value of the product to enable licensing to a startup company upon completion of the project. Milestones are specific, measurable, and achievable with clear deliverables and success criteria validated by industry input. Strategy to execute the milestones is effective and potential risks have been adequately addressed.

- **Startup Opportunity:** Achievement of the project will increase the value of the innovation and clearly reduce risk to enable launch of an Ohio startup company. There is opportunity to sustain a startup company within a reasonable time (3–5 years). Successful completion of the Accelerator Award positions the expected startup company to attract follow-on funding.
- **Funding:** Funds requested are tied to project milestones and specific go/no-go decision points. Degree to which technical validation activities will be conducted or overseen by an independent party. The project can be successfully completed within one year with the funds requested.
- **Intellectual Property:** strength of intellectual property position to protect the business model.
- **Team:** Appropriate expertise to successfully complete the proposed project; PI and Co-PI(s) will dedicate the time needed to complete the project within proposed timeframe; the inventor(s) is committed to developing and commercializing the technology.

Confidential Information

Confidential proprietary information that has not been protected through the technology commercialization office should not be publicly disclosed without a confidentiality agreement. Applicants should request a confidentiality disclosure agreement (also known as a non-disclosure agreement) electronically through Ohio State's online Cayuse Inventions portal prior to engaging in discussions with industry experts or other external parties. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Licensing Officer working with them on their technology with any questions or for additional guidance.

Projects Involving Human Subjects and/or Animal Subjects

- The PI must determine if activities involving human subjects require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval or exemption. Documentation indicating IRB approval, or pending approval is required at the time of a full application. IRB approval for the project must be current within one (1) year of the notice of award.
- If a project involves animal subjects, the PI must obtain Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval. Documentation indicating IACUC approval, or pending approval is required at the time of a full application. IACUC approvals must be current within three (3) years of the notice of award.
- 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.