

**Request For Applications** – UD’s National Science Foundation Innovation Corps (NSF I-Corps) Sites Program (Cohort 8)

**Requesting Organization** – UD, Horn Program in Entrepreneurship

**Title** – I-Corp Sites Teams for Investigating Commercial Viability of Their STEM-Based or Behavioral/Health-Science-Based Business Ideas

**Opportunity Summary**

The University of Delaware’s NSF I-Corps Sites Program provides training and mini-grants of \$3,000 to support team-based customer discovery research aimed at investigating the commercial viability of a product idea or a specific market application of a novel process, algorithm, device or other technology. Teams will typically consist of an entrepreneurial lead, an academic lead, and an external mentor. Entrepreneurial leads are expected to be undergraduate or graduate students or post docs; academic leads are expected to hold academic appointments that would qualify them to serve as a PI on an NSF grant, and external mentors are expected to hold positions outside the University and possess relevant domain expertise.

UD’s NSF I-Corps Sites training program consists of a series of four sessions aimed at introducing teams to lean startup methodology and guiding them through the initial phase of customer discovery research – customer, problem, solution and value proposition validation. Training sessions involve extensive hands-on work by team members; therefore, all members are expected to plan to attend.

Mini-grants can be used to fund any expenses related to customer discovery research, including prototyping costs. Legal expenses are not permitted. Teams will have a period of approximately 3 months to spend their awards, beginning on the date of the first training session.

**Cohort & Schedule**

This RFA covers the seventh cohort of UD’s NSF I-Corps Sites Program and will include up to 10 teams/projects per cohort. The workshop schedule for the cohort is provided below. **All sessions will be scheduled to be held at the Venture Development Center** (132 E. Delaware Avenue, Ste. 100).

**Workshop Schedule:**

1. March 27 from 9:00am-12:00pm
2. March 30 from 9:00am-12:00pm
3. April 13 from 6:00pm-9:00pm
4. April 27 from 6:00pm-9:00pm

## **Eligibility**

All teams consisting of at least an entrepreneurial lead (undergraduate, graduate student or postdoc) and an academic lead (faculty member) who are working on a STEM-related or behavioral/health-science-related project are eligible to apply. Teams may include additional members, including an external mentor, as desired. Teams applying without an external mentor may be assigned to a mentor for the duration of the training program.

## **Application & Award Process**

Teams should complete the University of Delaware's NSF I-Corps Sites Application via the online form (see <https://www.tfaforms.com/412884>) by **5:00pm on Friday, March 17th**.

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed by the I-Corps Sites Review Team and evaluated based on project potential and team commitment.

Funding awards for cohort 8 will be announced no later than Wednesday, March 22nd. All funded teams will then participate in the training program, beginning on March 27th.

## **Related and Follow-On Opportunities**

Funded teams will gain automatic acceptance in the Horn Program's VentureOn program (but w/o the provision of an additional stipend) for the spring semester, 2017. Participation in VentureOn provides 24/7 access to the Venture Development Center's co-working space and a variety of additional benefits.

Teams finding initial evidence validating the commercial viability of their product/business idea will have the opportunity to participate in other Horn Programs. They will also be eligible to apply to the NSF I-Corps Teams program, which awards \$50,000 and provides more extensive training to guide additional customer discovery research.

## **Additional Information**

Additional information about UD's NSF I-Corps Sites Program is available at: [www.udel.edu/icorps](http://www.udel.edu/icorps).

## **Questions**

Questions about this request for applications or the University of Delaware's NSF I-Corps Sites Program should be directed to [hornprogram@udel.edu](mailto:hornprogram@udel.edu). Please specify "I-Corps Sites Program" in the subject line.