

# The Ohio State University Accelerator Awards

## FAQs | September 2019

### General

#### 1. What is the difference between the Accelerator Awards (TVSF Phase 1) and the TVSF Phase 2 programs?

The aim of the Ohio Third Frontier [Technology Validation and Start-up Fund](#) (TVSF) is to create greater economic growth in Ohio through the creation of startup companies that commercialize technologies developed by Ohio institutions of higher education. TVSF can be divided into two separate mechanisms; the Accelerator Awards (Technology Validation Phase 1) and the Start-Up Fund Phase 2. The purpose of the Accelerator Awards is to generate the proof needed to advance technologies to the point that they are either ready to be licensed by an Ohio-based startup company upon completion of the project or determined to be unfeasible for commercialization. Phase 2 funding supports Ohio-based startup companies that intend to license technology developed at Ohio State during the critical early life of the company and accelerate the time to market by obtaining either a first customer or investment by the conclusion of the grant term. The lead applicant for the Accelerator Awards (TVSF Phase 1) is an Ohio State faculty member with principal investigator status, whereas the lead applicant for Phase 2 funding is in the startup company.

#### 2. What are the next steps to obtain TVSF phase 2 follow-on funding after completing an Accelerator Award; can I apply before my Accelerator Award final report has been approved?

If a technology received an Accelerator Award, the project must be complete with affirmative results before applying for TVSF Phase 2 funding. The Phase 2 application will require submission of a summary of the Accelerator Award project, including metrics that indicate successful completion and the validation/proof process employed.

#### 3. How many proposals are submitted per application cycle? How many projects are awarded?

In 2018, three funding cycles were held (Winter, Spring, Fall) and we received approximately 20 applications per cycle. Typically, 8-10 applicants were invited to make a pitch presentation to the Selection Committee with approximately five projects awarded each cycle.

#### 4. How many funding cycles are there each year?

For FY20 there are two funding cycles planned, Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. The Spring 2020 cycle is dependent on the availability of funds.

#### 5. Who makes the award decisions?

The Accelerator Awards Selection Committee consists of two representatives of the Corporate Engagement Office and seven external partners with commercialization, investment and entrepreneurial expertise.

Funding decisions will be made by the Ohio Third Frontier based upon recommendations of the Accelerator Award Selection Committee.

## Eligibility

### **6. Who is eligible to apply for an award?**

Ohio State faculty with Principal Investigator (PI) status must be listed as an inventor on the technology and will serve as PI for the project. Post-docs and staff are eligible to apply as co-PI. Students are not eligible to apply as PI or co-PI.

### **7. When should I talk with my Licensing Manager about applying for the Accelerator Awards?**

Before submitting a pre-proposal for the Accelerator Awards, you need to submit an invention disclosure form to the Corporate Engagement Office through the Innovate portal at least 30 days in advance of the pre-proposal deadline. If invited to submit a full application, you should be in contact with your Licensing Manager at least 30 days in advance of the full application deadline to give your Licensing Manager adequate time to ensure your technology has intellectual property protection in time for the submission deadline.

### **8. How do I know if my technology is at the right stage to apply for Accelerator Awards funding?**

Your Licensing Manager within the Corporate Engagement Office will be able to help assess commercialization viability of your technology initially. To be at the stage ready for commercialization in the context of an Accelerator Award, your technology must be beyond proof of concept and basic research and should be ready to license to an external entity within 12-months. Funds can be used to perform validation activities that can include prototyping, human clinical data, animal studies, market and customer demand assessment, demonstration and assessment of critical failure points, scale up and commercialization. In addition, teams invited to make a full application for the Accelerator Awards engage with an industry expert to help determine the commercialization-focused milestones for the project.

### **9. After completing an Accelerator Awards project, will I be eligible for a subsequent award? What conditions must be met?**

Given the technology transfer goals of the Accelerator Awards, it would be unlikely for a technology to receive an additional award. Applicants are encouraged to apply with new proposals for a different application of the same technology or for new technologies once the initial project is completed. If you wish to submit an additional Accelerator Award application, previous outcomes and compliance with the program's requirements will be considered.

### **10. Is there a limit to the number of times a proposal can be submitted and reviewed?**

Proposal submission will be limited to no more than three times. A proposal submitted for the second or third time is considered a revised proposal and the appropriate box must be checked on the application form to indicate revised submissions.

**11. The best way to commercialize my technology is through an established company, not a startup. Can I still apply?**

This would not align with the goals of the Ohio Third Frontier, which is create greater economic impact in Ohio based on startup companies that commercialize technologies developed at Ohio research institutions.

**12. Can an existing company apply for Accelerator Awards funding?**

Existing companies are beyond the scope of the Accelerator Awards and are not eligible to apply. Existing startup companies that intend to license intellectual property developed at Ohio State are eligible to apply for TVSF Phase 2 funding.

**13. Can I collaborate with institutions outside of Ohio?**

Based on the goals of the Ohio Third Frontier and the commercialization focus of the Accelerator Awards, there is preference for projects that secure purchased services from Ohio-based third-party vendors.

**14. Are the Accelerator Awards bound by a conflict of interest disclosure; how will I know if I have a conflict?**

During the application stage proposed projects will be assessed and undergo a conflict of interest review.

## **Intellectual Property & Licensing**

**15. Does software meet the intellectual property requirements?**

Yes, it does. Copyrighted materials, including software, are eligible if OSIF has the right to commercialize the copyrighted materials via an exclusive license agreement. Software/information technology is one of the technology areas targeted by the Ohio Third Frontier.

**16. I used to be employed at another institution and it has some ownership of my IP. Am I eligible to apply?**

If more than one institution is involved or named on the IP for your technology, you must declare in your pre-proposal and an inter-institutional agreement (IIA) must be in place. Your Licensing Manager can help clarify who has rights or claims against your IP and what impact that may have on commercialization. IP that is predominantly owned by a by an institution outside of Ohio is not a good fit for the Accelerator Awards.

**17. My technology is under an option agreement in the same field as my potential project, can I apply for Accelerator Award funding?**

No, if the technology is not available for licensing in the applicable field of use it is not eligible for the Accelerator Awards.

**18. Can my technology be licensed to a company outside Ohio?**

No, to be consistent with the goal of the Ohio Third Frontier to stimulate economic growth in Ohio, per the state's requirements, technologies must be licensed to an Ohio-based company. If a technology is licensed

to a company outside of Ohio within five years of the award notice, the grant must be repaid to the Ohio Third Frontier.

**19. As part of the licensing terms, does OSIF take equity in exchange for the Accelerator Award funds provided?**

The Accelerator Awards is grant funding awarded to an Ohio State faculty member. No equity is taken by OSIF for consideration of the Accelerator Awards funding provided. Any equity negotiated as part of the licensing deal is independent of Accelerator Awards funding status.

## **Budget**

**20. Should I budget indirect costs?**

No, indirect costs should not be included in the budget.

**21. Is travel allowed as an expense?**

No, travel is not an eligible expense.

**22. Can I include PI salary on budget?**

No, this is not an eligible expense

**23. Can I support my student? Post-doc?**

In keeping with the commercialization goals of the Accelerator Awards, projects should prioritize outsourcing work to Ohio-based third-party vendors. For this reason, personnel support for students, staff or post-docs is limited to 25% of the total awarded budget. Tuition is not an eligible expense under the Accelerator Awards.

**24. The RFA says that the majority of project expenditures must be spent with external third-party service providers. What does this mean?**

In keeping with the technology transfer goals of the Accelerator Awards, commercialization milestones of the projects are defined and guided by an industry expert and projects should prioritize outsourcing work to Ohio-based third-party vendors rather than performing it within the university. Your proposal narrative should have compelling justification for not sourcing the work to an outside service vendor.

**25. Can I use vendors outside of Ohio?**

There is a strong preference to use vendors based in Ohio. If there is a critical need to use a vendor located outside of Ohio, your budget must include sufficient justification for this.

## Project Plan & Timeline

### **26. Can I change the project milestone plan and budget post-award?**

Any changes to the milestones must be requested prior to completion date of that milestone using the change request form. The impact on the project scope, timeline, and justification for the changes must also be included. The request will be reviewed by the Accelerator Awards program and may require additional approval from the Selection Committee and the Ohio Third Frontier. Re-allocation of funds from the original itemized budget must also be requested via the same format.

### **27. How do I find an Industry Expert?**

Industry experts should be external to the University and have a strong industry background in the relevant technology field. When submitting the pre-proposal we encourage PIs to identify and recommend potential industry experts. The Corporate Engagement Office can also facilitate identification and matching of industry experts to projects.

### **28. What is the role of the Industry Expert on the project?**

The industry expert serves to provide critical industry insight for technologies and to help define and guide appropriate and commercially relevant milestones for projects.

### **29. Can I have IRB approval as a milestone on my project?**

No, this is not a commercially viable milestone. Due to the short project timeline, a pending IRB submission or IRB approval (within 1 year) must be in place by the full application deadline. Funds may not be awarded if necessary IRB approvals are not obtained in a timely manner and delay the project start date beyond 3-months of the award notice.

### **30. Can I have publishing a paper as a milestone on my project?**

No, while we support publication of the resulting work, this is not a primary objective in line with the commercialization and technology transfer goals of the Accelerator Awards.

### **31. What is the earliest time I can access awarded funds?**

The funds are disbursed in quarterly tranches based upon the project milestones. The first tranche will be released April 1, 2020 at the start of the project period.

### **32. Do I have to start the project immediately once I receive the funds?**

It is expected that the PI is aware of the start date defined by the program and will be prepared to start the project as soon as the funds are released.

### **33. Are no-cost extensions allowed?**

No, no-cost extensions will not be permitted under the Accelerator Awards. PIs are expected to complete projects within the 12-month project period.

### **34. What are the reporting obligations?**

There are defined reporting obligations that must be adhered to during the Accelerator Award. These include: (i) project kickoff meeting, (ii) quarterly updates with the Accelerator Awards program and commercialization team, (iii) written quarterly progress reports (to be discussed in the meetings and for State of Ohio mandated reporting), (iv) mid-year project update, (v) final report within 30 days at the end of the project (vi) final pitch presentation. Details of reporting formats and deadlines will be provided to awarded projects.

### **Contact Information**

For more information or additional questions, please contact the Accelerator Awards team by email at [accelerator\\_awards@osu.edu](mailto:accelerator_awards@osu.edu).

Cheryl Turnbull  
Senior Director of New Ventures  
Corporate Engagement Office – New Ventures

Kate Schulhaus, PhD  
New Ventures Manager  
Corporate Engagement Office – New Ventures

Corine St-Gelais, PhD  
Grants & Contracts Specialist  
Corporate Engagement Office – New Ventures