National Science Foundation

DOE Laboratories of the Future Workshop Series

Ruth Shuman, Ph.D.
I-Corps and SBIR/STTR Program Director
rshuman@nsf.gov

Andre Marshall, Ph.D.
I-Corps Program Director
awmarsha@nsf.gov

https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps/teams
National I-Corps Program

I-Corps Program Vision

*Reducing risk associated with translating technologies from the laboratory to the marketplace*
What is I-Corps?

7-week entrepreneurial training program to

GET YOU “OUT OF THE LAB”

NOW “OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE”

to learn how to actually

EVALUATE MARKET OPPORTUNITY

You will “travel” (now virtually) to meet with

OVER 100 POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS,
Partners, and other stakeholders
I-Corps Program Aims

- Support commercialization of “Deep Technologies”
  - Primarily technologies resulting from fundamental discoveries in science and engineering at universities and research institutions
- Address skill and knowledge gap associated with transforming basic research into deep technology commercial ventures
  - Identify customer segments and value proposition; i.e., someone that cares and why
I-Corps Program Basics

- Real-world, hands-on experiential learning through customer and industry discovery
- Based on Steve Blank’s Lean LaunchPad course at Stanford
- A process to quickly assess commercial interest and feasibility

The Customer Discovery Method developed by Steve Blank & The Business Model Canvas popularized by Alex Osterwalder
National I-Corps Eligibility

Two Eligibility Pathways:

- Have received a prior research award from NSF in a related science or engineering field that has been active within the past 5 years
  - Lineage extends to PI, Co-PIs, Senior Personnel, Post-Docs, Grad Students and Professional Staff
- Have participated in an I-Corps Node or Site Regional Program and receive a recommendation to a National Cohort

Other Requirements:

- Must have a technology connection to a university, research institution
- Current agreements with other federal agencies: NASA, DHS, DoD
- Diversity and inclusion is a priority for NSF
National I-Corps Program History

I-Corps Success Story*

- Teams: >1900
- Participants: >5500
- Startups formed: 1036
- Startup funding: $760M
  - Public funding $425M
  - Private funding $335M

* From 2012 – 2020 Summer Cohorts

- Program launched in 2011
- Now recognized widely as an effective training program in the US and internationally
Submission Mechanics

- Form a Team: Entrepreneurial Lead (EL), Technical Lead (TL), Industry Mentor (IM)
- Participate in a Regional I-Corps Program
  - Receive letter of recommendation
- Submit an application through the National I-Corps portal: https://nsfgov.secure.force.com/icorps
- Schedule an interview with I-Corps staff
- Select a National I-Corps training Program
  - At least 3 per quarter: Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall
Recent Program Changes Due to COVID-19

- All 2021 Cohorts will be held virtually
  - Winter Cohorts filled – All Spring Cohorts available
- No Travel Required
- Customer Discovery Interviews will be conducted by phone or video conference
NSF National I-Corps Program

Thank You!

Questions?

I-Corps Teams Website: https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps/teams.jsp