

Food Systems Innovative Grant Program Announcement

Program Overview

The Food Systems Innovation Grant – a collaboration between the UC Davis Innovation Institute for Food & Health (IIFH) and Venture Catalyst launched in Fiscal Year 2020-21 – is one of the technology proof-of-concept programs managed by Venture Catalyst in collaboration with InnovationAccess. This program is aligned with the Venture Catalyst Science Translation and Innovative Research (STAIR™) Grant and focuses on funding proof-of-concept innovations that provide breakthrough solutions to global issues across the food system.

Early-stage technologies from university research are often perceived as too uncertain or too risky to attract funding to translate into commercial products or services. The lack of accessible funding creates a gap between basic research and early-stage commercialization efforts. The Food Systems Innovation Grant helps bridge this gap by providing funding and resources to translate basic UC Davis research with commercial potential by demonstrating proof-of-concept and establishing market viability, thus de-risking the innovation. The ultimate objective of the program is to develop technologies that attract entrepreneurs, industry, and investors willing to commercialize UC Davis technologies, resulting in societal and economic impacts. Successful projects will advance UC Davis technologies towards commercialization by achieving specific research and development milestones. Outcomes that might be enabled by Food Systems Innovation Grant funding include, but are not limited to:

- Building a working prototype or second iteration prototype to prepare for commercialization
- Generating translational data or research results to create more robust foundational IP
- Enabling patent claims
- Testing commercial and market feasibility
- Demonstrating scale-up development potential
- Producing results that support more competitive Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grant applications

Eligibility Criteria

Projects eligible for Food Systems Innovation Grant funding will feature an early-stage technology that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Aligns with IIFH's core focus on safe, sustainable, and secure nutrition accessible by all and addresses a food system challenge
- Has advanced beyond the basic research stage, but requires early proof-of-concept data to show feasibility for commercial potential
- Has demonstrated successful results in the research environment and is poised for commercialization pending a specific, targeted demonstration, test result, or prototype
- Has reached a critical stage of technology development, whereby specific questions pertaining to commercialization feasibility can be answered within the resource constraints of the program
- Has identified milestones that would overcome a specific hurdle to commercialization, enabling a technology to become more attractive for either licensing to an existing company or enabling the formation of a startup company within 1-2 two years of project completion

Eligible Applicants:

- Anyone with Principal Investigator (PI) status at UC Davis is eligible to apply for a Food Systems Innovation Grant
- Postdoctoral scholars and university staff may submit applications as Co-PI with an eligible PI

Grant Terms and Amounts

Up to \$50,000 is available for the Food Systems Innovation Grant in Fiscal Year 2020-2021. Approved projects may be eligible for up to \$50,000. Grants are for a single 12-month period from the date of grant funds disbursement. All submitted proposals must be limited in scope of work and budget, such that work can be completed within that 12-month period.

All applicants with eligible projects will be also be advanced for review through the STAIR Grant. Up to \$250,000 is available for the STAIR Grant Program in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Approved projects may be eligible for up to \$50,000. In addition, Venture Catalyst has engaged several partners to expand potential funding available to particular technologies and projects through the STAIR Grant program.

How to Apply

For more information and application instructions, visit the Venture Catalyst proof-of-concept programs website at: <http://research.ucdavis.edu/offices/vc/stair/>. You can email any questions you have to stairgrant@ucdavis.edu. **The application deadline is Tuesday, March 3, 2021, at 5:00 pm PST.**