

Food Systems Innovation Award Program: Request for Applications (FY 2021-22)

KEY DATES

Announcement Date: February 17, 2022

Application Deadline: April 5, 2022

Finalists' Pitch Presentation: May 10, 2022

Award(s) Announcement: Mid-June 2022

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Food Systems Innovation Award – 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 within the Office of Research. This program focuses on funding proof-of-concept innovations utilizing cutting-edge technologies to improve metabolic health outcomes by providing easily accessible food and health choices that support happier, healthier, longer lives for everyone. It is also focused on creating mutual benefit to participants: applicants gain feedback from experienced industry-relevant investors, and the investors gain insights into emerging game-changing technologies, while providing their expertise on the commercial landscape.

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 Food Systems Innovation Award helps bridge the gap between discovery and commercialization by providing two key resources:

1. An opportunity to showcase the research to investors for feedback and guidance
2. Funding that will help drive research to address market needs

The ultimate objective of the program is to develop metabolic health driven products and services that attract and build relationships with investors, entrepreneurs, and industry professionals to support the commercialization of UC Davis technologies, resulting in easily accessible food and health choices that support happier, healthier, longer lives for everyone.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process is an annual cycle, wherein applications will be selected based on the following criteria:

a. Executive Summary

Applicants will submit a 1-page executive summary using a form template (see attached) that will capture the problem, technology innovation (solution), market opportunity, customer (application), team and IP strategy. The summary should also contain some information on the potential metabolic health driven product or service the proposed work may lead to.

b. Selection of Finalists

Initial selection process will consist of screening the submitted executive summary that meets the minimum criteria. Those that receive investor interest will be invited to prepare a pitch and full budget with justification.

c. Finalists' Pitches & Award Selections

The selected applicants will be required to do a five-minute pitch presentation based on the magnitude of the problem, size of the market and impact the proposed work will have on the

progress toward commercialization. Presentation will be followed by a five-minute Q & A session. A rough template presentation will be provided.

DURATION AND AMOUNT OF FUNDING

In Fiscal Year 2021-22, up to \$50,000 is available for the Food Systems Innovation Award. Approved projects may be eligible for up to \$25,000 in each cycle. Funds are for a 12-month period from the date of award funds disbursement.

USE OF FUNDS

Food Systems Innovation Award funding may be used specifically for proof-of-concept data generation. This will cover direct costs. Examples of direct costs that may be included in the funding request are salary, tuition, supplies, reagents, or minor (non-capitalized) equipment. Travel costs are generally excluded from eligibility, except in rare cases.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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

- Aligns with IIFH's core focus on creating a world where easily attainable metabolic health leads to happier, healthier, longer lives for everyone.
- Has advanced beyond the basic research stage, but requires early proof-of-concept data to show feasibility for commercial potential.
- Research that 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.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Anyone with Principal Investigator (PI) status at UC Davis is eligible to apply for a Food Systems Innovation Award.

HOW TO APPLY

Submit your Application Form, 1-page Executive Summary and biographical sketch for the PI and/or co-PI to fsiaward@ucdavis.edu. You can download the application form, executive summary template and the RFA at the following URL:

<https://itc.ucdavis.edu/food-systems-innovation-award-program/>. You can email any questions you have to fsiaward@ucdavis.edu. **Application deadline is Tuesday April 5, 2022, at 5:00 PM PDT.**

EXPECTED OUTCOMES FROM PROOF-OF-CONCEPT AWARD

Significant outcomes that might be enabled by Food Systems Innovation Award funding include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- 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
- Producing results that support more competitive Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grant applications
- If the researcher(s) already has compelling data that addresses a market need, then funds can be used for testing the commercial and market feasibility
- Network with the investor ecosystem
- Gaining validation through third party testing or prototype development

In addition to enabling outcomes such as those listed above, the program also helps develop an innovative and entrepreneurial culture that extends the benefits of UC Davis research activities beyond the boundaries of the university. A key to achieving translational impact is obtaining feedback and advice from the investor community (angels, VCs) to awardees. Feedback will be invaluable to the program and to UC Davis researchers as they design and implement research plans to increase the commercial potential of UC Davis technology.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CONDITIONS

All potentially patentable IP developed under a Food Systems Innovation Award project will be assigned to the University of California.

Technologies that have been optioned or licensed to a company are not eligible to receive the Food Systems Innovation Award. However, technologies under a Letter Agreement with a company are eligible.

AWARD CONDITIONS

Awardees will provide their progress updates (in the form of a pitch presentation) after six months and after 12 months, at the end of project completion. Awardees will receive feedback from investors.