

The Corridor Early-Stage Innovation Fund

**the
florida
high tech
corridor**

early-stage innovation fund



The Florida High Tech Corridor and USF Research & Innovation are launching a new program to support early-stage innovations and applied research with significant commercial potential. These funds are meant to seed USF-developed technologies that could lead to industry investment, start-up creation, and/or licensing opportunities. USF researchers may request **up to \$25,000** to support USF research expenses associated with the further development of the target innovation. Initial funding has

been provided to support two pilot rounds of this program with three awards anticipated in each round (six awards total).

Key Considerations:

- Funding is intended to support USF-developed innovation and cannot be used to further develop an outside companies' existing technology.
- Funds can be used for faculty, student, and staff time, supplies and materials, lab access fees, and other associated USF research expenses. Funds cannot be used to support outside consultants or other non-USF expenses. Because these funds are internal to USF, no indirect costs will be applied to these awards. Please be sure to consult with your individual College or Dept. on any specific budgetary considerations.
- Awardees will have six months from the date of award to complete the outlined research.
- Multi-disciplinary projects with collaborations across multiple colleges and/or departments are highly encouraged.
- Given the substantial interest in this program, researchers and projects that have previously received significant Corridor funding through its Matching Grants Research Program may not be considered.
- If you have not already, be sure to [work with USF Tech Transfer to disclose the technology](#) central to your submission. Failure to do so may jeopardize your ability to protect this technology in the future

Key Dates:

Round 1 - COMPLETED:

- Friday, November 18, 2022 (5pm) - Letter of Intent Due
- Friday, January 13, 2023 (5pm) - Full Proposal Due
- Friday, March 3, 2023 - Awards Announced (Anticipated)
 - Funded research will coincide with summer 2023 term

Note: Proposals not funded in Round 1 are welcome to submit in future rounds. Researchers interested in resubmitting are highly encouraged to meet with program staff to receive feedback. Proposals resubmitted with little to no changes may not be considered.

Round 2:

- Friday, March 31, 2023 (5pm) - Letter of Intent Due

- Friday, May 19, 2023 (5pm) - Full Proposal Due
- Friday, June 30, 2023 - Awards Announced (Anticipated)
 - Funded research will coincide with fall 2023 term

Letter of Intent: To be considered for funding, interested applicants must submit via email a one-page Letter of Intent by the due date above to the **Florida High Tech Corridor** at rsch-fhtcorridor@usf.edu.

The letter of intent should include:

- **Lead Principal Investigator - Name, Title, Department, & College**
- **Other Participating Faculty/Staff, if applicable**
- **Project Title**
- **Funding Request Amount**
 - **Preliminary Budget:** Detailed justification is *not* needed at this time. Simply allocate funding into the anticipated budget categories.
- **Abstract:** In common language, provide an overview of the early-stage innovation, the research proposed, and potential commercial impact. One to two paragraphs maximum (limit to 250 words). If awarded, this abstract may be shared publicly. Do not disclose any private information.

Note: Only one Letter of Intent per lead PI will be accepted.

Full Proposal: Select researchers will be invited to submit a full proposal addressing the points below. Proposals must be submitted via email to the **Florida High Tech Corridor** at rsch-fhtcorridor@usf.edu by the due date above. Proposals must be a PDF. It should include a 1-page cover sheet with the project details, a narrative of no more than **THREE** pages (double spaced, 11 pt font), and a 1-page budget with budget justification. Additional details below.

Note: The review committee will be comprised of representatives from across USF and USF Research & Innovation, the Florida High Tech Corridor, and the local economic development community. The committee is not composed of peer researchers or technical experts. Reviewers will be focused on the translational and commercial potential of the innovation and the team’s ability to deploy this innovation to solve real-world challenges. Please write for this audience – provide adequate context and explanation, limit and simplify complex technical descriptions, define acronyms, etc. Proposals that do not adequately adhere to this guidance may not proceed to full committee review.

Proposal Coversheet (1 Page)

- **Lead Principal Investigator - Name, Title, Department, & College**
- **Other Participating Faculty/Staff, if applicable**
- **Project Title**
- **Funding Request Amount**
- **Abstract:** In common language, provide an overview of the early-stage innovation, the research proposed, and potential commercial impact. One to two paragraphs maximum (limit to 250 words). If awarded, this abstract may be shared publicly. Do not disclose any private information.
- **College Leadership Signature:** Proposals must be signed by the lead PI’s Dean, Associate Dean of Research, or appropriate College Leadership.

Proposal Narrative (3 Pages)

- **Background:** Provide a general description of the early-stage innovation and its place among the current state-of-the-art. Please identify any collaborators or co-inventors. Summarize the research and development you and your team have previously completed. What is the innovation's current patent status? Outline any previous funding (internal or external) that has been invested into this early-stage innovation.
- **Potential Commercial Viability*:** What problem or unmet need does this innovation address? What competitive advantage does the innovation offer over what is already available? How unique or novel is this solution? Who is the target market for this technology? Is there a demonstrated demand for a solution to this problem/unmet need? How have you determined this demand?
- **Project Plan:** Please outline the proposed research plan. What is the overall goal of the research effort? What tasks will be completed to achieve this goal? What results are expected? How will this research help to move the early-stage innovation further along towards commercialization?
- **Long-Term Commercialization Strategy*:** What is your anticipated path to commercialization for this early-stage innovation? What has informed this pathway/strategy? What steps have you previously taken to support this path (i.e. market research, networking, industry engagement, etc.)?
- **Follow-On Funding Strategy*:** Upon completion of the proposed research, how will additional funding be secured? How will those funds be deployed to advance the technology towards commercialization? Proposals with a specific future funding strategy will be viewed most favorably.

***Note:** Given the goals of this program, these sections (*) are especially critical. Be sure to spend adequate time thoroughly addressing these points with specific detail and well-founded justification for any claims or proposed strategies. Proposals that do not adequately adhere to this guidance may not proceed to full committee review.

Click here to review the [program rubric](#).

Proposal Budget (1 Page)

- **Budget & Justification:** Provide a one-page budget breakdown including budget justification. Provide the name and contact information of your fiscal & business administrator who will oversee fund transfer should the proposal be awarded.
 - Please be sure to consult with your individual College or Dept. on any specific budgetary considerations. i.e. Tuition waiver requirements.

When composing your proposal, please consider the [Corridor's targeted high-tech industry clusters](#) and [USF's strategic areas of focus](#). Proposals that align with these areas will be viewed most favorably.

Corridor's Targeted High-Tech Industry Clusters

- Aerospace & Aviation
- Agritechology
- Gaming, Entertainment, & eSports
- Financial Technology
- Information Technology
- Life Sciences & Medical Technology
- Microelectronics, Nanotechnology & Sensors
- Modeling, Simulation, & Training

- Optics and Photonics

- Energy & Environmental Science

USF's Strategic Areas of Focus

- Analytics & Data Science
- Biology by Design
- Design, Arts & Performance
- Global & National Security

- Healthy, Society, and Biomedical Science
- Social Justice & Human Rights
- Sustainability, Environmental & Oceanographic Sciences

The review committee expects to notify applicants of the funding decision within six weeks of the due date. Researchers will have six months from the date of award to complete the outlined research.

Reporting Requirements:

To capture impact and ensure that funds are spent in full towards the intended purpose, awardees are required to submit the following information within 30 days of the project period end date.

- Reconciliation of funds expended
- Summary of work completed
- Future workplan based on these accomplishments

Annual surveys of follow-on progress may be requested up to five years beyond the project period.

Awardees will be required to report major milestones associated with this technology to program staff – including external investments, company formation, licensing opportunities, etc..
