UMD I-Corps Teams - Guide to NSF National Application

UMD I-Corps staff is available to help you apply to the NSF National I-Corps Teams cohorts.

Please follow these steps when preparing your application:

Preliminary Steps:

1. Determine/confirm your eligibility.
   a. Applicants should have completed a [UMD Regional Introduction to I-Corps](#) course, which includes conducting at least 20 customer discovery interviews. If you are not certain about your status with regards to course completion, [contact us](#).
   b. NSF is interested in applicants who are commercializing federally-funded university research. In addition for NSF to consider your application, the technology underlying the effort must: 1) have an explicit connection to an Institution of Higher Learning (beyond personnel); 2) be consistent with NSF requirements for [intellectual merit](#); and 3) represent a deep technical innovation based on discovery in fundamental science and/or engineering.
   c. Gather information related to grants and funding that has supported your research.

2. Read the following three web pages carefully:
   a. NSF I-Corps cohort dates: https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps/teams.jsp
   b. NSF I-Corps Teams Solicitation https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf21552&org=NSF
   c. NSF I-Corps Teams FAQs https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2018/nsf18057/nsf18057.jsp

3. Notify the UMD Research Administrator in your department or school/college, to tell them that you intend to apply for an NSF I-Corps National Teams Award. After completing the Executive Summary and NSF Interview (steps 6 - 10 of this document), if successful, you will be invited to submit a "full proposal" through Fastlane or research.gov (as detailed in the solicitation) , the online platform used by NSF for grant submissions. This is done in coordination with your Research Administrator and usually has a very tight deadline of about 10 days, so it is important to alert them now of your plans.

Assembling your Team:

4. Determine your team composition.

a. All teams must have a Technical Lead (TL), Entrepreneurial Lead (EL), and Industry Mentor (IM). The Technical Lead is often, but not always, the Principal Investigator (PI) on the NSF I-Corps Teams proposal.
   i. FAQ #6 in the NSF I-Corps Teams FAQ link above describes team roles in more detail.
b. If you need help finding a an Industry Mentor (IM), UMD suggests the following:
   i. Use the UMD [Innovation Gateway](#) to find programs and resources aligned with your innovation
   ii. Join the [DC I-Corps LinkedIn group](#) (available to participants of teams who have completed regional I-Corps courses)
   iii. Join the [Terrapins Connect](#) community
   iv. Attend [Dingman Fridays](#)
   v. Meet with the [Entrepreneurs in Residence](#) at UMD's UM Ventures
   vi. Attend Virtual [Entrepreneur Office Hours (EOH)](#) through Mtech
   vii. UMD alumni can join the UMD [Terrapin Entrepreneur Network](#) (TEN) for Terp Entrepreneurs
   viii. Continue to expand your own network through your advisors, colleagues, and partners and customers from your I-Corps interviews.
   ix. Continue to expand your network (and connect on LinkedIn) with the mentors, instructors, and other teams from your I-Corps cohort.
5. When the entire team is identified, make sure there is at least one [national cohort](#) with dates for which you are all entirely available.

Preparing the Executive Summary:

6. Before submitting an executive summary, you must [create a user account](#) with NSF.
7. Then log in to review the NSF I-Corps Teams [Executive Summary](#) application form
   a. Start to draft responses to the fields on this form in your own Google Doc or Word Doc.
   b. In your Executive Summary Lineage Statement, be sure to use the following wording as dictated by NSF: "The Regional I-Corps Training Program award conferring lineage is: The DMV I-Corps Node at the University of Maryland"
8. [Schedule a meeting](#) with the UMD I-Corps Team to review, discuss, and confirm:
   a. Team composition
   b. Team commitment
   c. Your Executive Summary
   d. National cohort logistics
9. Finalize and [submit](#) (You must login using your user account from #6 above first) your Executive Summary.

The NSF Interview Process:

10. Usually you will be invited for an interview with NSF within 1-2 days of submitting your Executive Summary.

a. Follow the instructions in the invitation from NSF to schedule the interview.
b. Note that the interview is with your entire team. Be sure to select a time when your whole team is available.
c. Notify the UMD I-Corps team of your interview details for our records.
11. Following the interview, there are three common outcomes:
a. You may be invited to submit a full proposal
b. You may be asked to schedule a second interview with a second NSF I-Corps Program Officer or NSF Expert.
c. You may be rejected.
12. In all cases, notify UMD I-Corps so we can help you prepare for next steps.

Final Proposal Submission:
13. If you are invited to submit a proposal, you usually only have 10 days to do so. Notify your UMD Research Administrators ASAP and begin working on your proposal, which will be submitted through Fastlane or Research.gov (as detailed in the solicitation) through the UMD PreAward process in your department/school.
a. UMD I-Corps is not responsible for facilitating or managing the proposal writing process.
14. Keep the UMD I-Corps team updated on status, and upon acceptance into a national cohort schedule a time with us so we can help you prepare for the cohort.

FAQs

1) **When preparing the $50,000 grant budget, these guidelines apply:**
a) 10% ($5,000) must be budgeted for university overhead
b) You may request stipends in your budget for team members:
   i) The EL may receive up to $15,000
   ii) The TL may receive up to $10,000
   iii) The IM can not be compensated
c) The Budget should include $5,000 per team to cover participation fees in the required course.
d) The remaining funds should be budgeted for costs associated with Customer Discovery (including, but not limited to Current or Future Travel, Attending Conferences, LinkedIn Premium membership, books for the program, etc.).
e) If at the end of the 7 week National I-Corps program there are funds remaining, your team may use up to $5,000 towards MVP development.
f) For additional budgetary questions or details reach out to Ruth Shuman, I-Corps Program Director at NSF.