

**TIP** Technology,  
Innovation and  
Partnerships



# National Science Foundation I-Corps Program Presentation for NASA SBIR/STTR Awardees

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Creates breakthrough technologies | Meets national needs | Empowers all

# What is I-Corps?

An entrepreneurial training program  
*Utilizing experiential learning coupled with  
First-hand investigation of the industry ecosystem to*

**EVALUATE YOUR MARKET/COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY**

You will interview (virtually or in-person)  
**potential customers,**  
partners, and other stakeholders



# I-Corps Program Basics

- Real-world, hands-on experiential learning through customer discovery
- Based on Steve Blank's Lean LaunchPad course at Stanford University
- 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



# I-Corps Program Mission

***Reduce the risk associated with translating technologies from the laboratory to the marketplace***





# I-Corps Program Aims

- **Support translation and commercialization of “Deep Technologies”**
  - Primarily technologies resulting from fundamental discoveries in science and engineering
- **Address skill and knowledge gaps associated with transforming basic research into deep technology commercial ventures**
  - Identify customer segments and value proposition; i.e., identify beachhead market and market opportunity

Most companies fail because they develop something *that does not have customers*

# Two NSF I-Corps Programs For NASA Awardees

## ➤ **Beat-the-Odds Boot Camp**

- For NASA's Phase I SBIR Awardees

## ➤ **National I-Corps Program**

- For NASA's Phase I STTR Awardees

## Beat-the-Odds Boot Camp

- An introductory version of the I-Corps program (introductory lecture plus 3 class lessons)
- Requires 30 interviews
- Provides an introduction to the customer discovery process and business model validation designed for early-stage companies
- Draws on the methods and customer discovery curriculum used in the NSF I-Corps Program
- Taught by National I-Corps instructors
- An immersive experience that helps companies to determine product-market fit, develop stronger business models, and market strategies



## Beat-the-Odds Boot Camp Program Highlights

- **You are encouraged to participate as early as possible** – The information will inform your technical and commercial plans
  - Anticipate market and technical Pivots
- **You participate as a team** - Typically the Principal Investigator and CEO/or lead of business development, plus an industry mentor
- **Participate with other awardees** – Organized into “Pods” of 6 – 8 companies with one instructor
- **Requirements** - complete pre-course assignments (watch videos), conduct 30 customer interviews, attend Pod sessions and Office hours, give final lessons learned presentation





## Beat-the-Odds Boot Camp Timeline

- Complete pre-course videos - (Pre-kick-off)
- Attend the Kick-off Webinar (2 hours) – Week 0
- Participate in Pod Sessions - Weeks 1, 3, and 5 (1.5 hours)
- Office Hours with your instructor - Weeks 2, 4, and 6
- Give Final Lessons Learned Presentation - Week 7



# Beat-the-Odds Boot Camp Schedule

- **2024 Fall Boot Camp –**

**Boot Camp Schedule: All times are in Eastern Time**

Kick-off	Aug 29	1:00 – 3:00 pm
Pod Session 1	Sep 3 - 5	TBD
Office Hours	Sep 9 - 13	TBD
Pod Session 2	Sep 16 - 18	TBD
Office Hours	Sep 23 - 27	TBD
Pod Session 3	Sep 30 – Oct 2	TBD
Office Hours	Oct 7 - 11	TBD

Final Presentation Day                      Oct 15                      10:00 am – 4:00 pm

- You will be contacted to register
- You will be assigned to one Pod date and time (1.5 hrs) for each Session
  - Pod assignments and times determined following the close of registration
- You will be asked to sign up for Office Hours
  - Instructors post a sign-up sheet for Office Hours after the first Pod Session



## Boot Camp Use of Funds

- Funds may be used for
  - Compensation to support time and effort
    - At the same pay rate as your Phase I award
  - Travel for customer discovery in the US
    - Includes conference fees but not exhibitor booths
  - Tools to facilitate virtual customer discovery
    - Zoom, Calendly, LinkedIn

For NASA Phase I STTR Awardees

# National SBIR/STTR I-Corps Program Features

- National I-Corps training developed specifically for Phase I SBIR and STTR companies
- Includes NSF, NASA, and DHS Phase I (and some Phase II) company teams
- Includes 10 interactive class lectures to cover the Business Model Canvas
- Requires teams conduct 100 interviews
- Focused on identifying product-market fit of your technology and your beachhead market
  - To improve your Phase II Proposal and chances for private funding and future commercial success



## How to apply ...

- **Form a Team:**
    - Entrepreneurial Lead (EL): Typically, the CEO or the person leading business development
    - Technical Lead (TL): Typically, the CTO or PI of the SBIR/STTR award
    - Industry Mentor (IM): Industry expert with business experience; independent from the technology development; business advisor, entrepreneur
    - You may include additional team members; e.g., Co-EL or Co-TL to your team.
  - **Submit an Executive Summary application through the National I-Corps portal:** <https://nsfiip.force.com/mywork>
  - **Schedule an interview with I-Corps staff**
- \*May elect a PI-of-Record (submits proposal but does not participate)**

# Submit an Executive Summary Application

## Executive Summary Preparation and Submission

- ✓ Complete and submit I-Corps Teams Application Form
  - <https://nsfiip.force.com/icorps/s/login/>
  - Describe team members
  - Describe technology
  - Describe commercial application
  - Describe commercial plan



# Schedule an interview with I-Corps Staff

## Video conference team interview

- **Schedule interview with NSF that includes all Team members**
- **All must agree to program requirements**
  - **Minimum of 100 interviews**
  - **Must be present for all events including Kick-off, Weekly Sessions, and Closing Meetings**
  - **Commitment to customer discovery process**
  - **Commitment to commercialization**



# Once You're Accepted

- **Confirm Your Cohort**

**One All SBIR/STTR Cohort is available through the remainder of 2024**

- **20-24 Teams per Cohort**
- **Fall SBIR/STTR Schedule**

KICKOFF                                      Oct 28 - 31 (Mon - Thurs)

WEEKLY SESSIONS                      Thursdays: 11/7, 11/14, 11/21, 12/5, 12/12

LESSONS LEARNED                      Dec 16 - 17 (Mon - Tue)

- **3 (or more) All SBIR/STTR Cohorts planned in 2025 (dates to be announced)**
- **Your team will be added to the roster of the cohort you select**





# Program Description

- **Kick-off (3.5 Days – 15 interviews)**
  - Introductions on Day 0
  - Lectures, team presentations, customer interviews, instructor feedback, office hours
- **Weekly Sessions (weekly for 5 weeks)**
  - 17+ interviews per week, lectures, office hours, instructor feedback, presentations
- **Closing – Lessons Learned (1.5 Days)**
  - 100+ interviews completed, final video and presentation



## National I-Corps Program History

# I-Corps Stats for Companies formed\*

- **Startup funding: \$3.166B**
  - Public funding \$1.016B
  - Private funding \$2.150B

Widely recognized as an effective training program in the U.S. and internationally

\* From 2012 – 2022 Summer Cohorts

# NSF National I-Corps Program for SBIR/STTR Grantees

**Thank You!**  
**Questions?**

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