Request for Applications (RFA)
Microsoft Innovation Acceleration Award

PURPOSE:

In an effort to promote entrepreneurship and adoption of leading digital technologies in a responsible and inclusive manner, Johns Hopkins Technology Ventures (JHTV) and Microsoft Corporation announce the second year of translational support called the Microsoft Innovation Acceleration Award. This spring, at least three awardees will receive:

- A grant of up to $50,000 to advance technology or support startups focused on using Digital Solutions, Computer Science, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence to use modern solutions to address societal problems and create markets.
- Engagement with a Microsoft technical team of cloud solution architects and developers
- Admission to Microsoft for Startups, an exclusive program which includes:
  - Up to $120,000 in Microsoft Azure Cloud credits for up to 24 months
  - Licenses for 25 instances of Microsoft Office365
  - Licenses for up to 10 instances of Microsoft Visual Studio Enterprise Edition
  - Technical support
  - Commercialization / business support, Go-to-Market and Co-selling readiness consultation from a Microsoft Partner Development Manager.

ELIGIBILITY:

Johns Hopkins University faculty, students, and affiliated startups.

KEY DATES AND APPLICATION WEBSITE:

Application Deadline: April 11, 2021
Awardees Announced: April 26, 2021

APPLICATION COMPONENTS:

- Problem/Opportunity being addressed:
  - Describe the specific problem you are trying to solve or opportunity you are trying to address with an emphasis on how digital solutions can play a key role.
  - Additional information should describe any studies or data generated as well as any intellectual property secured for the technology.
- Solution and Value Proposition:
  - Describe the potential product/service as well as target customers, and why they are likely users/purchasers.
- Competing Products and Companies
- Potential Addressable Market:
  - Describe the size of the potential addressable market in terms of number of users/customers.
  - The average revenue per user/customer (which can be used to compute the total market size).
  - An estimated five year annual growth rate of these numbers.
- 12 Month Action Plan, Impact of Award and Risk Factors:
  - Describe the general development plan.
Specific milestones you are looking to accomplish over the next 12 months.
Why these milestones are significant/impactful.
The primary risk factors involved.
- Funding raised to date (include specific amount and sources)
- Proposed Budget (specifically, how the grant will be spent)
- Team description (individuals, affiliations and roles)
- Anything else you believe is important to consider

REVIEW PROCESS:

- Once your application is submitted, expect to receive an email acknowledging its receipt.
- Your application will be evaluated by external advisors and members of the FastForward and JHTV staff.
- After your application is evaluated, you will be contacted within two weeks to discuss any refinements to your application that are needed. Your application will be evaluated according to these SCORING CRITERIA.
- Finalists will be selected to present a five minute pitch (maximum ten slides) to judges.
- As part of the Award you will be encouraged to work with FastForward and JHTV to identify if a business mentor might be useful to help advance your business thesis during the duration of the award. You will also be encouraged to participate in entrepreneurial training activities where appropriate such as Customer Discovery Training (I-Corps).

SCORING CRITERIA:

- Opportunity addressed
- Viability of proposed solution
- Go-to-Market readiness
- Potential for global impact and economic development locally
- Award impact on advancement
- Team members and diversity
- Coachability

For each section, reviewers will use the following system for scoring:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 – Excellent</td>
<td>The applicant has included all of the required information and has made a very convincing argument in support of the criterion being scored.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 – Above Average</td>
<td>The applicant has included all of the required information and has made a reasonable argument in support of the criterion being scored.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 – Good</td>
<td>The applicant has included most of the required information and has made a fair argument in support of the criterion being scored.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 – Fair</td>
<td>The applicant has provided most of the required information but has not made a fair argument in support of the criterion being scored.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 – Poor/ Missing</td>
<td>The applicant has not provided enough of the required information to make a fair argument in support of the criterion being scored.</td>
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PROGRAM INFORMATION:

For further information, please contact Mark VanderZyl at mark.vanderzyl@jhu.edu.