



U.S. Small Business
Administration

Growth Accelerator Fund Competition

2024 Competition Overview

Pre-Application Webinar

January 16, 2024

AmericasSeedFund.us/accelerators

accelerators@sba.gov

Agenda

- Overview of the Prize Competition
- Eligibility
- Submission Slide Decks
- Important Links
- Q&A

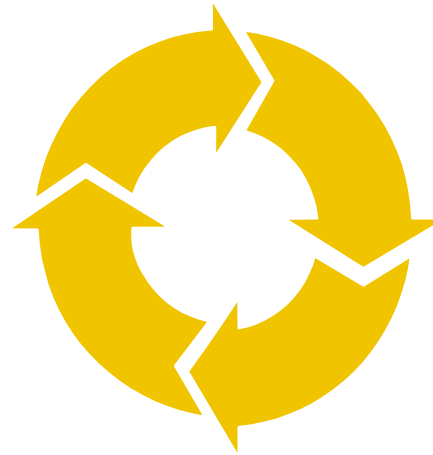
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SBA Office of Investment and Innovation Programs

Connecting public and private sector resources and capital with high growth entrepreneurs

Small Business Investment Company Program (SBIC)

- \$42B in Assets Under Management
- \$8B in Financing to small businesses in FY23
- 318 Private Funds (Private Equity, Private Credit, Venture Capital, Growth Equity, Buyout, and Fund-of-Funds)



Small Business Innovation Research & Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR)

- \$4B+ in small business R&D awards annually
- 11 Participating Federal Agencies
- Funding for Federal and State Technology Partnership Program (FAST) SBIR/STTR Assistance

Investment & Innovation Ecosystem Development

- Growth Accelerator Fund Competition (GAFC)
- Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC)
- Ecosystem Support Organization Convening, Resources and Education

Investment & Innovation Ecosystem Development

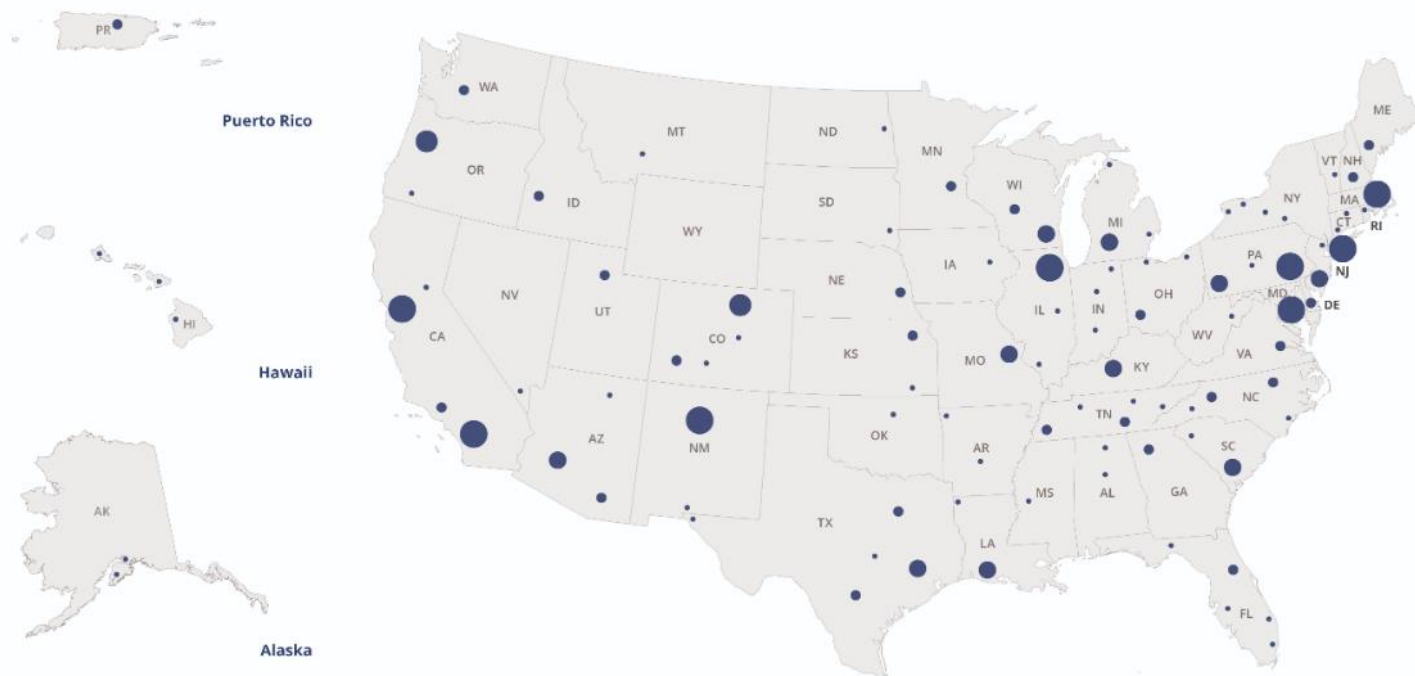
Building an inclusive public-private support ecosystem for all innovators.

Foster and facilitate a thriving national ecosystem that advances equitable investment in innovative high growth small businesses.

The SBA Growth Accelerator Fund Competition (GAFC)

SBA launched the Growth Accelerator Fund Competition (GAFC) in 2014 to stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship across the country.

sbir.gov/accelerators
accelerators@sba.gov



Total GAFC prize awards since 2014	427
Total GAFC prize funds since 2014	\$26,600,000
Number of competitions 2014-2023	7
Number of states/territories represented	52
Number of unique winners	314

Growth Accelerator Fund Competition Purpose



Speed the launch, growth and scale of STEM/R&D-focused small businesses through impactful and inclusive approaches.



Nurture a national equitable entrepreneurship ecosystem by building new collaborations that strengthen connections between Ecosystem Support Organizations through the SBA.

Competition Goals

- **Increase the pipeline and success** of STEM/R&D-focused entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- Increase the success of STEM/R&D-focused entrepreneurs in **accessing capital and resources** to advance their businesses.
- Incentivize innovation ecosystem stakeholders to provide **equitable access** to resources for underserved communities and industries.
- **Catalyze partnerships and relationships** between stakeholder groups to strengthen the national innovation ecosystem.
- **Connect both new and established participants** in the national innovation ecosystem.

Competition Goals

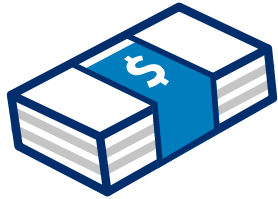
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**Stage 1
Catalyze**

Prizes

Up to \$5,750,000 in cash prize awards

Stage 1 *Catalyze*

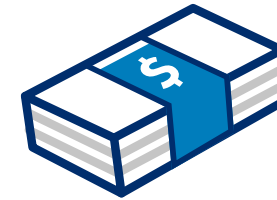


\$50,000

Up to \$3,000,000

To Catalysts for planning to grow the innovation ecosystem around a Theme Area

Stage 2 *Accelerate*



**\$50,000 -
\$150,000**

To Accelerate Partnerships (led by Catalysts) for supporting underserved STEM/R&D entrepreneurs

Prize Structure

Stage 1 Submissions Due
February 16, 2024

Winners Announced April 2024

Stage 2 Submissions Due
June 2024

Stage 1 Catalyze
\$50k each

Ecosystem Building Activities

Stage 2 Accelerate
\$50k - \$150k each

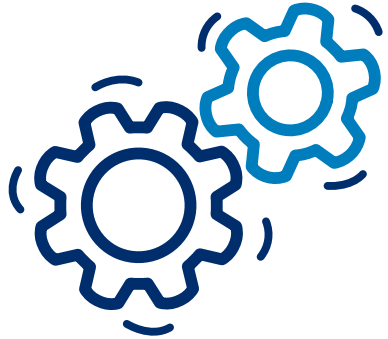
- Ecosystem builders (Catalysts) focus on a Theme Area
- Ecosystem building activities to recruit and/or support Accelerators
- How you amplify the impact Accelerators have for small businesses
- Submissions posted publicly to facilitate connections with Accelerators

- Catalysts
 - Host ecosystem building activities, such as co-design workshops or Strategic Doing sessions
 - Recruit Accelerators to support Theme Area
 - Identify match or in-kind resource support for Accelerators
 - Close collaboration with SBA

- Accelerators submit:
 - How they will support small businesses
 - What value-add they are looking for from a Catalyst
 - Assessment of Catalyst winners, identifying preferred Catalyst partner
- Participating Catalysts win additional \$50k to support Accelerator network
- Opportunity for Bonus Prizes

Stage One: Catalyze

\$50,000 cash prizes awarded to organizations (Catalysts) to catalyze relationships between aligned stakeholders (Ecosystem Partners) that lead to the development of Growth Accelerator Partnerships

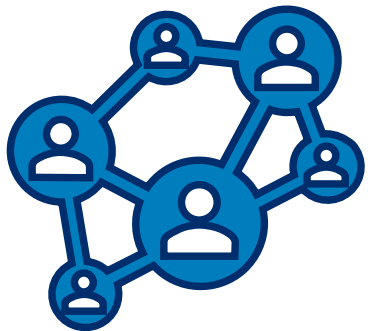


- Catalysts work collaboratively with Ecosystem Partners to bring additional resources, deepen network connections, and develop strategies that amplify the impact and success of the Growth Accelerator Partnership and the STEM/R&D-focused entrepreneurs and small businesses it serves.
- **SBA encourages creative models for ecosystem building. SBA welcomes Stage One submissions from a broad range of organizations with a collaborative vision to nurture a national ecosystem for equitable access to entrepreneurship.**

Use of Stage One Prize Funds

SBA expects Catalyst winners to use Stage One funds for ecosystem building activities, including but not limited to:

- Recruitment of new, community-connected Ecosystem Partners
- Co-design with Ecosystem Partners
- Establishment of novel partnerships
- Strengthening existing alliances among stakeholders (including public, private, non-profit, and academic partners)
- Developing resources to support Growth Accelerator Partnership impact during Stage Two
- Creating a new ecosystem-focused accelerator model



The award funding from SBA is to be used to fund the operating budget for Catalysts and cannot be used for direct investing in small businesses or startups. Funding may be reserved for proposed Growth Accelerator Partnership activities at Stage Two.

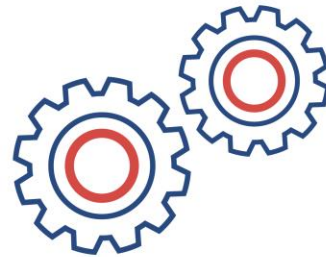
THEME AREAS



National and Economic Security

Including but not limited to:

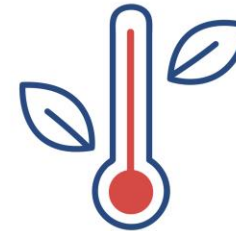
- National Security and Defense
- Artificial Intelligence
- Microelectronics
- Advanced Computing and Software
- Quantum Computing
- Human-Machine Interfaces
- Other Critical and Emerging Technologies



Domestic Manufacturing and Production

Including but not limited to:

- Advanced Manufacturing R&D
- Supply Chain Resiliency
- Critical and Resilient Infrastructure
- AgTech and Agricultural Innovation
- Other Supply Chain, Infrastructure, and Manufacturing Technologies



Sustainability and Biotechnology

Including but not limited to:

- Energy and Sustainability
- Biotechnology
- Climate and Environment
- Public Health
- Renewable Energy Generation and Storage
- Electric Vehicles
- Blue Economy
- Other Climate, Energy, and Life Science Technologies

Competition Guidelines

This webinar is not intended to cover all details pertaining to the competition guidelines.

You are responsible for reviewing the full and complete competition guidelines at: AmericasSeedFund.us/accelerators

AmericasSeedFund.us/accelerators
accelerators@sba.gov

Who Can Compete?



Private entities (for- and non-profits) such as corporations or other organizations, that are incorporated or organized in and maintain a primary place of business in the U.S.

Non-Federal government entities, such as states, counties, tribes, and municipalities

Academic Institutions based in the U.S.

Individuals or teams that are U.S. citizens or permanent residents and at least 18 years old at the time of submission

Eligibility

Not Eligible

- The following are NOT eligible:
 - Federal entities
 - Federal employees acting within the scope of their employment
 - SBA employees and SBA contractors
 - Individuals or organizations that are currently suspended or debarred by the federal government

Important Dates

Stage One Catalyze

Submission Period: January 8 to **February 16, 2024** (midnight in your time zone)

Screening, Judging, and Vetting Period: February – April 2024

Stage One Winners Announced: April 2024

Stage Two Accelerate

Submission Period: June to July 2024

Screening, Judging, and Vetting Period: July – August 2024

Stage Two Winners Announced: September 2024

Submission Package

Contestant Information: Submission Portal at AmericasSeedFund.us/accelerators

Submission Slide Deck: A **PDF** version of a slide deck (no more than **13 slides**) and must address all items, in the order listed. The deck will not be made public. A standard, 11-point minimum font size applies (tables, images, and illustrations may use a reduced font size not less than 8-point and may be landscape). No more than 10 MB.

One-slide Summary (public): A single presentation slide that summarizes information about your organization and the ecosystem you are working to build that may be used to attract new Ecosystem Partners. If selected, the one-slide summary will be made public.

Video Narrative: A video of not more than **ninety (90) seconds** that describes how the applicant is uniquely qualified to catalyze the entrepreneurship ecosystem around its selected theme. The video must be posted to a public site (such as YouTube or Vimeo) and be accessible to Competition judges. If selected, the video may be made public.

Submission Slide Deck

Stage One: Catalyze

Submission Slide Deck

Slide 1: Summary Information

- Name of Primary Contestant (entity)
- City and State/Territory
- Website of Contestant
- Contact Person (First & Last Names)
- Contact Email and Phone
- Other Key Team Members (Names)
- Theme Area
- Link to Video Narrative

Slide 2-3: Ecosystem Vision

- Your organization's mission
- Your vision of a thriving ecosystem in the selected Theme Area(s)
- Your organization's experience and activities in the selected Theme Area(s)
- How you will augment the ecosystem of support to enable new opportunities and address challenges in the selected Theme Area(s)

Submission Slide Deck cont'd

Slide 4-5: Broadening Participation in the Innovation Economy

- How your organization currently supports inclusive innovation, and how you will support and expand access to the innovation economy in your Theme Area(s) for entrepreneurs from underserved communities
- How your organization defines and measures success
- How you will use Stage One prize funds to encourage new entrants (including Ecosystem Partners with roots in underserved communities) to engage with the innovation ecosystem and participate in the Growth Accelerator Partnership

Slide 6-8: Overall Plan for the Award

- Your current plan for Stage One and how this plan will contribute to forging a successful Growth Accelerator Partnership for submission in Stage Two
- How you will deploy new and/or existing resources (including Stage One prize funds) to catalyze collaborative partnerships in innovation ecosystems
- Your value proposition to stakeholders (including Ecosystem Partners, entrepreneurs, etc.) as an ecosystem builder (e.g., resources, knowledge, expertise, and experiences)
- How you will build capacity and scale a network of resources to support and sustain a successful Growth Accelerator Partnership at Stage Two

Submission Slide Deck cont'd

Slide 9-10: Implementation and Learning Agenda

- What you will pilot in Stage One to catalyze new collaborations with Ecosystem Partners, and how that will assist in the development of a Stage Two Growth Accelerator Partnership
- What risk factors you anticipate, how you will mitigate/overcome these risks, and what success looks like at the end of Stage One
- What organizational and staff resources you will deploy to implement your Stage One plan

Slide 11-12: Ecosystem Building Partnerships

- Former, current, or future partnerships/working relationships with federal, state, regional, and/or local entities you would like to highlight
- Specific details on the effectiveness of past collaboration efforts
- How your organization will leverage other available resources to support a Growth Accelerator Partnership
- Your interest in and ability to support new Ecosystem Partners
- Characteristics, skills, or assets you value in potential Ecosystem Partners
- The role you envision for potential Ecosystem Partners to achieve the vision of a thriving ecosystem in the selected Theme Area(s)

Slide 13: Additional Information at Contestant's Discretion

- Contestant may use this slide to provide any additional information that would be useful for the submission.

One-Slide Summary (public)

Stage One: Catalyze

One-Slide Summary (will be made public if selected)

- Make your own public-facing, one-slide submission summary that can be used to explain to potential Ecosystem Partners who you are and your vision for a Growth Accelerator Partnership.
- There is no template, so feel free to present the information as you see fit. Please make any text readable in a standard printout and conference room projection.

Video Narrative (public)

Stage One: Catalyze

Video Narrative (will be made public if selected)

A video of not more than 90 seconds that can be used to explain to potential Growth Accelerator partners who you are and your ecosystem vision.

Describe:

- How your organization is uniquely qualified to catalyze an inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystem around your selected Theme and implement your proposed plan
- The value you bring to the ecosystem
- What you look for in Ecosystem Partners
- What you plan to do with Stage One prize funding that will lead to the Growth Accelerator Partnership proposal for Stage Two

The video serves as a first introduction of your organization and vision to reviewers and potential Ecosystem Partners.

Post your publicly accessible video online (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo).

Be creative and produce a video that conveys the required information in exciting and interesting ways but remember that time-consuming activities that only improve production values (i.e., technical elements such as décor, lighting, and cinematic techniques) are not necessary.

Selection of Winners

- **Screening & Vetting**

- SBA will review submissions for completeness and Contestant eligibility
- SBA, at its sole discretion, may request clarifying/explanatory information
- Contestants selected for awards will be vetted by SBA for, among other things, conflicts of interest with the Agency

- **Winners Selection**

- SBA will choose winners whose submissions best satisfy the Competition criteria and present the greatest potential for success
- SBA may also take into account the geographic location and dispersal of Contestants, the extension of services to underserved populations, industry diversity, the risk posed by the Contestant's organization, and similar considerations when selecting winners
- No less than 50% of GAFC prizes will go to first-time winners & no less than 50% of GAFC prizes go to Contestants located in the 29 states/territories with the fewest # of SBIR/STTR Phase I awards (refer to prize competition rules)

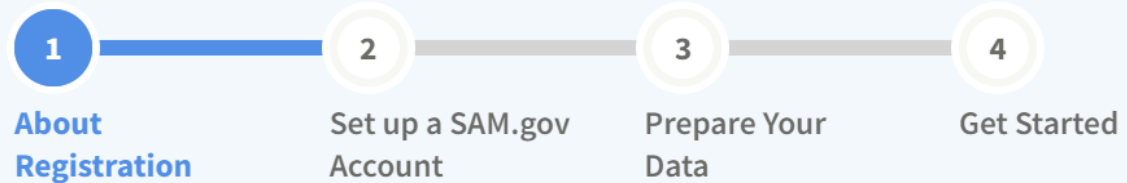
Register in SAM.gov

SAM.gov is an official website of the United States government. SAM.gov is FREE to use. There is no charge to get a Unique Entity ID, register your entity, and maintain your entity registration at SAM.gov.

[SAM.gov | Entity Registrations](#)

Before You Get Started

Review these steps to choose which option is right for you. You can register to bid and apply for federal awards or you can request a Unique Entity ID only without having to complete a registration.



1 About Registration

If you want to apply for federal awards as a prime awardee, you need a **registration**.

A registration allows you to bid on government contracts and apply for federal assistance. As part of registration, we will assign you a Unique Entity ID.

To see comprehensive instructions and checklist for entity registration, download our [Entity Registration Checklist](#) [🔗](#).

Important Links

Review the complete competition guidelines at: AmericasSeedFund.us/accelerators

Attend the Theme Area webinar on January 31, 2024, at 2 pm ET. Register here: <https://bit.ly/2024GAFCThemes>

Submit your Stage One application: bit.ly/2024GAFCStageOne

Send your questions to Accelerators@sba.gov

Responses to all questions will be posted publicly as an FAQ document weekly at: AmericasSeedFund.us/accelerators

View 2023 GAFC Stage One Catalyze winners here: <https://bit.ly/GAFC23Directory>