



# Acorn Innovation Grants 2023

**Maximum Award: \$16,250**

The MA Acorn Innovation Grant is intended to support the demonstration of the viability of a technology developed at Massachusetts research universities with commercialization potential. Awards could be used to further develop a prototype or to gather additional data to demonstrate proof of concept or to obtain data that shows how the technology compares to existing technologies and what the competitive advantages are. The Acorn Awards are designed to fund small, rapidly accomplishable projects to demonstrate the technology features such that additional proof of concept or commercialization funding can be obtained. To be eligible for an award, applicants must be a Principal Investigator at a Massachusetts academic research center with the technology disclosed to your institution. Up to 12 awards of \$16,250 each will be granted.

## Schedule for Acorn Innovation Grants 2023

October 17, 2022	RFP Launched. Open Solicitation.
October 28, 2022	Applications due with a 3 min pitch video
November 16, 2022	Winners notified
December 9, 2022	Contracts must be under agreement
January 2023	Announcement of award recipients

If you have any questions, contact Priya Yadav from MassVentures at [pyadav@mass-ventures.com](mailto:pyadav@mass-ventures.com)

## Application Information

### Technology areas of focus:

- Life Sciences
  - Therapeutics
  - Diagnostics
  - Medical Device
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Physical Sciences
  - Advanced Materials
  - Artificial Intelligence
  - Photonics
  - Robotics
  - Quantum computing
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed applications with a 3 min pitch video must be submitted by October 28, 2022. Applications should be concise, yet complete in description. Reviewers with technical and business backgrounds will be carefully selected; however, they may not be familiar with your particular technology. Provide information that will enable them to judge the technical feasibility. Do not disclose any proprietary information.

**You can upload your 3 min pitch video or provide a link to your 3 min pitch.** Your video can be recorded as a Zoom session sharing 4-5 slides and with your webcam. It should include: (1) Unmet need that your technology is addressing, (2) A brief description of the technology solution, (3) Competitive advantage of the technology vs incumbents, (4) What you will accomplish with the Acorn grant.

Applications that are not submitted by the closing deadline will not be considered in this solicitation.

## **Process for Awards**

The funds are awarded through an external review process judged by a pool of independent experts. The steps in the process are as follows:

- Proposals and 3 min video pitch are received and distributed to industry experts for review of technical merit and feasibility.
- Winners are selected and notified, and feedback is provided to all finalist teams.

**Note: If you receive an award from the Acorn Innovation Grant, the PI, campus, and award will be disclosed to the public.**

The MassVentures staff oversees the process and approves the final recommendations from the external reviewers. MassVentures determinations are final and not subject to discussion. **In addition, MassVentures reserves the right to withdraw an applicant if the applicant violates any criteria in the application guidelines or does not provide sufficient information in the proposal.**

## **Judging Criteria**

The reviewers will be asked to consider the following:

- Technical merit
- Commercialization potential and business viability
- Impact of Project Plan; and
- Project team and its ability to execute the plan

### **UMass applicants:**

If the PI currently has an active proposal under consideration for an OTCV Technology Development Award, the PI may also apply for this award, but as a general rule UMass will not allow one project to claim funds from both sources. PIs should disclose if they have support from ACORN when applying to UMass grants.

## **Project Criteria**

The project must be able to start on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022 with a final report due on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

## **Uses of Funds**

Typical use of funds (maximum \$16,250) include:

- to conduct further defined research on an invention that will lead to proof of concept or prototypes.
- to undertake testing of a technology or material to obtain initial data on performance.

- to develop a more user-friendly software interface.
- to send a material out to independent third party for testing under industrial conditions; and
- hire outside expert consultants to validate technology.

As the awards are so small, do not include overhead in the budget.

**Please note that funds may not be used for the following:**

- basic research.
- legal expenses to advance intellectual property protection.
- publicity expenses (e.g., the development of marketing materials).
- legal and other expenses of business formation and operation.
- attendance at scientific conferences; and
- purchase of computer or other unrelated equipment.

## **Timeline**

The award will be valid for work to be completed by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

The award recipients must submit a formal final report on the research completed, milestones achieved, new technologies disclosed, use of funds, and commercialization activities. It is also anticipated that throughout the award period the recipient will maintain contact with MassVentures on commercialization plans for the technology.

## **Proprietary Information**

It is the policy of MassVentures to keep your information confidential, but we cannot guarantee its security. Application materials are shared with a panel of independent reviewers and may be subject to public disclosure requirements in the future. Applicants should only submit publicly available and other non-confidential information about their technology in the proposal. Generally, technology can be described in broad terms that do not require submittal of proprietary information. The technology's commercial potential is the most important issue for selection for MassVentures support. However, limited information on the actual technology or experimental data should be included in the proposal to allow reviewers to assess the maturity and validity of the technology. Discuss any concerns with your technology transfer office and work with them on the contents of the proposal.