

May 7, 2018

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable José Serrano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science & Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairmen Moran and Culberson and Ranking Members Shaheen and Serrano:

Thank you for your continued support for the Regional Innovation (RI) Program within the Department of Commerce and for funding the program at \$21 million in Fiscal Year 2018.

As recipients of RI awards who are working in our communities to support innovation and entrepreneurship, we ask you to provide increased funding support as you develop the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2019. Fully funding the RI Program would enable dozens of additional communities throughout the country to help entrepreneurs increase sales and boost job growth, and to work with manufacturing and other industries to utilize and increase American innovation.

The RI Program encourages and supports regional innovation strategies by funding flexible awards that we have matched greater than 1:1 with non-federal funds. The program is a unique and critical source of support for impactful regional efforts. RI awards throughout the country have enabled organizations to:

- Develop an “Innovation Constellation” strategy for innovation and entrepreneurship in Pittsburg, Kansas, which is also helping advance workforce and business attraction;
- Catalyze a new seed fund in Texas that has raised more than \$19 million and made three investments to date in women-led startups;
- Establish a \$5 million seed fund in Alabama that will mentor 15 early stage ventures and target follow-on funding of \$1 million per company;
- Build a fund that has become the most active seed investor in upstate New York;
- Accelerate a Chicago-area manufacturing hub to work with 150 companies, generating nearly \$20 million in revenue and launching more than 200 products;
- Capitalize a seed fund that has raised \$13 million for investment in entrepreneurs launching startups in rural Colorado;
- Develop entrepreneur education programs for three Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Georgia;

- Expand a successful accelerator to the greater Hawaii community, providing education and training for nearly 100 additional entrepreneurs and startups;
- Fund development projects for 100 early-stage entrepreneurs in Kansas City, who have since raised more than \$53 million in funding and created over 600 new jobs;
- Launch Puerto Rico's first seed fund, which has invested \$225,000 in 6 local start-ups, helping create or retain 50+ jobs for the regional economy;
- Provide 1:1 assistance to over 500 Arkansas ventures, which have raised investment capital, created quality jobs and brought new products and solutions to market;
- Train Ohio manufacturers to form parts with a process saving 99 percent of the energy, 90 percent of the floor space and 90 percent of the costs of traditional methods; and,
- Work with Tampa-area startups that have created 874 new, well-paying jobs.

Demand for RI Program funding is strong, far outpacing the current funding. The EDA has received more than 830 applications from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico requesting \$245 million in funding and committing \$284 million in private matching funds over the four rounds of RI Program awards. To date, EDA has made 140 awards totaling \$57 million.

As you develop the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill for FY 2019, we ask you to prioritize the Regional Innovation Program. Increased resources for the RI Program will ensure that more regions can leverage innovations to cultivate entrepreneurship, grow startups, and bring new products and ideas to market—efforts that are crucial in building and maintaining the U.S. competitive edge.

We thank you again for your continued support and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alabama

Innovation Depot, Inc.
Innovation PortAL
University of Alabama at Birmingham

Arizona

Greater Phoenix Economic Council

Arkansas

Startup Junkie

California

Fresno State
University of California Agriculture and
Natural Resources

Colorado

Telluride Foundation

Connecticut

UConn

Florida

Santa Fe College
Tampa Bay Wave

Georgia

Georgia Institute of Technology

Hawaii

XLR8UH

Illinois

mHUB
UI LABS

Iowa

Iowa Foundation for Microenterprise

Kansas

Enterprise Center in Johnson County
Pittsburg State University - University
Strategic Initiatives

Louisiana

Louisiana State University
Louisiana Tech University

Maryland

BioHealth Innovation
Maryland Technology Development
Corporation
University of Maryland

Michigan

Ann Arbor SPARK
University of Michigan Medical School

Missouri

BioSTL
Digital Sandbox KC

Nebraska

Invest Nebraska

New Mexico

Arrowhead Center/NMSU

New York

Albany Medical College
Launch NY
Southern Tier Startup Alliance

Ohio

JumpStart, Inc.
Lorain County Community College
Ohio Energy and Advanced Manufacturing
Center
University of Cincinnati

Oregon

Oregon BEST
Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network

Pennsylvania

Ben Franklin Technology Partners of
Central and Northern Pa.
Idea Foundry, Inc.
Innovation Works, Inc.
University of Pittsburgh

Puerto Rico

IDEA Seed Fund

South Carolina

University of South Carolina

South Dakota

Governor's Office of Economic
Development

Texas

TRUE WEALTH VENTURES

Virginia

Virginia Tech Economic Development

Wisconsin

StartingBlock Madison, Inc.
The Water Council
Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable
Technology