**Innovate Alabama Network Grant Program Guidelines**

1. **Purpose**
   1. Innovate Alabama’s Network Grant Program allows for admitted members of the network to apply for supplementary grant funding for innovation-related projects. This grant program aims to reward ecosystem partners throughout the state who are committed to expanding innovation-related programming and assets. Providing funding to support and expand existing initiatives will grow the Alabama economy by attracting and retaining high and mid-skilled workers; creating programming that connects entrepreneurs with innovation resources; and developing physical assets that contribute to increased quality of life and worker productivity.
   2. Innovate Alabama recognizes three components to a healthy and robust innovation economy: people, place, and resources. People refer to programming and assets that help strengthen the workforce, including such as affordable housing initiatives, education opportunities, workforce development programs, and others. Place refers to the assets that attract and retain workers to communities. Assets and programs may include, such as neighborhood revitalization grants, placemaking initiatives, building rehabilitation or preservation programs, among others. Lastly, resources refer to the financial or programmatic assets that directly grow or serve innovators within the community. Assets in this category may include mentorship programs, non-profit accelerators, business incubators, among others. Innovate Alabama understands that innovation activity is the result of a complex interaction between these asset categories and that the examples provided above are non-exhaustive.
2. **Program Goals**
   1. The Innovate Alabama Network Grant Program aims to catalyze innovation throughout the state of Alabama through accomplishing the following goals.
      1. Increase innovation related activities throughout Alabama.
      2. Create a broader network of innovation-related programming and assets in urban and rural areas.
      3. Provide access to innovation-related seed funding for ecosystem partners.
      4. Recognize and support the diversity of innovation ecosystem partners throughout the state.
      5. Encourage partnerships and coordination among partners, particularly to bolster future efforts.
3. **Eligibility Requirements**
   1. The program is open to current members of the Innovate Alabama Network.
   2. Applicants to the Innovate Alabama Network may include this grant application with the initial designation application. However, only approved applicants to the Innovate Alabama Network will be eligible for funding through this program.
4. **Additional Considerations**
   1. Funding will be awarded to successful applicants at the sole discretion of Innovate Alabama.
5. **Funding Guidelines**
   1. Funding should be used to advance Innovate Alabama’s existing programmatic interests and pillars (see Section 1 b.).
   2. Applications should explicitly show the connection between the purpose of requested funding and Innovate Alabama’s goals.
   3. No more than 10% of awarded funds should be allocated to indirect costs.
   4. Applicants may only request funding for one year. Innovate Alabama will not accept multi-year funding requests.
6. **Application Requirements** 
   1. The grant application must include the following sections:
      1. Project description including proposed milestones and a statement of how Alabama’s economic development will be advanced through an award of funds;
      2. Project budget;
      3. Budget justification;
      4. Budget timeline for 12 months after funds are dispersed.
   2. Innovate Alabama will consider each application on a rolling basis and will periodically notify applicants of its decision to award or not award funds.
   3. Innovate Alabama may choose to place particular focus on applications that reflect the diversity of gender, race, and geographical areas of the state. Innovate Alabama has the sole discretion to grant or deny any award and designation.
   4. The amount and all terms and conditions of the award must be memorialized in a grant agreement between Innovate Alabama and the applicant (the “Grant Agreement”). The Grant Agreement shall provide for the return of grant funds if the applicant does not comply with these guidelines, or if the applicant should repeatedly fail to file reports demonstrating such compliance.
   5. All documents submitted to Innovate Alabama become the property of Innovate Alabama. The applicant should not disclose to Innovate Alabama any confidential or proprietary information that would adversely affect its intellectual property rights. Innovate Alabama and its members will not be bound by any requirements or expectations of confidentiality as a part of administering the Innovate Alabama Network Grant Program.
7. **Reporting**
   1. Award recipients will be required to submit a 6- and 12-month report to Innovate Alabama documenting the use of award funds, project progress, and project impacts. The report must include a short summary indicating the progress that has been made, including, but not limited to:
      1. Total award funds used;
      2. Additional capital raised from all sources; and
      3. Number of partners engaged around project development.
   2. Innovate Alabama may require additional topics to be included at its discretion.
   3. If the applicant does not complete either the 6- or 12-month reporting period, future funding may not be granted.
8. **Timeline**
   1. Innovate Alabama will accept applications for the second round of the program beginning on September 9, 2023. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Round 2 will close on January 5th, 2024 at 5 PM CT.
9. **Audit Oversight**
   1. The applicant shall maintain records to document its expenditure of the funds for a minimum of five years after the date of the award. All such records and accounts shall be made available on reasonable demand to Innovate Alabama.
10. **Additional Information**
    1. If you have questions about the Innovate Alabama Innovative Designation Programs, please email at partners@innovatealabama.org or visit Innovate Alabama’s website at [www.innovatealabama.org](http://www.innovatealabama.org).
11. **Instructions for Application Submittal**
    1. Applications should be submitted electronically to Innovate Alabama. Applicants should submit applications to partners@innovatealabama.org.
    2. Applications should be submitted in PDF format, except for the budget. This should be attached as a PDF and an Excel document.