Aggie Climate action for Equity (ACE) Proof-of-Concept 2023-2024 Grant Program

Program Overview:
ACE Proof-of-Concept Grants (ACE Grants) is one of the technology and innovation proof-of-concept programs managed by Venture Catalyst in collaboration with the Office of Research. ACE Grants are administered by the UC Office of the President (UCOP), with original funding from the California State Legislature, mandated by AB 179.

ACE Grants provide funding and resources to translate basic UC Davis research with high impact potential by demonstrating proof-of-concept and establishing market viability (or a path to adoption), in alignment with California's Climate Adaptation Strategy Priorities. In collaboration with an established cadre of on- and off-campus partners and Innovation*Access*, Venture Catalyst will leverage existing infrastructure and form new partnerships to yield a climate innovation pathway that accelerates the translation of nascent innovations into applied projects aimed at addressing the effects of climate change. ACE Grants are dedicated for the purpose of nurturing technologies, policy interventions, and behavioral innovations that can play a meaningful role in climate change mitigation, resilience, and adaptation, with a specific attention to end-user engagement and a focus on positively impacting communities most vulnerable to the effects climate change. The ultimate objective of the grant program is to develop innovations that attract entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, industry, and/or investors willing to commercialize, replicate, or disseminate UC Davis innovations, resulting in societal and economic impacts aligned with the UC Davis Land Grant mission.

Eligibility Criteria:
Projects eligible for ACE Grant funding will feature an early-stage innovation that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Has advanced beyond the basic research stage but requires early proof-of-concept data to show the project can successfully mitigate, adapt to, or provide resiliency towards climate change issues affecting California and feasibility for commercial potential.
- Has demonstrated successful results in the research environment and is poised for commercialization, dissemination, or replication to scale, pending a specific, targeted demonstration, test result, or prototype.
- Has reached a critical stage of innovation development, whereby specific questions pertaining to commercialization feasibility, dissemination, or replication can be answered within the resource constraints of the program.
- Has identified milestones that would overcome a specific hurdle to commercialization and vulnerable community applicability, enabling a technology to become more attractive for either licensing to an existing company or enabling the formation of a startup company within 2-5 years of project completion. Noncommercial innovations adopted by government agencies or nonprofit organizations are also considered a positive outcome.

Proposed projects must explicitly identify one or more of the three Climate Change Impact Areas. These impact areas are incorporated as part of the California Natural Resource Agency's Climate Adaptation Strategy Priorities.

Climate Change Impact Areas include:

- Mitigation- an action or set of actions to reduce or capture emissions of greenhouse gasses.
- Adaptation- an action or set of actions that reduce physical climate risk.
- Resilience- describes a state of readiness to face climate risks.

Anyone with Principal Investigator (PI) status at UC Davis is eligible to apply as a project PI. Postdoctoral scholars, graduate students, and university staff researchers are eligible to submit applications as Co-PI with an eligible PI. Any student considering applying alongside a PI should contact ace-grants@ucdavis.edu to learn more about navigating the process within UC policy.

Grant Terms and Amounts:
Up to $550,000 is available for up to six ACE Grants. Approved projects may be eligible for up to $90,000 each. All submitted proposals must be limited in scope of work and budget, such that work can be completed within a 12-month period (March 2024 - February 2025). No-cost extensions will not be considered.

This grant program requires periodic check-ins with expert mentors and participation in a Venture Catalyst approved entrepreneurship training to maximize optimal success of the program. To see the RFP, as well as a full list of Venture Catalyst programs, please visit https://itc.ucdavis.edu/venture-catalyst/.

How to Apply:
Proposals must be submitted through the Office of Research's InfoReady grant application platform (Kerberos login required). Proposals are due no later than **Sunday, January 21, 2024, 11:59 PM PST.**

Questions? Please email ace-grants@ucdavis.edu.