

December 2023

Happy  
Holidays

from **UCDAVIS**  
VENTURE CATALYST



**Aggie Climate action for Equity (ACE) is Now Accepting  
Grant Proposals!**

The Aggie Climate action for Equity (ACE): Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Climate Change Solutions program has released its Proof-of-Concept Grant request for proposals (RFP) and encourages all those who are eligible to apply. ACE Grants are dedicated for the purpose of nurturing technologies, policy interventions, and behavioral innovations that can play a tangible role in climate change mitigation, resilience, and adaptation, with a specific attention

to end-user engagement and a focus on positively impacting California's communities most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. For the 1-year grant period (March 2024 - February 2025), 6 projects will be awarded to receive up to \$90,000 each.

Click [here](#) to download the RFP and visit the [InfoReady link](#) to access the grant application platform. You can also visit the [ACE webpage](#) to get more information about this opportunity or contact [ace-grants@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ace-grants@ucdavis.edu).

[Learn More](#)

## 2024 Biotech Innovation Gallery (BIG) Showcase at J.P. Morgan Healthcare Conference

Join us for the BIG Event & Reception showcasing exciting UC Davis biotech startups selected from 30 participants in the [Venture Catalyst BIG pre-accelerator program](#).



Stop by the [Chandran Gallery](#) on Wednesday, January 10 2024, for coffee and the opportunity to meet with participating startups and members of the UC Davis Innovation & Technology Commercialization team. For more details, please visit the [BIG webpage](#). Space is limited so reserve your spot now!

[Reserve Now!](#)

## UC Davis-associated Startup Expert IEP Wins \$1 Million Black Ambition Prize



UC Davis-associated startup [Expert IEP](#), co-founded by School of Education PhD student [Antoinette Banks](#), won the Pharrell Williams Black Ambition grand prize of \$1 million! Expert IEP is a parent-facing app that uses predictive AI to optimize existing individualized education plans for children diagnosed with disabilities.

Banks was named a finalist and selected to pitch out of a group of over 2,000 applicants ([watch a recording of the LinkedIn livestream event here](#)).

[Black Ambition](#) is a nonprofit initiative dedicated to closing the opportunity and wealth gap by empowering Black and Hispanic entrepreneurs.

[Read More](#)

## UC Davis-associated Startup AgriNerds Takes Top Prize at Spark Venture Competition

UC Davis-associated startup [Agrinerds](#) was one of two startups to win \$7,500 in the recent Sacramento State entrepreneurship competition.

Co-Founder Dr. Maurice Pitesky, a professor at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, aims to reduce cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza by tracking ducks that are carriers and are close to poultry operations.



[Read More at the Sacramento Bee](#)

## UC Davis CuRe Trial Awarded \$15 Million by State Stem Cell Agency



A team of UC Davis Health researchers, led by pioneering fetal surgeon [Dr. Diana Farmer](#) and bioengineer [Dr. Aijun Wang](#), has been awarded nearly \$15 million for groundbreaking work on a spina bifida treatment. The funding will allow the team to carry out phase 2 of a clinical trial that tests the first stem cell treatment for the birth defect. [Spina bifida](#), also known as myelomeningocele, occurs when spinal tissue in a fetus fails to fuse properly during the early stages of pregnancy.

Launched in the spring of 2021, the [CuRe clinical Trial](#) (Cellular Therapy for In Utero Repair of Myelomeningocele) tests a one-of-a-kind treatment that uses placenta-derived stem cells to improve outcomes for children with spina bifida. The treatment, a stem cell patch, is delivered directly to the spinal opening of the fetus while still developing in the mother's womb.

## Get Your Applications In! Opportunities for Life Sciences, FoodTech, and More

### Intro to Lean Startups: NSF I-Corps Method

The [NSF I-Corps Method](#) offers an immersive one-week virtual training aimed at translating academic research into a startup. You'll learn how to conduct 15 customer interviews to identify your top customer segment and value propositions, validate your commercial market, and accelerate finding product market fit. All teams who complete in the Bay Area I-Corps are also eligible for \$1,000 in AWS credits! [Learn more](#) or [apply here](#) by January 5, 2024.

### CLSFAST Spring 2024 Cohort

[California Life Sciences](#) is now accepting applications for the [Spring cohort](#) of its bi-annual 12-week advisory program, FAST California. Early-stage startups creating disruptive technologies with high medical impact are invited to [apply here](#) by Jan 6, 2024.

### The Spinoff Prize

[The Spinoff Prize](#) aims to encourage and give visibility to academic entrepreneurs and their startups. Shortlisted spinoffs will pitch at the slam panels during the [Curious2024 – Future Insight™ conference](#) in Mainz, Germany and the winner will go home with a €30,000 cash prize! [Learn more](#) and apply by January 7, 2024.

### Technologies Feeding the Future

Present your ground-breaking solution in front of top-notch venture capital firms and corporations! This annual competition is designed to empower entrepreneurs and help them build new partnerships that will lead to future industry breakthroughs. [Learn more](#) or [apply here](#) by February 19, 2024.

### J.P. Morgan Asset Management Life Sciences Innovation Summit

J.P Morgan Life Sciences Private Capital and Blue Horizon Advisors are sponsoring the inaugural J.P. Morgan Asset Management: Life Sciences Innovation Summit at the Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi in May 2024. The inaugural event seeks to attract top-caliber, early-stage entrepreneurs in life sciences to seed the growth of the emerging scientific innovation hub in Abu Dhabi. The two-day Summit will take place in conjunction with the Abu Dhabi Global Healthcare Week. [Learn more](#) or [apply here](#).

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## Funding Opportunities

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### NHLBI Catalyze Funding Opportunities

Facilitates the transition of basic science discoveries into viable diagnostic and therapeutic candidates cleared for human testing. Offers heart, lung, blood and sleep investigators funding, technical services, training, and mentorship. Develops the translational research workforce by helping investigators build



their product development and entrepreneurial skills. Supports and funds product definition, preclinical research research, and development of technologies and transformative platforms. [Apply here](#). Deadline: December 21, 2023

### **Saving Lives with Connectivity: Accelerating Vehicle to Everything (V2X) Deployment**

Federal funding is available for eligible entities to deploy, operate, document, and showcase integrated, advanced roadway deployments featuring applications enabled by interoperable wireless connectivity (among vehicles, mobile devices, and smart infrastructure). [Apply here](#). Deadline: January 17, 2024

### **NASA Space Tech Catalyst Prize**

[The NASA Space Tech Catalyst Prize](#) is part of a national engagement strategy under the Early Stage Innovations and Partnerships (ESIP) Research & Development portfolio as part of a commitment to enhance outreach efforts and attract high-quality proposals from a diverse pool of innovators competing for NASA space technology R&D awards. [Apply here](#). Deadline: February 8, 2024

### **SBIR Grants for Women**

By awarding \$200+ million in research and development (R&D) funding to about 400 startups each year, in three phases, through 11 federal bodies. Grantify helps you apply for funding from one such body, the National Science Foundation (NSF). [Learn more](#).

### **Growth Factory - Accelerating Venture-Backable Startups**

The goal of this local startup accelerator is to help founders of pre-seed to seed stage venture backable companies located in the Greater Sacramento Region rapidly achieve product-market fit, positioning them to raise funds and achieve revenue of \$1M in ARR within 18 months. Applications are open on a rolling admissions basis. [Apply here](#).

### **AgFunder**

AgFunder is a new kind of venture capital firm built on proprietary technology and a global ecosystem of over 85,000 subscribers. We invest in exceptional and bold founders who are committed to building the next generation of agrifood technology companies that will transform our food system. We are one of the most active agrifood tech investors in the world. [Apply here](#).

### **Tech Coast Angels**

If your company has a strong team with a great defensible idea, early traction, and is set to grow, TCA is ready to invest up to several million dollars individually or with our syndicate partners. TCA looks at investments in the United States and Canada. [Currently accepting applications](#).

### **Open SBIR/STTR Grant Topics**

Federal Research/Research & Development with the potential for commercialization. [Learn More](#).

### **UC Davis Office of Research - Links to Funding Sources**

Browse the listings of funding announcements provided by sponsoring agencies and other pertinent information about obtaining critical research funding. [View the complete list here](#).

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## **Educational Opportunities**

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### **Lab to Market Commercialization of Climate Technologies Webinar**

Learn about the important role lab technology can play in addressing climate change, the opportunity this current moment in time presents, and how people can engage in the process! [Register here](#). Date: December 13, 2023

### **CleanStart CEO Crash Course**

Want to learn how to operate your business as a real CEO? Have a good idea for a business but unsure of what you need to do? Join the CEO Crash Course brought to you by [BlueTechValley](#) and CleanStart! [Apply here](#). Date: December 24, 2023

### **Elev X!**

Elev X! is a venture studio program that provides funding, mentorship from industry leaders, and competitive technology and human resources for researchers with entrepreneurial spirits. [Apply here](#).

Deadline: December 29, 2023

### **2024 Economic Forecast**

Is Sacramento ready for a recession? How well prepared are we as a region and a business community? What does it mean to you, your industry, and your company? Start your year with the information you need to succeed at the 2023 Economic Forecast. [Register here](#). Date: January 16, 2024

### **Startup Pitch Workshop - Monthly**

Three startups present their pitch for advice and feedback from a panel of experts. Organized by StartupSac, Startup Folsom and NCID. [Apply here](#). Date: 4th Wednesday of every month.

### **On-Demand Virtual Entrepreneurship Toolkit Series**

The new On-Demand Toolkit Series is a resource of past recordings as well as slides and tools taught throughout the 5-week series. After a short application, you will have access to five recordings and subsequent resource tools. [Apply now](#).

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## **Regional Events**

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### **Startup Holiday Party**

Startup Grind Sacramento in partnership with StartupSac and Startup Folsom is hosting a Startup Holiday Party! The party is free - bring an unwrapped toy that will benefit the Sacramento Children's Home or just donate \$10. All net proceeds will go to the Sacramento Children's Home. [RSVP here](#). Date: December 14, 2023

### **CBCC Business Mixer**

Network and grow your business at the upcoming CBCC Business Mixer on the first Friday of every month! Get the chance to win a generous Visa Card, a week's worth of radio spots to promote your business, and more! [Learn more here](#).

### **1 Million Cups**

Present your early-stage company to your peers. Or just grab a coffee and listen.

Date: [Every Wednesday](#)

### **Business Casual: Get Your Creative Biz Together**

Every fourth Saturday of the month, Atrium's mentorship team will be hosting a free business basics discussion group. Growing your creative business can seem like a daunting task. Atrium is here to help take your ideas from the drawing board to the boardroom with free "get started right" business workshops for creative startups. Come with a laptop and a ready-to-grow mentality. [Register now](#). Date: Ongoing

### **Sacramento State Carlsen Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship Events and Workshops**

[Learn More](#). Date: Ongoing

### **California Life Sciences Institute FAST Advisory Program**

Get the coaching you need to perfect your business model. [Apply now](#). Date: Ongoing

### **Bay Area NSF Innovation Corps Immersive Short Course**

Join the weeklong immersive course for university researchers and early-stage startup founders. [Apply now](#). Date: Ongoing

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## **Industry Events**

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### **Seed Central - The Essential Networking Event**

'Tobamoviruses of solanaceous crops: Insidious invaders that co-evolved and spread worldwide with seed of these crops' with Bob Gilbertson, Distinguished Professor. [Register here](#). Date: December 14, 2023

### **Seed Central - 7th Innovators Showcase**

Join Seed Central as it hosts the 7th Innovators Showcase at UC Davis! The event will feature startups and innovative companies in ag and food, from seed to health. Visit the exhibits, hear pitches, and stick around for networking with other ag and food-minded innovators. [Register here](#). Date: December 11, 2024

### **Bio Events - Partnering @ JPM**

BIO One-on-One Partnering unifies access to partnering for the life science industry. You can efficiently arrange meetings with biotechs, investors, in-licensors, medical device and medtech companies, and other life science leaders, regardless of whether you are registered for a specific event during JPM Week. [Learn more](#). Date: January 8-12, 2024

### **CEO & Investor Conference**

Biotech executives and investors have joined the [BIO CEO & Investor Conference](#) Advisory Committee, sharing their insights to create timely, impactful sessions and panel discussions on the latest investment trends, therapeutic innovations, and policy developments. [Register here](#). Date: February 24-26, 2024

### **Science2Startup Symposium**

This one-day symposium in Cambridge, MA will feature presentations from top therapeutics researchers to a curated audience of experienced biotech venture capitalists, entrepreneurs at leading biotech startups, and senior executives at large pharma companies. [Learn more](#). Date: April 10, 2024

### **World Summit AI Americas**

The world's leading AI summit for the Americas will return to Montréal and bring together global AI leaders from enterprise, big tech, startups, academia, law, government and investment to hear the world's brightest AI brains deliver innovative, cutting-edge, topical content, tackle the most burning AI issues and set the global AI agenda. [Learn more](#). Date: April 24-25, 2024

## **About Venture Catalyst**

**UC Davis Venture Catalyst** supports the development of new UC Davis-associated ventures fueled by university research and technology. Venture Catalyst offers several innovative programs that bridge the gap between early-stage research and commercialization and provide entrepreneurs the resources, support, and connections needed to successfully form and grow technology-based startups. With a focus on accelerating technology-led economic development in the Davis-Sacramento region, Venture Catalyst also works closely with partners in the regional innovation and economic development ecosystems.

### **Contact Venture Catalyst**



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