

Sample Proposal for HHS Ignite

*Below is a sample proposal for HHS Ignite that applicants may use as a reference.
Please note: the project that we decided to “propose” is the Ignite program itself.*

Project Title: 50 characters

HHS’ Internal Accelerator for New Ideas

Executive Summary: 500 characters

HHS employees are quick to identify ways to improve processes, services, and policies at HHS. Their ideas, if validated and implemented, could improve on how HHS delivers its mission. New ideas at HHS, however, often do not get the chance to be tested because they are killed in the conversation stage or held up in complex processes.

Our proposal is a program that allows HHS employees to test their ideas on how to address a concrete problem and quickly determine if their idea is worth pursuing.

Info on the Supervisor of the Project Lead (Name, Title, OpDiv, Office, Email, Phone Number)

Bryan Sivak

HHS CTO & Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Office of the Secretary, bryan.sivak@hhs.gov

Option to waive the \$5,000 award. This is non-binding and doesn’t affect the selection process.

No thanks to waiving!

Info on the Project Lead (Name, OpDiv, Office, Email, Phone Number)

Read Holman

Office of the Secretary, HHS IDEA Lab, read.holman@hhs.gov

Info on any additional team members (Name, OpDiv, Office, Email, Phone Number, Skill sets / role)

Will Yang

Skills: Business Principles, Project Management, Design Thinking

Office of the Secretary, HHS IDEA Lab, will.yang@hhs.gov

Julia Herron

Skills: Project Management, Data Analytics

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Kate Appel

Skills: Communications and Program Support

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What is the problem you're trying to solve? 2000 characters

The need to make the government more modern and efficient is evident across the sectors of the US government, and HHS employees are constantly identifying new ways to improve processes, services, and policies across HHS' 11 agencies. Their ideas, if validated and implemented, could enable them to do their jobs better and improve on how the Department delivers its mission.

New ideas, however, often do not get the chance to get meaningfully vetted at HHS. That is, HHS employees who want to test out their idea can encounter significant barriers in doing their quest. These barriers can take the form of: cumbersome and complex decision-making processes, low organizational risk tolerance, a lack of dedicated time or human resources; uncertainty in how to navigate bureaucracies, and unfamiliarity with risk mitigation and project management techniques.

Moreover, methodologies that have demonstrated success in the private sector – particularly among startups - could be more incorporated into government operations. These techniques – such as design thinking and lean startup - stress the importance of end-user interactions, prototyping, or developing a minimally viable product. These approaches to problem solving and project implementation can be of great benefit to HHS, where many processes have become calcified over time and many products outdated.

What is your idea / proposed solution you'd like to address? 1000 characters

Our idea is a structured program that would allow HHS employees to test ideas. This program would help HHS employees to quickly determine if their idea is worth pursuing and if so, how to improve upon it to best serve their end-users.

Small teams of HHS employees could apply, and the HHS IDEA Lab would sponsor the program, helping teams to develop project plan; check-in on progress; and ensure adherence to methodologies. Teams would learn the methodologies at an orientation at the beginning of the program. Other amenities would include access a network of innovators, mentors, and technical advisors and technologies not typically available to HHS staff. Finally, funding would be provided for teams to travel to the orientation or carry out their project.

The program would be successful if each team produced a simple low-res prototype and consistently engaged with end-users. We propose to beta test this larger idea by supporting 3 identified teams from OS over a 6 week time-frame.

Who is your end-user / target customer? 75 characters

Our customers are HHS employees whose ideas address concrete problems.

Is there any other information you want to share with us? 500 characters

This effort supports the Secretary's strategic goals – specifically Objective C of Strategic Goal #4: Ensure Efficiency, Transparency, Accountability, and Effectiveness of HHS Programs. This effort also aligns with the Presidents Second Term Management Agenda. We have logistical approvals from legal and financial resources.