

HHS Ventures Fund Round 2 Release Notes

Release History:

Round 1 // Released in March 2014 // Projects began June 2015

Round 2 // Released in January 2015 // Projects to begin May 2015

The following changes made for the release of Ventures Fund Round 2:

1. Communications

- a. **Rename from “Program” to “Fund”** - We have been referring to this as the HHS Ventures Program. To better reflect the intended philosophy (as described in this document), we will refer call it the IDEA Lab Ventures Fund.
- b. **Tag Line:** An internal investment fund.
- c. **1-liner:** The HHS Ventures Fund supports HHS staff-led projects that have been beta-tested and validated but need support to getting implemented.
- d. **Target Audience:** Mid-level management

2. Selection Process - Similar to this past round, projects are ultimately selected by a cross-HHS “Council” of senior individuals from the Agencies applying as well as from individuals at the HHS level.

- a. **Step 0 / Submit Project Abstract:** Teams interested in receiving Ventures Fund submit online some basic information. This is meant to be very simple and easy for the interested parties. Information collected includes:
 - Info on the Project Team (Project Lead + Team members)
 - Info on the Executive Sponsor
 - Project Abstract (500 characters)
- b. **Step 1 / The Pre-Pitch:** All teams that submit an pitch their idea to IDEA Lab staff. Staff provide feedback on the proposal (the business details as well as the presentation itself) and also determine if any shouldn't go forward (most all will go forward).
- c. **Stage 2 / The Pitch:** The teams then pitch to a cross-Departmental Council. Since the Fund supports efforts that have already demonstrated success, applicants are required to demonstrate their prototype

- d. **Step 3 / Deliberations:** The Council deliberates until they reach consensus. They may seek additional advice from experts from across the Department if needed. There's also an opportunity for back and forths with the team regarding the dollar amount, the team make-up, the project goals, and the project timeline.
3. **Additional context for the Executive Sponsor.** Each project being proposed must have an Executive Sponsor. This person's position within the organization should coincide with the desired scope of the proposed project, so it might be a Division Director or an Agency head.
4. **Additional Information Provided on the Types of Projects Supported.** The Ventures Fund supports the scaling and/or operationalization of bold projects with sufficient evidence to warrant an investment of funds and time. Projects may be internal- or external-facing.
 - a. Types of projects include:
 - Implementing a new beta-tested workflow, policy, or internal procedure
 - Operationalizing a proven technology
 - Rolling out a new product or service being delivered
 - Scaling a new product or service
 - Transferring an innovation from one part of HHS to another
 - b. There are lots of ways within HHS for a project to get funded. The Ventures Fund seeks to play a unique role among the organizational funding mechanisms. Thus, priority will be given to the following projects that exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:
 - Replaces or dramatically modernizes an internal process or product
 - Contains a compelling cross-departmental collaboration
 - Increases Departmental transparency, participation, or collaboration with external stakeholders and/or the American people
 - Those that bring supporting resources (match-funding, contract support, organizational resources, etc)
5. **Loosen Project Funding Amounts and Performance Periods** - This past year we communicated that we had \$150,000 and would be supporting projects of budgets of \$50k or less. We mentioned that projects were to go for only 9 months.
 - a. We will defer to the proposal on the funding amount and timeline requested. So a team may propose 20k for a 3 month project, or 100k for a 15 month project. Decisions will be made simply on an ROI basis.
 - b. To give folks a sense as to the size and scope of the efforts, we'll provide the following information:

- Most projects will likely be between \$50-150k, though they certainly may be more or less.
- Most projects will likely have performance periods of 6-12 months, though they certainly may be longer or shorter.

6. Provide Additional Information on Reporting Requirements / Expectations from the Team

- a. Teams are able to operate freely on their own and manage their project through milestones and to completion. However, some regular check-ins and reporting requirements will exist to keep the IDEA Lab staff aware of progress. Those include:
 - Monthly: Teams have 1 hour check-in calls with IDEA Lab staff.
 - Monthly: Written project reports are submitted to the Council.
 - Ongoing: Teams track their major milestones and tasks publically using BetterWorks.

Key Dates for Ventures Fund Round 2:

- January 1, 2015: Begin Accepting Project Abstracts
- February 28, 2015: Last day to Submit a Project Abstract
- March 2-13, 2015: Give Pre-pitches to IDEA Lab staff
- March 16-27, 2015: Pitch to cross-HHS Panel for Funding
- April 2015: Selected projects announcements
- Depending on the portfolio of projects supported in this first round of 2015, we may have another round of pitches later in the year. But it's no guarantee at this point.

Background

In March 2014, we solicited proposals for funding by a new program within the IDEA Lab: HHS Ventures. HHS Ventures was advertised to teams as a "Phase II" opportunity to continue development of their "data-proven projects" for up to 9 months with a budget up to \$50,000.

We received proposals from 7 teams representing 5 OpDivs: CDC, CMS, NIH, OS, and FDA. A selection panel was brought together, with one representative from each. Those individuals were:

- Carmen Villar, Chief of Staff, CDC
- Elaine Johanson, Director of Operations, Office of Informatics and Technology Innovation, FDA
- Julie Boughn, Deputy Director, Center for Medicaid & CHIP Services, CMS
- James Ludington, Engineer, Office of the Director, IHS
- Richard Aragon, Director, Office Program Integrity Assessment, Integration, and Oversight, OS/ASFR
- Mark Rohrbaugh, Director, Office of Technology Transfer, NIH

Each of the 7 teams pitched their idea to this panel who asked questions and then deliberated to identify their recommendations. Bryan took their recommendation and selected 3 proposals for Ventures Funding:

- HHS Game Jam 2014 (CDC + NIH + HRSA)
- 3D Print Exchange (NIH)
- EMS to HIE Innovation (ONC + ASPR)

These projects began their work under the auspices of Ventures in July 2014. They are scheduled to wrap up and present their projects on April 23, 2015.