Innovation Crossroads

Starting new companies is a challenge, and start-up funding has declined over the past decade. Innovation Crossroads, supported by the US Department of Energy’s Advanced Manufacturing Office and the Tennessee Valley Authority, leverages Oak Ridge National Laboratory’s unique scientific resources and capabilities and connects the nation’s top innovators with experts, mentors, and professional networks in technology-related fields to take world-changing ideas from research and development to the marketplace.

Empowering Aspiring Entrepreneurs

Through an annual national call, top entrepreneurial-minded innovators are selected to join the two year program. Participants receive a fellowship that covers living costs and benefits, a travel stipend, a substantial grant for collaborative research and development work at ORNL, and comprehensive assistance to build a sustainable business model.

By embedding the next generation of top technical talent within ORNL, Innovation Crossroads positions entrepreneurial researchers to address fundamental energy, manufacturing, and grid challenges identified by industry.

National lab expertise—ORNL is DOE’s largest science and energy laboratory and home to some of the nation’s most significant user facilities. Because Innovation Crossroads entrepreneurs work within ORNL, they have access to essential tools and resources immediately. This access reduces cost, risk, and R&D time, allowing researchers to focus on creating the next generation of game-changing technologies.

Multidisciplinary collaboration—Innovation Crossroads participants work with ORNL’s renowned scientists and engineers across many disciplines, including biological and environmental sciences, advanced materials, neutron sciences, nuclear science and engineering, and high-performance computing, providing a platform for accelerating innovation.

Business mentoring assistance—Innovation Crossroads has a growing number of partnerships that offer a unique business mentoring experience. Innovators have opportunities to participate in Launch Tennessee’s Energy Mentor Network. They are also supported by the University of Tennessee Anderson Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and can work with interns from the UT Bredesen Center, who assist with market research and customer discovery. Additionally, each innovator establishes his/her own advisory board and is introduced regularly by Innovation Crossroads staff to potential customers and investors. Other established partnerships provide legal, finance, and accounting assistance to Innovation Crossroads innovators.

“Our Innovation Crossroads has enabled us to scale our technology at a rapid pace by having access to world-renowned facilities at ORNL and leveraging the knowledge of experts in our field. Without the program we would not be where we are today.”

Megan O’Connor, Nth Cycle
Empowering Leaders, Launching Businesses

R&D funding from industry partners supports collaboration opportunities with researchers across ORNL. Innovation Crossroads continues its partnership with the Tennessee Valley Authority to fund additional innovators for Cohort 4.

Cohort 2
Donald DeRose
Eonix
Shane McMahon
Lux Semiconductors
Justin Nussbaum
Ascend Manufacturing
Megan O’Connor
Nth Cycle
Matthew Smith
TCPoly

Cohort 3
Jesse Claypoole
MantaPoole Technologies
William Fitzhugh
American Nanotechnologies
Hicham Ghossein
Endeavor Composites
Alex Lewis
Electro-Active Technologies
Trevor McQueen
Neptune Fluid Flow Systems
Leila Safavi
Purist
Jesse Thornburg
Grid Fruit

Alumni (Cohort 1)
Anna Douglas
SkyNano Technologies
Matthew Ellis
and Samuel Shaner
Yellowstone Energy
Mitchell Ishmael
Active Energy

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