Rapid Acceleration, Innovation, and Leadership in Sacramento (RAILS) Program
2016 Grant Awards Overview

By the Numbers

On June 22, 2016, the City of Sacramento opened the application process for the inaugural Rapid Acceleration, Innovation, and Leadership in Sacramento (RAILS) Grant Program. The program offers up to $1 million annually for the following types of grants:

- **Acceleration Grants ($50k to $250k):** for **accelerator** and **incubator programs** supporting Sacramento startups through mentorship, networking, and education to raise capital, grow their business, and create new jobs.
- **Innovation Grants ($20k to $100k):** for **tech companies** and **organizations** making it easier to work with and in Sacramento; or for **local organizations** bringing together the innovation community in Sacramento.
- **Leadership Grants ($10k to $50k):** for **educational programs** training our next entrepreneurs in technology and business to build Sacramento-based startups.

The City received **143 applications** totaling nearly **$18 million** in funding requests. Of the **106 eligible** applications, highlights include:

30	**48**	**28**
Acceleration Applications	**Innovation** Applications	**Leadership** Applications
$4 million in requests	$2 million in requests	$1 million in requests
$168k average request	$76k average request	$40k average request

Application Review Process

The Economic Development Department (EDD), Information Technology Department (IT), and the Mayor's Office for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (MOFIE) reviewed and scored applications, with the Mayor's Tech Council serving in an advisory capacity as industry experts. Top-ranking applicants were interviewed. Funding recommendations were developed using a competitive selection process based upon the following criteria:

- Proven track record
- Clear, actionable plans that achieve RAILS objectives
- Fills an industry gap or local market need
- City funds would be "catalytic" to completing the project
- Value to the Sacramento innovation ecosystem
- Program deliverables and metrics

Internal Review Team

- **Melissa Anguiano** EDD
- **Larry Burkhardt** EDD
- **Maria MacGunigal** IT
- **Abhi Nemani** MOFIE
- **Ash Roughani** MOFIE
- **Veronica Smith** EDD

Mayor's Tech Council

- **Sheri Atwood** SupportPay
- **Erika Bjork** Sacramento Republic FC
- **Sonny Mayugba** Waitr
- **Viabhav Nadgauda** Moneta Ventures
- **Jay Sales** VSP Global
- **Tyler Smith** SkySlope

Award Recommendations

Staff recommends the following organizations as grantees for the 2016 RAILS program:

5	**5**	**5**
Acceleration Grant Awards	**Innovation** Grant Awards	**Leadership** Grant Awards
$507k total awards	$288k total awards	$175k total awards
$101k average grant	$58k average grant	$35k average grant

Acceleration Grants

I/O Labs Foundation

$250,000

I/O Labs Foundation will launch a new innovation center on the 700 block of J Street in Downtown Sacramento. As a central organizing entity for Sacramento's research centers, incubators, accelerators, universities, economic development organizations and investors, the I/O Labs Foundation operates as a conduit to statewide, national and global innovation ecosystems.

Entrepreneurs Showcase
$100,000

The Entrepreneurs Showcase has been running its annual accelerator programs for seven years, with a focus on helping startups grow, receive financing, and entrench themselves in Sacramento. Alumni companies enter the program with 1-2 employees and, within a year, many have grown to 5-10 employees, creating new jobs. Some of these companies have raised funds and been able to scale rapidly and are on track to grow headcounts to 20-30.

E49 Corporation
$57,000

Suite 210's incubator intensive program, operated by E49 Corporation, is focused on equipping and mobilizing nonprofit and for profit businesses that solve social issues in the Sacramento Region through networking, mentoring and training. Suite 210 serves as a co-working space designed to blend incubator programs for nonprofit and for-profit businesses to solve social issues

through networking, mentoring and training.

Founder Academy
$50,000

Founder Academy will provide entrepreneurial founders with tools and knowledge to build thriving businesses in our region through a rigorous training curriculum that brings the real-world perspective of business mentors and the ongoing support of a community of local business professionals and fellow entrepreneurs. The program offers the network, support, and place to make great companies in Sacramento.

Square One Clubs
$50,000

Square One Clubs is a software and game developer business accelerator made up of game developers and organizers wishing to give back to the emerging game development community in Sacramento. Square One will secure a location that will include the addition of a training/event space and studio, enabling the organization to build an educational program and host both private, member only events, and public events to server the larger community.

Innovation Grants

Hacker Lab
$99,605

Hacker Lab is expanding its current workspace and equipment offering on 1715 I Street into the adjacent facility. Hacker Lab will use its RAILS grant to procure innovation equipment that will improve the capabilities and resilience of our citizens. In Sacramento's innovation ecosystem, there are accessible co-working spaces and entrepreneurship programs. However, there are no spaces in which entrepreneurs can access local makers and fabrication machinery to design and prototype a technical solution for their businesses.

Apptology
$50,000

StartupSac, a project by Apptology, is a web platform to manage and promote grassroots startup events, curate and provide access to startup resources through the StartupSac website and mobile apps. There is currently no other one-stop resource hub for startups, entrepreneurs, and innovators in the region. The StartupSac.com website and mobile apps will provide tools and resources for all constituents in the startup community including founders.

Code for Sacramento
$50,000

Code for Sacramento is a civic technology organization committed to bringing teams together to explore creative solutions to civic issues and improving public access to government services and information using technology. The RAILS grant will support increased engagement with government, nonprofit, and private entities, as well as capacity building.

Rocket Department
$50,000

Rocket Department will open a prototyping lab where entrepreneurs can validate and build their business ideas. The primary goal is to provide access to high quality equipment and technical experts who know how to use them. This lab will address the gap between entrepreneurs with the ideas and the people with the technical skills to build those ideas. Rocket Department will provide the tools and people needed to prototype and manufacture their products in Sacramento.

Dynasty Video Productions
$38,800

Dynasty Video Productions will produce, Innovation Sacramento, a video series about entrepreneurs, startups and events that are fueling tech growth in Sacramento. Included are short lifestyle pieces about the City of Sacramento that highlight the exciting city we live in. Innovation Sacramento will enhance economic development by branding Sacramento as the New Tech Capital of California. Episodes will show the success and proliferation of startups and technology in an engaging way with video, and social media.

Leadership Grants

Green Technical Education & Employment
$41,637

The Green Tech Web Builders Bootcamp introduces low income youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds to high technology careers serving as a springboard to web development, design and manufacturing. Introducing underserved youth to high technology gives them an opportunity to join a workforce currently experiencing a disparity in women and minorities. The program also encourages self-employment and entrepreneurial skill building exercises and innovative project based learning.

Square Root Academy
$48,665

Square Root Academy trains the next generation of engineers and scientists coming from underserved areas in the very communities this demographic resides in. It ensures that this program is accessible to those who

need it most at no cost at all to the students. Using a hands on STEM based curriculum, in class mentors connect the mathematical and scientific theories taught in the classroom to real life applications. The projects created foster a sense of academic empowerment within the students creating by bridging the gap between the concepts in the classroom and their practical use.

Operation Innovate
$50,000

The Get STEAMED Digital Badge project, by Operation Innovate, is an educational leadership project that offers digital badge certification for underserved youth ages 16 - 24 in top three STEM/Tech Fields IOS App, Website and Video Game Development. The project aims to train and badge 45 youth in IOS App Development, Instructional Website Design and Development, Video Game Development, Startup Entrepreneurship and Workforce Readiness.

The Elevate Project
$25,000

The Elevate Project is a mentor program for female tech entrepreneurs. Program goals are to increase success of women-led businesses and counter negative biases towards female entrepreneurs. Grant funding will support the creation of infrastructure for the project in Sacramento, a strategic roadmap for implementation in Sacramento, and events to engage this community.

Yellow Circle
$10,000

Yellow Circle is an organization committed to making careers in information technology more accessible. Yellow Circle's CodeIT! Academy project aims to create an advanced online learning academy where students of all ages, races, genders, locations, or socioeconomic status can gain hands-on experience and education in all aspects of information technology.