Why this guide?
I-Corps requires significant commitment. Before choosing I-Corps, participants must understand how the program works and how it fits into the pathway towards commercialization. Our outreach focuses on building relationships and trust across the commercialization pathway to create dedicated and successful teams. Researchers encounter many barriers toward commercialization, and we want them to know that we are on their side.

This guide provides an overview of the strategies and approaches that have proven successful across Hub universities at helping researchers decide to enroll in our regional I-Corps program. Effective communication begins with understanding, so if you are new to I-Corps, we recommend first familiarizing yourself with I-Corps by visiting our website at icorpsne.org.

We look forward to collaborating with our Hub members and regional universities to bring the benefits of I-Corps to a diverse and inclusive range of researchers. Our Hub communications team provides the tools (posters, flyers, graphics, emails, social media, etc.), and your role is to put those tools into action at your universities to ensure that National Science Foundation’s I-Corps program provides the greatest benefit for society.

Our recruitment approach includes:
• Emphasize the I-Corps commitment to diversity
• Make it easy to learn about I-Corps
• Work with campus partners
• Build human connections
• Foster a peer to peer approach
• Tell your I-Corps story
• Follow up with email

Emphasize the I-Corps commitment to diversity
• Build relationships with programs and educational institutions that serve diverse populations. Give in-person or online presentations, and provide I-Corps flyers and other materials to these programs.
• Highlight the diversity of our Hub’s leadership, instructors and mentors when describing I-Corps.
• Emphasize the inclusive nature of our programs and highlight the benefits of the program ($3,000 grant, no cost to participate, etc.)

Make it easy to learn about I-Corps
The more exposure people have to an idea, the more likely they are to remember it when looking for solutions. Make it easy for your researchers to connect with I-Corps.
• Add an I-Corps overview to existing presentations at new faculty orientations, graduate student fairs, conferences, etc. Combine I-Corps information with other topics of interest to researchers (such as presentations on patents, starting a company, etc.).
• Post I-Corps opportunities wherever your researchers go, in person and online. Post paper or digital posters in science and engineering buildings. Identify relevant campus newsletters and website calendars (engineering school newsletter, innovation newsletter, tech transfer office, research development, etc.) for posting.
• Host an I-Corps information session for your campus or for the entire Hub.

Work with campus partners
I-Corps most likely aligns well with your existing programs in entrepreneurship, technology transfer, corporate engagement, career development and other areas. Meet with your campus partners to explain the benefits of I-Corps to their units and enlist their engagement.
• Connect with your technology transfer colleagues. Ask them to provide regular updates on new disclosures and to connect you with the relevant faculty members/researchers.
• Add I-Corps to the programs listed as career development for faculty, graduate student and postdoctoral researchers.
• Interact with regional accelerator programs, venture capital firms, pitch competitions, etc. in your university’s ecosystem. Meet with campus executives-in-residence and other entrepreneurship mentors.
• Build a recruiting pipeline by leveraging technology-assistance programs or innovation funding. Track who receives funding, and follow up with them from time to time.

Build human connections
People take action when working with people they know and trust. Build relationships with researchers via online or in-person meetings.
• Attend on-campus poster sessions and research showcases. Talk one-on-one about I-Corps to graduate students, postdocs and faculty.
• During faculty or staff lunches, sit with various groups to meet new people and talk about I-Corps.
• Be flexible and available for short one-on-one meetings with anyone who has questions. Provide your cell phone number. Try to reduce any friction with the application process.

Foster a peer to peer approach
People are more likely to try something new if they receive a recommendation from a trusted peer or friend.
• Ask I-Corps participants to recommend the Hub training program to their colleagues.
• Appoint or hire graduate students or postdocs who have completed the program to be ambassadors to talk to their peers about the program.
• Request that deans, chairs and directors bring up I-Corps when visiting their researchers’ labs or during faculty meetings.
Tell your I-Corps story
Prospective participants will turn to your university websites to look for success stories. Post regular updates on the teams and their accomplishments, and share them with the main Hub website.

- Enlist your campus research communicators to create articles profiling your I-Corps participants. Ask successful teams and national-level I-Corps awardees to participate in Q&As or articles.
- Distribute I-Corps success stories widely both on campus and to the regional media.
- Annually summarize successes of I-Corps teams, and post these successes broadly.

Follow up with email and other forms of outreach
Email serves to remind people of opportunities and to prompt them to take action. Email will be most effective when it follows on/reinforces information garnered from trusted sources.

- Rather than creating your own I-Corps email list, consider working with campus partners who already send trusted emails to their constituents (for example, groups that serve faculty, postdocs, graduate students, other entrepreneurship programs, institutes and centers that want to demonstrate that their research leads to “broader impacts,” etc.).
- Create a list of people likely to be influential to researchers, such as deans, department chairs, center directors and their staff. Request that they forward your emails to their members.
- When no list exists, create your own. For example, develop lists of recipients of NSF, NIH, DOE and other federal agency grants with a focus on deep technologies. To obtain award information, ask your Sponsored Programs office or check the funding agencies’ grants databases.

We hope these strategies and tactics help you attract your institution’s researchers to our Hub’s programs and to the National Science Foundation’s national I-Corps programming. Our Hub’s central communications team works collaboratively with Hub members, affiliated universities and regional institutions to spread the word about this impactful program.

What the Hub does
The Hub provides communications leadership and has a part-time communicator who creates materials to support Hub programming and outreach. The Hub does the following:

- Develops central assets such as strategy, identity, logo and website.
- Creates flyers, digital and printable posters, emails, social media posts, calendar items and other resources to help you advertise I-Corps offerings on your campus.
- Create stories, social media posts and other content to demonstrate the goals and benefits of I-Corps.

What regional universities should do
In addition to the strategies and tactics listed above, regional universities should do the following:

- Forward the flyers, emails and other items to advertise upcoming program dates.
- Promote information sessions to your campus populations.
• **Post** opportunities and information sessions on your university calendars and in various campus newsletters.

• **Identify** campus populations and how to reach them (for example, graduate student career organizations, postdoctoral councils, entrepreneurship groups, science and engineering institutes, schools, departments).

• **Create** success stories and share them with the central Hub communicators.

• **Follow up** with interested individuals to answer any questions.