I-Corps™ at NIH

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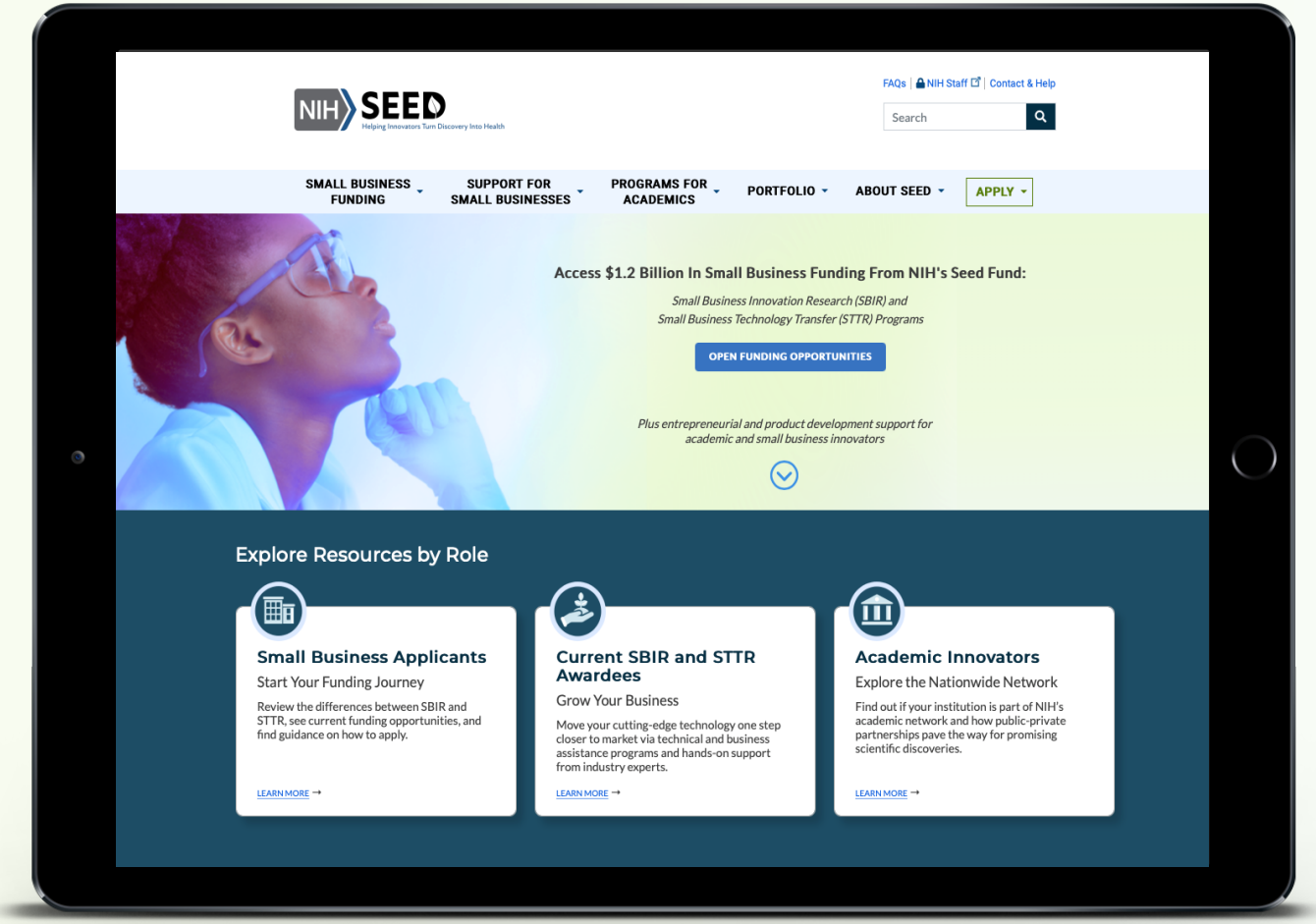
Program Director, I-Corps at NIH

OFFICE OF EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH | OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR | NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

NIH SEED

Small Business Program Website



http://seed.nih.gov

I-Corps at NIH – A Phase I SBIR Supplement

FOA – PAR-22-073

Notice with FY 24 dates – NOT-OD-23-188

Application Deadline (Cohort 2): Wednesday, January 31st, 2024
5 PM your local time

More information: https://seed.nih.gov/I-Corps-at-NIH

Contact Email: icorps@mail.nih.gov

What is I-Corps at NIH?

- Entrepreneurial Immersion Course for NIH and CDC funded small businesses

- Attendee teams conduct 100 customer discovery interviews over the period of 8 weeks to create a business model canvass for their NIH/CDC funded technology.

Outcome Goals for I-Corps at NIH

- Goal 1 – To increase team's knowledge and understanding of the market opportunities. This is achieved through interviews with customers.

- Goal 2 - To move the teams towards further funding success. Funding may be through non-federal - state or equity based fundings or additional federal fundings.

How will I-Corps at NIH help attendees?

Program for SBIR/STTR Phase I awardees to help:

- Define the value proposition (e.g., clinical utility) **early** before spending millions – saves time AND money
- Assess IP and regulatory risk before design and build
- Better understand core customers and the **specific** steps required for downstream commercialization
- Gather information essential to customer partnerships/ collaborations/ purchases before doing the science
- Identify financing vehicles before they are needed (helping to avoid the “Valley of Death”)

Eligibility

- *Active* Phase I SBIR/STTR Grant from participating ICs of NIH and CDC
- Phase I component of the Fast Track awards
- Only one supplement application per parent SBIR/STTR Phase I award is allowed under this FOA
- Phase I contractors with I-Corps at NIH option (must apply via acquisition offices to modify the existing contract)
- No Cost Extensions to maintain the eligibility (Only certain ICs)
- Phase II, Direct-To-Phase II, Phase II component of Fast Track grant are not eligible.

Program Requirements

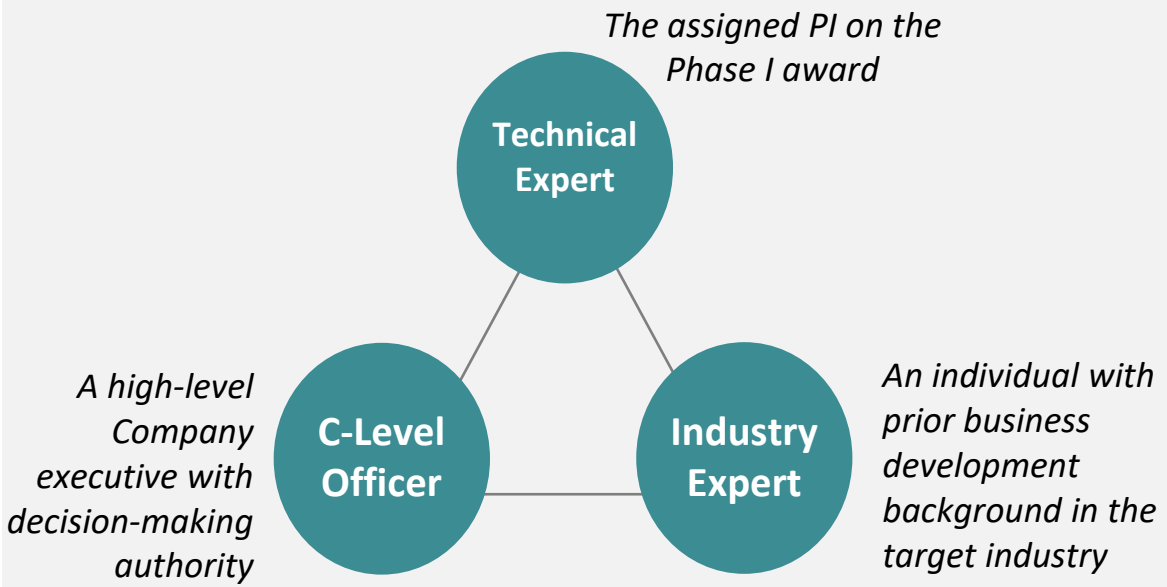
REQUIREMENT

Eligible SBIR/STTR grantees are required to assemble **3-member teams** that will work collaboratively to complete the activities and assignments required by the I-Corps curriculum.

ELIGIBILITY

- To be eligible, a company must have an ACTIVE Phase I SBIR or STTR grant from one of the 24 participating NIH and CDC Institutes and Centers
  The predicate Phase I grant **must** have project and budget timelines that are active from application date through end of I-Corps course syllabus.

THE I-CORPS TEAM



Who can be on the team?

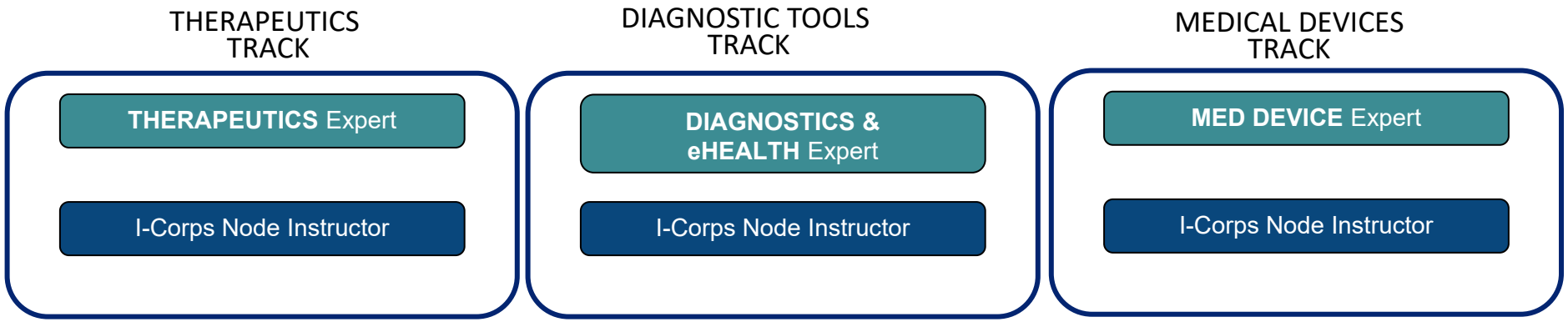
Is there flexibility in how the three required roles are filled on the I-Corps team?

Yes. For example, if the PD/PI (as listed in eRA) is also the CEO, then the PD/PI can be assigned the I-Corps role of "C-Level" and you can select a different senior level scientist to serve in the “TL" role.

In this example, consider Sue Scientist is the PD/PI (in eRA) on the predicate Phase I award; Sue is also the CEO of SBC, Inc. and will carry the role of C-Level on the I-Corps team. Sue recruits Robin Researcher, also of SBC, Inc., to be listed in eRA as a Co-Investigator and carry the role of Technical Lead on the I-Corps team. Finally, Evan Expert, an external advisor from Serial Entrepreneur, Inc. is listed in eRA as a Consultant to carry the role of Industry Expert on the I-Corps team.

Senior/Key Personnel	Organization	Role Category (in eRA)	I-Corps Team Role
Sue Scientist	SBC, Inc.	PD/PI	C-Level Executive
Robin Researcher	SBC, Inc.	Co-Investigator	Technical Lead/Expert
Evan Expert	Serial Entrepreneur, Inc.	Consultant	Industry Expert

Program Format



COURSE FORMAT

- 3-Day Kick-off Event
- 6 Weekly web classes
- 2-Day Lessons Learned

LIFE SCIENCE TRACKS

- Therapeutics
- Diagnostics/eHealth
- Medical Devices

- Teams are distributed among track “rooms”

TEACHING TEAM

- I-Corps Node Instructors
- Industry Domain Experts

- Curriculum tailored to life sciences

Award Budget

The selected project teams receive grant supplement funding (up to $55,000 total) to support customer discovery related activities –

- Course registration - **$22000** (mandatory)
- Allowable expenses related to conducting customer discovery –
  - Personnel time for team members (as appropriate)
  - Travel – Conferences, trade shows, meetings *within* the cohort dates
  - Membership to disease specific foundations/societies
  - License fees for virtual meeting platforms
  - Indirect Fees
- Non-appropriate budget activities – purchase of equipment (computers), marketing surveys and plans, IP filings etc.

Program Dates

Returning to in person meetings in 2024

	Cohort 1	***Cohort 2***
Application Due Date	November 15, 2023	January 31, 2024
Phone Interview	January 9 - 10, 2024	March 11-12, 2024
Course Kick-off	March 4 - 7, 2024 Houston, Tx	May 6-9, 2024 San Diego CA
Virtual Webinars	March 13, 2024 March 20, 2024 March 27, 2024 April 3, 2024 April 10, 2024 April 17, 2024	May 15, 2024 May 22, 2024 May 29, 2024 June 5, 2024 June 12, 2024 June 18, 2024
Course Close-out, Bethesda MD	April 22-23, 2024	June 24-25, 2024
Cohort Size	24 Teams	24 Teams

NIH Expectations from the Participants

- Each team member commits 20-25 hour/week for the duration of 8 weeks for I-Corps related activities
- Fully participate in 3.5 days kick-off, 6 Wednesday webinars and 2-day close-out/finale (fully virtual)
- Conduct at least 100 customer discovery interviews
- Prepare and present a 2-minute video and a 10-minute lessons-learned presentation during the finale.

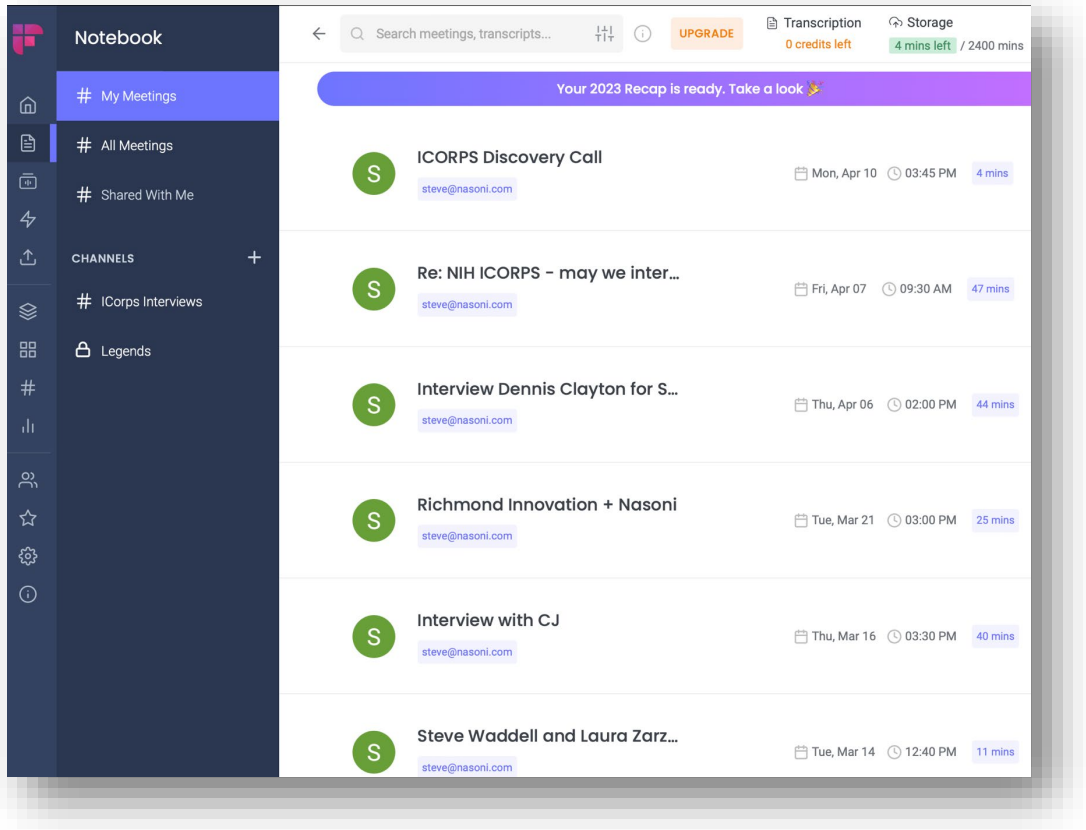
I-CORPS Testimonial

Steve Waddell, MBA, PMP
President & CEO
Nasoni

I-Corps at NIH – 2023

Commitment to Interviewing

- Challenging to conduct 100+ interviews in 8 weeks
- Requires full dedication!
- Yields extremely valuable information
- We found Fireflies Notetaker app to be very helpful



Embracing Customer Pivots

- Be open to changing customer focus
- Learning is key
- Adaptability is crucial

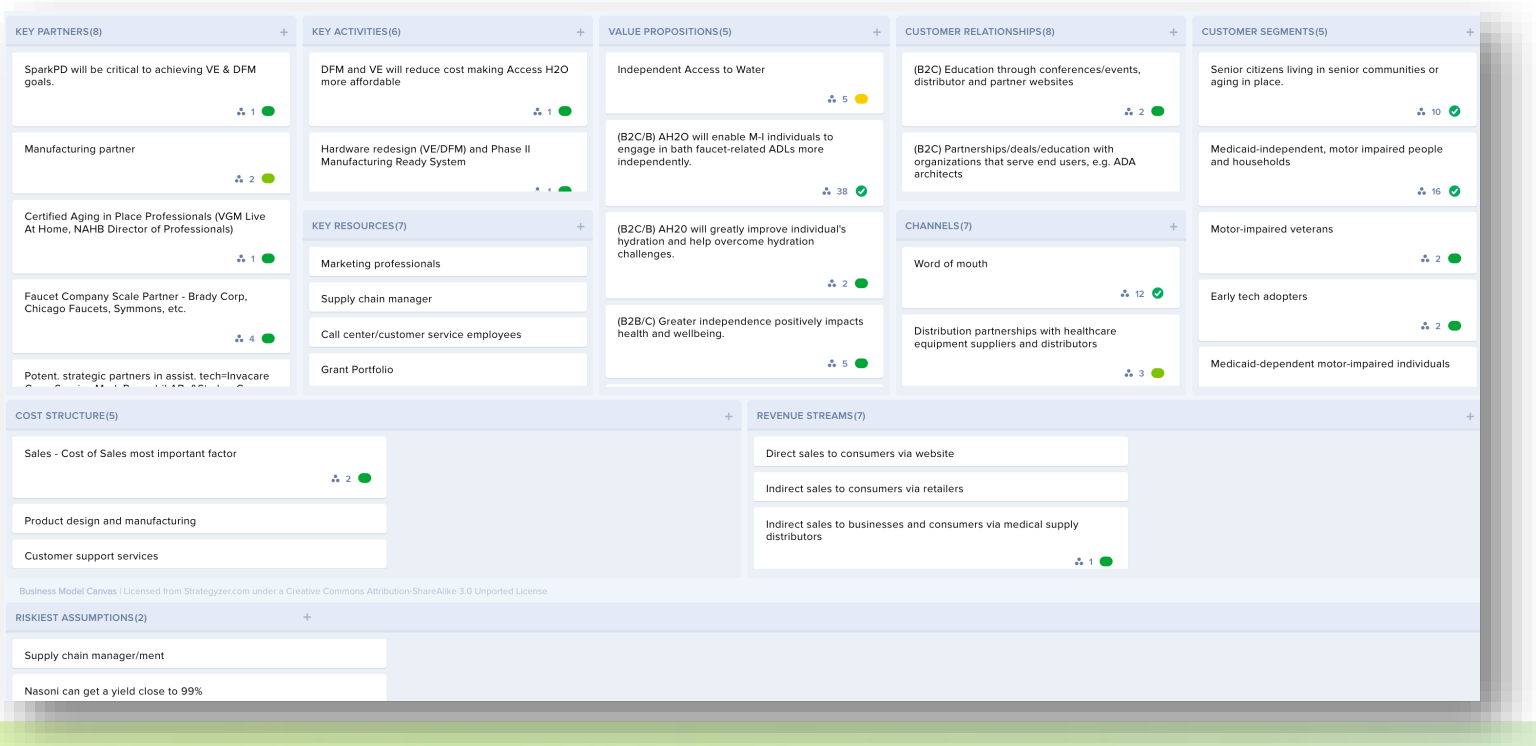
Expect the Unexpected

- Be ready for spontaneous opportunities
- Adapt quickly to new situations
- Valuable experiences often come unplanned

Attending the Ability One conference – had to fly to CA from VA the next day!

Utilizing BMC Software

- Access to business model canvas tools
- Weekly validation of BMC hypotheses
- Free usage for 6 months post-program

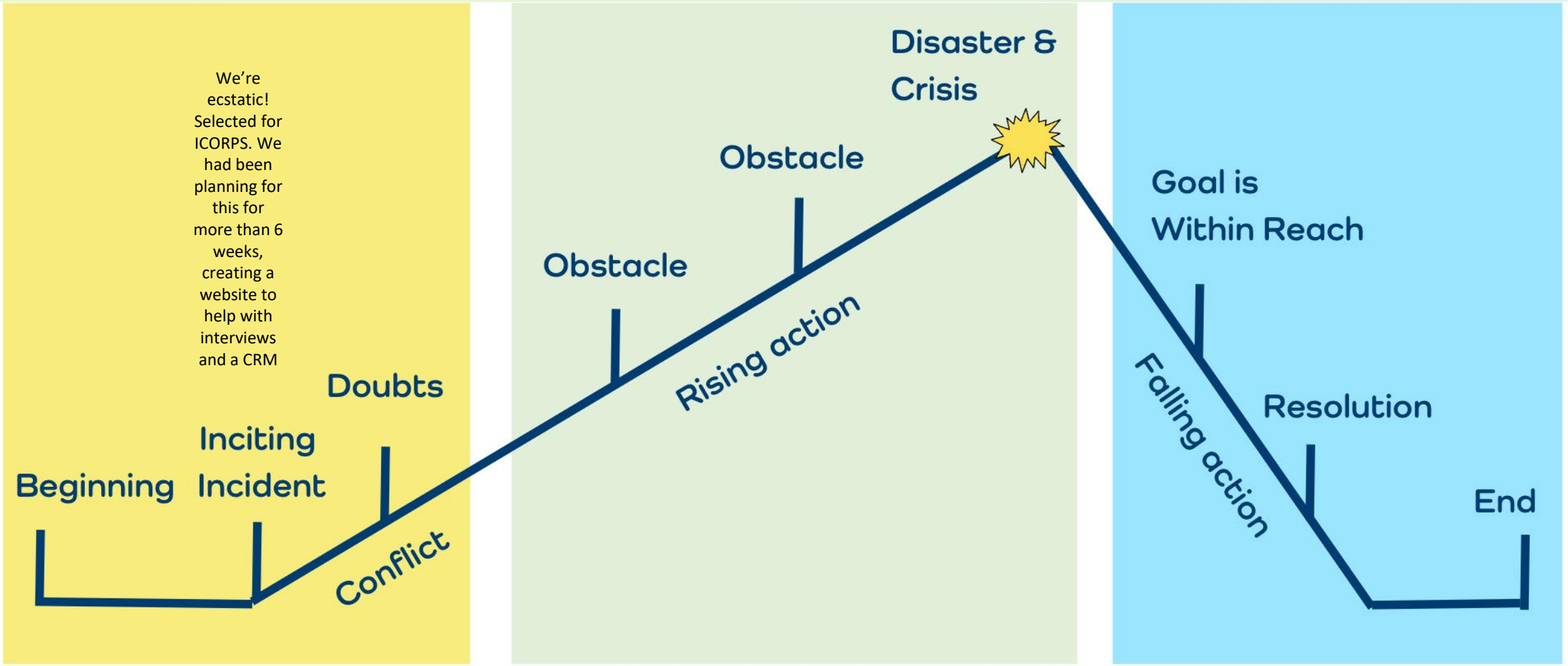


Maximizing Office Hours

- Take Full Advantage of Office Hours!!!
- Engage with Different Advisors: Explore Varied Perspectives for Broader Understanding
  - Discover Unique Insights from Each Expert's Specialization

Unexpected Insights from Customer Interviews

- Interviews can reveal surprising needs
- Example: Smart sensor faucet aiding a quadriplegic rapper for “warm water”
- Be open to unforeseen applications
- Customer excitement can lead to unique contributions (e.g., a rap song!)


We're ecstatic! Selected for ICORPS. We had been planning for this for more than 6 weeks, creating a website to help with interviews and a CRM
Beginning
Inciting Incident
Doubts
Conflict
Obstacle
Obstacle
Disaster & Crisis
Rising action
Goal is Within Reach
Falling action
Resolution
End
BEGINNING (Setup)
MIDDLE (Confrontation)
END (Resolution)

Final Video

I-Corps Team
Steve Waddell
PI
Jen DuBois
IE
Dave Scouler
CLO
01:58
Team 349 I-CORPS Final Video

Questions?

Connect with SEED

Online
http://seed.nih.gov/

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