



BBCetc and University of Kansas Awarded NIH Grant to Spur Innovation in Traditionally Underserved Areas

BBCetc and the University of Kansas are among the recipients of four new STTR Fast-Track grants intended to help translate scientific discoveries and technologies out of the lab and into commercial products that improve patient care and enhance human health. The Awards for Regional Technology Transfer Accelerator Hubs for Institutional Development Award (IDeA) states are managed by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The [IDeA program](#) builds research capacities in states that historically have had low levels of NIH funding by supporting basic, clinical, and translational research; faculty and student development; and scientific infrastructure improvements. The program also enhances the ability of investigators to compete successfully for additional research funding and serves the research needs of medically underserved communities. The [23 IDeA states and Puerto Rico](#) historically have had disproportionately few [SBIR](#) and [STTR](#) awards. The new grants will support the creation of one accelerator hub in each of the four IDeA regions (Central, Northeastern, Southeastern, and Western).

The hubs will partner with businesses to leverage existing IDeA programs and provide academic researchers and administrators with scientific entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. The hubs will also offer networking opportunities and business development strategies that can result in more successful SBIR and STTR applications and facilitate the creation of new startup companies.

BBCetc and the University of Kansas will develop the Central region's **Sustainable Heartland Accelerator Regional Partnership (SHARP)** Hub in collaboration with university partners in the five-state Midwest IDeA region (KS, OK, NE, ND, SD).

BBCetc Managing Partner, Becky Aistrup and Doug Wright, PhD, Vice Chair, Anatomy and Cell Biology, University of Kansas Medical Center will serve as co-PIs on the project.

"We are delighted by the opportunity to help build the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Central region and to help developing technologies move from lab to market," said Aistrup. "During the first year, we will be piloting the program in Kansas and then roll it out with other partnering institutions in the region."

Other awardees were:

- Northeast: DRIVEN: Accelerating Medical Entrepreneurship in the Northeast, Celdara Medical, LLC, Lebanon, New Hampshire, with University of Vermont, Burlington
- Western: Accelerating Solutions for Commercialization and Entrepreneurial Development in the Mountain West IDeA States, Virtici, LLC, Seattle, with University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, Albuquerque:
- Southeastern: Southeast Xlerator Network, XLERateHealth, LLC, with University of Louisville, Kentucky