



We are giving University of Delaware student teams up to \$10,000 to work on their Startup or Social Venture this summer

SUMMER FOUNDERS Pre-Accelerator 2026

Applications Now Being Accepted!

Key Dates for 2026

- Applications will be accepted and processed on a rolling basis until the 2026 cohort is full or April 12, 2026, at 11:59 p.m., whichever comes first.
- All applicants are encouraged to hold June 1-2 (Kickoff sessions) and August 13 (Demo Day) as mandatory in-person program meeting dates. No program activities will be scheduled during the week of June 29-July 3.

About the Program*

- Summer Founders is an 11-week program, running from June 1 to August 13, 2026. (Note: All program activities will be suspended for the week of Monday June 29 - Friday, July 3, 2026 to provide a summer holiday. Summer Founders sessions will resume on Monday, July 6, 2026.)
- During Summer Founders, students will be granted a monthly stipend while working full time to develop their ventures. Continuation of the stipend is contingent on satisfactory engagement in weekly mentoring and educational sessions as well as making satisfactory progress in assessing your venture's viability.
- The program is designed to enable each participating student/team to work toward the achievement of their specific goals while benefitting from venture-specific mentoring.
- Summer Founders will conclude with "Demo Day" on Thursday, August 13, 2026. All participating students are required to attend Demo Day in person and may be invited to present their venture to an audience of mentors, advisors, and investors.
- Participants who choose the in-person track must commit to working in/from the Horn Entrepreneurship Venture Development Center located in Newark, DE for the duration of the program. Participants who choose the hybrid track will be required to be present in person on June 1-2 and August 13, but may otherwise select to work from a location of their choosing.

About the Funding

- Funding is made possible through donations. These donors DO NOT and University of Delaware DOES NOT take ownership or equity in your business or non-profit and have NO governance or control of your business or non-profit. All we ask is you commit to working hard on your project over the course of the summer.
- All teams are encouraged to apply including teams of one person.
- The Director of Horn Entrepreneurship shall be the arbiter of all rules and rule clarifications.
- The Director reserves the right to disqualify any participants who violate these rules or the spirit of



the program.

* Changes in program content or schedule may be made before and/or during the course of the program.

Eligibility

All University of Delaware teams, regardless of college or major, are welcome to apply. All team members must be University of Delaware students enrolled at least half time and in good standing. Please see the FAQ below or email questions to: hornprogram@udel.edu.

FAQ

I am a graduate student. Can I apply to this program? Yes. The program is open to any UD student with a business concept enrolled at least half time and in good standing.

Is there additional funding available if we expect our team's living costs to exceed the Summer Founders grant? No. Currently, no additional funding will be supplied in excess of the Summer Founders grant.

My team consists of four members, do we each receive 25% of the grant? We recommend you decide as a team how to allocate the full grant among each team member. It is your decision how you spend the grant.

What happens if I receive the grant and subsequently receive an offer from an internship that I would rather accept? This program offers a rare opportunity to work on your startup outside the bounds of a typical academic semester and provides significant help and a substantive grant. We expect that all grant recipients understand and honor the commitment once the opportunity is offered and accepted.

I am a senior this year and will not be a UD student during the summer. Can I still apply for the grant? Yes.

I am a graduate student and will not be a UD student during the summer. Can I still apply for the grant? Yes.

Is the funding fully guaranteed? No. Funding is dependent upon satisfactory progress, demonstrated learning and meeting expectations.

What is the commitment? Participants are expected to treat the program like a full-time job during the summer. This includes attending required sessions (in-person or virtual), meeting regularly with coaches/mentors, completing weekly progress updates and deliverables, and formally requesting and receiving approval for any time off during the 10 weeks in which the program is in session (M-F, 9-5).

Is the funding the same for in-person and hybrid tracks? Summer Founders is a high-commitment program designed for individuals and teams who are motivated and prepared to spend 11 weeks actively working to build their new ventures. Stipend amounts vary by track; participants in the in-person track receive higher stipends than virtual track participants to compensate for the higher costs typically associated with residing in Newark for the summer.

Can I receive course credit? Students accepted into the Summer Founders Program who also seek to earn course credit may enroll in ENTR450/650 - Business Accelerator for New Ventures. The curriculum embedded in Summer Founders will satisfy the course requirements of ENTR450/650. Regular summer tuition rates will apply.



Disclaimers:

Horn Entrepreneurship maintains full discretion over the selection process and all funding and in-kind service associated with the Summer Founders program, including grant amounts, terms and conditions. Summer Founders includes open session presentations and external review of business concepts. Participation is voluntary, and as such, participants are responsible for determining whether to disclose proprietary or sensitive information. The University of Delaware assumes no liability for accidental or voluntary disclosures of proprietary information or intellectual property

Ownership of IP

You own any intellectual property (i.e., patents, hardware, algorithms, copyrights) you bring to the Summer Founders program. IP developed through the process of Summer Founders, business model testing and customer development etc. is shared equally among the members of the team (unless the team agrees to an alternative sharing agreement prior to the collaborative development of the IP). If the team is working with University of Delaware owned IP (i.e., research being conducted by one of the team members or a UD patent), you MUST check with the University's Technology Transfer Office to better understand licensing issues.

Concerns about idea sharing

If you feel your idea may become real, you should discuss intellectual property rights with your team from the beginning. If you can't come to an agreement with the team, you will need to join another team, pick another project, or drop out of Summer Founders.

Non-disclosures

Summer Founders is an open program. There are no non-disclosures among students, faculty, mentors, advisors or any assisting outside party. Please keep in mind that ideas are best viewed as liabilities, rather than assets, because there are significant costs associated with pursuing them (in terms of time & money). Also, initial ideas seldom prove successful; most companies succeed because the process of learning, discovery, and execution shapes an initial idea that is mostly wrong into something that people actually want to use. This process requires willingness to share your ideas openly with peers and others.

International Students

International students on F-1 and J-1 visas are strongly encouraged to discuss any entrepreneurship, start-up, or volunteer opportunities with the [Center for Global Programs and Services](#) prior to accepting the position. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security restricts certain practical training options (whether paid or unpaid) for F-1 and J-1 students unless they have prior authorization from the government. Please note that even if an international student is not being paid or is volunteering, they may still require authorization.

If you are an F-1 or J-1 international student considering work, volunteering, self-employment, or start-up ventures (even if they are part of a class project or as part of your program of study), please [contact](#) an immigration advisor at CGPS to discuss your options and requirements for maintaining status in the U.S. Additional information can be found on the [CGPS Employment](#) page.