

Northwest Cleantech Innovation Network

Project Summary

With a focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) the Northwest Cleantech Innovation Network (NWCIN) provides a growing, regional entrepreneurial support system and network of resources for all entrepreneurs and small businesses. Founded in 2021 by VertueLab, the Washington Clean Energy Testbeds, and the CleanTech Alliance, NWCIN synergistically combines and grows regional programs and resources into a unified support network for burgeoning entrepreneurs and startup companies in the cleantech innovation ecosystem. with aligned missions of accelerating cleantech, climate tech and clean energy innovations in the Pacific Northwest.

NWCIN continues to improve its programming to provide integrated outreach and education activities that purposefully include specific elements to address the needs of underrepresented individuals and communities within the Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska cleantech ecosystem. NWCIN's four assistance programs include:

- Cascadia Cleantech Accelerator is an 18-week yearly cohort-based program providing business and technical mentorship.
- Lab2Launch is a program designed to educate and connect entrepreneurs to regional research institutions' energy testing & equipment resources and technologies available to license.
- Federal Funding Assistance is a program providing support to NWCIN cohort startup companies that are applying for SBIR/STTR and other federal grants.
- Cleantech Hardware Innovation Prototyping (CHIP) provides access to the Washington Clean Energy Testbeds for testing, and prototyping clean energy hardware technologies

Key Personnel/Organizations

Prime recipient:

VertueLab, Principal Investigator & Federal Funding Assistance Manager: Mary Phillips, Ph.D., Accelerator Manager: Leo Ochoa, Director of Finance and Operations: Felicia Kang.

Key Participants: Subrecipients:

CleanTech Alliance, VP Economic Development: Rachelle Ames, Program Coordinator: Blake Myer, Accelerator Manager: To be hired.

Washington Clean Energy Testbeds, Managing Director: Michael Pomfret, Ph.D., Program Manager & Senior Staff Scientist: Phillip Cox, Ph.D.



MVP

1	An expanded CHIP program that provides additional funds for materials costs for participating companies, access to facilities at partner institutions, and no-cost technical workshops at WCET for underrepresented communities to increase highly skilled talent available for hardware startups.
2	Provide tailored Federal Funding Assistance (FFA) training, coaching and mentoring for individuals from socioeconomically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities.
3	Add new technology demonstration project curriculum and partnering events for CCA cohort members and NWCIN alumni: Ad-hoc curriculum modules.
4	Adapt Lab2Launch (L2L) programming to provide partnering information for entrepreneurs interested in new regional consortia (ex. Hydrogen Hubs, NSF Engines).

Progress Made on Implementation

During Phase 2, our programs completed each MVP, meeting and exceeding most key milestones, with strategic pivots enhancing their effectiveness tested or new iterations determined for future programming. Key highlights include - 2 companies are on track to increase TRL by at least 1 through the CHIP program, 5 underrepresented entrepreneurs are actively pursuing SBIR funding via FFA, the demonstration project programming was deployed to CCA & NWCIN participants, and the L2L debuted new consortia partnerships and was an actively used resource.