

2026 Application and Administrative Guidelines OKBioStart Concept and Launch Programs

About OKBioStart

OKBioStart Program is a grant-funded, multi-institutional program for innovators, founders, and the life science community in the greater Oklahoma City ten-county region that accelerates the translation of innovative concepts into commercially viable life sciences (Biotech, MedTech, or Virtual Health) technologies. OKBioStart connects Oklahoma innovators and technologists with each other and the local and national innovation ecosystem to support the development of health-related technologies that meet unmet medical needs for patients, providers, and payers, resulting in new Oklahoma startups. OKBioStart is organized in a three-part process including community, concept, and launch programs.

The Community Program is designed to build and engage the local innovation and research ecosystem around life sciences and the efforts of OKBioStart. The regular programming and events are open to all life sciences ecosystem partners including academia, corporations, entrepreneurial resources, and government. The current schedule of community-building programs and events can be found on the OKBioStart website.

The Concept Program is a twelve-week cohort-based program to explore promising intellectual property from research institutions regarding commercial viability. In this program, innovators will work with the OKBioStart team and the local entrepreneurship ecosystem to understand potential and path ahead. A comprehensive commercialization plan will be generated and shared with OKBioStart selection committee to determine path forward. The most promising concepts could have the opportunity to advance to the OKBioStart Launch program.

The Launch Program is a twelve-month program to implement findings from the concept program to advance the concept toward a viable startup. OKBioStart will provide nondilutive funding to support achieving milestones identified in the Concept phase in addition to mentoring, legal support, etc. Upon project completion, awardees should be incorporated and actively pursuing startup funding through angel and seed investors, investment accelerators, federal SBIR/STTR awards and corporate partnerships. Through this staged application for both concept and launch programs, applicants will better understand the path to commercialization for their technology and receive direct support in progressing from institutional idea to startup entity. OKBioStart participants receive access to industry experts and an ecosystem of business, operational, and technical resources to accelerate their commercialization pathway.

This RFP (Request for Proposal) outlines the program for OKBioStart **Concept Program and Launch Program for 2026**.

Concept Program

APPLICANT PROCESS

STEP 1: The innovator will submit a non-confidential application that will be reviewed by OKBioStart’s scientific experts and selection committee.

Prior to submission, the OKBioStart team is available to meet with the innovator team via email or teleconference to answer any questions regarding application requirements. You can request a teleconference via email at OKBioStart@ou.edu.

To begin the application document, click [OKBioStart Concept Application](#)

PROJECT PERIOD DEADLINES:

Concept Cohort	Application Deadline
Cohort A	Dec 5, 2025
Cohort B	April 3, 2026
Cohort C*	July 17, 2026

*Due to time constraints, this cohort will be eligible for commercialization plan only and not Launch Program non-dilutive funding.

TYPES OF PROJECTS ELIGIBLE FOR CONCEPT PROGRAM:

Geographic Restrictions:

The innovator team will reside in the greater [Oklahoma City ten-county region](#).

Project types include:

- Biotech Innovation
- Medical Devices
- Virtual Health

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Technologies are evaluated based on the probability of future commercial success given the following criteria:

- Validity of unmet medical need
- Disruption to current standard of care
- Total addressable market size
- Tech milestones towards regulatory pathway
- Strength and nature of intellectual property
- Addressability of regulatory risk

STEP 2: Applicants may be selected to be interviewed by OKBioStart selection committee. The interview process will take place in the two weeks following the application deadline.

STEP 3: OKBioStart committee will review application and interview details, and a maximum of seven concepts will be selected to participate in the concept program.

STEP 4: PIs (Principal Investigator) invited to participate in the concept program will be notified and start the program by the following dates:

Concept Cohort	Notification Date	Program Dates
Concept A	December 19, 2025	January 12, 2026 - April 10, 2026
Concept B	April 24, 2026	May 11, 2026 - July 31, 2026
Concept C*	Aug 14, 2026	September 8, 2026 - December 4, 2026

*Due to time constraints this cohort will be eligible for commercialization plan only and not Launch Program non-dilutive funding.

During this program, a two-hour informational interview kick-off meeting will be completed, and a working commercialization plan document will be generated between OKBioStart, partners, and the innovators regarding commercialization opportunities and paths ahead. OKBioStart will utilize commercialization plan documents to discuss concepts with ecosystem partners, i.e., Entrepreneurial Law Center, investor community, and scientific consultants. Bi-weekly hour meetings with the innovator team will be scheduled throughout the 12-week program. These bi-weekly meetings are scheduled to review any added information from ecosystem partners and reconcile any additional information needed by the program manager. Additional meetings might be needed by ecosystem partners, and those meetings will be coordinated by the concept program manager. Because of the nature of the research supported by this program, collaboration between the innovator team and OKBioStart program manager is essential. Participants are expected to familiarize themselves with this RFP (Request for Proposal), participate in the due diligence process as needed, and adhere to the deadlines herein.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

At least one concept program innovator team member must participate in business fundamentals training. This training explores the product/market fit of a new business concept and helps life science innovators explore commercial viability. This training is designed to enhance commercial viability efforts and provide context for the unique commercial considerations in the life science industry. This training is typically held in an in-person workshop.

STEP 5: At the culmination of the 12-week program, a comprehensive commercialization plan will be completed by OKBioStart team. The commercialization plan will answer two fundamental questions – what is the commercial opportunity and what is the path ahead. Concept C 2026 will only be eligible for the commercialization plan and not the associated non-dilutive funding.

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT DETAILS COULD INCLUDE AREAS SUCH AS:

- Defined Unmet Medical Need
- Risk Analysis with defined commercial hypothesis
- Novelty
- Commercial viability with feedback from investors
- IP analysis and recommendations
- Scientific milestones outlined
- Proposed budget
- Founder Team Recommendations

Launch Program

OKBioStart will guide innovators to implement project plans from the Concept Program in a six to twelve-month program. OKBioStart will provide non-dilutive support (\$50K-\$75K) to advance the concept forward during the Launch Program for Concept A and Concept B 2026. Concept C 2026 is not eligible for non-dilutive award but is eligible for program management support. Upon project completion, OKBioStart expects awardees to be actively pursuing follow-on funding opportunities, such as SBIR/STTR awards, angel investment, corporate partnerships, etc.

ELIGIBILITY/REQUIREMENTS

OKBioStart will select participants from the Concept Program to participate in the Launch Program.

Concept B 2026 will be the last program eligible for non-dilutive Launch Program funding.

SELECTION PROCESS

All concept program project plans will be reviewed for launch program selection.

REVIEW PROCESS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

Project plan from concept program will be reviewed by OKBioStart committee and scored based on commercial opportunity and viability of path ahead.

Technologies are evaluated based on the probability of future commercial success using the following criteria:

CRITERIA	EVALUATION
FDA Milestones to POC and/or IND	Pre-clinical efficacy studies, toxicology
Unmet Medical Need and Total Addressable Market Size.	Commercial interest, market size, current standard of care, is it a clinical indication of interest by investors, why similar drugs previously failed
Commercial Viability	GLP/GMP/CDMO
IP Strength	Patent potential, length of patent, type of patent
Risk Analysis	Defined hypothesis for working product, have risky questions been answered to inform a go- or no-go decision. What questions would either confirm your hypothesis or fail your hypothesis?
Proposed Budget	
Estimated Timeline to Phase I Clinical Trials	

NOTIFICATION AND START DATE:

Launch Cohort	Award Notification Date	Program Dates
Cohort A	Dec 19, 2025	Jan 12, 2026 - Jan 11, 2027
Cohort B*	April 24, 2026	May 11, 2026 - April 30, 2027

*Award timeline based on grant expiration date

MEETINGS, REPORTING, AND OPERATING REVIEWS

Awardees will participate in monthly working meetings with the OKBioStart team during their launch program period of support. These sessions are not reporting meetings but working meetings to advance both technical and commercialization efforts. Awardees and OKBioStart launch project manager will submit two-page quarterly reports that will be submitted to the OKBioStart committee and EDA Oversight Committee for their review and comment.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY

Through the federal grant funding received for OKBioStart, there are no impacts on participant intellectual property ownership as a result of support from OKBioStart.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR RESIGNATIONS AND TRANSFERS

In the event of a Principal Investigator's resignation or inability to continue the project, the awardee should contact OKBioStart, which will evaluate the specific circumstances to determine the disposition of funds. If a Principal Investigator transfers to another institution, he/she is required to contact OKBioStart, which will evaluate the specific circumstances to determine if the award is transferable.

PRIVACY POLICY

Information provided in your OKBioStart application will be used to decide as to whether to fund the proposed project. As part of this decision-making process, OKBioStart relies on outside advisors to assist in the review of all applications received and will use reasonable efforts to not distribute your application beyond the parties described above.