



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is Smart City Works?

SMART CITY WORKS™ is a next generation business accelerator, called a BUSINESS ACTUATOR, that builds and launches innovative urban tech and IoT companies. We were established in 2016 in the Washington, DC metro region as the world's first seed accelerator uniquely focused on infrastructure and the built environment and on improving the livability, sustainability, operations and resilience of cities. Our Spring and Fall business acceleration programs are designed to more rapidly move early stage ventures to commercialization, reduce risk for downstream investors, and improve the likelihood of product uptake in the marketplace.

### What areas of infrastructure does Smart City Works focus on?

We look for companies focused on all aspects of infrastructure and IoT innovation that improve the livability, sustainability, operations and resilience of cities. If you have a unique and impactful idea, we are interested! In particular, we seek solutions that address significant social and civic challenges in cities and urban environments—infrastructure cost and performance, public safety, transportation, affordable housing, community sustainability, livability, and resilience. Solutions must impact and improve one or more of the ways cities support daily life to include, for example: transportation; energy production, storage and use; public safety; food supply or disposition; housing; construction; urban planning; and water and waste management. We also accept into the program companies with cutting-edge products that provide enabling capabilities to build and scale IoT solutions, for example in areas of data virtualization, human-machine teaming, cybersecurity, AI, blockchain, new materials, and automation. Look for our **Call for Innovators (CFI)** every Spring and Fall for more details!

## What is a business accelerator?

A business accelerator provides hands-on personalized business and technical mentoring to emerging businesses over a period of months to speed commercialization of early stage ventures and new technologies.

## What is a business ACTUATOR, and how is Smart City Works doing more than traditional business acceleration?

We go beyond traditional business acceleration and into a new model of commercialization called business *actuation*. What does this mean?

First, business actuators provide all the services and programming that traditional business accelerators provide –i.e., developing strong business plans and operations, as well as opportunities for funding. These are core elements of our program. But *actuation* aims to move faster and perform better over the long-run. Like you, we want to speed the path commercialization and help ventures get to market faster. We do so by looking across the entire innovation-commercialization life-cycle and closing the gap between innovator and investor, and between entrepreneur and end-user. We do this by integrating end-users and investors into our selection process and earlier to identify key needs and capability gaps from our municipal partners, investors, and others. Applicants that meet these needs, are then selected and are therefore in a far better position to participate in demonstration and pilot projects with Smart City Works partners, and ultimately to drive their solutions into the marketplace faster.

Second, selected ventures participate in a detailed gap analysis program we pioneered as part of our intake process. From this, we develop a uniquely tailored, highly-focused, and highly-customized business acceleration program for *each venture*. This includes intensive 1:1 mentoring with a world class network of executives, technical resources, and direct engagement with decision-makers and department heads in municipalities. Our core curriculum and executive training program is designed to help CEOs overcome challenges in product development, go-to-market strategies, pricing, operations, and other core capabilities, to endow ventures with proven products, and help build a team equipped with the skills to grow and compete for funding and market share.

## What resources do Smart City Works companies receive?

We offer a number of key resources and amenities to participating companies:

- Intensive 90-day **Business Executive training** curriculum + 1:1 mentoring tailored to each company's unique business growth and scaling needs;
- Business model, go-to-market, marketing, and term-sheet development;
- Multiple guest speakers, mentoring and networking sessions led by industry and government experts;
- Up to 12-months **rent-free office space** for graduates.
- HubSpot's world-renowned **CRM, Marketing and Sales software** at a 90% scholarship for the first year.
- **\$10,000 in AWS credits**, tech support, and platforms.
- Pro-bono and reduced-fee **legal & professional services, makerspaces**, and more!
- Strategic introductions to a curated group of cities, universities, laboratories, technical experts, entrepreneurs, and business executives from the Smart City Works network; and
- Development of an **investor-ready pitch** with the support of seasoned Angel and Venture investors **Initial funding**.



## What type of training will companies receive in the cohort acceleration program?

You will receive and participate in top-level immersive training and mentorship across all the important elements of creating a successful business. The program has multiple learning streams including: how to best organize and manage a startup; business planning; building a world class team; developing and instituting your corporate culture; product design and development; raising capital; communications and marketing your company; sales, customer acquisition, and go to market strategies; market analysis; building and implementing a financial plan, testing and commercializing the product, and ultimately developing and making a world class investor pitch. We maintain regular and scheduled deliverables and check-ins with the Smart City Works team to make sure that all companies stay on track and progress throughout the program.

## Are there participation fees to be part of the program?

There are no application or participation fees. Companies are required to provide their own travel and take care of their housing and meal arrangements while participating. For companies selected to participate in the Smart City Works program, we provide full actuation services, programming, mentorship, and resources to include one-year rent free co-working space, AWS credits, and other amenities listed above, CEO business leadership development training, customized 90-Day intensive business acceleration program, investor pitch development, Demo Day, other strategic introductions and pilot project opportunities as applicable, and enduring post-graduation support, in exchange for 4-6% equity. We believe our interests and your interests should be fully-aligned. This arrangement fundamentally makes this possible: when you succeed, we succeed!

## How can I participate in a Smart City Works cohort?

Twice yearly, Smart City Works will issue a **Call for Innovators (CFI)** to announce a new cohort class is forming. We accept companies into our cohorts through a rolling admission process: applicants are selected on a first come, first serve basis until the cohort is filled. Each cohort may be tailored to advance a particular aspect of designing, building, and operating infrastructure, or a particular smart city vertical, enabling technology need, municipal challenge or all of the above! Companies that seek to compete for a place in a cohort class, should sign-up for notifications or apply through the Smart City Works website at [www.smartcityworks.io](http://www.smartcityworks.io).

## How are cohort companies selected?

We are looking for the best team, best ideas, best inventions. We want to change the world as much as you do. Companies that meet eligibility requirements will be included in a selection process that may require responding to a written questionnaire, and/ or submission of additional information. Finalists will be required to pitch their solution and participate in an interview process. We evaluate applicants primarily based on three key criteria:

- **Impact.** How likely will your proposed solution improve the livability, sustainability, operations, and resilience of cities? How great will your innovation change the way we design, build, and/ or operate urban infrastructure or scale or bolster IoT solutions?

- **Commercial Feasibility.** Is your innovation and business well-positioned to reach commercial markets?
- **Team.** What is the maturity of your business and your business team?

If you are competitive in these areas, you will be well-positioned to be selected to participate in a cohort.

## **Am I eligible to participate in a Cohort?**

To be eligible, you must be an established business, with a specific product or solution in the Smart City Works mission space. You and key members of your team must be willing to travel to the accelerator and re-locate for 3 months to participate in person with other motivated entrepreneurs and professionals.

## **Do I have to be in the Smart City Works location for the entire 3-month period?**

For the most part, yes. Experience shows that co-locating with other leading entrepreneurs for the entire three months of the program adds tremendous value to start-ups and will yield the most from the experience. We have an in-depth curriculum and ongoing events and learning opportunities daily as well as industry leaders and mentors regularly spending time on site. We provide opportunities for business building, actuation, and time with customers as part of the program. We want you to be successful. The best means to achieve that success is through the synergies that come from similarly-focused entrepreneurs and participation together in the business acceleration program.

## **Can I apply if our company or founders are not from the US? Can you help with visa/immigration issues?**

Yes. Anyone from anywhere can apply. We have had companies participate from Africa, Europe, Australia, India and all over the world. You do have to be legally in the U.S. during the program, of course. Once accepted, we can help with legal/immigration issues by leveraging our contacts and network. However, we cannot help with them in advance of acceptance to Smart City Works.

## **What level of business maturity is required to be eligible?**

We will look at all applications from established businesses, at all levels of development. We typically accept both start-ups and mature companies in each cohort. Fundamentally, we are looking for great ideas and great teams. We are

looking for solutions most likely to re-invent the way we live-in, design, build, and operate cities. You may be that difference. If so, we want to work with you. We want to help make your company a success!

## **When is the next opportunity to join a Cohort?**

*We are now OPEN for Fall 2019 Cohort Class! APPLY NOW!!*

< <https://www.f6s.com/smartcityworks/apply> >

## **What are my responsibilities?**

Two things. First, each cohort company will need to determine who on the team will participate. Participants will be responsible for travel, living arrangements, and local transportation. Second, you are responsible for showing up and being open to a world of possibilities! Bring your passion, ingenuity, and dedication to your cohort, and your commitment to listening, communicating, challenging, and adapting your ideas to create a viable commercial business ready to change the world.

## **What happens when the program ends?**

After your three months in residence with Smart City Works ends, it is the beginning of a long-term relationship. Our post-cohort support program begins with you. You are now part of the Smart City Works family and alumni network. And we remain part of your team. We will continue to support your journey. You will be invited to events, pitches, and industry gatherings. Our training programs and technical office hours are open to you for refreshers or to work on key areas of interest. We will continue to monitor your progress and look for opportunities for further investment, partnering, and customer contacts, and we will look to you as future cohort companies come through our actuator program, to lead the way, sharing your lessons and success with them.

Our goal is to help you be wildly successful!

## **Where will the FALL 2019 cohort be located?**

The FALL 2019 cohort will be located in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area at Refraction – a collaborative co-working environment at the end of the Silver Line on DC's Metrorail. <http://www.refractionpoint.org>

## **Where will I live?**

If a company is accepted into a Smart City Works cohort, we will work with the team to find suitable living arrangements, but ultimately your living arrangements are up to you.

## **How can I invest in cohort companies?**

Great idea. We can work with you on how to best partner with, sponsor, or invest in Smart City Works and its cohort companies. Send us an email through our website [www.smartcityworks.io](http://www.smartcityworks.io).