Life Science Washington Institute and Washington State Department of Commerce Award $500,000 to Life Science Startups

The SBIR/STTR Matching Fund and Washington Competes grant programs support a diverse pipeline of early-stage companies in more communities across the state

SEATTLE — October 10, 2023 — Life Science Washington Institute (LSWI), in partnership with The Washington State Department of Commerce, awarded $500,000 in grants to 20 organizations across Washington state. The grants support a diverse group of entrepreneurs by prioritizing entrepreneurs and companies located outside of King County as well as women-led and/or socially or economically disadvantaged companies throughout the state. Made possible by redeploying money returned to the state's Life Science Discovery Fund, the SBIR/STTR Matching Fund and the Washington Competes grant programs support early-stage companies focused on developing healthcare solutions that improve lives.

"Life Science Washington Institute is proud to announce the grant recipients as part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the next generation of life sciences innovators," said Richard Giersch, Executive Director, Life Science Washington Institute. "In addition to the funding, the Life Science Washington Institute will offer technical assistance to all of the applicants and award recipients as they work to improve the health of Washington residents."

These grants, each $25,000, will help propel Washington-based life science startups' growth and, ultimately, transform patient lives with new medications, medical devices and more rapid, accessible diagnostics tests.

"As a top life science hub, sufficient funding is essential to the success of Washington-based biotech companies," said Alison Beason, Director/Sector Lead, Life Science & Global Health, Washington State Department of Commerce. "By partnering with LSWI, this funding provides continuous support to advance innovations by early-stage startups, that have potential to improve health outcomes."

SBIR/STTR Matching Fund Awardees

The $25,000 SBIR/STTR Matching Fund Grant, which is awarded to companies that currently have a Phase 1 SBIR/STTR grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will be used to support awardees' ongoing research. Seven out of the 10 awardees meet one or several prioritized criteria, which include companies that are located outside of King County, women-led and/or socially or economically disadvantaged.

Companies funded include women-led, Snohomish-based Remmie Health, which is focused on improving the in-home analysis of ear-nose-throat infections through remote diagnosis and recovery, reducing the need for parents to take their children to a doctor's office to get diagnosed.

"We continue to represent our end-users and advocate for health equity, especially for the under-served communities, often in rural locations, developing countries, or simply busy parents needing support taking care of their children and elderly family members," said Jane Zhang, Founder and CEO, Remmie Health Inc. "The funds will allow us to fine-tune the pilot efforts towards a larger scale rollout for diverting in-person visits to telehealth, for families with young children with chronic ear infections or

needing post-ear tube surgery follow-ups in a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Washington state."

Full list of SBIR/STTR Matching Fund Awardees:

- AVM Biotechnology, Inc. (Seattle)
- Glannaventa, Inc. (Bainbridge Island)
- GMJ Technologies, Inc. (Seattle)
- Histone Therapeutics Corp. (Seattle)
- Orthopedic Wellness Laboratories, Inc. (Woodinville)
- Photon Biosciences, LLC. (Spokane Valley)
- Plurexa, LLC. (Seattle)
- Remmie Health Inc. (Bothell)
- TopoGene Inc. (Seattle)
- Virtici LLC. (Seattle)

Washington Competes Awardees

After a scientific review by an esteemed panel, six of the 10 recipients of the Washington Competes grant also met one or more of the prioritization criteria, which include companies outside of King County, as well as companies that are women-owned or socially or economically disadvantaged.

One of the companies funded is Alli Connect Inc., which helps employees find therapists.

"The first responder community is experiencing an even more deadly mental health crisis than the general population," said Colleen Hilton, Co-founder and CEO. "With 90% of first responders experiencing trauma and 30% going on to develop PTSD, we are seeing a flood of disability claims and suicides in this population. Alli Connect's technology platform makes it easy for first responders to have direct access to mental health care when and where they need it. The technology is proven to improve initial patient engagement from 43% to 88% and long-term treatment adherence from 20% to over 52%! The funds will allow us to improve the QR code-to-launch functionality for our mobile phone app."

In addition to receiving the Washington Competes grant funds, all awardees will join the LSWI Commercialization Support Program, which ensures life science entrepreneurs and early-stage companies have access to the mentoring and resources required to start and grow in Washington state. By providing access to resources such as a nationwide partnering network, free consultants, mentors, grant writing workshops and networking events, companies have a guide to ensure success, work with other emerging companies and secure funding opportunities. All Washington Competes applicants will receive a gap analysis from LSWI's expert panel with suggestions for other activities that entrepreneurs may consider to move their company initiatives forward.

Full Awardee list of WA Competes Awardees:

- Allay Health Inc. (Bellevue)
- Alli Connect Inc. (Snohomish)
- Appiture Biotechnologies Inc. (Spokane)
- CathConnect Corp. (Seattle)
- DocNexus.ai Co. (Seattle)

- Ice Bear Therapeutics SPC. (Seattle)
- PHAIT Inc. (Gig Harbor)
- Primary Bioscience Inc. (Seattle)
- Violett Inc. (Gig Harbor)
- Xonotiv LLC. (Auburn)

About Life Science Washington Institute
Life Science Washington Institute, "Where Entrepreneurs Come First," is driven by a mission of three closely connected goals: to launch life science companies, mentor entrepreneurs, and connect companies and entrepreneurs to resources they need. It is a vital part of Washington state's energetic and connected life science ecosystem, and it works to ensure life science entrepreneurs and companies have access to the right resources at the right time as they are founded and grown. For more information, visit https://www.lswinstitute.org/.

About Life Science Washington
Life Science Washington connects its 500+ members to each other and to funding, talent, partners and essential business services and elevates the industry by promoting policies that strengthen the environment for ground-breaking research and product development that improves and saves lives. For more information, visit https://lifesciencewa.org/.

About Washington State Department of Commerce

Commerce works with local governments, businesses, community-based organizations and tribes to strengthen communities. The department's diverse portfolio of more than 100 programs and effective public and private partnerships promote sustainable community and economic development to help all Washingtonians thrive. For more information, visit http://www.commerce.wa.gov. For information on locating or expanding a business in Washington, visit choosewashingtonstate.com.

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Full list of SBIR/STTR Matching Fund Awardees:

- **AVM Biotechnology, Inc**
  - https://avmbiotech.com/
  - AVM Biotechnology is a clinical-stage company developing therapeutic options for cancer and autoimmune diseases.
  - "LSWI is a vital advocate and support organization for emerging biopharma companies like AVM Biotechnology whose mission is unleashing immune potential. To be chosen as a company to receive LSWI matching funds for our current SBIR Phase 1 NCI grant is an honor and validation of the potential of our lead immunomodulatory drug, AVM0703.

The LSWI grant will assist AVM Biotechnology to maintain its strong patent portfolio. We are very grateful to LSWI." Theresa Deisher, Founder and CSO, AVM Biotechnology Inc.

- **Glannaventa, Inc.**
  - https://www.linkedin.com/company/glannaventa-inc-/
  - Glannaventa focuses on point-of-care early-stage ovarian cancer diagnosis.
  - "We have recently completed a 20-patient pilot study using the third generation endoscope, and the results have been very informative re. the design of the endoscope introducer system and the imaging system. We will be able to use the WA State LSWI matching funds to buy parts to modify the imaging system to be able to keep the endosalpinx in focus over the full variability of the inner lumen diameter. We will also use a consultant to do modification components that cannot be done in house. This would not have been possible with the SBIR part budget alone, and could easily be the difference between finding the needle in the haystack and not," John Black, Founder, Glannaventa Inc.

- **GMJ Technologies, Inc.**
  - https://gmjtechs.com/
  - GMJ Technologies, Inc. (GMJ), a Seattle-based startup is developing a novel analytical tool, based on electrophoretic separation and mass spectrometry, for biologics testing. GMJ's product enables rapid discovery, manufacturing, and quality control to expedite the delivery of novel therapeutics for patients with improved safety and efficacy.
  - "This matching grant will be highly impactful for GMJ to engage key opinion leaders in the biopharma industry and acquire early adopters of its technology. GMJ will use the fund to support registration and development of marketing collaterals for exhibition at CASSS CE Pharm 2024 conference," Tosin Dada, PhD, Principal/CEO, GMJ Technologies

- **Histone Therapeutics Corp.**
  - https://www.linkedin.com/in/shiri-levy-a1b15911/
  - Histone Therapeutics is a biotechnology company at the forefront of epigenetic editing that is focused on enhancing cell function by controlling gene regulation and creating drug modalities based on protein modifiers of chromatin remodeling that could provide new options for treating disease.
  - "The funds from this award will allow the company to rapidly protect competitive intellectual property that it is developing." Shiri Levy, Founder, Histone Therapeutics

- **Orthopedic Wellness Laboratories, Inc.** (OWL)
  - https://www.orthopedicwellnesslabs.com/
  - OWL's innovative technology delivers repeatable, measurable, and accurate range of motion diagnostics coupled with a patented and patent pending, industry first approach to musculoskeletal development and rehabilitation.
  - "Our innovative technology delivers repeatable, measurable, and accurate range of motion diagnostics coupled with a patented and patent pending, industry first approach to musculoskeletal development and rehabilitation. We have just completed a new industrial design of our head restraint and will put this award money towards engineering a better cervical rehabilitation product to reduce pain and improve function," Brad Walker, CEO, OWL

- **Photon Biosciences, LLC.**
  - https://photonbiosciences.com
  - "Originally formed as a Washington State University start-up, Photon Biosciences, LLC has received Phase I funding from the National Institutes of Health SBIR program (NIGMS SBIR) and a GAP grant from the Washington Research Foundation to develop our core technologies and commercialize a variety of product lines for the biomedical research community and biotechnology using an entirely new class of genetically expressible phosphorescent proteins.
  - With the LSWI Matching fund we will upgrade our cryo-microscope to add additional capabilities," Chandima Bandaranayaka, CEO, Photon Biosciences, LLC.

- **Plurexa, LLC.**
  - https://plurexa.com/
  - "Plurexa's goal is to make therapeutics innovation faster, cheaper, and easier by leveraging the power of human mini-organs: three-dimensional structures that capture key features of human organs in the convenient form of a petri dish. Currently, we are targeting specialized proteins called myosins, which shape and strengthen cells, to treat polycystic kidney disease, a disorder in which tiny tubes expand into balloon-like cysts. Funds will be used to demonstrate proof of concept and further validate the therapeutic hit compound, laying the brickwork for deeper drug development efforts," Benjamin Freedman, Co-founder CSO, Plurexa LLC

- **Remmie Health Inc.**
  - https://remmiehealth.com/
  - Remmie is building AI ear-nose-throat health solutions with a family digital otoscope for evaluating ear infections, real-time streaming of symptoms with integrated telehealth services, and AI clinical decision support capabilities.
  - "The funds will allow us to finetune the pilot efforts towards a larger scale rollout for diverting in-person visits to telehealth, for families with young children with chronic ear infections or needing post-ear tube surgery follow-ups in a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Washington state. We continue to represent our end-users and advocate for health equity, especially for the under-served communities, often in rural locations, developing countries, or simply busy parents needing support taking care of their children and elderly family members," Jane Zhang, CEO, Remmie Health Inc.

- **TopoGene Inc.**
  - https://www.topogene.com/
  - TopoGene, a UW spinoff, is developing low-cost, ultrahigh resolution DNA arrays for spatial biology and synthetic biology applications.
  - "We will use the LSWI SBIR/STTR matching fund to cover patent application costs. The IP protection is critical to the technology commercialization," Li Sun, PhD, Chief Technology Officer, TopoGene, Inc.

- **Virtici, LLC**
  - https://virtici.com/
  - The Virtici team focuses on life's biggest health challenges, creating and transforming scientific innovations into life changing medical products.

- "We are grateful for the SBIR matching funds provided by LSWI, as they will undoubtedly help advance the innovation and development of our gonorrhea vaccine. This support will significantly improve health outcomes and allow us to go beyond what we originally planned in our vaccine development," Neil Fanger, PhD, President & CEO Virtici, LLC

Full list of WA Competes Awardees:

- **Allay Health**
  - https://www.allayhealth.net/
  - Allay Health's digital health platform offers personalized, continuous, and comprehensive gastrointestinal (GI) care.
  - "We are very glad to be recognized as a promising early-stage healthcare startup in the WA Competes Award program. We plan to utilize the funds to build on top of our current progress and refine some of our patient reporting workflows to increase care for more of GI patients in need," Victor Bian, Founder, Allay Health, Inc.

- **Alli Connect Inc.**
  - https://alliconnect.io/
  - Alli Connect makes finding mental health care hassle-free.
  - "The first responder community is experiencing an even more deadly mental health crisis than the general population. With 90% of first responders experiencing trauma and 30% going on to develop PTSD, we are seeing a flood of disability claims and suicides in this population. First responders will be able to have direct access to mental health care when and where they need it. With the funds we will improve the functionality of "QR code-to-app launch" for reducing barriers to adoption," Colleen Hilton, CEO, Alli Connect Inc.

- **Appiture Biotechnologies Inc.**
  - https://appiturebiotech.com/
  - Appiture Biotechnologies' vision is a future more reliant on physical indicators of ASD risk.
  - "Children suspected with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from rural communities are often identified later than children in urban areas, and frequently go undiagnosed, lacking appropriate services in a timely manner before entering school. This model will put WA State at the forefront of technology innovation in ASD detection and early intervening supports for children at higher risk for neurodevelopmental delay and ASD. The WA Funds will be used to complete our prototype and work with a regulatory specialist to prepare our submission to the FDA for pre-market clearance," Georgina Lynch, Founder, Appiture Biotechnologies Inc.

- **CathConnect Corporation**
  - https://cathconnect.com/
  - CathConnect is a medical device that improves the safety of urinary catheters by allowing the tube to disconnect when pulled – transforming the catheter from a hazard into a safe and effective treatment.

- "CathConnect is excited about the opportunity with the WA Competes Fund Award, and this will help bring the medical device to patients. Funding will help product testing and regulatory requirements," Joelle Tudor, CEO, CathConnect Corporation

- **DocNexus.ai Co.**
  - https://www.docnexus.ai/
  - DocNexus is revolutionizing the global medical affairs & commercial ecosystem with search. We provide a next-generation data platform that makes it simple to search through millions of insights, scour through publications, clinical trials, payments, and social media data within seconds to identify HCPs, products, manufacturers and healthcare systems. DocNexus uses AI-powered Knowledge Graphs to help life science organizations find the right key opinion leaders that can help develop and bring the next generation of life-saving pharmaceutical products and medical devices to market.
  - "With the $25,000, we plan to invest in further research and development of innovative life science solutions, enabling us to accelerate our mission of revolutionizing healthcare. This funding will significantly bolster our efforts, we'll expand our product experience, reaching new audiences and pushing the boundaries of life sciences search, ultimately advancing the field of life sciences and improving patient outcome," Mahek Chhatrapati, CEO, DocNexus Co.

- **Ice Bear Therapeutics SPC.**
  - https://www.icebeartx.com/
  - Ice Bear Therapeutics' mission is to bring more affordable insulins to the market, in order to benefit patients with diabetes.
  - "Ice Bear Therapeutics has developed and patented a novel technology to manufacture insulins much more efficiently and cost effectively. We will use the funds to do so." Christian Pfleger, PhD, Co-founder, CEO, Ice Bear Therapeutics SPC
- **PHAIT Inc.**
  - https://phait.com/
  - "PHAIT is focused on a crucial unmet medical need: preventing lung cancer, the #1 cause of cancer deaths in women, more than breast, ovarian, and cervical cancers combined. The WA Competes Grant Award provides catalytic funds to position PHAIT for $10M investment towards the clinical-proof-of-concept phase 2 clinical trial for lung cancer interception therapy with the drug, oral iloprost. We are grateful to Life Science Washington, WA Commerce, and the Life Science Washington Institute (LSWI) for their support of start-up companies with this funding and to LSWI for their mentoring that enables success," Deirdre R. Meldrum, PhD, Founder, President and CEO, PHAIT, Inc.

- **Primary Bioscience Inc.**
  - https://www.primarybioscience.com/
  - The goal at Primary Bioscience is to make diagnostics proactive rather than reactive. To that end, they are developing a single-molecule protein sequencing device to be deployed as both a multi-cancer early detection tool and as a research tool.
  - "We will use the funds to support our lab requirements and prototype supplies. This will help us to gather the data to complete additional proof of concept work on the core technology, necessary for further seed funding," Stacy Anderson, PhD, Founder, Primary Bioscience Inc.

- **Violett Inc.**
  - https://www.violettuv.com/
  - Violett's portable air sterilization system integrates real time air quality monitoring with UVC light and a triple layer filter to detect and remove anything harmful in the air.
  - "Our mission is to empower users to take control of their air and protect their people. The funds from this grant will be used to iterate the current unit design for ease of manufacturability at scale, and design circuitry to implement improved internal sensors to report unit health and individualized usage data," Jessie Perez, PhD, Cofounder and COO Violett Inc.

- **Xonotiv, LLC**
  - http://xonotiv.com/
  - Xonotiv is a biomedical device startup dedicated to developing innovative technology for applications in prosthetics, exoskeletons and robotics.
  - "This award will help Xonotiv test its novel prosthetic knee on amputees, and move us closer to commercialization. The funding will be used for amputee pilot tests and Intellectual Property (IP) protection," Paul Pomeroy, CEO, Xonotiv, LLC

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