

Tuscaloosa County Economic Development Authority, The University of Alabama and Techstars Partner to Bring Accelerator and Pre-Accelerator Programs to Tuscaloosa

Tuscaloosa, Ala., — The [Tuscaloosa County Economic Development Authority](#) and [The University of Alabama](#) are partnering with [Techstars](#), the most active pre-seed investor in the world, to bring a first-of-its-kind, hydrologic innovation-focused accelerator and pre-accelerator program to Tuscaloosa.

Techstars WaterTech and Sustainability, an accelerator program for early-stage startups, and **Founder Catalyst WaterTech and Sustainability**, a pre-accelerator program for idea-stage startups, will create a pathway for founders to progress through their entrepreneurial journey building water technology companies. The programs merge the business and technology expertise of TCEDA with UA's cutting-edge water-related research capabilities and Techstars' accelerator model which has helped thousands of startups to succeed.

The partnership is a collective effort to ignite the critically important water technology sector while also highlighting the tremendous business and innovation opportunities that exist in Tuscaloosa.

In their work to advance bold economic development projects across the county, TCEDA was awarded a grant from [Innovate Alabama](#) to spearhead and establish the Techstars WaterTech and Sustainability accelerator, marking the catalyst for the partnership with UA and Techstars.

"TCEDA is proud and honored to work with The University of Alabama and Techstars to bring this program to our area. We are particularly grateful to Innovate Alabama for their support and for recognizing the potential impact of a water technology accelerator program," Justice Smyth, executive director of TCEDA, said. "This collaboration not only positions Tuscaloosa as a hub for hydrologic innovation but also underscores the tremendous business opportunities that exist within our vibrant community. We are enthusiastic about the prospect of nurturing a new generation of entrepreneurs who will play a pivotal role in addressing the critical challenges related to water use and management."

"The decision to establish the Techstars program in Tuscaloosa underscores the richness of resources available in Alabama, making our state an ideal location for fostering groundbreaking innovation," said Innovate Alabama Chair Bill Poole, a Tuscaloosa resident. "At Innovate Alabama, we are building a future where entrepreneurs thrive, and the presence of Techstars further solidifies our commitment to this vision."

The University of Alabama stands as a national hub for water-related research and is home to an unrivaled academic and federal water research enterprise, to include the [Alabama Water Institute](#), which administers the [Cooperative Institute for Research to Operations in Hydrology \(CIROH\)](#); the University's College of Engineering and College of Arts and Sciences, among

others; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's [National Water Center](#), and the soon to be opened [U.S. Geological Survey Hydrologic Instrumentation Facility](#).

"The University of Alabama is proud to be at the epicenter of cutting-edge water research. Our talented faculty, staff and students are helping address critical water-related challenges through the programs and facilities housed on UA's campus," said Dan Blakley, associate vice president for economic and business engagement at UA. "The accelerator will align the strengths of UA's talent and state-of-the-art facilities with the most innovative start-up companies in the world to create sustainable solutions to society's most urgent issues and continue to develop the Tuscaloosa community as a hub for the water economy."

"Water is the most essential resource - one that affects every single person's livelihood - and yet, it's also among the most challenged resources on Earth," said Techstars Chief Accelerator Investment Officer Shirley Romig. "We believe that entrepreneurs play an instrumental role in addressing the critical challenges related to water use and management, and we're thrilled to partner with TCEDA and UA to support and enable them as they create a better future for all."

Both **Techstars WaterTech and Sustainability** and **Founder Catalyst WaterTech and Sustainability** will welcome founders who are focused on progressing the future of hydrological innovation, which includes water resources prediction and observing systems, drinking water systems, wastewater systems, water utility management, urban water management, treatment technologies and digital water solutions - among others.

Applications for the Founder Catalyst pre-accelerator program are now being accepted through March 3, 2024. The 10-week, non-equity-based program will provide idea-stage to early-stage founders access to valuable startup education, mentorship, community building, and access to Techstars' global network of entrepreneurs, mentors and corporate partners. Those interested are encouraged to visit [Founder Catalyst WaterTech and Sustainability](#) to learn more.

[Techstars WaterTech and Sustainability](#), a 13-week, equity-based accelerator program for early-stage startups will launch in September 2024. Founders who are selected will receive hands-on mentorship, curated entrepreneurial content and programming, up to \$120 thousand in funding, and access to Techstars' global network of mentors, investors, alumni and corporates. Those interested in applying when applications open in March 2024 should get in touch [here](#).

About Techstars

Techstars is the most active pre-seed investor in the world having invested through its accelerators in more than 4,000 companies. Founded in 2006, Techstars believes that entrepreneurs create a better future for everyone and great ideas can come from anywhere. Now we are on a mission to invest in an unprecedented number of startups per year enabling more capital to flow to more entrepreneurs around the world. We do this by operating accelerator programs and venture capital funds, as well as by connecting startups, investors, corporations, and cities to help build thriving startup communities. www.techstars.com

About TCIDA/TCEDA

The Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority, dba the Tuscaloosa County Economic Development Authority, is the economic development agency for all jurisdictions within Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, for manufacturing, technology and knowledge-based investments. TCEDA is a one stop source for accessing site location data including available sites and buildings, financing, employee training, and incentives. Through its efforts and partnerships, the Authority strives to contribute to a positive quality of life for Tuscaloosa County and its citizens, through new opportunities, investment, jobs, and tax revenue.

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