

Illumina Accelerator

Frequently asked questions.

Introduction

Illumina is focused on its mission of unlocking the power of the genome. To help achieve this mission, Illumina Accelerator is partnering with startups to accelerate innovation in the entrepreneurial community. With extensive mentorship, financial support, and access to sequencing systems, reagents, and lab space, Illumina Accelerator is building a dynamic genomics ecosystem to help startups launch in the San Francisco Bay Area. Together, it aims to advance breakthrough applications in genomics, including therapeutics, diagnostics, agriculture, synthetic biology, forensics, and direct-to-consumer applications.

Schedule and curriculum

What is the curriculum?

Illumina Accelerator is a 6-month funding cycle. It works with up to five startups per cycle, so the curriculum is custom tailored to each company's unique needs. The core focus includes company building, strategy mapping, technology advancement, pitch development, and active coaching throughout the cycle. As the cycle concludes, meetings with venture capitalists and leading investors will be organized. The final month is the busiest time and will be devoted to completing all experiments, following up with all interested parties, and finding a new headquarters for the startup.

How long is each funding cycle?

There are two, 6-month funding cycles per year.

Eligibility and applications

Who is eligible?

Candidate teams are genomic researchers, entrepreneurs, startups, or early-stage companies from academia and industry that aim to take their promising next-generation sequencing (NGS) applications to market.

How are applicants selected?

Applicants are selected based on team dynamic, experience, and product characteristics (eg, intellectual property (IP), demonstrated market acceptance, etc). Factors also include the project go-to-market strategy, overall market potential, and total financial considerations.

When is the best time to apply?

Candidates should apply a few months before the application deadline, which occurs twice a year.

Funding

How do startups receive funding?

Startups are funded twice a year. Apply online for the next cycle (www.illumina.com/accelerator).

Is funding granted to only genomics-based startups?

Yes, Illumina Accelerator funds startups developing downstream breakthrough applications in genomics. This is the area in which Illumina Accelerator expertise brings the most value. Startups will benefit most from an accelerator targeted to their specific area of interest.

How much does Illumina Accelerator invest in a startup?

Illumina Accelerator provides financial support so companies can produce the data needed for their fundraising efforts.

- Up to \$100,000 in convertible notes (provided by seed investors)
- A set number of credits towards Illumina sequencing reagents and sequencing instrument access
- An unsecured line of credit of \$20,000
- Up to 20% of a Staff Scientist's time to help design experiments

Is Illumina Accelerator appropriate for startups that are already in progress?

Illumina Accelerator can support a given startup from the concept level through initial seed funding, as long as it hasn't already raised a Series A round from venture capitalists. If needed, Illumina Accelerator can help with finding law firms to help incorporate a startup.

Do startups have to accept the convertible notes?

No, convertible notes are optional.

Does Illumina Accelerator take equity in startups?

Yes, Illumina Accelerator takes 8% common stock in each startup.

Can a startup that has already raised some funding still apply?

Yes.

Should a startup apply if funding is not needed?

The financial aid that Illumina Accelerator provides is only one component of the program. The real benefits are inherent in the vehicle itself.

What if the startup project is expensive and large in scope?

Illumina Accelerator invests in big ideas and helps drive value for startups developing breakthrough applications in genomics.

Is a business plan needed to acquire funding?

No, Illumina Accelerator makes funding decisions based on applications and personal interviews. Concepts are considered, but business plans are not required.

Can a single person apply for funding?

Yes, but the chances of acceptance are much lower. Building a startup is often far too intensive for just one person.

If a group has two ideas, can two applications be submitted?

Yes, two applications can be submitted as long as they are submitted from different founders.

Will Illumina Accelerator fund multiple startups working on the same idea?

No, if they are in the same class, Illumina Accelerator will not fund multiple startups working on the same idea.

Will Illumina Accelerator fund startup teams that have a great idea, but minimal technical expertise?

Illumina Accelerator will consider the application, but having a technical cofounder among your connections will greatly increase the chances of acceptance. Teams that are arbitrarily formed for the sole purpose of beginning a startup have much lower chances of long-term success. Personal connections can help teams stay together.

Intellectual property

Will startups have access to the Illumina intellectual property (IP) portfolio?

Illumina Accelerator aims to empower companies with the resources they need to innovate. As such, Illumina Accelerator will consider providing nonexclusive rights to IP on a case-by-case basis.

Proximity requirement

Can startups participate without moving to the Bay Area?

Unfortunately, no. The startup must be based in the Bay Area during the 6-month funding cycle. Startups may maintain a second operational site, but at least 2 cofounders must be full-time in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 6-month funding cycle.

International considerations

Do the startup members need to be US citizens?

No, as long as they can reside in the US for at least 6 months.

Can Illumina Accelerator get visas for startup members?

No, Illumina Accelerator does not secure visas for participants, but Illumina Accelerator can introduce participants to law firms with expertise on immigration matters.

Other

Is it possible to tour the Illumina Accelerator facilities in San Francisco?

Tours can be arranged for selected candidates.

Can startup members meet with an Illumina Accelerator team member before applying?

Yes, Illumina Accelerator is happy to connect with prospective startups. Contact Illumina Accelerator via email at accelerator@illumina.com to share information about the startup.

Will Illumina Accelerator sign a nondisclosure agreement?

No, Illumina Accelerator does not sign nondisclosure agreements.

Contact us

How do I connect with Illumina Accelerator?

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www.illumina.com/accelerator

Learn More

Learn more or apply to Illumina Accelerator at www.illumina.com/accelerator.

About Illumina, Inc.

Illumina is improving human health by unlocking the power of the genome. Our focus on innovation has established us as the global leader in DNA sequencing and array-based technologies, serving customers in the research, clinical, and applied markets. Our products are used for applications in the life sciences, oncology, reproductive health, agriculture, and other emerging segments. To learn more, visit www.illumina.com and follow us on Twitter [@illumina](https://twitter.com/illumina).