University of CINCINNATI | OFFICE OF RESEARCH

The University of Cincinnati Office of Research
Michelman Green, Clean, and Sustainable Technology Research Innovation Program

Courtesy of the generous contributions of the Dr. John S. Michelman Fund for the Advancement of Sustainable Technology, the Office of Research is pleased to share the AY25-26 funding opportunity announcement for the *Michelman Green, Clean, and Sustainable Technology Research Innovation* Program. Consistent with UC's investments in research focused on solving problems that matter, this funding opportunity is aligned with UC's **Research2030** strategic plan for research and our **Next Lives Here** Urban Futures Pathway Biosciences & Bioeconomy Initiative. Dr. John Michelman's 57-year career at Michelman, Inc. was focused on developing products that improve the performance of many common materials; for example, making paper more water resistant but still biodegradable and recyclable. This particular example used chemistry as the enabler but there are hundreds of different and unexplored pathways to create sustainable technology. The purpose of the Dr. John S. Michelman Fund for the Advancement of Sustainable Technology is to uncover and exploit these pathways.

This program supports researchers focused on real-world solutions that enhance environmental quality, promote responsible resource management, and drive growth in high-value technology areas such as specialty chemicals, advanced materials, water or energy technologies, and resilient infrastructure. This year, the program has been re-designed to more closely support feasibility-stage work (TRL 2–5).

Two tracks are available:

- Track 1 – focused on researchers seeking seed funding for early-stage applied research with strong potential for commercialization, licensing, or startup formation (SBIR-like track)
- Track 2 – focused on researchers working with an outside partner on solving a key business problem (Collaborative track)

This program will follow a two-stage application/evaluation process. The first stage involves submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI). Up to five finalists will then be invited to submit a full proposal and share a 15-minute presentation/Q&A to discuss their proposed activities. This program is open to UC faculty. Track 1 applicants may include additional researchers from beyond UC; Track 2 applicants must have at least one committed outside research partner.

Phase 1 awards will be up to $35,000 for a 6-month project period. Phase 1 grantees who make appropriate progress during the award period will be eligible for additional Phase 2 funding. Budgets will only be required from grantees and will be created in collaboration with the Office of Research.

KEY DATES

FOA Release: September 3, 2025
LOI Due: October 14, 2025 by 5:00 pm EDT
Finalist Notification: Week of October 20, 2025 (anticipated)
Final Proposal Deadline: November 17, 2025 by 5:00 pm EST (finalists only)
Finalist Presentations: Week of December 15, 2025 (anticipated)
Grantees Announced: Week of January 12, 2026 (anticipated)
Phase 1 Grant Project Period: February 2026 – July 2026

Eligibility

- Due to changes in the program composition, prior Michelman awardees (principal investigators - PI's and co-investigators – co-I's) are eligible to submit as a PI for this program.
- The applicant (PI) must be a UC faculty member with at least an 80% FTE appointment, with UC being the primary appointment. Tenured/tenure-track, Research- track and other faculty titles are eligible to serve as PI.
- UC faculty can only participate in one application/submission.
- The research team may include additional faculty, postdoctoral scholars, graduate or other students, staff members or other personnel appropriate and necessary for the proposed research project. All collaborators from outside UC must be identified in the application.
- Otherwise eligible faculty with external funding may apply but the proposed activities must not duplicate those already funded, and the applicant should clearly delineate the relationship between on- going, funded work and that being proposed here. **Note: Given the Applied Research focus of this program, the applicant(s) may be supported by external funding for basic (fundamental) research relevant to the proposed project. Such funding is typically the domain of NSF or other select federal agencies.**
- Otherwise eligible faculty who received past URC or Office of Research funding may apply. Such previously funded applicants must have met all requirements of former awards within budget and timeframe AND the proposed area of research, scholarship or creative activities may not duplicate that previously supported by a former award. Note: such previous awardees will be required to provide data/evidence that the previously funded project was successful and impactful as required by the Office of Research.

Letter of Intent Submission Requirements

Applications will be submitted online via *Wizehive*, a user-friendly, internal funding software. When the application is available on the *Wizehive* platform, the live link to apply will be posted at https://research.uc.edu/funding/overview.

Letter of Intent Materials

All applicants will be required to provide their name, UC email, UC ID-number, ORCID, college, department/unit, date of hire/appointment at UC, and proposal title within the *Wizehive* portal prior to uploading the required pdf file. **Applicants must select the appropriate track when registering.**

The LOI should be written for a general university audience in terms readily understood by those who are not experts in the field. Avoid jargon, acronyms, or other technical terminology.

Track 1: Seed funding for early-stage applied research with strong potential for commercialization, licensing, or startup formation

The LOI should contain the following information in the order listed below and will be submitted as a single PDF file. Figures may be included but cannot be used to exceed the page limits. No hyperlinks or redirects to external information may be included. Your submission must adhere to general requirements of 12 point font, 1 inch margins, and single column layout. Incomplete LOIs will not be reviewed.

In two (2) pages or less, describe:

PROPOSAL TITLE AND APPLICANT NAME

THE TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

- Describe the technical innovation to be researched and developed.
- Explain how it is significantly better than existing solutions.
- If it opens a new market, explain why it will be adopted.
- Focus on applied R&D (TRL 2–5), not basic science.

TECHNICAL OBJECTIVES & CHALLENGES

- Outline the specific Phase 1 R&D tasks.
- Identify technical hurdles and describe how they will be managed.
- State how success will be measured.

MARKET OPPORTUNITY

- Identify the customer or end user.
- Describe the value proposition and competitive advantage.
- Provide evidence of need or demand.

THE TEAM

- Describe team capabilities to execute the R&D.
- Include technical expertise, commercialization experience, and plans to fill any gaps.
- Describe desired end goal, e.g., formation of a startup, commercialization, and/or licensing

ALIGNMENT WITH PROGRAM PRIORITIES

- Describe how your project advances enhanced environmental quality, responsible resource management, or growth in high-value technology areas

Additional materials required:

Bibliography/References Cited. Full reference details for all citations. (1 page maximum)

Biographical Sketch/CV for all faculty using this TEMPLATE. (3 page maximum per team member)

Before submitting your LOI, confirm that your submission:

- Clearly defines a technical innovation at TRL 2–5
- Describes a feasibility-stage R&D plan with measurable objectives
- Addresses a real-world market or customer use case
- Demonstrates an understanding of the competitive landscape
- Identifies a clear path to IP, licensing, or spin-out
- Includes a qualified team with a plan to fill any expertise gaps
- Aligns with program priorities

Track 2: Collaborative project with outside partner

The LOI should contain the following information in the order listed below and will be submitted as a single PDF file. Figures may be included but cannot be used to exceed the page limits. No hyperlinks or redirects to external information may be included. Your submission must adhere to general requirements of 12 point font, 1 inch margins, and single column layout. Incomplete LOIs will not be reviewed.

In two (2) pages or less, describe:

PROPOSAL TITLE AND APPLICANT NAME (outside partner(s) must be identified here)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- What is the technical/scientific problem or use case you will be addressing
- Why is it worth addressing
- How does it align with the goals of this FOA?

APPROACH & INNOVATION

- At a high level, describe the approach you will take to address your problem statement.
- Clearly delineate how the team will coordinate research activities and, as necessary, which laboratories will be conducting particular R&D activities.
- Describe the innovative nature of this work, the potential application spaces, and any relevant use cases/prototypes to be investigated.
- Note – successful applicants will be able to clearly articulate how this research will transition into real- world use cases, applications, or process improvements.

OUTCOMES/IMPACT

- Describe why this research will be important as evidenced by the potential outcomes it will have on your outside partner and your own research goals.
- Provide a plan for how this work will be continued upon completion of the award including any anticipated follow-on investment by your outside partner.

Additional materials required:

Bibliography/References Cited. Full reference details for all citations. (1 page maximum)

Biographical Sketch/CV for all faculty and external collaborators using this TEMPLATE. (3 page maximum per team member)

Before submitting your LOI, confirm that your submission:

- Clearly defines a technical problem at TRL 2–5
- Demonstrates an innovative solution to an important scientific or technical challenge
- Describes the roles of both you/your team and the outside partner
- Describes the outcomes and impacts – locally and globally
- Aligns with program priorities

LOI Review Criteria

Track 1

- Innovation & Technical Merit: Is the idea novel, high-impact, and within TRL 2–5 scope?
- Feasibility & Objectives: Is the R&D plan technically sound and achievable within Phase I scope?
- Market Alignment: Are there clear market or customer needs and evidence of competitive advantage?
- Capabilities: Do the researcher(s) have the appropriate skills and expertise for success or has it presented a clear plan to address gaps?
- Program Fit: Does this project align with the program's goal?

Track 2

- Problem Statement: Are the significance and relevance of the problem clear and within the TRL 2-5 scope?
- Approach: Does this approach seem likely to succeed? Is this an innovative solution? Why will this approach succeed where others have failed?
- Capabilities: Does the team clearly describe delineation of responsibilities? Does the team possess the appropriate skills and expertise for success?
- Outcomes: Does the project clearly describe the benefits to the industry partner, UC, and broader society? Has a clear plan for follow-on investment been presented?
- Program Fit: Does this project align with the program's goals?

Finalist Selection & Review Process

Each LOI to this program will be reviewed by a team assembled by and including the VP for Research. No more than 5 finalists will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Neither comments nor feedback on LOIs will be provided to applicants, however comments and feedback on full proposals will be made available to finalists.

Details on the full proposal process and required materials will be distributed to all finalists directly.

Note: Michelman Green, Clean, and Sustainable Technology Research Innovation Awardees will be required to serve as reviewers for future Michelman Program competitions. Furthermore, Phase 1 grantees who make appropriate progress during the award period will be eligible to apply for additional Phase 2 funding where appropriate.

QUESTIONS? Email research@uc.edu