

Mission Accelerator Program Overview

This overview includes information about the Mission Accelerator program, eligibility, benefits, what's required to participate, selection criteria, how to apply and important dates.

Applications are due on March 22, 2016 by 11:59pm.

About the Mission Accelerator

The [Mission Accelerator](#) is a five-month program designed to fast-track the growth and impact of nonprofits in Greater Austin. This unique opportunity brings new, high-value resources to a select group of enterprising nonprofits each year. To qualify, an organization must be an established 501c3 with an innovative solution that addresses a community need, and has an initial plan to significantly grow their program or service.

Accelerator participants engage in group classes and receive one-on-one guidance from nonprofit consultants and some of Austin's most successful business leaders and social entrepreneurs in our Mission Capital [Social Venture Partners](#) network. We tailor each participant's program experience based on their specific needs and build an advisory team of Mission Capital consultants and Social Venture Partners to collaborate alongside you on the development of a business growth plan with a powerful case for funding and pitch deck.

At graduation, participants receive \$3,000 from Mission Capital for completing the program and an opportunity to pitch for additional investment of human and financial capital from our Social Venture Partners.

Through the Mission Accelerator, organizations will:

- Identify their customer segment and target market
- Define their unique value proposition or strategic niche
- Develop a business model canvas to inform and drive business decisions
- Develop a pricing model
- Create a pitch deck for potential funders
- Pitch their plan to the Social Venture Partner network
- Expand their network of nonprofit peers, business leaders, and potential funders

About Philanthropitch Austin

Accelerator finalists will pitch for acceptance into the Mission Accelerator on May 2 at [Philanthropitch Austin](#), a social impact, fast-pitch competition that spotlights some of Austin's most promising nonprofits and the innovative solutions they bring to local challenges. At the end of the night, more than \$100,000 will be awarded and the 2016 Accelerator class will be announced. Philanthropitch Austin is presented in partnership with the Notley Fund and Mission Capital.

Mission Accelerator Benefits

1. Mission Capital Consulting Expertise

Mission Capital brings a unique, holistic perspective into the social sector. Our approach is guided by nationally-recognized best practices and the most up-to-date research. Each Mission Accelerator participant is assigned an experienced consultant from Mission Capital who will help guide your leadership team and advisors through the program.

2. Social Venture Partner Advisors

Social Venture Partners is a network of some of Austin's most successful business leaders and entrepreneurs who invest their time, expertise and connections in promising nonprofit organizations poised to make a significant impact. Partners are critical participants in the Mission Accelerator and work alongside nonprofit leadership teams to create a business growth plan and case for support.

3. Peer Learning and Support Group

As an Mission Accelerator participant, you are welcomed into the Mission Capital community to benefit from learning, sharing, and collaboration with the 2016 Mission Accelerator class and Mission Accelerator alumni.

4. Funding and Connections for Future Investment

Finalists for the Mission Accelerator will pitch at Philanthropitch Austin for financial and human capital to fast-track organizational growth, including more than \$100,000 in unrestricted award funding. Upon completion of the Mission Accelerator, participants will have the opportunity to pitch their growth plan to our Social Venture Partners for additional investment.

5. Opportunity for Investee Partnership

Mission Accelerator participants have the opportunity to be selected by our Social Venture Partners as investees for a longer engagement. Historically, our partners have selected one Investee for a three-year engagement with an initial \$30,000 investment and at least one Investee for a one-year engagement that includes partner time and expertise.

6. Increased Visibility and Validation

Mission Capital helps increase participants visibility through speaking opportunities at Mission Capital events, marketing, online media promotion and media referrals.

Mission Accelerator Alumni & Testimonials

2014 Class: Caritas of Austin, Easter Seals Central Texas, E3 Alliance, Fusebox, Mothers' Milk Bank at Austin

2015 Class: Explore Austin, Multicultural Refugee Coalition, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, WeViva

"By going through this process, we made time to look at every step of our business plan. Our chances of success on this project and future Caritas opportunities are stronger due to the Accelerator program. We are already seeing wonderful results." **John Cyrier, Board President, Caritas of Austin**

"Mission Capital brought very successful entrepreneurs to each meeting and we were able to hear from a host of people who have been in our shoes. To be given access to that level of expertise was amazing. After participating in the Accelerator, our business has taken off and the ongoing support has helped us grow our mission in such a successful way." **Tod Marvin, CEO, Easter Seals Central Texas**

Eligibility Requirements

The Mission Accelerator seeks established nonprofit organizations working to address a significant community need. Priority will be given to organizations that have an innovative solution and seek to dramatically grow their program or service in the market.

All applicants must:

- Be an established Central Texas based 501c3 nonprofit organization or nonprofit hybrid.
- Have at least two full-time staff members.
- Be financially stable and have a sustainable business model with a desire to diversify your revenue streams.
- Have the program or service already in the market, no matter how small, with some evidence of program success and established demand.
- Have a strong, entrepreneurial and coachable leadership team with an appetite for risk and support from the Board of Directors to participate in the program.
- Have completed some form of an organization-wide strategic plan within the past three years that is aligned with your plan to grow.
- Engage in all Accelerator activities (estimated 15-18 hours per month from May-October 2016).

Selection Criteria

Successful applicants should have a clear vision to significantly grow their program or service. We select organizations based on five key criteria:

- 1. Demonstrated Community Need**
 - Clear need for significant growth of the program/service
 - Addresses a significant problem for Central Texas
- 2. Strong Leadership Team**
 - Effective leadership with relevant experience, appetite for risk and innovation, and open to collaboration and input
 - Has the ability to utilize the human and financial capital of the Mission Accelerator
- 3. Solution or Business Model with Potential for Impact**
 - Innovative elements and approach
 - Realistic vision for how it will impact the community need and beneficiary population
 - Ideally open to some form of earned revenue
- 4. Vision for Growth**
 - Clear and persuasive vision for program/service
 - Sound strategy for program development and delivery
- 5. Current Program Success with Connection to Outcomes**
 - Program or service has been piloted with evidence of some success
 - Clear logic or research-based association between the program and intended outcomes

Program Commitments

Prior to selection into the Mission Accelerator, participants commit to:

- Semifinalists will participate in the second stage of the selection process which is a 30-minute, in-person interview on either April 5 or 6.
- Finalists will attend a mandatory pitch workshop on April 18 and develop a three-minute pitch to present at Philanthropitch Austin on May 2.

Upon selection into the Mission Accelerator, participants commit to:

- **Build a three person team to participate in the Accelerator.** Teams should include the Executive Director/CEO, individual responsible for program/service and a board member.
- **Dedicate time to the program and events, specifically an average of 15-18 hours per month** from June-October 2016 as outlined in the class schedule.
- **Actively participate in all events and applicable activities** including:
 - Monthly classes, customized trainings and individual office hours from June-October 2016.
 - Development of materials for Accelerator Graduation in October:
 - Funding pitch deck and 8-10 minute pitch presentation.
 - Investment prospectus/Case for support.
- **Participate in Mission Accelerator activities after graduation:**
 - Attend a one-time, in-person focus group in December 2016.
 - Allow Mission Capital to use organization name, logo and photos in its marketing materials, including but not limited to website, printed materials, press releases, social media and email communications.
 - Willingness to report out on social impact and financial progress and to fill out programmatic surveys as requested.

Application Process

1. **Register and attend one of our information sessions (optional)**
February 24, 9:30 - 11:30am at Blackbaud ([Register here](#))
March 1, 12 - 1pm, online ([Register here](#))
2. **Complete the online application by March 22**
Review the application questions here. Applications are due by 11:59pm on March 22, 2016
Apply online here: <http://www.fundacity.com/mission-accelerator/apply/584>
3. **Participate in semifinalist interview on April 5 and 6**
Selected semifinalists will be invited to participate in the second stage of the selection process for a 30-minute, in-person interview on April 5 and 6
4. **Participate in finalist pitch workshop on April 18**
Finalists will be notified by April 11 and asked to attend a pitch workshop on April 18 to help prepare for your pitch at Philanthropitch Austin
5. **Pitch at Philanthropitch Austin on May 2**
Up to five organizations will be selected by Social Venture Partners at Philanthropitch Austin for entrance into the 2016 Mission Accelerator class

Accelerator Class Schedule (dates subject to change)

2016 Accelerator Orientation	May 23, 10am - 12pm
June Class	June 15 or 16, 10am - 4pm
Office Hours	June 30, 10am - 12pm
Office Hours	July 14, 10am - 12pm
Office Hours	August 11, 10am - 12pm
August Class	August 25, 10am - 2pm
Mission Capital Conference Reception	September 7, 5:30 - 7:30pm
Office Hours	September 15, 10am - 12pm
September Class	September 22, 9am - 2pm
Office Hours	October 6, 10am - 12pm
October Class	October 10, 10am - 2pm
Pitch Practice	October 18, 10am - 12pm
2016 Mission Accelerator Graduation/Demo Day	October TBD, 5 - 7pm