

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**RAMP business accelerator to recruit high-potential startup companies to the region**

*Applications accepted through March 15 for new RAMP-in-Residence Cohort*

**ROANOKE**— Entrepreneurs who want to speed up their companies' growth are encouraged to apply to become the next participants of the RAMP-in-Residence business accelerator program.

RAMP's mission is to propel high-potential startups to expand and create jobs in the STEM-H (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Health) fields. The RAMP-in-Residence program is housed in the renovated Gill Memorial Building, 709 S. Jefferson St., along the downtown Roanoke Innovation Corridor.

RAMP-in-Residence participants will benefit from a mentoring program, networking opportunities, business education, and access to capital. The program's model, based on best practices garnered from existing successful business accelerators, will continue to focus on accelerating three to five technology or life science-focused companies in the next cohort. Companies accepted into the RAMP-in-Residence program will work closely with mentors to focus on building, testing, improving, validating product-market fit, and launching their product for the market.

To be considered for the RAMP-in-Residence program, applicants must:

- Agree to locate their company, rent-free, inside the accelerator for a six-month residency;
- Have a minimum viable product, preferably with sales traction;
- Work full-time on their startup during the program;
- Have a product or service employing workers in the STEM-H field with scalability potential;
- Be willing to consider operating their company in the region after graduation.

The deadline to apply is March 15. To learn more, visit [www.ramprb.tech](http://www.ramprb.tech). The program is expected to begin on May 15.

Support for RAMP comes from a broad public/private partnership that draws on leaders in higher education, government, and the region's growing technology community. RAMP's founding partners include:

- the City of Roanoke, which provides ongoing support and won a \$600,000 state grant approved by Gov. Terry McAuliffe to renovate the Gill building as an accelerator;
- Virginia Western Community College, which operates the facility and provides entrepreneurial classes and faculty support;
- the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council, which runs the accelerator program and has developed the accelerator's mentorship and networking initiatives.

“Those selected for our second cohort will have an excellent opportunity to focus on their business,” said Mary Miller, RAMP Director. “The mentoring support and business connections that these companies make will last long beyond the six months in residence. Our goal is to help these companies grow right here in our region, and we are prepared to do whatever is necessary. I am excited as the nomination process opens. If you are ready to work on your company, I certainly hope you will apply.”

RAMP has just completed its inaugural year, which was supported by a \$40,000 Building Entrepreneurial Economies grant from the state Department of Housing and Community Development. The first RAMP-in-Residence Cohort received a warm send-off at a RAMP Wrap Part on January 4<sup>th</sup>.

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