

VIPC Awards Commonwealth Commercialization Fund Grant to George Mason University for Development of Novel Protein

CCF grant supports Dr. Lee Solomon in the development of a preventative solution for E. coli food contamination.

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The [Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation \(VIPC\)](#) today announced that George Mason University (GMU) has been awarded a Commonwealth

Commercialization Fund (CCF) grant for \$75,000 in support of research conducted by Dr. Lee Solomon. VIPC's CCF programs have distributed more than \$53 million to Virginia-based startups, entrepreneurs, and university-based inventors since 2012 in support of critical early technology testing and market validation efforts.

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Dr. Lee Solomon, George Mason University, Assistant Professor

E. coli food contamination is a major health concern in the food industry, costing more than \$6 billion annually, yet current methods to fight contamination are inadequate and focus only on mitigating outbreaks that have already occurred. George Mason University's Dr. Solomon is developing a wholly preventative solution that stops contamination early on in distribution by genetically controlling responsible bacteria. CCF funding will allow Dr. Solomon and his team to develop an artificial protein that can bind DNA and stop expression of the toxic proteins that cause food poisoning.

“This CCF grant is giving us the opportunity to reach two important milestones, including proof-of-concept in live bacteria,” said Dr. Lee Solomon, Assistant Professor. “Completing proof-of-concept by the end of this project is a key step towards securing the follow-on funding needed to



bring the solution to market. We are genuinely appreciative that VIPC saw the potential benefits our work can have on the nearly 300,000 Americans affected each year by E. coli food poisoning.” □

“Innovative research and early-stage technology development happening at George Mason University and other

Virginia universities is poised to disrupt the status quo across a breadth of industries,” said Hina Mehta, VIPC’s Director for University Programs. “Researchers like Dr. Solomon are addressing important unmet needs, and VIPC is fortunate to have a front-row seat as these novel technologies move along the commercialization pathway.”

George Mason University is a public research university based in Fairfax, Va.

About Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC)

VIPC: Connecting innovators with opportunities. As the nonprofit operations arm of the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority (VIPA), VIPC is the commercialization and seed stage economic development driver in the Commonwealth that leads funding, infrastructure, and policy initiatives to support Virginia's innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, and market development strategies. VIPC collaborates with local, regional, state, and federal partners to support the expansion and diversification of Virginia’s economy.

Programs include: Virginia Venture Partners (VVP) | VVP Fund of Funds (SSBCI) | Virginia Founders Fund (VFF) | Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) | Petersburg Founders Fund (PFF) | Smart Communities | The Virginia Smart Community Testbed | The Virginia Unmanned Systems Center | Virginia Advanced Air Mobility Alliance (VAAMA) | The Public Safety Innovation Center | Entrepreneurial Ecosystems | Regional Innovation Fund (RIF) | Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) for SBIR & STTR | University Partnerships | Startup Company Mentoring & Engagement. For more information, please visit www.VirginiaIPC.org. Follow VIPC on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn.

About the Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF)

VIPC’s Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) accepts applications and awards funding on a rolling basis to Virginia’s small businesses and university-based innovators. For Virginia’s academic and nonprofit research community, the competitive grant program seeks to fund high-potential Virginia-based academic research teams that are developing technologies with strong commercial potential. The grants support early technology and market validation efforts such as customer discovery, market research, business model validation, the development of prototypes or minimum viable products (MVPs), customer pilots, and intellectual property protection, team development, and more. For more information on funding opportunities and eligibility



requirements, or to apply, visit the CCF pages from www.VirginialPC.org.

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