

# Nucleos Secures \$3 Million in Seed Funding and National Science Foundation Award to Empower Second Chance Learners

*Company undertakes the transition to a Public Benefit Corporation (PBC)*

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, November 30, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Nucleos, an emerging leader in educational technology dedicated to breaking down barriers for individuals to access high-quality education and training in the justice system and beyond, is pleased to announce that it has received the Small Business Innovation and Research (SBIR) Phase IIB grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). This award is an integral part of the funding that has brought the company's seed stage funding total to \$3 million, signaling a new era for Nucleos. The funding will enable Nucleos to enhance its innovative educational platform for "second chance learners" — individuals who are incarcerated or returning to society — to assist in developing their career goals and connecting with educational resources, training programs, and job opportunities.



People using the Nucleos platform on secure devices in a prison education program

The logo for Nucleos, featuring the word "NUCLEOS" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is stylized as a blue circle with a horizontal line through it, resembling an equals sign.

With the aid of this seed funding milestone, Nucleos will embark on a new chapter as a Public Benefit Corporation (PBC). This transformation affirms the centrality of the company's mission – promoting a more just society through education and training – as Nucleos grows and scales its operations. Nucleos PBC is devoted to intertwining pro-social outcomes with corporate business objectives, ensuring that positive change isn't just a mission — it's core to the Nucleos business strategy.

"We are driven by the goal to ensure that education and technology can aid those who need the help the most," says Noah Freedman, Nucleos CEO and Co-Founder. "We hear from users how the different courses they are taking, whether advanced certificate programs or English language learning, will help them avoid going back to jail and prison and to be there for their families. It is



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*Christopher Aro*

incredibly powerful. One such success story comes from one of our early investors, Dave Dahl, founder of Dave's Killer Bread, [who attributes prison education programs](#) with helping to turn his life around and setting him up for a tremendously successful and inspiring career."

Nucleos has established strong corporate relationships with a number of organizations, including strategic collaborations with [WGU Labs](#), an affiliate of Western Governors University and [iT1 Source](#), a global technology solution provider.

Nucleos is also pleased to announce Christopher Aro as the new Chief Operating Officer (COO). As a Marine veteran and former team member overseeing operations at Inspectify from Seed to Series A, Christopher brings a wealth of experience in leadership, navigating personal challenges and startup scaling. His dedication to democratizing education, training, and career opportunities is fueled by a deeply personal perspective – his own experiences as an individual impacted by the judicial system. "Facing homelessness, mental health crises, and incarceration, the struggle is real for both veterans and people returning from incarceration," shares Aro. "At Nucleos, we're stepping into this fray, targeting jails and prisons. We're not just providing education; we're igniting a beacon of hope, ensuring every person re-entering society emerges stronger, ready to thrive beyond barriers."

In addition to the National Science Foundation, Nucleos' seed funding is led by investments from strategic partners with aligned interests in promoting a better education technology environment for learners — iT1, Western Governors University (WGU) Labs, social impact fund ScaleGood Fund, and Sanjay Srivastava, founder of Vocareum, an Ed-tech leader in virtual lab experiments. Their support will bolster Nucleos' capacity to make a tangible impact on individuals and society and to amplify and expand the reach of our distinctive platform.

These strategic partnerships have spurred the development of the Nucleos Reentry as a Service program as a collaboration with iT1, which streamlines the implementation of solutions for justice and educational institutions. Western Governors University Labs, a subsidiary of the largest U.S. university by enrollment, solidifies Nucleos' ability to offer top-tier, Pell-funded bachelor's degree programs to its beneficiaries. Their well-structured curriculum and asynchronous course models fully support Nucleos' mission to enable incarcerated individuals to advance at their own pace and prepare for successful reintegration into society.

ScaleGood fund, a social impact venture capital fund, shares in the Nucleos mission to transform society through broader access to education and training. Other notable angel investors include Sanjay Srivastava, a founder of Vocareum, and a successful Silicon Valley tech entrepreneur. Vocareum offers a virtual lab platform built specifically for learning, researching, and assessment

for a broad range of courses that require computation. Vocareum's expertise in partnering with educational institutions supports Nucleos' goal of providing high-quality education to incarcerated individuals.

Nucleos is grateful and energized by the potential for growth and innovation that lies ahead. This period marks a significant opportunity to further our commitment to educational access and those we serve. Nucleos' steadfast drive continues to fuel innovation and expansion, focusing on providing transformative educational opportunities for underserved populations and promoting successful reintegration within the correctional space. Nucleos will be raising further funding in 2024, and encourages any interested investors or partners to get in touch.

#### About Nucleos

Nucleos PBC is on a vital mission to promote a more just society through education and training. We focus on demolishing barriers that hinder access to high-quality education and career goals, thereby creating a direct connection between learning and jobs. Our conviction is that everyone deserves access to 21st-century learning opportunities. While our initial efforts focus on justice-involved learners, our ultimate goal is to foster an all-encompassing, equitable learning environment that stimulates growth and potential for every individual, regardless of their circumstances.

More information can be found at [www.nucleos.com](http://www.nucleos.com).

Noah Freedman

Nucleos

+1 866-682-5367

info@nucleos.com

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