

VIPC Awards Technology Commercialization Grant to xStar Research for Time- and Cost-Saving Performance Analysis SaaS Tool to Spur Greener Buildings

xStar Research is revolutionizing the architectural and engineering design process with innovative, integrated software that delivers sustainability insights.

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The [Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation \(VIPC\)](#) today announced

that Blacksburg, Virginia-based startup [xStar](#) Research LLC has been awarded a Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) grant for \$100,000. xStar Research has developed a software to help architects build greener buildings, while saving time and money.



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We are empowering architects to design more energy-efficient, low-carbon buildings with unparalleled ease, speed, and affordability.”

Dr. Rick Fenrich, CEO, xStar Research

Buildings account for 37% of global carbon emissions and decarbonizing buildings is a major opportunity. However, fundamental information to help architects design more sustainable buildings, especially at the early stages, hasn't been easily accessible. xStar Research has set out to equip architects and engineers with critical data on costs, energy, and carbon emissions. By putting building performance analysis insights at their fingertips, architects are more quickly able to quantify cost-sustainability tradeoffs and can save up to 15% of design time, or about \$2,000 to \$44,000 or more, per project.

xStar Research is developing a SaaS tool that provides near-real-time analysis and optimization of building designs to architects during the design process. The software will integrate seamlessly into Autodesk Revit, a popular architectural design software. CCF funding will enable the company to complete development and launch the first version of the software.

“The biggest challenge in architectural design is usually balancing a client’s budget, which becomes even harder when incorporating sustainability objectives. Today’s architects lack the tools to easily calculate the tradeoffs between cost and sustainability that are used to support design decisions, improve sustainability, reduce building costs, and market designs to clients. This is where our breakthrough product comes in,” said xStar Research CEO Dr. Rick Fenrich. “We are empowering architects to design more energy-efficient, low-carbon buildings with unparalleled ease, speed, and affordability.”

The company has previously received funding from VIPC’s Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) to enhance the competitiveness of their federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) proposal strategy. In addition to learning more about the grant application process and clarifying and presenting their business idea, target market, and company story, xStar Research is better prepared to seek and receive new funding to grow and scale their operations as a result of VIPC’s SBIR proposal support and this CCF grant.

VIPC President and CEO, Joe Benevento, said, “Supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in Virginia through the earliest stages of technology commercialization is part of VIPC’s core mission. We are proud to facilitate opportunities for Virginia startups like xStar Research to accelerate the commercialization of technology and solutions into the marketplace.”

“Aligning financial and sustainability objectives in building design is unnecessarily complicated for architects due to limited software tool support and lengthy, cost-prohibitive design iterations,” said Jeanette Townsend, VIPC’s Director of Private Sector Grants. “With Rick’s background in both design and optimization, he is the ideal Virginian to introduce a solution that arms architects and engineers with the information they need to envision and initiate greener buildings from the start. CCF is glad to be able to support him and xStar Research in this mission.”

About xStar Research

xStar Research aims to revolutionize the architecture and engineering design process with software that empowers designers for sustainable building design. We believe state-of-the-art analysis and optimization software doesn’t have to be hard to use. We are a team of thinkers and doers who are passionate about contributing to the innovation of designers and the wellbeing of the planet. To learn more, visit www.xstarresearch.com.

About Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC)

Connecting innovators with opportunities. VIPC operates as the nonprofit corporation on behalf of the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority (VIPA). VIPA / VIPC is Virginia’s designated authority for leading innovation and economic development in the Commonwealth of Virginia through research, commercialization, and technology advancement; entrepreneurship, startup, and venture capital growth; and regional ecosystem, innovation network, and industry sector expansion. As part of its operations, VIPC helps attract and catalyze private investment into

early-stage startup companies, provides research and technology commercialization grants to universities and entrepreneurs, and offers resource and funding support for entrepreneurial ecosystems, innovation networks, and public-private partnerships at local, state, federal levels.

VIPC's programs include: Virginia Invests | Virginia Venture Partners (VVP) | Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) | Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Development | Regional Innovation Fund (RIF) | Smart Communities | The Virginia Smart Community Testbed | The Virginia Unmanned Systems Center | Virginia Advanced Air Mobility Alliance (VAAMA) | The Public Safety Innovation Center (PSIC) | Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) for SBIR & STTR | University Partnerships | Startup Company Mentoring & Engagement.

For more information, please visit www.VIPC.org. Explore the latest news from VIPC and images from VIPC-supported stakeholder events. Follow VIPC on Facebook, X, and LinkedIn.

About the Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF)

VIPC's Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) accepts applications and awards funding to university research partners and entrepreneurial startups at the earliest stages of technology commercialization along the innovation continuum. These commercialization grants support R&D and early technology and market validation efforts such as the development of prototypes or minimum viable products (MVPs), customer pilots, and intellectual property protection. For more information on CCF funding opportunities and eligibility requirements, or to apply, visit www.VIPC.org.

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