

Exhibit A
Wildcat MicroFUND: Rural Expansion
Scope of Work

Summary:

Currently, the Wildcat MicroFund (WMF) helps early-stage entrepreneurs cultivate business ideas, launch new businesses, provides mentoring, and engages entrepreneurial communities along the Northern Wasatch. The main objective of the WMF is to propel early-stage business ideas and businesses forward by awarding low-dollar (non-Federal/donations) cash awards and ongoing mentoring resources. The opportunities offered by the WMF exist to provide critical early-stage infrastructure for entrepreneurs. The WMF provides professional support services and mentoring resources designed to guide entrepreneurs through the beginning stages of business service/product ideation. Ultimately, the WMF helps support the launch of new business ventures. The resources of WMF support entrepreneurs as they develop and iterate value propositions, identify and refine market segments, conduct market, and validation activities, and develop product design and concepts.

In the past six years, the WMF has established a proven track record of helping early-stage businesses find success. The WMF has received over 1200 applicants, hosted over 150 pitch events, and awarded over 500 awards consisting of either cash or professional service awards.

Since the WMF was started, the number of underserved applicants has increased 32%. WSU has built an impressive infrastructure within the Ogden/Clearfield/Weber/Davis/Morgan and Box Elder areas that specifically provides support to under-served and under-represented communities. For instance, the WMF has two Spanish-speaking mentors that serve applicants and provide technical support from inception into the fund through business launch. With the success the WMF has had thus far in the area, the WMF has created a blueprint and proven model that could be utilized to service other areas of the State of Utah.

The WMF proposes expanding into two new Eastern Utah regions with high-level under-served and under-represented populations. These new Eastern areas are rural regions that experience high poverty rates and declining workforces. Younger populations leave these regions seeking better and higher-paying jobs. Another common factor in these regions is the lack of an entrepreneurial ecosystem with access to entrepreneurial tools and resources. The WMF has a proven track record of serving entrepreneurs, especially when financial and mentoring barriers keep them from starting a new business. The WMF has established partnerships within each new proposed region and is aligned with motivated local partners and business community support systems. These collaborative relationships will promote robust entrepreneurial ecosystems and provide business opportunities in the region.

Detailed Scope:

The WMF primarily aims to provide critical early-stage infrastructure for entrepreneurs to become competitive for formal fundraising activities (e.g., crowdsourcing, accelerators, SBIR grants, state grants, business competitions, micro-lending, angel funding, and VC funding). Scholars and entrepreneurs often refer to this early resource mobilization period before formal fundraising as the three Fs, "friends, family, and fools," implying that only the unwise or socially obligated will invest in early-stage business ideas.

The proposed regions of expansion have high poverty rates, making it difficult for entrepreneurs to leverage their social networks to gather the resources necessary to develop their business concepts. To address this gap, the Wildcat MicroFund will provide the resources and training to effectively guide entrepreneurs through the early stages of creating a strategic plan, including developing and iterating value propositions; identifying and refining market segments; conducting a competitive analysis including marketability and patentability analyses; performing market validation; developing product designs; generating marketing materials, and reducing to practice the proof of concepts.

Weber State University, through its Hall Global Entrepreneurship Center, has created the program and content that the WMF uses. As the WMF expands into eastern Utah, the Hall Global Entrepreneurship Center will design and develop content and programming that meets the unique needs of Eastern Utah. The WMF expects that programming and training will be uniquely developed and tailored for these underserved populations. Weber State University will provide additional educational opportunities to entrepreneurs who would like a certification, an associate's degree, or minor in entrepreneurship. The Weber State entrepreneurship program can be done online, allowing entrepreneurs in Eastern Utah access to this educational resource. Scholarships (not EDA or matching funds) will be used to help cover the costs of participants. Additional training for the entrepreneur outside of what the WMF offers will be helpful in the creation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem in these Eastern Utah regions.

The WMF partners with Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) across the state and local business development agencies to provide mentoring services for early-stage entrepreneurs. This proven model was developed in the current WMF service areas and has shown to be highly effective. This partnership benefits both the SBDC and the WMF. The WMF leverages the expertise of the SBDC. While the WMF provides an evidence-based system, programs, and funding opportunities that cater to early-stage entrepreneurs the SBDCs can utilize these early-stage entrepreneurs and connect them to free SBDC resources. Partnerships have been established in each new region that the WMF is proposing to expand into. (Please refer to the letters of Commitment and Support).

The SBDCs help a variety of businesses, emphasizing companies that need access to traditional funding sources. The focus on more mature businesses often precludes early-stage entrepreneurs at the ideation stage, which requires access to mentoring and resources unique to early-stage entrepreneurs. SBDC does not have access to these types of resources or programs to help early-stage

entrepreneurs. This is amplified when early-stage entrepreneurs stem from under-represented or underserved populations. The WMF provides the SBDC with programming and resources to serve early-stage entrepreneurs. The resources include access to materials, marketing, infrastructure, and award funding that are not typically available to SBDCs.

The flow diagram below provides a complete scope of work and the nuts and bolts components of the WMF. The flow diagram is organized sequentially but has multiple entry and exit points for entrepreneurs based on their specific needs.

Regions of expansion as follows:

Region 1, Region 2, and Region 3.

Region 1. Box Elder, Cache, and Rich counties, each of these counties' Per Capital Income is below the national average. Networking and the connection of necessity and challenges to innovators, entrepreneurs, and private industry

- Entrepreneur makerspace and equipment for collaboration and prototyping
- Location for all kinds of companies to prototype new concepts.

Region 2. Daggett County, Duchesne County, Uintah County, Carbon County (49007), Emery County, Sanpete County, Sevier County, Piute County

Each of these counties' Per Capital Income is below the national average. Much of the land owned by the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation, Ashley National Forest, and the Bureau of Land Management. Declining populations in several of the counties in the region (Carbon, Emery, Piute). Coal-reliant communities except for Daggett & Piute); approximately 8.2% of the region's jobs revolve around coal (or other) mining activities.

Region 3: Grand County (49019), Wayne County (49055), San Juan County (49037), Garfield County (49017), Kane County (49025), and 7 Indigenous Tribes of Southern Utah (Ute Mountain, Navajo Nation, Piute, Hopi, Zuni, Apache, Southern Ute)

Each of these counties' Per Capital Income is below the national average. Small population with negative growth in working-age populations (specifically Garfield, San Juan, and Wayne counties). Workforce: rural areas suffer from a lack of working-age people who leave for better paying jobs in more urban areas. Protected lands (Bryce Canyon National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Capitol Reef National Park, Tribal Lands, etc.) – private land more limited. Networking and the connection of necessity and challenges to innovators, entrepreneurs, and private industry

The WMF's pursuit of growth is part of every regional CEDS plan. This will be supported by the counties' Economic Development Directors' letters of support for their project in their region.

Regional Coordinator Position & Roles Overview:

Areas of Coordination:

- This person will be responsible for helping to establish greater capacity and community connections for expansion efforts of Weber State Universities Wildcat MicroFUND.
- It will be particularly important to continue to grow and foster greater connections in San Juan County and Navajo Nation.
- Assist WMF Manager with fundamental regional management aspects.
- Liaise with local entrepreneur assets like area SBDC offices and chamber of commerces to promote the resources of the Wildcat MicroFUND.
- Work closely with local business development agencies to drive applicants to the WMF.
- Manage regional specific administrative tasks as identified and assigned by the WMF manager.
- Expand the regional applicant base, raise fund awareness, and expand the overall regional reach of the WMF in alignment with the WMF.
- Promote the growth of regional entrepreneurial ecosystem growth.
- Provide technical support and assistance to applicants seeking the resources of the WMF.
- Assist with mentoring on an as needed and identified basis for applicants as they cycle through the required