



Concept Paper: FoundryPad

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Vision

FoundryPad aims to cultivate vibrant, resilient tech startup ecosystems, powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and community collaboration, and a novel end-to-end founder support system. We facilitate ideation, transform innovative ideas into fundable, scalable, and impactful tech companies, fostering economic growth and positioning the region as a recognized hub for emerging tech innovation.

What We Do: An Integrated Pathway for Tech Innovation

FoundryPad offers a unique, three-pronged approach to building successful AI-driven tech startups:

- **AI Academy (Foundation & Ideation):** Through workshops, coding boot camps, support of high schools, University AI clubs, underrepresented groups (e.g., women, minorities, first-generation students), and programs like StartathonAI, we inspire, motivate, support, and empower founders, developers, and business professionals to leverage AI tools for rapid market analysis, value proposition development, and business planning. This phase focuses on education, ideation, and team formation, demystifying entrepreneurship with AI as a core enabler.
- **The Cultivator (Nurturing & Validation):** Selected teams from the AI Academy, or other intake channels, enter our Cultivator—a hybrid hatchery-accelerator. We provide initial seed funding as a non-profit mission-based investor through PRIs and SAFEs, intensive coaching, mentorship from seasoned entrepreneurs, and a support community. The focus is on validating business models, developing Minimum Viable Products (MVPs), achieving customer traction, and building resilient teams, de-risking ventures for growth.
- **Foundry (Growth & Scaling to Series A):** Promising companies transition into our Foundry, receiving substantial investment, a structured curriculum for scaling operations

through our network of partnering accelerators, customer acquisition, financial management, and strategic partnerships, plus intensive Series A preparation. We connect founders to later-stage venture capitalists (VCs) and guide them through fundraising complexities.

Why We Do It: Benefits to Stakeholders

FoundryPad delivers transformative benefits across the ecosystem:

- Local Community (initially DMV - Washington DC, Maryland, Virginia - focusing on healthcare, govtech, fintech, climate tech, aerospace, etc)
 - Workforce development: prepare the AI-powered workforce
 - Job Creation: Drives high-quality job growth through new tech companies.
 - Economic Development: Attracts investment and strengthens the local economy.
 - Talent Retention: Retains and attracts skilled individuals with opportunities.
 - Regional Profile: Positions the corridor as an AI innovation hub.
- Venture Capitalists (VCs)
 - Curated Deal Flow: Access to vetted, de-risked startups.
 - Improved Due Diligence: Startups with validated models and clear metrics.
 - Co-Investment Opportunities: Options to invest alongside our program.
 - Early AI Talent Insight: Exposure to emerging founders and AI applications.
- Founders
 - Structured Pathway: Clear support from idea to Series A.
 - Access to Capital: Non-dilutive funding and fundraising support.
 - World-Class Mentorship: Guidance from AI and entrepreneurial experts.
 - AI-Powered Advantage: Tools to leverage AI for a competitive edge.
- Broader Tech Ecosystem
 - Innovation Catalyst: Stimulates AI-driven solutions to real-world problems.
 - Replicable Model: Offers a blueprint for community-driven startup development.
 - Feeder System: Prepares companies for later-stage accelerators and investors.

How We Do It: Building a Community-Centric Ecosystem

Our approach leverages local strengths, rooted in community collaboration:

Collaborative Environment

We foster a space where educators, developers, founders, mentors, investors, and stakeholders connect, share knowledge, and support each other, building a thriving ecosystem.

Leveraging Existing Networks

We integrate with Google Developer Groups (GDGs), academic institutions, local government initiatives, and businesses to amplify our impact.

Non-Profit Structure

Operating as a non-profit enables us to:

- Prioritize founder success and ecosystem growth over profit.
- Access grants from government, foundations, and corporate philanthropy.
- Attract mission-driven mentors and volunteers.

Continuous Engagement

Regular events, workshops, demo days, and networking opportunities keep the community engaged, facilitate knowledge sharing, and showcase portfolio progress.

Mentorship as a Cornerstone

A curated network of experienced mentors provides tailored guidance at every stage, ensuring founder success.

Milestones

- ☒ Create a tech community: We have created GDG Annapolis and GDG Baltimore and formed partnerships with several others
- ☒ Initiate AI Academy: have completed several workshops and StartathonAI events
- ☒ Piloted Cultivator
- ☐ Identify a Board: due by the end of 2025 with expertise in AI, venture capital, non-profit governance, and community leaders.
- ☐ Form partnerships: Black Girl Ventures, Code Fever, or Women Who Code, BWTech, UMD, VT, etc.

2026–2028 Goals:

- ☐ Raise funds: By 2026, raise an initial \$500K through grants, corporate sponsors, and angel investors, with an allocation plan of 40% for seed funding, 30% for operations, 20% for marketing, and 10% for events.

- ☐ Run over thirty educational and hands-on training events, and competitions like [StartathonAI](#), impacting over 900 people and inspiring twenty projects..
- ☐ Create 200 high-quality jobs through portfolio companies by 2028.
- ☐ Long-term financial sustainability plan: \$5M in follow-on funding for Foundry graduates by 2028 through continued grants, corporate partnerships, potentially returns from PRIs/SAFEs.
- ☐ Exit 2 companies

Conclusion

FoundryPad combines AI-focused training, a hybrid hatchery-accelerator model, and a community-centric, non-profit approach to unlock entrepreneurial potential in the region. We invite community leaders, investors, mentors, and aspiring founders to join us in building a thriving future for tech innovation in DMV area.