



IIFH – Better Ventures Innovator Fellowship

A unique opportunity to work with our innovation partners in an immersive, hands-on experience in a food and health investment environment gaining real-world business and entrepreneurial skills while evaluating ag, food and health startups.

- **Financial support:** 6 month stipend*, travel, tuition, accommodation, research and conference expenses (capped at \$50k by [IIFH](#))
- **Timeline:** Winter through Spring 2025 (Ideally mid-January start, but date is flexible)
- **Eligibility:** UC Davis post-doctoral fellows, or PhD students post-QE
- **Eligibility:** UC Davis post-doctoral fellows, or PhD candidates who have passed their QE
- **Part-time Learning and Exposure to Venture Capital (VC) Group:** During the first half of the fellowship (months 1-3), fellows will begin work remotely, part-time with VC and will be exposed to methods, practices, culture and systems of how VCs identify investable ventures, evaluate startups in the food arena, and more. The fellow will engage in regular virtual (and occasionally in-person) meetings with the VC host. This happens simultaneously while continuing fellow's on-campus research commitments. This time allows the fellow to become oriented with the VC landscape, role responsibilities, and be poised to begin full-time immersion with their VC host during the second half of the Fellowship (months 4-6), which is also remote.
- **Experiential Learning with Venture Capital Group:** During the second half of the fellowship (months 4-6), the fellow transitions to full-time work with the VC host to evaluate startups in relevant industries. The full-time element should involve regular travel to various locations around the country (funds for travel, accommodation and conference allowance provided).
- **APPLICATION DEADLINE September 27, 2024 – OR UNTIL FILLED:** [Click here to apply.](#)

About Better Ventures

[Better Ventures](#) is an early-stage venture capital firm that backs founders on a mission to build a better world. We partner with startups leveraging emerging technologies and breakthrough science to create a sustainable, healthy, and inclusive economy where both people and planet thrive. We are active in investment themes that map to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) including food/ag tech, synthetic biology, circular economy, electrification, personalized health, longevity, education, and the future of work. Big challenges represent big opportunities, and we seek founders with a passion to build world-changing companies with the potential for impact at scale



and outsized financial returns. Better Ventures is committed to backing underrepresented founders, and we have set public goals to build investment portfolios with 50%/10%/10% representation of women, Black, and Latinx founders.

Candidates with coursework or experience related to one or more of the following areas (or similar) are strongly desired: synthetic biology, agriculture technology, alternative protein, microbial science, microbiome, genomics, bioinformatics, longevity, personalized health, machine learning, and generative AI.

About the Innovation Institute for Food and Health (IIFH)

The IIFH works to catalyze innovation across food, agriculture, and health. Founded on a unique academic-industry partnership and interfacing with both entrepreneurial and research sectors, the institute facilitates development and delivery of commercial products that bring metabolic health to food products and services. We envision this leading to a world where easily attainable metabolic health leads to happier, healthier, longer lives for everyone.

Program Description

Phase 1 (3 months): Begin part-time work with Better Ventures (~50%), splitting time between appointment and academic research

Start date flexible, must be between January 15 and June 15: following selection, anticipate joining Better Ventures remotely for three months.

- Learn to support Better Ventures efforts in evaluating startups and selecting investable ventures that address selected challenges in food and health.
- The fellow will work closely with Better Ventures staff through virtual means. Support is provided for regular in-person meetings and conferences, as needed.
- Participate in frequent video conferences with founders, faculty, investors, academic and commercial partners, and subject matter experts
- Part-time will allow the fellow an orientation to the startup world, familiarize them with the necessary skills and processes, and begin building a framework for constructive engagement.
- Engage in IIFH Fellowship activities and check-ins, and plan one-day Twitter Takeover
- Attend the Student Startup Series on Fridays at the Student Startup Center
- Support from monthly face-to-face meetings with IIFH (virtual or in-person), as needed.
- Access to funds for attending conferences and professional development opportunities.

Phase 2 (3 months): Onsite experiential learning with Better Ventures in Oakland, CA

Fully immerse onsite with Better Ventures. Access to funding to cover your accommodation, conferences and travel.

- Learn how VCs source and evaluate investment opportunities in a variety of categories
- Perform technical due diligence and market research for new investment opportunities and prepare written reports summarizing work and report findings during weekly team meetings
- Attend at least one in-person industry-related conference and other VC events
- Engage in IIFH Fellowship activities and check-ins, and perform one-day Twitter Takeover
- In conclusion: provide a brief report on the results and impact of the fellowship, with the potential to present at IIFH's annual event or equivalent.

Application Requirements

- 1) Completed application form on IIFH website. [Click here to apply.](#)
- 2) Resume or CV (PDF)
- 3) Letter of interest detailing current research focus, why the program is of interest to you, and how your career goals align therewith (max. 2 pages, PDF format)
- 4) Letter of support from supervising PI or Major Professor. (max. 1 page, PDF format)
- 5) Optional: Second Letter of Recommendation

Please combine items 2-5 above (in the order they are listed) into one single PDF for submission.

- **PhD-status Fellows must have an active GSR appointment in their department or be able to acquire one with their PI. The fellowship covers 100% your existing 50% GSR appointment at its current step for the six months of the program, regardless of where you are in your VC commitment.*
- *75% of postdocs salary and benefits are covered by the program.*