CYBER HOWARD ACCELERATOR

Program: 12-Week Milestone

Support early-stage cybersecurity startups in product readiness, go-to-market strategy, funding, and operational scaling, positioning them for success in government, defense, and commercial markets.

Weeks 1-4: Product Development & Market Validation
Validate product-market fit and ensure technical readiness for customer engagement

Milestones:
- Conduct a product audit and security assessment with EIRs and industry mentors.
- Define target customer segments and refine the problem statement based on market needs. (TAM, SAM, SOM)
- Conduct competitive analysis and position the company's unique value proposition.
- Engage with potential beta customers (make it, break it, repeat) or test environments for product feedback.

Program Activities:
- Mentorship sessions with government and enterprise security buyers.
- Customer discovery interviews and early pilot scoping.

Weeks 5-8: Go-To-Market & Sales Strategy
Develop and execute a scalable sales & marketing strategy

Milestones:
- Build a cyber-focused go-to-market (GTM) plan aligned with federal and enterprise sales cycles.
- Develop a B2B/B2G sales strategy and begin GovCon/federal procurement readiness.
- Create initial marketing content (white papers, case studies, industry reports).
- Define lead generation & outreach strategy (conferences, thought leadership, etc.).
- Establish key procurement pathways for government and enterprise adoption.

Program Activities:
- Sales coaching: Selling cybersecurity solutions to the government and private sector.
- CISO roundtable discussions: How to get products into enterprise security stacks.
- Marketing & branding workshops tailored for cybersecurity founders.
- Procurement & funding sessions: Engaging with federal & state contracts (SBIR/STTR, OTAs, etc.).

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Weeks 9-11: Funding & Investment Readiness
Prepare companies for investor engagement, funding opportunities, and scaling

Milestones:

- Develop and refine a pitch deck and investor narrative.
- Engage with cyber-focused venture capitalists, angels, and strategic investors.
- Explore non-dilutive funding options (grants, federal contracts, state incentives).
- Define post-accelerator growth plan, customer acquisition and hiring.
- Prepare for final pitch day with key stakeholders and potential funders.

Program Activities:
- Pitch coaching with investors & GovTech funding specialists.
- 1:1 meetings with VCs, grant advisors, and corporate partners.
- Funding roundtable: How to leverage contracts for early-stage growth.

Week 12: Graduation & Scale-Up Readiness
Final showcase, securing next steps for growth, and transitioning to long-term success

Milestones:
- Deliver final pitch showcase to investors, government leaders, and corporate buyers.
- Secure partnerships, pilots, or funding commitments for post-program growth.
- Formalize graduation roadmap – either move into the MIC for further incubation or transition independently.
- Ensure legal, financial, and operational readiness for long-term success.

Program Activities:
- Final pitch showcase & networking event with investors & policymakers.
- Exit strategy planning: Post-program growth roadmap development.
- Connections to MIC resident programs for continued support.