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**ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
AND  
STARTER STUDIO FL INC.**

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**FY 2026 GRANT AGREEMENT**

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THIS AGREEMENT ("Agreement"), made and entered into this 1st day of October 2025, by and between ORANGE COUNTY, a charter county and political subdivision of the State of Florida, hereinafter referred to as the "County" and STARTER STUDIO FL, INC hereinafter referred to as "STARTERSTUDIO".

**WITNESSETH:**

WHEREAS, STARTERSTUDIO has applied to the County for a donation of funds for the operations of STARTERSTUDIO; and

WHEREAS, the County developed the Orange County Economic Stimulus Strategy 4.0 and appropriated funds to STARTER STUDIO FL INC to launch accelerator programs to provide education and training in tech entrepreneurship and business leadership for tech startup founders, and has determined that there is a public interest for such activities/programs in order to support existing tech startups and other aspiring entrepreneurs desiring to start a tech business venture in Central Florida through education, mentorship, investment pursuits and other activities conducive to Orange County's economy and, to that end, the County has appropriated funds to be donated to STARTERSTUDIO for such purposes; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to enter into an agreement with STARTERSTUDIO whereby STARTERSTUDIO will receive said funds of the County in accordance with the terms and conditions herein set forth; and

WHEREAS, STARTERSTUDIO has available the necessary qualified and trained personnel, facilities, materials and resources to perform its obligations as set forth in this Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and mutual covenants herein contained, the parties agree as follows:

## **Section 1. County's Obligation.**

**1.1** The County has appropriated for the period commencing October 1, 2025, and ending September 30, 2026, a total sum not to exceed One Hundred Sixty-Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-Three and 00/100 Dollars (\$167,843.00) ("County Contribution") to reimburse STARTERSTUDIO solely for the purposes set forth in Exhibit "A". If STARTERSTUDIO is unable to complete any portion of its project scope or activities during the first installment period, it may request approval to reallocate the corresponding funds to the second installment period. Any such request shall be submitted to the Economic Development Administrator for prior authorization no less than thirty (30) days before the conclusion of the first installment period. The County Contribution shall be made in up to two installments, with each installment not to exceed Eight-Three Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty-One and 50/100 Dollars (\$83,921.50). Payments are scheduled based on the submission of two performance and financial reports, as outlined in Exhibit "A". The report for the first period (October 1 to March 31) is due no later than April 15, and the report for the final period (April 1 to September 30) is due no later than October 15, as described in Exhibit "B". The final report will determine compliance for future funding. Failure to submit these reports may result in termination of this Agreement and make STARTERSTUDIO ineligible for future County contributions.

**1.2** No funds paid under this Agreement shall be expended for any lobbyist, as such term is defined in section 2-351 of the Orange County Code, to engage in any lobbying activities designed to influence decisions or other foreseeable actions of the Board of County Commissioners or the governing body of any other municipality located within Orange County.

Furthermore, STARTERSTUDIO agrees that it shall not undertake, or cause to be undertaken, or participate in, any lobbying before the state legislature in order to advocate for or influence legislative decision making inconsistent with legislative priorities adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, without the prior written consent of the Board or the County Administrator.

**1.3** No funds paid under this Agreement shall be expended for payment of any liability, claims, demands, damages, expenses, fees, fines, penalties, proceedings, actions and cost of actions, including attorney's fees or attorneys on appeal of proceedings or judgments of any kind and nature.

## **Section 2. STARTERSTUDIO'S Obligation.**

**2.1 Representation of STARTERSTUDIO.** STARTERSTUDIO represents that it will use its best efforts to develop and promote startup tech businesses and entrepreneurs in Central Florida, which should include partnering with Orange County Office of Economic, Trade & Tourism Development, and Business Development offices.

**2.2 STARTERSTUDIO as Independent Contractor.** The parties expressly acknowledge that STARTERSTUDIO is acting as an Independent Contractor, and nothing in this Agreement is intended or shall be construed to establish an agency, partnership or joint venture relationship between the parties.

**2.3 Unlawful Discrimination.** STARTERSTUDIO, in performing its obligations under this Agreement shall not unlawfully discriminate against any worker, employee, applicant or member of the public because of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and gender expression/identity, color, age, disability or national origin.

**2.4 Accounting.** STARTERSTUDIO will utilize such accounting procedures and practices in maintenance of the records of receipts and disbursements of the funds contributed by the County as will be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. STARTERSTUDIO agrees to submit reports to the County's Office of Management and Budget according to the terms described in Exhibit "B". Reporting shall contain a standardized format including an Executive Summary, Table of Contents, detailed breakdown by programming, participant data, financials, and other specified sections pertaining to, as required by the agreement. All fonts in reporting should be legible and in Times New Roman 12 pt. format to ensure readability. A standardized reporting template to be provided upon request. Failure to comply with the County's request for submission of such reports shall constitute grounds for termination of this Agreement and may result in the ineligibility of STARTERSTUDIO to receive future contributions from the County.

**2.5 Non-Profit Status.** STARTERSTUDIO agrees to maintain its corporate, non-profit status in the State of Florida throughout the term of this Agreement. If STARTERSTUDIO should, during the term of this Agreement, lose its corporate status, it shall immediately notify the County in writing, and the County reserves the right to terminate this Agreement immediately.

**2.6 Right to Inspect and Audit Accounts.** During the term of this Agreement, STARTERSTUDIO, with respect to the receipt and expenditure of funds provided under this Agreement, shall permit County staff and the Orange County Comptroller and his staff to inspect and audit STARTERSTUDIO's books and accounts at any time during normal working hours, provided that reasonable notice is given to STARTERSTUDIO prior to any such inspection. Any costs incurred by STARTERSTUDIO as a result of a County audit shall be the sole responsibility of and shall be borne by STARTERSTUDIO. In addition, should STARTERSTUDIO provide any or all of the County's funds to sub-recipients, then, and in that event, STARTERSTUDIO shall include in written agreements with such sub-recipients a requirement that records of the sub-recipient be open to inspection and audit by the County or the County's designee.

**2.7 Annual Financial Audit.** STARTERSTUDIO shall obtain an independent financial audit conducted by a Florida-licensed certified public accountant and provide the results of the audit to the County within thirty (30) days of receipt by STARTERSTUDIO.

**2.8 Maintenance of Records; Audit.** For a period ending five (5) years after the expiration or termination of this Agreement, STARTERSTUDIO shall make all records and documents relating to this Agreement available for inspection and copying by the County or any agent designated by the County.

**2.9 Assignment.** STARTERSTUDIO may not assign its rights hereunder, without the prior written consent of the County. Failure to comply with this section may result in immediate termination of this Agreement.

**2.10 Indemnification.** STARTERSTUDIO agrees to indemnify and save harmless the County from and against any and all liability, claims, demands, damages, expenses, fees, fines, penalties, suits, proceedings, actions and cost of actions, including reasonable attorney's fees, attorneys on appeal of any kind and nature arising or growing out or in any way connected with STARTERSTUDIO's performance of its obligations under, or STARTERSTUDIO's breach of, this Agreement.

**Section 3. Term and Termination.**

The term of this Agreement shall begin on October 1, 2025 and shall continue until September 30, 2026, unless extended by written modification to the Agreement, signed by both parties. However, this Agreement can be terminated by either party at any time, with or without cause, upon no less than fifteen (15) days notice in writing to the other party. Said notice shall be delivered by certified mail or in person to the business address of the party upon whom such notice is served.

**Section 4. Notice.**

All notices required herein shall be delivered by either certified mail with return receipt requested or in person with proof of delivery. Notice shall be deemed received when (a) personally delivered or (b) on the third business day after mailing by certified mail with return receipt. Any notice required or permitted to be given under this Agreement shall be in writing, shall specifically refer to this Agreement, and shall be addressed to the appropriate party and address specified below:

COUNTY: Orange County Board of County Commissioners  
Attn: Economic Development Administrator  
201 S. Rosalind Avenue, 5th Floor  
Orlando, Florida 32801

AND

Orange County Administrator  
201 S. Rosalind Avenue, 5th Floor  
Orlando, Florida 32801

STARTERSTUDIO: Starter Studio FL, Inc  
36 West Pine St  
Orlando, FL 32801

**Section 5. Miscellaneous.**

**5.1 Entire Agreement.** This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties. Any representations or statements heretofore made with respect to such subject matter, whether verbal or written, are merged herein. No other agreement, whether verbal or written, with regard to the subject matter hereof, shall be deemed to exist.

**5.2 Waivers.** Performance of this Agreement by either party, after notice of default of any of the terms, covenants or conditions, shall not be deemed a waiver of any right to terminate this Agreement for any subsequent default, and no waiver of such default shall be construed or act as a waiver of any subsequent default.

**5.3 No Third-Party Beneficiaries.** This Agreement does not create, and shall not be construed as creating, any rights enforceable by any person or entity other than the parties to the Agreement.

**5.4 Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida. Venue for any litigation occurring as a result of this Agreement shall be held in the Ninth Circuit Courts in and for Orange County, Florida, and shall be governed by the laws of the State of Florida.

**5.5 Severability.** It is agreed by and between the parties that if any covenant, condition or provision contained in this agreement is held to be invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the validity of any other covenants, conditions or provisions herein contained.

[SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement on the dates set below.

ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
By: Board of County Commissioners

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jerry L. Demings  
Orange County Mayor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: Phil Diamond, CPA, County Comptroller  
As Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Clerk

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

STARTER STUDIO FL INC.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn Haynes, CEO/Executive Director

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 9/19/25

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **ACTIVITY FOR WHICH FUNDING IS REQUESTED**

Funding in the amount of \$167,843.00 for FY24-25 will be used to support STARTERSTUDIOS'S operations, which consist of highly skilled staff in technical assistance provision to startup tech and budding, aspiring founders. The programs they offer are targeted to serving tech and tech-enabled startups at various early-stages of development, from the earliest ideas to those seeking initial investment. Additionally, STARTERSTUDIO staff shall provide a detailed budget outlining how the funds will be utilized. Also, STARTERSTUDIO will participate in Eight (8) Economic Support Organizations meetings per year. Four (4) in-person meetings and Four (4) virtual group grantee calls with County staff

STARTERSTUDIO is expected to deliver the following major initiatives by September 30, 2026:

- Recruit and host at least 8 cohorts serving at least 70 participants combined, across all programs
- Participation in monthly group grantee calls with County staff, as well as in utilizing the SourceLink web resource provided by the National Entrepreneur Center and the County, and the Central Florida STEM Online Mentor Database provided by The Corridor and the County (training will be provided in monthly group grantee calls for how to access and use the online resources)
- Work with Orange County staff to investigate and prioritize technology solutions which the County may invest in or procure; as well as work with The Corridor on the local industry cluster strategy plans complementary to STARTERSTUDIO's accelerators outcomes.

Particular tasks agreed to be completed during the FY25-26 budget year include:

- Recruitment and selection of participants appropriate to each specific accelerator program
- Provide educational programming, access to mentors/Subject Matter Experts, and individual coaching
- Provide staffing and space for the programs
- Provide impact reports to County as outlined in Appendix B

**STARTERSTUDIO's Proposed Budget – Total: \$167,843.00**

<b>FY 25-26 Budget Categories</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes on Types of Expenses for the Category</b>
Showcase and Other Events - hosting or participation costs	\$25,000	Demo days, Alumni Workshops, Alumni/Investor networking, ecosystem support events, etc.
Tools and Resources	\$137,843	Education & Learning platform; Marketing/Comms creative/ materials; Facilitators, Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Alumni Network Manager; Curriculum R&D/updates, Intern stipends, SME Stipends, Awards.
Financial Audit	\$5,000	Securing and paying an accounting firm for a Review Audit (at this fee level).
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$167,843</b>	

NO FUNDS PAID UNDER THIS AGREEMENT SHALL BE EXPENDED FOR PAYMENT OF ANY LIABILITY, CLAIMS, DEMANDS, DAMAGES, EXPENSES, FEES, FINES, PENALTIES, PROCEEDINGS, ACTIONS OR COST OF ACTIONS, INCLUDING ATTORNEY'S FEES OR ATTORNEYS ON APPEAL OF ANY PROCEEDINGS OR JUDGMENTS OF ANY KIND AND NATURE.



## **EXHIBIT B**

The following reports are to be submitted to the Office Economic, Trade & Tourism Development as indicated:

1) STARTERSTUDIO shall provide the County with a copy of its semiannual performance and financial reports of the agency's activities/programs/services. A spreadsheet shall be provided outlining clients served to ensure alignment with programming goals. In cases where Grantee has been awarded multiple grants, staff should make every effort to prevent duplicating efforts and ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and strategically. Reporting periods shall end on March 31, and September 30.

<b>Invoice</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Reports and Invoices Due</b>
1	October 1– March 31	April 15
2	April 1 – September 30	October 15

Within each report, the following information needs to be included as it pertains to the agency's activities/programs/services offered to companies located within unincorporated Orange County:

- Brief summary of the progress of the accelerator programs to include: topics shared in each program; total number of attendees by program; number of mentors engaged in the program; total number of hours coaching provided across participants from STARTERSTUDIO staff or Contractors; any impact metrics or outcomes from Demo days, or other program related activities/events etc.
- Detailed list of program participants - information provided can be in a table format and must be at least: name of individual, ; anticipated tech industry vertical, brief explanation of the technology, and whether potential for intellectual property exists. If a company is formed, please share the address with zip code of company, legal entity (i.e. Corporation, LLC, etc.), major industry company may target, and potential opportunities/synergies for the company to work with the County (can be short summaries).

For the final report, the following is also needed:

- Cumulative listing of every participant in the accelerator programs up until September 30 – adding a progress column to the provided progress report table which provides any of the following for that individual:
  - 1) total dollar amount of revenues/contracts/investments obtained during the work period;
  - 2) total dollar amount of grants obtained during the work period as well as total dollar amount of grants/contracts pursued;
  - 3) total number of mentor/SME connections made by STARTERSTUDIO for client as well as whether the connection was made using the Central Florida Online Mentor Database, as well as the number of total unique mentors added over the year to either STARTERSTUDIO'S database as well as to the Online Mentor Database;

- 4) total number of customer, investor and/or partner connections made by STARTERSTUDIO for client as well as who clients were introduced to;
- 5) brief summary of any new intellectual property created or obtained as well as any progress on IP progressed (i.e. pending to full patent, etc.); and
- 6) any other notable progress metrics and/or anecdotes indicating participant's growth as a result of the Program (can include notes on founder skill development).

A presentation to County staff will also be required to discuss through the final report.

2) STARTERSTUDIO shall provide the County with a copy of its annual financial report, external audit reports, and any performance or statistical data requested by Orange County.

**Reports and Communications to the COUNTY:**

Orange County. Office of Economic, Trade & Tourism Development  
ATTN: Economic Development Administrator  
201 S. Rosalind Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Orlando, Florida 32801  
Phone: (407) 836-7370  
Fax: (407) 836-7399

**Reports and Communications to STARTERSTUDIO:**

StarterStudio FL, Inc  
ATTN: Dawn Haynes, CEO/Executive Director  
36 W. Pine St.  
Orlando, Florida 32801  
Phone: 407-378-4150