

## **AXIS Mentorship Program**

Indiana has a robust and diverse life sciences ecosystem, yet there is significant opportunity to further grow the industry by strengthening its entrepreneurial environment, workforce pipeline, and mentorship infrastructure. By building on past success, we can foster a dynamic support system for early-career scientists, researchers, and aspiring founders—key contributors to innovation and long-term competitiveness not just in life sciences, but across Indiana’s advanced industries.

A central strategy involves equipping Indiana-based innovators with the skills, knowledge, and networks needed to thrive, resulting in greater talent retention, reduced brain drain, and strengthened inclusive economic growth. By accelerating commercialization, expanding career pathways, and cultivating both first-time and repeat entrepreneurs, we can sustainably support a pipeline of high-quality ventures that benefit the entire sector.

A critical component of this effort is structured mentorship. Harnessing the experience of seasoned business and technical experts through a formal, team-based mentoring model helps entrepreneurs refine ideas, navigate challenges, and launch successful ventures. Indiana has adopted the internationally recognized MIT Venture Mentoring Service (MIT-VMS) model, which emphasizes conflict-free, confidential, and team-based guidance led by highly trained volunteers.

BioCrossroads, the Indiana Biosciences Research Institute, and the 16 Tech Innovation Community trained a diverse group of stakeholders in the MIT-VMS model in 2019 and again in 2024. Indiana’s cohort #93 is now delivering tailored, objective support to emerging life sciences entrepreneurs and innovators, helping them advance their ventures while developing critical career skills.

This independent, centrally located, affiliation-agnostic team serves the entire state—connecting and elevating existing resources to improve mentorship quality, access, and talent development. Together, these efforts strengthen Indiana’s life sciences ecosystem and advance the state’s broader economic goals.

This program is operated by a 501(c)(6) nonprofit for the benefit of the Indiana life sciences industry broadly. All services are offered to a defined class of entrepreneurs through an open and transparent selection process.