

The logo for 'bounds accelerator' features the word 'bounds' on the top line and 'accelerator' on the bottom line. The letter 'o' in 'bounds' and the letter 'o' in 'accelerator' are replaced by solid red circles. A red dotted line starts from the top of the first red circle, arches over the word 'bounds', and then descends to the top of the second red circle. A small red asterisk is positioned to the upper right of the second red circle.

**bounds
accelerator***

2024 Program Information

Welcome To Bounds 2024 Cohort

Bounds Accelerator is an Arkansas-based, next-generation technology startup accelerator focused on the force-multiplying effects of merging serial entrepreneurs, industry and technology leaders, degree-seeking talent, and startup founders driving digital transformation in retail, transportation, logistics, manufacturing, and supply chain systems through the emerging technologies such as AI/ML, AR/VR, and blockchain-based solutions.

We are seeking a cohort of founders with early-stage traction, a prototype or working product, and a large addressable market. We prefer B2B commercialization models with a clear vision for their product that can apply to the retail value chain.

You'll be a great fit if your company meets the following qualifications:

- ✓ Your technology solves a real problem in the retail value chain
- ✓ Your solution is feasible, differentiated, and able to scale
- ✓ You have early traction, such as a waitlist, LOIs, beta users, or sales
- ✓ Your Total Addressable Market is at a \$2B threshold
- ✓ You have a US-based office or representative

The 2024 cohort will take place from January–April 2024. The application deadline is November 16.

Weekly cohort programming is virtual; however, both the kickoff event (January 11) and Demo Day (April 29) are in-person in Bentonville, Arkansas.

We're accepting ten companies into the 2024 cohort.

Why Apply to Bounds?

Access to Funding and Networking Opportunities

Connect with local and seed-stage VCs specialized in your niche, paving the way for investment opportunities.

Guidance and Mentorship from Industry Leaders

Gain insights and advice from top-notch advisors and corporations like Coinbase, Haun Ventures, and AI Foundation (among others). Refine your product market strategy and iterate on groundbreaking ideas.

Your Personal Intern Support

Receive invaluable assistance from a dedicated intern from the University of Arkansas. These students bring fresh perspectives and expertise, supporting you for 15 hours a week in vital areas, from market research to strategy enhancement.

Empowering Educational Resources

Access a wealth of knowledge on hiring, compensation, onboarding, sales, deal negotiation, and marketing. Explore emerging AI and Web3 business models through tailored educational sessions.

Boosted Exposure and Credibility

Get warm introductions to potential customers, including enterprises, from our extensive network. Validate your market with interviews of companies within Northwest Arkansas (NWA).

Compete for Demo Day Cash Award

Cap off your journey with Demo Day in April, competing for a substantial, non-dilutive cash award. It's a testament to your hard work and innovation throughout the program.

Ready to accelerate your startup with Bounds? Let's accelerate the future of the retail value chain technology together.

Northwest Arkansas: A Retail-Powered Region

We're headquartered out of Northwest Arkansas (NWA), known as the Silicon Valley of Supply Chain Innovation, where it brings together Fortune 500 enterprises, technology startups, entrepreneurial support organizations, over 1,400 CPG supplier offices, and private sector capital partners to drive real-world innovation.

NWA is a prominent retail value chain nexus with subject matter experts, global companies, and abundant resources in retail, transportation, logistics, manufacturing, and supply chain management, generating over half a trillion in annual cumulative revenue. This region hosts the global headquarters of Walmart, JB Hunt Transport, and Tyson Foods, all recognized as Fortune's Most Admired Companies, a global list of companies with the strongest reputations. NWA's global supply chain reach, combined with emerging tech capabilities, lays the foundation for the emergence of the next generation of industry leaders and billion-dollar retail value chain-focused companies.

While our program is largely virtual, we believe your time spent in Bentonville, Arkansas, will provide you with a strong network of leaders in the retail value chain. And, of course, we hope you stay.



Timeline of Events

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- Nov 16, 2023** Application Due Date
 - Nov 18, 2023** Finalist Interviews Begin
 - Dec 6, 2023** Cohort Announced
 - Jan 8, 2024** Virtual Cohort Orientation
 - Jan 11, 2024** In Person Kick Off Event
Bentonville, Arkansas
- Accelerator programming runs for 16 weeks**
- Apr 29, 2024** Demo Day
Bentonville, Arkansas

Bounds Partners

Principal Partners



AI FOUNDATION

Venture-backed dual commercial and nonprofit enterprise, and global AI research composed of top AI scientists and researchers who work to democratize AI for the benefit of humanity.

coinbase

One of the leading cryptocurrency exchanges and blockchain platforms and a game-changing accelerator partner as a source of industry expertise and rich network connections.

HAUN

A \$1.5 billion venture capital firm focused on helping founders build the next generation of the internet.

Accelerator Leads

CARTWHEEL

An established venture builder with early stage B2B SaaS experts, serial entrepreneurs, digital product designers, and technologists.



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS | Entrepreneurship
& Innovation

Provides business incubation, experiential learning opportunities, and a community those who want to be innovators inside existing organizations, solve meaningful problems, or build new ventures

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a technology startup accelerator program?

A technology startup accelerator is a program or organization that provides mentorship, resources, funding, and networking opportunities to early-stage technology startups, typically over a fixed timeframe, to help them grow rapidly.

How does a startup accelerator differ from an incubator?

Accelerators “accelerate” growth of an existing company, while incubators “incubate” disruptive ideas with the hope of building out a business model and company. So, accelerators focus on scaling an existing business while incubators are often more focused on innovation and idea validation.

What is the Bounds accelerator origin story?

Bounds was founded from a partnership between Cartwheel Startup Studio and The University of Arkansas Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation to develop a Retail Value Chain startup accelerator leveraging Northwest Arkansas’ strengths and emerging technology. Coinbase, Haun Ventures, and the AI Foundation followed on as program partners with strong emerging tech platforms and venture networks to launch the first Bounds accelerator cohort in 2024. We are on a mission to help your startup grow by leaps and bounds.

Bounds Accelerator is an Arkansas-based, next-generation technology startup accelerator focused on the force-multiplying effects of merging serial entrepreneurs, industry and technology leaders, degree-seeking talent, and startup founders driving digital transformation with AI/ML, web3, and AR/VR in retail, transportation, logistics, manufacturing, and supply chain systems.

How do you define the Retail Value Chain?

A value chain is a series of consecutive steps that go into the creation of a finished product, from its initial design to its arrival at a customer’s door. The Retail Value Chain includes any sub-industry or stage from sourcing materials, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, warehousing, supply chain and retail management, all the way to the retail consumer experience.

Does my solution have to be used in the retail value chain right now?

No, but the problem a Bounds cohort company solves should exist within the Retail Value Chain. The starting point does not have to be in the Retail Value Chain, but needs to be clearly applicable to it at some point in the future. Your startup is eligible if you can answer the following question: do you have an active or potential use case that touches the Retail Value Chain?

Is my startup eligible to apply for Bounds?

We welcome all who are interested in submitting an application, however, the ideal applicant for Bounds is an early-stage startup founder with a clear vision for their software product applying to the Retail Value Chain, a prototype or working product utilizing emerging tech, and be generating some early-stage sales traction. We prefer startups based in the United States with B2B commercialization models and a large addressable market

What is the application process for your accelerator program?

Bounds is accepting applications from startups for the 2024 cohort. It will take place from January–April 2024. The deadline for on-time applications is November 16. If you want to apply, please submit your application online, alongside a 5-minute video pitching your company. We encourage you to submit your application as soon as you're ready to apply.

If your application is promising, we will invite you to interview with us. Interviews will be held virtually from November 18-30. We will alert all applicants about their application status by Dec 6, 2023.

What criteria do you use to select startups for your program?

The cohort selection will be based upon quantitative and qualitative data submitted through the application, as well as a final interview screening. Our selection committee will objectively score and evaluate the application pool to narrow it down to a smaller finalist pool. Only finalist will receive invitations for interview screenings. Named program partners will collaborate with the Bounds team on choosing cohort participants that may solve significant issues their corporation/industry is currently facing. We are looking for scalable software solutions, as opposed to hardware or robotics-focused applications.

Can international startups apply to Bounds?

International startups may apply, but we will require they have a US-based office or representative in order to be accepted into the program. The Bounds team will not be able to assist in visa applications or international work programs for the first cohort.

After I apply, what are the next steps?

We encourage you to submit your application as soon as you're ready to apply. Our selection committee will read applications on a rolling basis, and applications that are submitted early may be selected for an early interview. If your application is promising, we will invite you to interview with us during the month of November. Most interviews will be held by video conference from mid-November to early December.

How long does your accelerator program typically last?

Bounds is a 16-week accelerator program kicking off Jan 11, 2023 and ending Apr 29, 2023. Fourteen out of the sixteen weeks will include virtual educational programming, cohort accountability check-ins, and office hour mentor meetings. Two weeks out of the sixteen (at the beginning and end) will include in-person activities events in Northwest Arkansas. Travel expense reimbursement will be offered.

What does my weekly time commitment for Bounds look like?

For 16 weeks, you'll have weekly cohort calls and educational workshops scheduled (60-90 minutes each) with open office hours to connect with 1:1 with mentors and a cohort advisor (as needed). All of these activities mentioned will be virtual; however, there are two required in-person events in Bentonville, Arkansas (a Kickoff Event on January 11 and a Demo Day Event on April 29).

What are the benefits of joining Bounds?

Access to funding and networking opportunities, mentorship, a dedicated intern, educational resources, exposure and validation, and potential for Demo Day cash award. Read more below:

Access Funding and Network with the Right Investors: Connect with local and seed-stage VCs specialized in your niche, paving the way for investment opportunities.

Guidance and Mentorship from Industry Leaders: Gain insights and advice from top-notch advisors and corporations like Coinbase, Haun Ventures, and AI Foundation (among others). Refine your product market strategy and iterate on groundbreaking ideas.

Your Personal Intern Support: Receive invaluable assistance from a dedicated intern from the University of Arkansas. These students bring fresh perspectives and expertise, supporting you for 15 hours a week in vital areas, from market research to strategy enhancement.

Empowering Educational Resources: Access a wealth of knowledge on hiring, compensation, onboarding, sales, deal negotiation, and marketing. Explore emerging AI and Web3 business models through tailored educational sessions.

Boosted Exposure and Credibility: Get warm introductions to potential customers, including enterprises, from our extensive network. Validate your market with interviews of companies within Northwest Arkansas (NWA).

Compete for Demo Day Cash Award: Cap off your journey with Demo Day in April, competing for a substantial, non-dilutive cash award. It's a testament to your hard work and innovation throughout the program.

What emerging technologies does Bounds focus on?

Artificial intelligence, machine learning, augmented and virtual reality, and blockchain-based solutions applicable to the retail value chain. We are not looking for hardware-based solutions or robotics companies for this upcoming cohort.

Are there opportunities for funding or investment during the program?

Bounds is not providing direct investment or funding to selected cohort companies, however we are providing access to program partners listed - who are committed to considering potential investment into Bounds startups. Introductions to potential customers and venture capitalist within our network will also be a key point of support offered by mentors in the program. Significant funding is available in the form of a non-dilutive cash award presented to winners of the pitch competition on Demo Day.

Do you take equity or require fees from the startups you accept?

No. Neither Bounds nor any associated partners will require program fees or take equity in exchange for participation in the accelerator program.

Who are the mentors for Bounds?

The Bounds mentor group will be a balanced mix of corporate executives, experienced startup founders, technologists in AI and web3, product leaders, retail value chain subject matter experts and top-ranked academics, as well as NWA entrepreneurial ecosystem supporters. Named sponsors and partners will also provide several mentors who are dedicated to seeing founder success in the Bounds accelerator.

How do you match startups with mentors and advisors?

Bounds does not have a formal matching process, but will provide in-person introductions, a transparent and comprehensive list of mentor background/strengths/emails, as well as clear expectations for communication on both sides. We have hand-picked mentors who are committed to advising in a particular areas of expertise or providing potential customer and investor connections.

What are the key milestones or goals for startups in your program?

Bounds startups will be encouraged to decide on their own key metrics of success for the program after the optimization audit in the first couple of weeks. These goals will be unique to each company, but will generally revolve around or be a direct function of revenue or user growth. Our team's goal is to create a focused environment and accountability to the startup's self-selected goals and milestones.

What is Demo Day?

At the end of the accelerator, there is a “demo day”. This is the opportunity for cohort startups to pitch investors and the local community in order to raise money (which is the core goal for many startups joining an accelerator). Bounds is hosting a huge party on April 29, 2023 and judges will decide on a winner from the pitch competition to take home a significant cash prize.

If you're interested in becoming a financial sponsor for Demo Day or future Bounds cohorts, please contact bounds@cartwheel.studio.

How can I get in touch with your team if I have more questions?

Please contact bounds@cartwheel.studio if you have read all Bounds FAQs and still have questions.