



**To:** SBA InnovateHER  
**From:** Diane R. Howerton  
**Re:** Statement of Support for SafeRoute by Current  
**Date:** June 19, 2017

The UC Merced SBDC is pleased to recommend Current Solutions' product, SafeRoute, for the 2017 SBA InnovateHER competition.

Information about the 2017 InnovateHER contest was circulated to over 4,700 small businesses, SBDC staff, consultants, and key stakeholders in Central California. Eighteen (18) completed applications were received. The ten (10) most qualified applicants were invited to pitch for the competition. A facilitator (1) and team of three (3) judges experienced with small business and innovation reviewed each application and business plan participated in each pitch, and asked questions of each entrepreneur. Judges focused on the merits of the three (3) top applicants and debated the finer points of each proposal, focusing on the judging criteria of the InnovateHER competition.

On "measurable impact on the lives of women and families" Current Solutions' product, SafeRoute, was a standout among the other applicants. One in four (1/4) women will experience assault during college and one in five (1/5) will experience assault during her lifetime. SafeRoute recognizes the fact that a woman, finding herself in an uncomfortable situation, like walking to her car at night or walking on campus, will naturally carry her phone in her hand. If she already has her phone in her hand, and she faces an attacker, she will likely be able to push the button that brings a cascade of support and resources to her aid. SafeRoute does several things at once:

- It alerts law enforcement and provides pinpoint data that is better than any triangulation systems available through 911 systems, which nationally suffers from a variety of location accuracy issues
- It alerts individuals who are on a SafeRoute safety plan, like a parent, spouse, or roommate.
- It alerts other SafeRoute users in the general area, so that the people closest can respond immediately while law enforcement is en route.
- It turns on the audio and video recording devices of the phone.

To take it a step further, SafeRoute is planning on creating a phone case with external buttons which activate the app's internal functions—eliminating the need to unlock a phone or open the app during an emergency. Future version of the case include additional interchangeable payloads, such as a siren, strobe light, or pepper spray.

In the area of “has the potential for commercialization,” Current Solutions’ SafeRoute has been researched extensively. The company’s advisory board includes law enforcement officers and specialists in marketing, finance, commercialization of cell phone accessories and software, and a regulatory expert. The company and management team was accepted into the Cal Poly Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship’s incubator and accelerator, The Hot House, where they have access to world-class resources and expertise in commercialization.

Current Solutions has a burgeoning social media following, with an organic audience of 11,000 as well as past viral reaches of over 13 million (the team was featured in the New York Times, Huffington Post, USA Today, and many other major news publications), a highly specific go to market strategy, manufacturers lined up to start production, completely built-out software, and extensive crowdfunding experience. Additionally, they have raised over \$500,000 in private equity and have pending utility patents on a phone case’s ability to control internal app functionality.

In the area of “fills a need in the marketplace” Current Solutions has developed a product that combines several markets into a new, disruptive solution. Today, there are separate markets for:

- Safety awareness apps/software
- Non-lethal self-defense (\$5.5B market annually)
- Cell phone cases/accessories (\$16B market annually)

With the burgeoning growth of mobile adoption globally - currently over \$16 billion and is expected to grow by \$8 billion to \$24 billion over the next seven years - this is an emerging market.

When coupled with other unique features of the Current Solutions phone case, like an integrated second battery that doesn’t require a separate charger, the case alone stands to make a dramatic impact on the phone case market. Furthermore, the fact that assaults against women are so prevalent indicates there is not a more effective solution available in the market.

The UC Merced SBDC Regional Network by and through its SBA InnovateHER process and judges highly recommend and ask your thoughtful consideration of Current Solutions’ product, SafeRoute, as a finalist in the 2017 SBA InnovateHER National Competition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Diane R. Howerton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Diane R. Howerton  
Regional Director