

Toyota AI Ventures Invests in Elementary Robotics as Part of First "Call for Innovation"

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LOS ALTOS, Calif. (December 19, 2018) — Silicon Valley-based venture capital firm [Toyota AI Ventures](#) today announced its investment in Elementary Robotics, a robotics platform startup founded in 2017. The funding marks Toyota AI Ventures' first investment as part of the "[call for innovation](#)" it launched this summer in partnership with the [Toyota Research Institute \(TRI\)](#).

The call for innovation program is designed to spur innovation by using a "call-and-response" approach to attract and invest in early-stage startups that are tackling specific problems in areas like artificial intelligence (AI), automated driving, and robotics. The initial call sought out startups developing disruptive technologies and business models in robotics, specifically solutions aimed at improving mobile manipulation for assistive robots.

"We applied for the call for innovation because we value Toyota's expertise and share the company's belief that AI and robotics can improve the quality of human life," said Elementary Robotics founder and CEO Arye Barnehama. "Our goal is to design affordable, intelligent robot assistants that are safe and easy to program, and we're thrilled to receive funding and support from Toyota AI Ventures as we continue our journey to build the next generation of robotics."

"The response to the first call exceeded our expectations, and we're excited to welcome Elementary Robotics to the Toyota AI Ventures portfolio as a result," said Jim Adler, founding managing director of Toyota AI Ventures. "Elementary is precisely the type of startup we hoped to find. Arye and his team are talented, tenacious, and focused on developing products that deliver real value to customers."

Elementary Robotics is the sixteenth [portfolio company](#) announced by Toyota AI Ventures, and the investment is part of a \$3.6M seed round that Elementary Robotics reported today. Other investors include Fika Ventures and Fathom Capital, which co-led the round, along with Ubiquity Ventures, Riot.vc, Osage University Partners, and Stage Venture Partners.

In addition to funding from Toyota AI Ventures, Elementary Robotics will be receiving feedback on its initial robotics platform from TRI's mobile manipulation team. "We look forward to being an early adopter of Elementary's technology, and exploring how we can use it in the future as part of our advanced research around assistive robotics," explained Max Bajracharya, Director of Robotics at TRI.

"Startups have a vital role to play in solving some of the toughest problems in robotics, and teaming up with Toyota AI Ventures on the call for innovation has given us a terrific opportunity to explore new partnerships with startups like Elementary Robotics," added Eric Krotkov, Chief Science Officer and head of TRI's robotics group.

Toyota AI Ventures is continuing to evaluate applications from the first call for innovation that closed at the end of October. Planning is also underway for the next call in consultation with the firm's Technical Advisory Committee, comprised of experts from TRI and the Toyota Research Institute-Advanced Development (TRI-AD). Further details will be available on the Toyota AI Ventures [website](#) in early 2019.