


Chicago Entrepreneurial Resources

tailored for Chicago area tech entrepreneurs as of October 2023

powered by [Gender Equality in Tech \(GET\) Cities Chicago-Tech Equity Working Group \(TEWG\)](#)

This guide is not a complete list all the resources available for Chicago area tech entrepreneurs. Please note that website addresses/URLs are subject to change as part of organizations' website updates.



About GET Cities-Tech Equity Working Group (TEWG)

The Tech Equity Working Group (TEWG) is a pioneering initiative of GET Cities Chicago. TEWG is a dynamic cohort of accelerators, incubators, funds, and ecosystem supporters aligned across shared goals to design city-wide solutions and collective infrastructure to address gender and racial inequities for Chicago-based tech founders.

TEWG's Scaling Pilots

Five of TEWG's pilots are now being scaled with some of our partners to expand the impact and ethos of the Tech Equity Working Group. Topics range from diversifying deal flow, disrupting non-dilutive funding, tech-enabling small businesses, connecting startups to corporates, and supporting diverse entrepreneurs to raise in new geographic markets. Those five pilots include:

- Chicago Venture Fellows
- TechRise and TechChicago
- Chicago Tech Equity Desk
- Travel Funding & Entrepreneur Exchange
- Venture Engine Executive Founders Series

To learn more about the five pilots and access those programs and tools, [click here](#).

TEWG Organizations & Members

To view the [TEWG](#) organizations and its members who are designing city-wide solutions and collective infrastructure to address gender and racial inequities for Chicago-based tech founders, [click here](#) (or view a list of participating organization logos by clicking [here](#).)



About GET Cities Chicago

As a national non-profit, Gender Equality in Tech (GET) Cities works to radically increase equity and intersectionality in tech through their three signature pillars. With having three hubs in the U.S., Chicago was the first hub. To learn more about the three signature pillars and about GET Cities Chicago, [click here](#).

GET Cities Chicago' Programs & Tools

To learn more about GET Cities Chicago's entrepreneurship interventions which were collaboratively developed with the Tech Equity Working Group (TEWG), [click here](#) for more information and to access the tools.

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About 1871

As one of the world's top non-profit innovation hubs, 1871 supports early stage, growth stage, and corporate innovators in building extraordinary businesses from idea to Fortune 50. Located in downtown Chicago inside Merchandise Mart, 1871, a community of founders, leaders, innovators, and supporters that is advancing the world forward and shaping a brighter future, offers a wealth of programs and resources.

1871's Founder Programs + Resources

Startup Roadmap

PYROS WORKSHOPS + COHORTS

PYROS is the platform upon which 1871's educational programming and workshops are built. As they are built upon the three stages every startup goes through- explore/build/launch, members are placed into a community of peers at each stage, so they have access to the right resources at exactly the right moment for their business. To learn more about the PYROS program, [click here](#).

- [Click here](#) to attend an info session.

MENTORS

1871 early-stage founders have access to 250+ vetted mentors with deep subject matter expertise. Founders can book problem solving sessions with mentors directly and focus on anything from product development to legal support.

PERKS & DISCOUNTS

Founders get access to over \$100k in discounts and perks ranging from free Amazing Web Services credits to CRM, insurance, and developer discounts.

1871's Founder Programs + Resources

Social Identity Programs

BLKtech Founders

The BLKtech Founders affinity program unlocks a new world of opportunities for founders through peer-learning, dedicated one-on-one mentoring, and exclusive programming. To learn more about the BLKtech Founders program and mentoring initiative, [click here](#).

- The 100% virtual, 12-week cohort is now accepting applications for its Summer 2024 cohort. [Click here](#) to apply.

LTNtech Founders

The LTNtech Founders affinity program in partnership with the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, unlocks a new world of opportunities for founders through peer-learning, dedicated one-on-one mentoring, and exclusive programming. Founders who identify as Hispanic, Latino/a, Latine, Latin@, etc. are welcome to apply. To learn more about the LTNtech Founders program and mentoring initiative, [click here](#).

- The hybrid, 12-week cohort is now accepting applications for its Fall 2023 cohort. [Click here](#) to apply.

1871's Founder Programs + Resources

Social Identity Programs

WMNtech Founders

1871's 12-week experience for women-identifying tech founders provides unique community, programming, and resources through peer-learning, dedicated one-on-one mentoring, and exclusive programming. To learn more about the WMNtech Founders program and mentoring initiative, [click here](#).

1871's Founder Programs + Resources

Innovation Labs

1871's Innovation Lab programs are immersive experiences for specific industries + technologies, are open to non-members and free for early-stage startups. Current focus areas include:

AI

1871's AI Innovation Lab connects early, growth and late-stage startups, corporates, and VCs who use artificial intelligence & machine learning technology. Current partners include [Why of AI](#), [Discover](#), [McKinsey & Company](#), and the [Chicago Cubs](#). [Click here](#) to learn more about the AI Innovation Lab.

- To be notified about the 2024 AI Innovation Lab, [click here](#) to join the notification list.

Cannabis

1871's Cannabis Innovation Lab with anchor partner Cresco Labs, is a program which enables early startups, connecting them to growth-scalers, corporates, and VCs with the goal of collectively solving for industry problems with technology. To learn more about the Cannabis Innovation Lab, [click here](#).

- As applications are closed for the 2023 experience, [click here](#) to stay up-to-date with updates for the 2024 Cannabis Innovation Lab.

1871's Founder Programs + Resources

Foodtech

1871's Foodtech Innovation Lab connects growth stage, late stage, and corporate tech businesses that want to solve the biggest challenges and opportunities in Food together. Partners include [World Business Chicago](#), [Farmers Fridge](#), [Human Co](#), and [Planting Hope](#). To learn more about the Foodtech Innovation Lab, [click here](#).

Supply Chain

1871's Supply Chain Innovation Lab connects growth stage, late stage, and corporate tech businesses that want to solve the biggest challenges and opportunities in Supply Chain. Current partners include [Accenture](#), [Microsoft](#), [Deacero](#), [World Business Chicago \(WBC\)](#), [Rheaply](#), [Arkestro](#), and [Super Dispatch](#). To learn more about the Supply Chain Innovation Lab, [click here](#).

As applications are closed for the 2023 experience, [click here](#) to stay up-to-date with updates for the 2024 Supply Chain Innovation Lab experience.

1871's Community + Tools

Tools & Community Resources

Job Network

Whether you're searching for a job at an 1871 member company or you're a hiring manager looking to recruit talent, our Talent Referral Network and Job Board can help you find the best fit for you or your organization.

[Click here](#) for more information, including the job board and talent referral network.

BLKtech Voices

Founded by a committee of Black 1871 team members with the goal of equity, inclusivity, and allyship across all levels of the 1871 team, our members, partners, and the larger tech world through offering resources for inclusive innovation. [Click here](#) for more information about BLKtech Voices. To receive BLKtech Voices updates, [click here](#) to subscribe.

PRDtech Voices

Named in honor of Pride, PRDtech Voices is a resource offering founded by a committee of LGBTQIA+1871 team members with the goal of inclusive innovation across all levels of the 1871 team, our members, partners, and the larger tech world. For more information about PRDtech Voices, [click here](#). To receive PRDtech Voices updates, [click here](#) to subscribe.

1871's Community + Tools

Tools & Community Resources

Upcoming Events

1871 puts on hundreds of events each year, showcasing speakers, members, mentors and influencers that inspire and innovate. Events include signature such as [International Women's Day](#), [Juneteenth](#), and [Tech Challenge](#); series events, and competition events which include [BLKtech Pitch Competition](#), [LTNtech Pitch Competition](#), and [WMNtech Pitch Competition](#). Join 1871 and the ecosystem to learn and to increase your social capital of building your network. [Click here](#) to learn about 1871's upcoming events and to register today!

Stay in the Loop with 1871!

- Sign-up for e-news [here](#)
- Join as a 1871 member [here](#)
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- [LinkedIn](#)
- [TikTok](#)
- [X](#)
- [YouTube](#)

About MATTER

MATTER is a global healthcare startup incubator, community nexus and corporate innovation accelerator headquartered in Chicago. Together, we are mobilizing a community of entrepreneurs, industry innovators, scientists and clinicians committed to improving health and care for every patient.



MATTER's Challenges and Accelerators

MATTER Momentum Accelerator: Class 4

Built exclusively for digital health companies and offers a structured, cohort-based approach to rapidly scale your business. The eight-week accelerator systematically steps through four critical pillars of growth — operations, sales, advisory boards and exit planning. The program is led by serial entrepreneurs and MATTER Venture Acceleration Fellows. For more information regarding the MATTER Momentum Accelerator, [click here](#).

- Cohort 4 will take place in 2024.

MATTER Challenges

These competitions invite innovators — like you — to collaborate with MATTER's partner organizations on solving the most pressing issues in healthcare. Offered throughout the year, [click here](#) to learn about upcoming MATTER Challenges.

MATTER's Tools

Upcoming Events

From large scale events to smaller forums and workshops, MATTER brings people together to be inspired, to learn and connect with one another. MATTER is a nexus for people who are passionate about healthcare innovation, entrepreneurship, and healthcare transformation. Join MATTER and the healthcare innovation ecosystem to learn and to increase your social capital of building your network. [Click here](#) to learn about MATTER's upcoming events and to register today!

MATTER Startup Spotlight *(inspirational capital tool)*

Through the MATTER startup spotlights featured in MATTER stories, the spotlights increase your social capital resources of being inspired. [Click here](#) to check out the MATTER startup spotlights.

The MATTER Health Podcast

This podcast highlights a broad array of perspectives from the conversations MATTER has had with entrepreneurs, change makers and industry thought leaders. [Click here](#) to listen to podcasts.

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- Sign-up for e-news [here](#)
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About mHUB

As the nation's largest hardtech and manufacturing innovation and headquartered in Chicago, mHUB runs accelerator programs and provides research & development services to ensure the U.S. manufacturing industry continues to accelerate, grow and thrive. mHUB is where people come to build the physical technologies that will change the physical world. Through prototyping labs, industry partnerships, and a commitment to U.S. manufacturing, the mHUB ecosystem is changing the landscape of HardTech development.

mHUB's Programs

mPOWER

mPOWER programs are designed to rebalance opportunity and access for startups building physical products that are founded by women and people of color. Harnessing the existing resources of the nation's leading independent innovation center for physical product companies, each participant receives hands-on support to turn ideas into hardtech businesses. For more information about the 6-month mPOWER cohorts, [click here](#). The mPOWER program is part of mHUB's [Catalyze Initiative](#), which promotes wealth creation for a more diverse set of founders through a series of targeted programs and partnerships.

- As different mPOWER programs are offered throughout the year, application periods for cohorts, including mPOWER Women Founders, are rolling, [click here](#) to apply for future mPOWER programs.

mHUB Accelerator for Sustainable Manufacturing

mHUB is looking for early-stage startups working on hardtech solutions focused on predictive maintenance, machine-to-machine learning, edge computing, robotics, automation, quality control, equipment & warehouse monitoring, connected employees, etc. The mHUB Accelerator is a fast-paced program that's designed to take your startup from concept or prototype to the foundation of a profitable, scalable and sustainable business. The 6-month, hands-on program connects surrounds teams with product engineering expertise and a hose of market and business intelligence leaders. Teams continue to receive support for an additional 18 months of continued mHUB membership and access post program. For more information, including areas of focus, timeline, the acceleration support team, and much more, [click here](#).

- To express your interest in the mHUB Accelerator for Sustainable Manufacturing, [click here](#).

mHUB's Programs

mHUB Climate & Energy Tech Accelerator

mHUB is looking for early-stage startups working on hardtech and infrastructure solutions in renewable energy, hydrogen, carbon capture & sequestration, energy storage, vehicle-to-grid solutions, heat sink technologies, distributed energy resources, sustainable buildings, and the Internet of energy. The mHUB Accelerator is a fast-paced program that's designed to take your startup from concept or prototype to the foundation of a profitable, scalable, and sustainable business. The 6-month, hands-on program connects surrounds teams with product engineering expertise and a hose of market and business intelligence leaders. Teams continue to receive support for an additional 18 months of continued mHUB membership and access post program. For more information including accelerator timeline, acceleration support team, and more, [click here](#).

- To express your interest in the mHUB Climate & Energy Tech Accelerator, [click here](#).

mHUB MedTech Accelerator

mHUB is looking for breakthrough solutions focused in medicine delivery, remote patient monitoring, wearables, sensing and diagnostics, therapeutic devices, and more. The mHUB Accelerator is a fast-paced program that's designed to take your startup from concept or prototype to the foundation of a profitable, scalable and sustainable business. The 6-month, hands-on program connects surrounds teams with product engineering expertise and a hose of market and business intelligence leaders. Teams continue to receive support for an additional 18 months of continued mHUB membership and access post program. For more information including accelerator timeline, acceleration support team, and more, [click here](#).

- To express your interest in the mHUB MedTech Accelerator, [click here](#).

mHUB's Programs

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- To express your interest in the mHUB MedTech Accelerator, [click here](#).

mHUB's Programs

Landis Family Fellowship for mHUB HardTech Development Services

This 6-month fellowship program for women and people of color enables diverse talent to gain access to \$6M in equipment and a pipeline for paid work in product design, innovation, and R&D with small- to medium-sized manufacturers. Being a contractor through the Landis Family Fellowship at mHUB has two main benefits: (1) engaging with mHUB's extensive ecosystem of companies interested in product innovation and smart manufacturing, and (2) adding revenue streams to financially support the momentum of your own endeavors while contributing to industry leading products and services. For more information about the Landis Family Fellowship for underrepresented physical product designers, [click here](#). The Landis fellowship is part of mHUB's [Catalyze Initiative](#), which promotes wealth creation for a more diverse set of founders through a series of targeted programs and partnerships.

- As applications run twice/year, [click here](#) to express your interest and for updates.

mHUB's Tools

mHUB's Startup Roadmap

mHUB membership provides a roadmap to startups with tailored programming, resources, and support built in. Wherever you are on your entrepreneurial journey, mHUB has the right resources to put your HardTech startup on the fast track to success. Roadmap includes:

- **on-demand digital curriculum**, startups can explore the tools needed to build their business. On-demand workshops are led by industry experts across customer discovery, business viability, and product feasibility.
- **access to mentors** that include a broad base of industry leading experts who want to help you grow your startup
- **Experts in Residence** across Supply Chain, Entrepreneurship, Product Management, and Engineering.
- **Live workshops and panels**

Members Spotlights (*inspirational capital tool*)

Through the mHUB members spotlights featured in mHUB's Blog, the spotlights increase your social capital resources of being inspired. [Click here](#) to check out the mHUB Member Spotlights.

Upcoming Events, Courses, & Talks

Throughout the year, mHUB features innovative events, courses, and talks. [Click here](#) to register for upcoming offerings and to check out past events.

mHUB's Tools

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- **access to a pool of mentors**
- **Experts in Residence**

mHUB mentor pool

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Stay in Touch with mHUB!

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About Chicago:Blend

Founded by local venture capitalists, Chicago:Blend is a 501c3 non-profit organization committed to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in Chicago's VC and startup community. Chicago:Blend's work is organized around data, education, and community collaboration.

Chicago:Blend's Tools

Resources & Tools

Chicago:Blend's curated resources include:

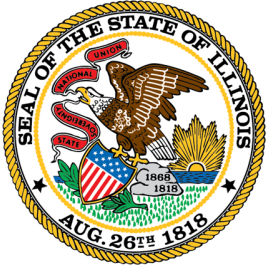
- **DEI Starter Guides for VC-Backed Companies** | [link](#)
- **Diverse Recruiting Platforms** | [link](#)
- **Resource Library** | [link](#)

Chicago:Blend's Venture Fellow's Research

Through its [Chicago Venture Fellows](#) program who are underrepresented, aspiring VCs in training, fellows can assist eligible Illinois entrepreneurs identify potential investors. [Click here](#) to contact a fellow.

Chicago:Blend's Tools

- Sign-up for e-news [here](#)
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Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity

About IL Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO)

As the nation's largest hardtech and manufacturing innovation and headquartered in Chicago, mHUB runs accelerator programs and provides research & development services to ensure the U.S. manufacturing industry continues to accelerate, grow and thrive. mHUB is where people come to build the physical technologies that will change the physical world. Through prototyping labs, industry partnerships, and a commitment to U.S. manufacturing, the mHUB ecosystem is changing the landscape of HardTech development.

DCEO's Programs

Grant Programs

DCEO's grant programs provide funds to organizations throughout Illinois for many different purposes. [Click here](#) to learn about grant opportunities, to view the Grants Basics Learning Library, and to access other resources on DCEO's website.

[DCEO's Federal Grant Support Program](#)

(DCEO)'s Federal Grant Match Program will make \$15 million available to Illinois-based businesses and organizations seeking competitive federal grants.

Loan Programs

[Advantage Illinois – State Small Business Credit Initiative \(SSBCI\) 2.0](#)

As the Advantage Illinois program supports small businesses by enhancing access to financial capital, the programs make eligibility as flexible as possible, maximizing the impact on Illinois economy and especially encouraging loans to [Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals \(SEDI\) and Very Small Businesses \(VSB\)](#), or businesses with fewer than 10 employees.

- The **Advantage Illinois Participation Loan Program (PLP)** helps Illinois businesses get term loan financing at lower rates by purchasing a portion of the loan and lowering risk for lenders.
- The **Advantage Illinois Loan Guarantee Program (LGP)** will provide a guarantee of partial repayment to the lender if a loan goes into default.

DCEO's Programs

As the [Advantage Illinois Participation Loan Program \(PLP\)](#) helps Illinois businesses get term loan financing at lower rates, the state purchases a portion of the loan, which lowers the risk for the lenders. Advantage Illinois fills the gaps that prevent businesses from obtaining financing due to:

- collateral and/or equity shortfalls
- lack of historical cash flow
- low credit scores
- negative net worth

Advantage Illinois PLP offers a program for **Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individual(s) (SEDI)** which helps businesses owned/ controlled by individuals with diminished credit. SEDI supports the following business owners and entrepreneurs:

- membership of a group subjected to racial/ ethnic prejudice or cultural bias
- gender
- veteran status
- limited English proficiency
- long-term residence in an isolated environment from mainstream American society
- member of a federally or state-recognized Indian Tribe
- long-term residence in a rural community
- residence in a community undergoing economic transitions
- membership of another “underserved community” (Executive Order 13985)

DCEO's Programs

Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individual(s) (SEDI) loan program details

Maximum participation is the lesser of:

- 50% of the project (all sources of funding)
- 50% of the loan
- \$2 million

Maximum term is 7 years

- Rate fixed at 2%
- Job creation and/or Retention: With each \$65,000 participated, one full-time job should be created or retained in the next 2 years

For additional information about the program, including the Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individual(s) (SEDI) program, [click here](#).

DCEO's Programs

[INVENT Venture Capital Program \(VCP\) \(New Program\)](#)

The Innovation Venture Fund (INVENT) will operate as a direct equity investment program, investing in early- and late-stage businesses with a focus on underserved start-ups facing systemic barriers and key industries such as agriculture, energy, information technology, life sciences, manufacturing, quantum information sciences and technology, and transportation.

[Climate Bank Finance Participation Loan Program \(New Program\)](#)

This new program will be overseen by DCEO and administered by the Illinois Finance Authority (IFA), which will partner with local lenders to issue the loans. As Illinois has officially designated "Climate Bank", IFA will be exclusively focusing on providing its SSBCI-supported financing for the start-up and/or expansion of ventures directly involving environmentally-supportive, "green" businesses, including those that address the adverse impacts of climate change.

DCEO's Programs

Incentives & Tax Credits

[Incentives and Tax Assistance](#)

Illinois offers a competitive range of incentives for locating and expanding your business, including tax credits such as the [Illinois Angel Investment Tax Credit Program](#) which encourages investment in innovative, early-stage companies to help obtain the working capital needed to further the growth of their company in Illinois and exemptions that encourage business growth and job creation. Additional grant programs and access to loans can assist your business with working capital, machinery and equipment, land acquisition, building construction and public infrastructure improvements. And for those looking to invest in Illinois companies, early-stage investment incentives are also available.

DCEO's Programs

Incentives & Tax Credits

Incentives and Tax Assistance

As the State of Illinois greatly expanded business incentives to attract and retain job creators looking to locate or expand their business in Illinois. Those new changes in 2023 include:

- \$400 Million Closing Fund: Discretionary cash assistance available for major job creators with significant investments through the Invest in Illinois Fund.
- Expanding and improving Illinois' premier incentive programs, including:
 - [Reimagining Energy and Vehicles \(REV Illinois\)](#)
 - [Economic Development for a Growing Economy \(EDGE\)](#)
 - [Manufacturing Illinois Chips for Real Opportunity \(MICRO\)](#)
 - [High Impact Businesses \(HIB\)](#)
 - [Enterprise Zone Expansion](#)

To learn more about the above programs and additional incentives and tax assistance that the State of Illinois offers such as the [Data Centers Investment Program](#), [Film Production Tax Credit](#), etc., please [click here](#).

For more information about DCEO's full range of programs and services for entrepreneurs, [click here](#).

DCEO's Tools

- DCEO's Business Resources | [link](#)
- DCEO's Small Business Assistance | [link](#)
- State of Illinois (government) resources guide for businesses including DCEO's programs | [link](#)
- Federal and Local Illinois governments' resources guide for businesses | [link](#)
- Financial capital resources guide | [link](#)
- Social capital "mentoring & networking" resources guide for businesses | [link](#)

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➤ Sign-up for DCEO-Office of Minority Economic Empowerment's (OMEE) e-news [here](#)

○ Contact OMEE [here](#)



ILLINOIS SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COALITION

About the Illinois Science & Technology Coalition (ISTC)

The Illinois Science & Technology Coalition (ISTC) is a member-driven, 501(c)(6) non-profit, nonpartisan organization that cultivates technology-based economic development throughout Illinois. Our work includes innovation programming, research/data, policy, and advocacy at a state and federal level.

The [Illinois Science & Technology Institute \(ISTI\)](#), our 501(c)(3)-affiliate, focuses on Science, Technology, Education and Mathematics (STEM) education, connecting companies with classrooms to better prepare the next generation of problem solvers.

ISTC's Programs

- **ABOUT ISTC:** Authorized by state statute in 1989 as Illinois' technology adviser, the **Illinois Science & Technology Coalition (ISTC)** serves as a convener, catalyst, and champion for Illinois' research, science, and technology communities. By providing our members and partners with a shared voice, ISTC delivers measurable economic impact and positions Illinois as a national innovation leader. **Our mission is to measure, connect, and enrich the Illinois innovation economy.**
- Our work consists of Data Research and Impact Reporting through our [Illinois Innovation Index Series](#), [Policy and Advocacy work](#) at a state and federal level and Innovation Programming, listed below:
- **VENTURE ENGINE®:** Venture Engine is an online platform, launched by ISTC in 2021, complemented by virtual and in-person programming that connects Illinois' most promising startups to the state's most innovative corporations. [Click here](#) to access it. Corporate partners can:
 - **scout** innovative startups in industries and technology areas that are critical to their business
 - **explore** a curated database of engagement-ready startups scouted on an ongoing basis
 - **connect** with startups that can help grow innovation within their company
- **VENTURE ENGINE®'S EXECUTIVE FOUNDER SERIES:** [GET \(Gender Equality in Tech\) Cities](#) and their Tech Equity Working Group (TEWG) awarded [The Illinois Science & Technology Coalition](#) a grant to launch the Executive Founder Series, which is focused on improving gender diversity in seed and series stage founders by facilitating corporate and venture capital connections between startup founders.
 - The program hosts six startup founders in a series of networking opportunities that offer introductions to seasoned subject matter experts across Chicago's innovation ecosystem, including civic/nonprofit, corporate, and venture capital leaders. [Link here](#). The program also provides Venture Engine's entire network of founders complimentary access to special events including galas, award ceremonies, workshops, and networking events that are typically cost-prohibitive, but beneficial to business development.

ISTC's Programs

- **VENTURE ENGINE®'S INDUSTRY SERIES:** ISTC hosts a suite of programs dedicated to advancing the work of Venture Engine founders through curated opportunities for education, business development, and networking.
 - **Lunch and Learns:** ISTC's Lunch and Learns provide insights on best practices for back-of-office strategies including HR, legal considerations (i.e. intellectual property, branding, etc.), business development, and industry trends. The workshops are free, virtual, and feature subject-matter experts to support startups in each growth stage.
 - **Workshops:** ISTC hosts in-person workshops on a quarterly basis, open to the public, and centered around specific industry topics. These workshops invite expert panelists to share valuable insights and knowledge within their respective fields. Some are designed to position founders as the specialist, offering exposure and a platform for their product or service, and others are designed as learning experiences for founders to learn from seasoned professionals.
 - **Pitch Showcases and Networking Dinners:** ISTC's quarterly Pitch Showcases feature five to seven Venture Engine startups and their elevator pitch. These presentations provide startups with a platform to showcase their product or service to an audience of potential partners and/or mentors. ISTC curates an audience of 20-30 industry experts that are specifically aligned with each founders' goals to support meaningful feedback and networking.
 - Following the Pitch Showcases, ISTC hosts private networking dinners. These dinners invite the participating startups and select audience members to continue conversations over dinner and are designed to foster deeper engagement between the founders and leaders in their industry.

ISTC's STEM Education Programing

Through our 501(c)(3) Educational Institute, we pave the way for the next generation of innovators by connecting students to companies and developing a stronger, more inclusive talent pipeline in Illinois. Through our programs—STEM Challenges, Mentor Matching Engine, The 6 x 3 Project, and Teacher Externships—we've paired thousands of students and teachers from across the state with mentors from around the world. **If startups are looking for way to impact their communities**, we have the following programs for them to participate.

- [STEM Challenges](#) are real-world projects that create opportunities for high school students to work alongside STEM professionals as mentors. Students and mentors from STEM Challenge industry partners collaborate over the course of six months to explore, create, and build innovative solutions.
- [The Mentor Matching Engine \(MME\)](#) is an invitation-based web platform that connects Illinois high school students and their teachers to STEM professionals who serve as online mentors. By connecting mentors and students electronically, MME is able to offer high-quality mentoring experiences and overcome geographic barriers.
- 6 weeks, 3 STEM opportunities, one impactful program. [The 6x3 project](#) recognizes that STEM does not exist in a silo, and takes an interdisciplinary approach, combining 3 pillars of STEM. Whether that be math, design thinking, or marketing skills, students will leave the 6x3 project with a robust, real world end product and skills needed to be successful in the future workforce.
- [Teacher Externships](#) are a critical link between the context of industry and the content of a classroom. Teachers get the opportunity to experience and use the latest real-world applications of STEM disciplines to better inform their teaching practices and prepare students to enter the STEM talent pipeline after high school, creating lasting partnerships between workplaces and local schools.

Stay in Touch with ISTC!

- Contact ISTC [here](#)
- Join as an ISTC member [here](#)
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About P33

P33 is an intentional and collaborative effort led by Chicago business and tech leaders across the private and public-sector to transform Chicago into a tier one technology and innovation hub and promote inclusive economic growth.

P33's Programs

TechRise Pitch Competitions

TechRise hosts weekly pitch competitions to connect Chicagoland-based, BIPOC and Woman/Trans/Non-Binary founded entrepreneurs with the capital, networks, and knowledge needed to grow their business.

TechRise offers services such as:

- **Weekly Pitch Competitions-** Every Friday, 5 Founders take the TechRise stage to pitch to a panel of investors for the chance to receive \$25,000 in non-dilutive grant funding to grow their business. Create a [TechChicago CommonApp profile](#) to apply.
- **TechRise OnDeck-** TechRise OnDeck is a program connecting founders to pro-bono talent at P33's corporate partners for project-based support. For more information including viewing past projects and submitting a project for the TechRise onDeck, [click here](#).
- **Workshops & Events-** Once you [join the TechRise network](#), founders receive opportunities to attend 'just in time' workshops to continue growing your business and network.

Speed Round

Speed Round focuses on helping Chicagoland Pre-Seed to Series A founders fundraise faster (industry agnostic). Founders are connected 1:1 with coaches (previous founders & friendly VCs with fundraising experience) to focus on business validation and fundraising strategy. Create a [TechChicago CommonApp profile](#) to apply.

P33's Tools

CommonApp

The newly created Common App is a connection platform for Chicagoland founders, investors and ecosystem partners which saves you time and resources by generating viable connections between founders, investors, and ecosystem partners. The free connection tool is powered by **P33** with the support of founding partner **GET Cities**. [Click here](#) to start connecting!

Techrise Founders Resource Hub

Focused on supporting early-stage BIPOC/Womxn founded and/or Chicago-based startups, the hub features a community-generated list presenting resources focused on capital such as awards & grants, networks such as accelerators & incubators, and knowledge tools such as online tools & templates. To access all resources on the Techrise Founders Resource Hub, [click here](#).

Chicago H-1B Connect

As Chicago business leaders are uniting to assist current H-1B visa holders impacted by recent layoffs in the tech industry across the U.S., the Chicago H-1B Connect tool presents career opportunities open to all including highly skilled H-1B visa holders in Chicago's thriving tech ecosystem. [Click here](#) to access the Chicago H-1B Connect platform.

Stay in Touch with P33!

➤ Sign-up for e-news [here](#)

➤ Contact P33 [here](#)

➤ [LinkedIn](#)

➤ [X](#)



About Startup Rocket

Startup Rocket is the productivity platform for entrepreneurs and organizations that support them, and it provides a comprehensive operations framework, a collaborative web app, practical business coaching, and best-in-class learning resources to help entrepreneurs build desirable products and accelerate their business growth.

Startup Rocket's Tools

- Resources | [link](#)

The logo for the Polsky Center features the word "POLSKY" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a circular graphic composed of multiple parallel lines in red and blue, creating a sense of motion or a stylized globe.

POLSKY

Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

About the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation at the University of Chicago

The Polsky Center advances all University of Chicago entrepreneurship and research commercialization innovation activities through the creation of new ventures and partnerships. The Polsky Center also supports local South and West Side community entrepreneurs and small business owners as well as University of Chicago alumni around the globe.

Polsky Exchange Membership

Operated by the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, the Polsky Exchange is a 34,000-square-foot startup incubator featuring work and meeting spaces, a Fabrication Lab for prototyping physical products, and a full calendar of programming and workshops designed to help entrepreneurs launch and grow their ventures. Part of UChicago's commitment to supporting economic development in the community, the Polsky Exchange has two buildings on Hyde Park's vibrant 53rd Street corridor – Exchange North at 1452 E. 53rd St. and Exchange South at 1463 E. 53rd St.

Membership is open to business owners and innovators in the community as well as UChicago students, faculty, and staff actively working on entrepreneurial ventures or involved in Polsky Center programs.

As a member of the Polsky Exchange, the following resources are available:

- **Workspace:** Access to the workspace in Polsky Exchange North Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. This includes access to the conference rooms for hosting business meetings and conference calls, and access to the Tech Bar.
- **Fab Lab:** Opportunity to sign up for time and equipment authorizations at the Fab Lab maker space, located in Polsky Exchange South. Fab Lab staff are also available to offer expert design, prototyping, and product development guidance.
- **Programs and Workshops:** Invitations to weekly workshops on innovation and entrepreneurship topics, and assistance in applying to the Polsky Center's free, cohort-based programs for community entrepreneurs such as the Small Business Growth Program and Small Business Financial Fundamentals.
- **Mentorship:** The Polsky Center has 100+ mentors who are ready to meet with you virtually or in person and assist you in navigating your business challenges and to plan for growth and scale.

Polsky Exchange Programs

Physical Products Incubator

- Provides materials and expertise to bring founders from idea to prototype in 12 weeks
- Provides dedicated space alongside Fab lab

E-Commerce Learning Lab

- E-commerce training and no-cost warehousing and fulfillment

Tech Equity Desk, supported by GET Cities

- 8-workshop series followed by two resource opportunities:
 - \$5K offset tech prof services
 - 80-90 hours UChicago intern time

Small Business Development Center, supported by the State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

- Provides one on one consultations for business owners
- Promotes events
- Increase visibility of local businesses

The Small Business Growth Program, supported by a JPMorgan Chase Ascend grant

- Booth students (under faculty supervision) and local coaches work closely with local entrepreneurs to design targeted growth strategies
- Deliverables involve digital marketing strategy and operations recommendations

The Small Business Financial Fundamentals Program, supported by a Chicago Community Trust grant under the Fund for Equitable Business Growth

- Booth students (under faculty supervision) work directly with local entrepreneurs to ensure accurate financial reporting and projections
- Deliverables involve loan application package materials

How to connect with the Polsky Exchange

Become a Member

The Polsky Exchange is open Monday through Friday from 8am-8pm (summer hours) to members. All entrepreneurs and business owners looking for workspace and resources are welcome to join at no cost. If you are interested in membership, please fill out the member interest form at

<https://airtable.com/shrbzcJ3GrxClEinG>

Upcoming Events

Check out year-round events to learn, get inspired, and to make new contacts. [Click here](#) to check out the calendar.

Ask a Mentor a Question

Polsky Exchange members can easily book one-on-one meetings with one of the Polsky Center's mentors who are industry experts and experienced entrepreneurs who provide critical guidance, feedback, and connections.

[Click here](#) to book an appointment after joining.

Stay in Touch with the Polsky Center!

- Send email [here](#)
- Contact the Polsky Center team [here](#)
- Join as a [Polsky Exchange](#) member [here](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [X](#)



TechNexus

VENTURE COLLABORATIVE

About Tech Nexus

TechNexus helps leading corporations and ambitious entrepreneurs develop mutually beneficial relationships that accelerate growth opportunities. A first-of-its-kind Venture Collaborative, we invest capital, incubate, and collaborate to create new growth opportunities. For over a decade, TechNexus has initiated hundreds of positive outcomes between mature corporations and early-stage companies to create new business models, revenue streams, and products.

TechNexus' Programs & Tools

If you are a founder building, email collaborate@technexus.com to get in touch with our ventures team.

Subscribe to TechNexus' newsletter to keep up with our updates and events → [Join the club](#)

TEAMWORKING *by* TechNexus

[TeamWorking by TechNexus](#) is a shared collaborative space for teams looking to redefine what it means to be “back in the office” and build, bigger and faster together. It's a smarter, collaborative space dynamic with dedicated offices for scaling teams, flexible membership access, and meeting rooms.

Book meeting rooms, host your next event, or become a member today!

Stay in Touch with TechNexus Venture Collaborative!

- Sign-up for e-news [here](#)
- Contact [here](#)
- Contact the team [here](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [X](#)