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News Release

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2019 Innovate Durham Partners Chosen

Six Startups to Bring New Ideas into City Hall, Durham County Government, and Durham Public Schools

DURHAM, N.C. – Last night, six startup companies began their projects to bring new ideas to the City of Durham, Durham County, and Durham Public Schools (DPS) and will be spending the next 12 weeks testing out innovative solutions to local challenges.

The City, County, and DPS staff collaboratively chose six partners for the [2019 Innovate Durham cohort](#), a program that allows startups and entrepreneurs to use local government as a lab to test out an idea, product or service by getting access to local government staff, data, and facilities.

Innovate Durham received 28 applications from companies interested in participating in year three of the program. A review committee made up of City and County leadership narrowed the field down to six participants, who each bring a unique, innovative solution to the program.

According to Toney Thompson, budget and management analyst with the City's Budget and Management Services Department, Innovate Durham continues to be a win-win for local startups and Durham government. "Going into the third year of the program, it is much easier to go out into the community and pitch startups on the value of joining Innovate Durham," Thompson said. "Likewise, on our side, departments are becoming more eager to see what solutions exist in our own backyard that we can test with little risk."

The 2019 Innovate Durham partners and their assigned test-case departments are as follows:

Process Maker

Durham County Information Services & Technology Department

[Process Maker](#) is workflow software that makes it easy to automate complex business processes connecting people and existing company systems. Headquartered in Durham, Process Maker has a partner network spread across 35 countries serving hundreds of commercial customers, including many Fortune 100 companies.

Reason

City of Durham Human Resources Department

[Reason](#) is a Durham-based technology company that provides a new and unique critical reasoning assessment to industry and academia. Reason is an accurate, unbiased, and fully automated critical reasoning assessment. It is web-based allowing for flexible administration and immediate feedback. These characteristics enable frequent, easy distribution of a powerful assessment that accurately measures the critical reasoning ability of job candidates and students.

Don't Waste Durham

City of Durham Solid Waste Management Department

[Don't Waste Durham](#) builds technology, infrastructure, and logistics to make possible the mainstream use of reusable food and beverage packaging. Their pilot will explore using the City's existing recycling infrastructure for collection of reusables and test new technologies for sorting.

NeedsList

Durham City-County Emergency Management Department

[NeedsList](#) is a real-time needs registry for crisis response. When disasters such as hurricanes, fires, or humanitarian emergencies strike, it's incredibly difficult to know what's needed on the ground, and who is doing what, where. NeedsList's platform aggregates supply, volunteer, and funding needs in real-time from the field into a centralized database to help communities get what they need, when they need it.

AC AnalytiX

Durham County General Services Department

[AC AnalytiX](#) is an air conditioning/refrigeration early warning, monitoring system that utilizes data analytics and cloud technology to analyze, and troubleshoot. The system also alerts anomalies that may be occurring in real-time. AC AnalytiX gives the end-user the ability to view multiple locations from a desk, or on the go.

B.combs

Durham Public Schools

[B.combs](#) is a comprehensive platform that aims to save teachers' and administrator's times, by aggregating activities and events, automating processes, and providing actionable metrics.

New for this year, all three local governments will benefit from the program. According to Eric Marsh, strategic initiative analyst with the County's Strategic Initiatives Office, having a startup work with Durham Public Schools fulfills a long-term vision for Innovate Durham. "When Innovate Durham was just a test, I think the hope was for the program to touch all three major local governments in Durham," Marsh said. "Now that we have been able to find a partner startup with DPS in year three, we hope Innovate Durham can turn into a foundational program for all three governments moving forward."

The pilot period for each startup runs from August 26 through November 29. Each partner will meet regularly with Innovate Durham staff as well as selected City, County, and DPS departments to help test their products. On December 5, these six partners will present their accomplishments and discuss the pilot period at a 'Demo Day,' which will be open to the public.

"Innovate Durham allows us to leverage our community's strengths to help solve our problems," Thompson said. "We hope a long-term benefit of the program is economic development that ultimately stays in our community."

Durham is the first city, county, and school system in North Carolina to start a public-private innovation partnership program and modeled its program after existing programs in [Kansas City, Mo.](#), [Pittsburgh, Pa.](#), and [San Francisco, Calif.](#)

For more information, visit the [Innovate Durham webpage](#) or contact Thompson at (919) 560-4111, ext. 20282 or toney.thompson@durhamnc.gov; or Marsh at (919) 560-0018 or emarsh@dconc.gov.

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