



**News Media Contacts:**

Amy Blalock, Public Affairs Manager, City of Durham  
919.560.4123 x11253 | 919.475.7735 (mobile)  
[Amy.Blalock@DurhamNC.gov](mailto:Amy.Blalock@DurhamNC.gov)

Dawn Dudley, Sr. Public Information Specialist, Durham County  
919.560.0008  
[ddudley@dconc.gov](mailto:ddudley@dconc.gov)

# News Release

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## **2018 Innovate Durham Partners Chosen to Begin Testing Solutions**

*Seven Startup Companies to Bring New Ideas into City Hall & Durham County Government;  
Public-Private Innovation Partnership Program Expands in Second Year*

DURHAM, N.C. – Seven startup companies will get their chance to bring new ideas to the City of Durham and Durham County by spending the next 12 weeks testing out innovative solutions to local challenges.

City of Durham and Durham County staff collaboratively chose seven partners for the [2018 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 39 applications from companies interested in participating in this year's program. A review committee made up of City and County leadership narrowed the field down to seven participants who each bring a unique, innovative solution to the program.

According to Ben Kittelson, senior budget & management analyst with the City's Budget and Management Services Department, Innovate Durham provides a unique opportunity for startups. "These companies get a chance to do research in our sand box since the opportunity to work with a large city and county, like Durham, can be a huge resource for companies at this stage," Kittelson said. "At the same time, the City and County get to explore the use of new technologies and new approaches to serving Durham residents. It's a win-win."

The 2018 Innovate Durham partners and their assigned test-case departments are as follows:

### **Applyable**

*Durham County Human Resources Department*

[Applyable](#) is creating a job application system which allows companies and recruiters to review applicants anonymously. This move mitigates bias in hiring and allows underrepresented minorities to progress further in the review process with a better chance of getting interviewed and hired. Applicants can create a professional profile and apply to jobs as well as send their résumé anonymously to be reviewed by companies or recruiters.

### **Community Expert Solutions**

*Durham County Public Health Department*

Community Expert Solutions has an online platform, [Digital LinCS](#), that matches, connects, and manages eligible people to patient assistance programs for free and reduced-cost HIV medications. Digital LinCS is configured to complete patient assistance programs for PrEP (Pre-exposure prophylaxis), a daily pill used to prevent HIV, and HIV Medication Assistance Program applications for HIV treatment medications.

### **Deep Visual Insights**

*City of Durham General Services Department*

[Deep Visual Insights](#) uses carefully tested artificial intelligence software to automatically and regularly check that security cameras are properly working. With this software, unhealthy cameras are quickly identified and operators are alerted of the problem. This software was developed by veteran Duke University researchers as part of a research project that was initiated by the Duke University Office of Information Technology.

## **Hoverlay**

*Durham County Library & Engineering Services Departments*

[Hoverlay](#) is a location-based augmented reality application that can display information about development projects at the location of the project. Anyone around that location would be able to experience highly visual, highly curated content about the project. This pilot will test whether the app can increase engagement and understanding of the benefits of development.

## **Rownd**

*City of Durham Fleet Management Department*

[Rownd](#) is an internet-of-things platform which makes every vehicle a smart vehicle. Using the OBD-II port on the dashboard, the platform can monitor engine performance and problems, location, acceleration and deceleration patterns, crashes, and maintenance schedules. Rownd starts with end-to-end security and data-ownership in which the user owns their data and it is kept secure.

## **State of Place**

*City of Durham Transportation Department*

[State of Place](#) is predictive analytics software that quantifies what people love about cities - walkability, sustainability, livability. State of Place will use a data-driven, holistic urban design focus to help achieve the City's Vision Zero goal of zero pedestrian fatalities. The software automatically recommends optimal ways to improve places for people, planet, and profits effectively and cost efficiently.

## **TRASHR**

*City of Durham Solid Waste Management Department*

[TRASHR](#) is an internet-of-things technology that seeks to make the waste management industry more efficient while promoting sustainable initiatives. TRASHR uses sensors to measure how full a dumpster is and transmits that information to a database where provided data analytics can be used to optimize waste routes, validate new composting initiatives, and save money.

These seven companies were selected using several criteria including the ability to allow the City and County to test the latest technology and build innovation capacity within each organization. The review committee also considered whether partnering with the company would help support local innovators in the Durham community. Four of the seven companies selected are located in Durham and five companies self-identified as minority or woman-owned or led.

According to Eric Marsh, strategic initiative analyst with the County's Strategic Initiatives Office, the partnership between the City and County in the second year of Innovate Durham has opened up new opportunities for startups. "We're really excited about this cohort of companies," Marsh said. "We hope to learn so much from these partnerships, all in the service of benefitting residents and employees."

The pilot period for each company will run from August 20 through November 20. Each partner will meet regularly with Innovate Durham staff as well as selected City or County departments to help test their products. On December 6, 2018, these seven 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 create capacity for our staff to solve problems in a new way," Kittelson said. "This is all about bringing new ideas into our organizations and, as a bonus, it also helps us support our local businesses and startup community."

Durham is the first city and county 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 website](#) or contact Kittelson at (919) 560-4111, ext. 20289 or [Ben.Kittelson@DurhamNC.gov](mailto:Ben.Kittelson@DurhamNC.gov), or Marsh at (919) 560-0018 or [emarsh@dconc.gov](mailto:emarsh@dconc.gov).

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