

Innovate Durham

City of Durham and Durham County, North Carolina

#Robust External Partnerships

Population: 301,520

Innovation

Criteria:

- Initiative fundamentally changed a process, product or service (fundamental)

OR

- Initiative builds upon existing knowledge to improve a product, process or service (incremental)
- The initiative substantially stretched the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.

Describe Your Innovation

(When and how did this innovation get started? Do also detail how the program or policy innovative, how it has changed previous processes, products, or services, and how it has substantially stretched or improved the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.)

Innovate Durham is a partnership program between startups, entrepreneurs and local government. Through the program, startups can use the City and County of Durham as a lab to test out an idea, product or service. For 12 weeks, participants are paired with a City or County department to work on a pilot project using an innovative idea or technology. The goals of the program are for the City and County to learn about new technology and trends; to create capacity for innovation in each organization; and, to support local businesses. This program started in 2017 after being approved as a pilot through an employee idea platform at the City; it is modeled off of similar programs in Pittsburgh, PA and Kansas City, MO. The program lowers the barrier to entry to work with the City and County and creates space for staff to experiment and prototype new ideas. City and County departments work with small businesses and new technology that they normally wouldn't be exposed to or that wouldn't apply through a regular RFP process. At the same time, it gives startups an opportunity to take the next step as a business, test assumptions or try out the local government market. This experience can be invaluable for a company that is just getting started. Through the program, the City and County not only support innovation and risk taking within local government, but also support local entrepreneurs and startups in the community. Examples of partnerships from the first year include: a virtual reality software company working on visualization of an affordable housing development, which City Council demoed before they voted to approve the project; and, a real time parking app, which used the City as the first customer testing out their hardware device and started as a graduate school project.

Collaboration

Criteria:

- Initiative demonstrated engaging stakeholders both internal and external.
- Initiative demonstrated high performance teaming, breaking down internal silos.
- Strategic partnerships and or community networks were developed as a result of the initiative

In less than 200 words, what individuals or groups are considered the primary initiators of your program? How does the innovation engage stakeholders or demonstrate high performance teaming? What strategic partnerships and/or community networks, if any, were developed?

As a partnership program, there are two groups that can act as initiators through Innovate Durham. The startups and entrepreneurs applying to the program can initiate a new idea or a new way to solve problems within local government, and department staff also can pose policy challenges to the program that startups apply to solve. This innovation brings new ideas and outside groups into local government that normally wouldn't work with the City or County of Durham. This lowers the barrier to entry to work with government by allowing participants to test out an idea, experiment in the local government market or use their product for a public purpose. The program encourages high performance collaboration by bringing teams of local government staff and startup community members together to solve problems or enhance services. Through Innovate Durham, local government has developed strategic partnerships with organizations that serve entrepreneurs and startups in North Carolina; examples include co-working organizations like American Underground and HQ Raleigh, non-profits that assist technology startups like NC IDEA, the Council for Entrepreneurial Development, the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, and local universities like Duke and North Carolina Central.

If a private consultant was used please describe in detail their involvement, identify the consultant and/or firm and provide contact information. Maintain a 100 word maximum.

N/A

Significance

Criteria:

- Initiative addresses an area of concern for the majority of local government organizations.
- Initiative can serve as a model and replicated in other jurisdictions.

Please describe the extent to which you believe your program or policy initiative is potentially replicable within other jurisdictions and why? To your knowledge, have any other jurisdictions or organizations established programs or implemented policies modeled specifically on this project? Please also provide verification of the replication.

This solution is definitely replicable in other communities. After the City first piloted the program, it expanded in year two to include Durham County, which opened up a whole host of other types of government services that could partner with startups. For any jurisdiction with a startup or entrepreneurial community a similar program could be set up to create structure around partnering, prototyping and experimenting. The creators modeled Innovate Durham off of similar programs at the City of Pittsburgh, PA and the City of Kansas City, MO, taking the

inspiration from those cities and shaping a program that is unique to Durham. Innovate Durham supports local businesses and brings new ideas into local government by aligning program goals with the City and County goals of creating a high-performing organization and encouraging a culture of innovation within both governments.

Effectiveness

Criteria:

- Initiative addresses a community or organization need.
- Initiative has achieved tangible results.
- Initiative improved the organizational culture or the traditional approach to problem solving.
- Initiative has received recognition for its achievements, i.e. independent evaluation, national recognition, local press, etc.

Please describe the most significant obstacle(s) encountered thus far by your program. How have they been dealt with? Which ones remain?

Staff learned a lot from the first year of Innovate Durham and continue to refine and shape the program based on feedback from the participants, department staff and other stakeholders like elected officials. The most significant obstacles staff have encountered thus far are: internal support and recruiting diverse participants to the program. Staff created buy-in with departments by working with City and County Attorney's offices to craft agreements with participants, thereby giving department partners confidence that the program had a legal blessing and making the process more official. Innovate Durham also incorporated other employees into the evaluation process for the program, allowing a department like Solid Waste to ask questions and bring up concerns with a startup before a partnership began. Staff got feedback after the first year of Innovate Durham that the participants did not reflect the diversity of Durham, so in the second year a lot of time was spent reaching out to diverse stakeholders and encouraged startups led by minorities or women to apply to the program. Because of that effort, the applicant pool for the 2018 cohort was 51 percent minority owned or led and 33 percent woman owned or led.

What outcomes did this program or policy have? Could you share one or two objective measures that demonstrate these outcomes? Ultimately, how did you measure the change based on the intervention, and why do you believe in the credibility of this assessment?

The direct outcomes of the program are the number of startup partners and the number of projects completed through the program. Without this intervention, the City and County would not work with startups or have pilot projects with non-governmental groups in this way. In the first year, Innovate Durham partnered with four startups, three of which were from Durham and all of which were from the Research Triangle region of North Carolina, and completed four projects with them. In the second year, Innovate Durham is partnering with seven startups, four that are from Durham and all of which have a presence in the Research Triangle region. Innovate Durham also focused on recruiting a diverse cohort of companies and has succeeded in that four of the seven are minority-owned or led and three are woman-owned or led. A longer-term measure is how many startups continue to work with the City or County on future projects or contracts. Currently one of the first four companies is still working with the City. One of the goals of the program is to encourage a culture of innovation in the City and County. There is not a direct measure for encouraging that culture, but one way it can be measured is by tracking the number of policy challenges submitted by City and County department staff to the program. 2018 was the first year soliciting policy challenges from departments, which startups could apply to tackle. In 2018, Innovate Durham received eight

policy challenges, and departments' willingness to provide challenges or opportunities they want to partner with the startup community on is a clear signal of buy-in to the program and of willingness to innovate and take risks. This measure can provide a better understanding of how the program is impacting innovation in the two organizations.

Has the program received any press or other media coverage to date? If yes, please list the sources and briefly describe relevant coverage.

Yes, please see below:

Minority hiring, internet-of-things key projects in Durham's startup program – State Scoop 08.24.18

<https://statescoop.com/durham-n-c-s-startup-program-looks-to-improve-minority-hiring-internet-of-things-in-city-agencies>

'Reflective of Durham:' New cohort for Innovate Durham is a diverse mix – WRAL TechWire 08.21.18

<https://www.wraltechwire.com/2018/08/21/reflective-of-durham-new-cohort-for-innovate-durham-is-a-diverse-mix/>

Meet Innovate Durham's new cohort: A look at the 7 startups + photos – WRAL TechWire 08.21.18

<https://www.wraltechwire.com/2018/08/21/meet-innovate-durhams-new-cohort-a-look-at-the-7-startups-photos/>

Virtual reality: A tangible tool for education, innovation – WRAL TechWire 08.10.18

<https://www.wraltechwire.com/2018/08/10/virtual-reality-a-tangible-tool-for-education-innovation/>

Tech on Tap Conversations: Innovate Durham – WRAL Tech on Tap Podcast 07.04.18

<https://www.wraltechwire.com/2018/07/04/tech-on-tap-conversations-innovate-durham/>

You could see new technology tested in Durham thanks to these 4 local – Durham Herald-Sun 10.02.17

<https://www.heraldsun.com/news/local/counties/durham-county/article176551293.html>

Durham To Tech-Savvy Entrepreneurs: Help Us Solve City's Problems – WUNC 07.25.17

<http://www.wunc.org/post/durham-tech-savvy-entrepreneurs-help-us-solve-citys-problems#stream/0>

Presentation

Criteria:

- Presentation will be delivered by a team.
- Presentation will be highly interactive and engaging.

Example Social Media Post

The @CityofDurhamNC & @DurhamCounty are turning #localgov into a lab to test innovative ideas. The #InnovateDurham partnership program pairs startups with government staff for 12 weeks to work on projects like virtual reality & affordable housing or smart sensors in dumpsters.

Please write an abstract or short description for your innovation that would make conference attendees say "Well, I need to attend this session!"

Here's a new twist on the public-private partnership: Bring new ideas and technology into your organization by partnering with startups! The City and County of Durham, North Carolina have set up a program to allow both

organizations to tap into the innovative resources in their community. Each year, startup companies and entrepreneurs apply to test out an idea, product or service with City or County staff. The Innovate Durham partnership program allows the City and County to test out new technology at no cost and supports local startups by lowering the barrier to entry to work with local government. In the first two years of the program, the City and County have worked with startup companies to test out virtual reality software, gamification training, internet of things devices and image recognition software. Through a partnership program with startups, your organization can also test the latest technology, build innovation capacity in your organization and support local businesses.

How will you make the session creative and unique?- How do you plan to be both entertaining and educational?- Include a description of how your session will facilitate group activities and/or interaction.- What will attendees be able to have as an actionable "takeaway" from the session?

A presentation on Innovate Durham will be creative and unique because attendees will walk away having considered how they could start a partnership program in their own community without any funding or dedicated staff. Presenters will highlight stories from the program that show the impact it can have as well as lessons learned from setting up and carrying out the program. Although the Innovate Durham program is the focus of the case study, each of the projects within Innovate Durham can be mini-case studies as well. Each has its own story of collaboration, working through barriers and changing culture. Presenters will facilitate group activities and interaction by asking attendees to brainstorm policy challenges, which startups could apply to work on in local government. Presenters will also ask attendees to brainstorm partners that could make a program possible in their own community. Attendees will think thorough the industries they can partner with, brainstorm ways to do it and assess potential barriers. The actionable takeaway from the session will be that encouraging a culture of innovation can be done in partnership with the resources already in your community and that these partnerships don't have to cost your organization anything but time.

Anything else you would like to add?

The City and County of Durham recognize and embrace the fact that it takes a variety of stakeholders to make community change. In the spirit of the Alliance for Innovation's continued push for more private-sector partnerships, the City and County of Durham believe that Innovate Durham is an interesting example of how to fuse these relationships in an approachable, testable way. Innovate Durham is about solutions to community problems, and it is also about relationship building and creating a space and forum to spark future public-private partnerships. Learn more at our website: <http://durhamnc.gov/3165/Innovate-Durham>