



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES THINKCHICAGO: CHICAGO IDEAS WEEK 2015

Fifth Annual Event Draws 150 Top Engineering and Computer Science Students to Chicago

Mayor Emanuel today announced the fifth annual ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week. The three-day event that will introduce 150 of the Midwest's top technology and computer science students to the city's fast-growing technology industry and bring them to one of the country's most unique idea-generating conferences.

This fall's ThinkChicago is the eight installment of the successful program established by Mayor Emanuel in 2011. Since the programs launch, 950 students have participated in it. This year's students represent 25 universities that span 18 states, predominantly from Illinois and the Midwest region.

"ThinkChicago brings together top engineering and technology students from across the country and helps prepare them to be the entrepreneurs and business leaders of tomorrow," said Mayor Emanuel. "These young leaders have a key role in driving Chicago forward as an international hub for technology and innovation."

Applicants were selected based on academic excellence and demonstrated commitment to technology and innovation. The Chicago Ideas Week installment of ThinkChicago targets college students from the Midwest, as the program aims to attract up-and-coming technology talent to the city. Of the 150 students attending this year, 87 percent hail from the Midwest, with 69 percent coming from Illinois. Approximately 35 percent of students are computer science/engineering majors, 8 percent industrial or mechanical engineering, 7 percent electrical engineering/electronics, 5 percent business, and 5 percent information systems.

"We're happy to welcome another class of top students to the city for ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week," said Jeff Malehorn, President & CEO of World Business Chicago. "Chicago has a truly dynamic tech ecosystem where leaders embrace talent and the community as a whole. We're thrilled to give students the chance to experience this city's entrepreneurial energy firsthand."

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

World Business Chicago and ThinkChicago have also partnered with LinkedIn to help the City of Chicago maximize talent attraction and retention. The research project is uncovering talent migration and skill supply and demand trends in LinkedIn's data that will help inform future initiatives. This includes the most in-demand technology skills, the top industries hiring technology workers, universities with the most alumni in Chicago, and where recent graduates migrate to and from.

Students will once again participate in the ThinkChicago Civic Tech Challenge, a pitch competition among ThinkChicago participants to propose ways in which the City of Chicago can use technology to encourage civic engagement among its constituents. Proposals may address increasing volunteer and service involvement among residents, how to better connect community members with services, or suggest ideas for new City e-services. The winning proposal will receive automatic acceptance to ThinkChicago: Lollapalooza 2016 and VIP passes for Lollapalooza 2016.

"We're proud to partner with the City of Chicago, the University of Illinois, World Business Chicago and 1871 to bring our nation's most talented students to Chicago," said Brad Keywell, Chicago Ideas Week Founder and Co-Chairman. "By showcasing Chicago as a hub of technological and entrepreneurial innovation, ThinkChicago helps ensure a pool of world-class talent selects Chicago as their home to begin their careers and contribute to the community of new ventures and technology that Chicago has come to be known for."

"The University of Illinois is proud to partner with Mayor Emanuel to help showcase the many technological and entrepreneurial opportunities available in Chicago," said University of Illinois President Timothy L. Killeen. "We also recognize the need to retain top talent right here at home and will continue to build the elite workforce that is so critical to the success of the city and our state."

As part of the program, ThinkChicago students will attend a variety of events that include:

- Keynote talks by Harper Reed (CTO Obama 2012, former CTO Threadless) and Jimmy Odom (Senior Advisor for Minority Business Development, State of Illinois, and Founder, WeDeliver)
- Panel discussion on *The Potential of Chicago* with:
 - Shradha Agarwal (Co-Founder and President, ContextMedia)
 - Caralynn Nowinski Collens (CEO, UI LABS)
 - Brenna Berman (Chief Information Officer, City of Chicago)
 - Craig Vodnik (Co-founder and VP Operations, Cleverbridge)
 - Sunny Williams (Founder, TinyDocs)
- Attendance at Chicago Ideas Week talks, including "Disruptive Innovation" and "A Peek Inside the World's Most Brilliant Minds"
- Location tours and a company showcase featuring leadership and engineers from more than 15 tech companies

"Through programs like ThinkChicago, 1871 works to attract and retain top tech talent to create and develop innovative businesses throughout the city," said 1871 CEO Howard A. Tullman. "We are pleased to again provide ThinkChicago participants with the opportunity to visit 1871 and immerse themselves in the Chicago entrepreneurial ecosystem."

Launched in 2011, Chicago Ideas Week is a week-long event that brings together some of the world's most outstanding speakers to present their ideas and inspire the innovations of tomorrow at 80+ sessions across the city of Chicago. Chicago Ideas Week aims to be the platform for sharing big ideas, inspiring action, and igniting change to positively impact the world. People who participate in Chicago Ideas Week include artists, engineers, technologists, inventors, scientists, musicians and economists.

For more information on Think Chicago, visit www.ThinkChicago.net. For more information on Chicago Ideas Week visit www.chicagoideas.com.

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