



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO



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**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR EMANUEL MEETS WITH 100 OF THE MIDWEST'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST STUDENTS AS THINKCHICAGO COMES TO TOWN**

*Final day of two-day recruiting trip is highlighted by panel discussion with Mayor*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel moderated a panel discussion for the 100 students chosen as part of ThinkChicago this morning, focused on exploring entrepreneurship and the city's fast growing technology industry.

"Attracting the most talented young people to Chicago is a key goal of my administration, and I am focused on building a business environment in Chicago that attracts and retains the most talented people in computer science and engineering," said Mayor Emanuel. "ThinkChicago is a good way for us to showcase the dynamic and growing Chicago technology economy and connect students with job opportunities in anticipation of their graduation."

Groupon hosted the panel discussion. Participants joining Mayor Emanuel included Jeff Holden, Senior Vice President of Product Management of Groupon; Neil Sales-Griffin, the co-founder and CEO of The Starter League; and Talia Mashiach, the founder and CEO of Eved.

"Chicago Ideas Week is about bringing people together to explore new ideas that will impact our future, so it is in that vein that we work in partnership with the City of Chicago and University of Illinois on ThinkChicago to bring tomorrow's best and brightest to the city," said Jessica Malkin, Executive Director of Chicago Ideas Week. "We look forward to continuing to grow this program and working with Mayor Emanuel to ensure Chicago is a top destination for tech talent."

This year is the second year of ThinkChicago, an innovative program launched by Mayor Emanuel in conjunction with Chicago Ideas Week in 2011. This year, thanks to the support of the University of Illinois, the program doubled in size from its original 50 participants to 100 participants. 50 of the students are from the University of Illinois system, and the remaining 50 students are from a variety of Midwestern universities.

“The University of Illinois is thrilled to partner with the Mayor’s Office and Chicago Ideas Week to showcase the city to 100 highly talented students from across the Midwest, including 50 from our campuses. ThinkChicago gives these students unprecedented access to the people and companies that are shaping Chicago’s tech community. These emerging young leaders are critical to our innovation ecosystem,” said Caralynn Nowinski, Associate Vice-President of Innovation and Economic Development of the University of Illinois.

ThinkChicago comes on the heels of the Mayor’s recruiting visit to the University of Illinois campus in Urbana-Champaign earlier this month, where he participated on a panel discussion with several hundred students, and attended a networking event at which nearly 40 Chicago-based tech companies connected with nearly 1,000 students.

There were over 450 applicants to the ThinkChicago program in 2012. Approximately 250 of those applicants came from the U of I campuses, and another 200 came from other schools in the Midwest.

This year’s selected students come from 16 universities spread across seven Midwestern states and have met with industry leaders, visited business headquarters, and attended the second annual Chicago Ideas Week. By the time the program comes to a close on Friday night, students will have visited 19 cutting-edge companies such as Braintree, Google, Groupon, Grubhub, Lightbank, Microsoft, Morningstar, and 37Signals. They will have also met Chicago’s most innovative startups at a reception hosted by 1871, the newly opened digital startup center located in the Merchandise Mart, and attended multiple Chicago Ideas Week events.

“As Chairman of the City’s Economic, Capital and Technology Development committee, I applaud the Mayor’s efforts to recruit and keep the best and the brightest young engineering minds in our city. It is so important to attract top-notch talent so that Chicago remains the destination for leading technology companies,” said Tom Tunney, Chair of Economic, Capital and Technology Development-City Council.

The students in the year’s program come from: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, UIC, University of Illinois at Springfield, Case Western Reserve University, DePaul, IIT, Iowa State, Loyola University of Chicago, Northwestern University, Purdue, St. Olaf College, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri, and University of Notre Dame.

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Photo Credit: Brooke Collins, City of Chicago

Photo Caption 1: Mayor Emanuel meets with 100 Midwest university students as part of ThinkChicago.