



# INFORMER

Official Newsletter for the Innovation DuPage Community

## Member Wins

### SuperBetter Grant Award to Support R&D Collab with NIU!



SuperBetter was awarded an Illinois Innovation Voucher! The \$75k grant fuels an R&D collaboration with Northern Illinois University to expand SuperBetter Classroom in the education industry. SuperBetter makes it easy for schools and universities to empower mental health, resilience and student success in classrooms and afterschool programs. SuperBetter CEO, Keith Wakeman, first met the NIU team through Innovation DuPage, which led to the R&D collaboration.

### Celebrating Two Years of Dunamis Coaching and Consulting



Congratulations to Karin Knecht, founder of Dunamis Coaching and Consulting, on two years in business! This milestone year was marked by both professional and personal achievements. Karin guided 20+ leaders through her "Illuminate Your Path to Leadership" program, became an American Citizen, and completed the NSA Speakers Academy Program. She also continues serving as a SCORE mentor, supporting fellow entrepreneurs and small business owners.

## Opportunities

### Clean-Energy Entrepreneurs: Explore DuPage's 'Green Business' Toolkit



For clean-energy startups and sustainable businesses in DuPage County, the County Environmental Division's [Business Sustainability page](#) is part of the [Sustainable DuPage program](#) and offers a practical toolkit to complement Innovation DuPage's entrepreneurial support. Through no-cost technical resources such as the free [Green Business Assessment and Planning Tool](#), companies can evaluate energy use, waste, and facility operations. While utilizing this tool, your business will also receive tailored action plans and access to incentives such as energy-efficiency grants, renewable-energy rebates, and long-term finance options like [Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy \(C-PACE\)](#). By combining Innovation DuPage's incubation services with Sustainable DuPage's policy-driven sustainability resources, businesses gain a powerful pathway to scale responsibly, reduce costs, and contribute to a greener regional economy.

### Clean Energy Incubator Grant Opportunity

Members participating in Innovation DuPage's Clean Energy Incubator (CEI) Program can now apply for the Equitable Energy Future Grant Program through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). This program provides substantial funding for pre-development activities that advance renewable energy and energy-efficient initiatives.

Grant Details:

- Award Range: \$250,000 – \$1,000,000
- Application Deadline: **December 31st, 2025**

[Learn More and Apply Here](#)

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## Amex Shop Small Grants Program

To help small businesses grow, innovate, and support their local communities, American Express is teaming up with Main Street America this Small Business Saturday® to launch the Amex Shop Small Grants Program. The Program will provide an initial \$5 million to fund 250 grants of \$20,000 each to eligible small business owners across the US.

To be eligible for this program, applicants must:

- Own a for-profit, independently owned small business
- Operate out of a physical “brick-and-mortar” storefront
- Be located in one of the 50 U.S. states or Washington, DC (Businesses located in U.S. territories are not eligible)
- Currently employ 20 or less FTE (Full Time Equivalent) employees

They are seeking proposals for projects to help your small business grow, innovate, and support your local community.

[Learn More and Apply Here](#)

Contact **Bill Payne**, Director of the Clean Energy Incubator Program, for support through the application process.

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## Construction Owner-2-CEO Applications Now Open



Are you or someone you know in the construction industry looking to take your business to the next level? Innovation DuPage and HACIA's Construction Owner-2-CEO is a free 10-week virtual business accelerator for construction professionals. Gain expertise in project management, contract bidding, leadership, marketing strategy, and human resources through expert-led training and networking.

[Apply here by January 6th](#)

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## Seeking Clean Tech Companies!



Innovation DuPage is actively looking for startups and small businesses working in the clean energy or clean technology industry - or referrals to companies that could benefit from our targeted support.

[To Learn More](#)

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# Coming Up

## ID Staff Out of Office: Happy Holidays!

ID Staff will be out of office from Wednesday, December 24th, to January 4th. We will return to normal office hours on Monday, January 5th.

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Join biweekly Member Meetups at Innovation DuPage! Network, enjoy bagels & coffee, and learn from spotlight members & resource experts.

The next Member Meetup will be on January 7th from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

If you can't make it in person, attend virtually through our [Zoom Link](#)

[Sign up](#) to present at a future Member Meetup

## The 2nd Annual Midwest Innovation and Entrepreneurship Summit

**College of DuPage** **INNOVATION DUPAGE**

### The Midwest Innovation and Entrepreneurship Summit

#### AI and the Future of Work

**Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026**  
 College of DuPage  
 Jack H. Turner Conference Center  
 Student Resource Center (SRC 2000)  
 425 Fawell Blvd., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

Midwesterners are famous for getting things done. Since the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, Chicagoland has been a hub of enterprise and entrepreneurs. With abundant natural resources, strong infrastructure, reliable energy, established colleges and universities and access to a talented workforce, we are now poised to be at the center of quantum technology, AI, big data and more.

To celebrate this legacy of innovation, hard work and demonstrated results, join Intel, Lenovo, Apple and more for this second annual summit.

**Featured Sessions:**

- Building your entrepreneurial team
- Funding and fundraising
- Emerging markets: quantum, fintech, advanced manufacturing and clean energy

For more information, visit [bit.ly/47R686Z](https://bit.ly/47R686Z).

For ADA accommodations, please email [access@cod.edu](mailto:access@cod.edu) with the event title in the subject line and your accommodation request. Please email two weeks in advance.  
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[Register Here](#)

Let us help you share your success with the ID community!  
 Share a recent win – big or small. It could be featured in our next letter! Email your accomplishment to [Hannah Macey](#).

## Resources

[Clean Energy Incubator Program](#)

[Member Portal Login Page](#)

[Member Meetup Signup Sheet](#)



**Reminder:** Innovation DuPage is open for members as a coworking space 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

Keep up with Innovation DuPage on social media!





Try email & social marketing for free!