



INFORMER

Official Newsletter for the Innovation DuPage Community

Coming Up

Come Support the 9th Annual Big Idea Pitch Contest: May 6

>>> Save The Date For The 9th Annual <<<



BIG IDEA Pitch Contest

Wednesday, May 6th, 2026

In-Person: 5:00 – 7:00 PM

425 Fawell Blvd, Glen Ellyn,
IL 60137, HEC RM1022



On Wednesday, May 6 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at College of DuPage, student finalists from across DuPage County will take the stage to pitch their business ideas for a chance to win a share of \$12,000 in prizes.

This event is free and open to the community. Whether you're an entrepreneur, a mentor, or simply someone who enjoys seeing fresh ideas come to life, this is a great evening to be part of. Presented in partnership with College of DuPage, this year's prizes are generously sponsored by NACCE, PermaSeal, and Ezee Fiber Internet.

[Register Here](#)

College of DuPage Graphic Design Showcase: May 14



The College of DuPage Graphic Design Program is hosting Portfolios 2026 on Thursday, May 14 at the Student Resource Center (SRC 2000) on the COD campus.

From 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., attendees can meet graduating graphic design students, view their portfolios, and connect with emerging talent available for hire or interviews. The evening also features an exhibition of nominated student work and light appetizers. The night wraps up with the COD Graphic Design Student Awards from 8:00 - 9:30 p.m.

Whether you're looking to bring on a designer or simply want to celebrate the next generation of creative talent in our community, this is a great opportunity to engage with local students who are ready to work.

[Register Here](#)



The next Member Meetup will be on May 13 from 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Member Spotlight: Tracy Sherrier of Fi For Kids

Problem Solving Session: IT Problem Solving Session with Adam Jeffries, Strategic Tech Advisor

Following the Member Meetup, there will be an Commercial Goods and Services cluster meeting.

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

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

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



FIRESIDE CHAT + WORKSHOP | IP & Innovation Strategy May 19 | 6:00 PM | Innovation DuPage



Elina Conley
Innovation Strategy
Azenity Consulting



Mark Polyakov
IP Attorney, Partner
Wood Phillips

RSVP Required

Join Innovation DuPage's Entrepreneur in Residence Elina Conley, Founder of Azenity Consulting, and IP attorney Mark Polyakov, Partner at Wood Phillips, for a fireside chat and workshop covering white space innovation, licensing, and acquisition due diligence, with valuable takeaways for founders, product leaders, and executives navigating growth.

[Register Here](#)

Virtual Business Model Canvas Workshop Series with Phil Brown

Sessions: June 16, 23, 30 and July 7 from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Turn Your Idea Into a Real Business Plan



4-Week Business Model Canvas Workshop Series

Led by Phil Brown, SCORE, Land of Lincoln & Innovation DuPage Mentor

Through our partnership with SCORE Land of Lincoln, ID recommends our early-stage companies participate in The Business Model Canvas, a 4-week workshop series that provides entrepreneurs with fundamental business knowledge and guides participants in developing a business plan.



Have a business idea but don't know where to start?

This hands-on workshop series is designed specifically for early-stage entrepreneurs who **don't yet have** a business plan.

What You'll Gain

- Create a clear, one-page Business Model Canvas
- Identify key components of your business
- Evaluate viability and risks
- Plan your next steps—or if you need to pivot

Program Structure

- 3 Interactive Sessions (2 hours each)
- 1 Final Q&A Session
- Small Group Setting

Who This Is For

- Aspiring entrepreneurs with an idea
- Early-stage founders without a business plan
- Anyone looking to validate and structure their concept

Why This Matters

- Most businesses fail due to lack of clarity—not lack of effort
- This workshop gives you the foundation needed to move forward with confidence

Spots Are Limited!

- Only 10 participants
- Sessions scheduled once 8 are confirmed



Get Started!

Secure your spot and turn your idea into an actionable business model!

Secure your Spot!

Opportunities

Illinois Innovation Voucher Program: Now Accepting Applications

Illinois small and mid-sized businesses can apply for vouchers covering up to 75% of costs (up to \$75,000) to partner with Illinois universities and research institutions on R&D projects. Eligible uses include product development, prototyping, testing,

and access to labs and equipment. Applicants must be Illinois-based for-profit businesses.

[To Learn More and Apply](#)

SCORE Chicago Small Business Pitch Competition: Applications Due May 7

SCORE Chicago is accepting applications for its Small Business Pitch Competition, open to small business owners ready to take their business to the next level. Participants receive one-on-one mentorship, exposure for their business, and a chance to compete for a share of \$15,000 in cash prizes. Applications are due May 7, with finalists announced in mid-June and the final pitch event taking place July 16 at the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Chicago.

[To Learn More and Apply](#)

ID Member Industry Clusters

Innovation DuPage's Industry Clusters are designed to connect ID Members working in the same industry. Industry Clusters give you the opportunity to:

- Network with peers in your field
- Share resources and tools
- Discuss trends and challenges
- Request future speakers and programming

Clusters meet 10:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m. in our event space, right after our regular Member Meetups (9:30–10:30 p.m. on Wednesdays). You're welcome to attend both! Here's the schedule for the next quarter:

- May 13 – Commercial Goods & Services
- June 10 - Marketing
- June 24 - Technology
- July 8 - Consumer Goods & Services

- May 27 – Female Founders from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Questions? Reach out to [Elina Conley](#), ID's Entrepreneur in Residence.

Seeking Clean Tech Companies!



**Clean Energy
Incubator Program**

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](#)

Resources

Grant Writing Support: Jessica Wain, Co-founder of Hobbs & Wain Advancement Partners provides grant writing and proposal development support, helping you identify, pursue, and secure funding opportunities that can accelerate your company's growth and scalability.

[Jessica's Booking Link](#)

Dorian Dickinson, CEO of FundingHope has shared his presentation from his workshop on raising capital through investment crowdfunding. The slides cover how Regulation Crowdfunding works, what investors look for, and how to evaluate if your business is ready.

[Access the Presentation Here](#)

Allies for Community Business provides capital, coaching, and connections to help entrepreneurs grow businesses that create jobs and wealth in their communities. Allies for Community Business offers loans up to \$500,000 to support community businesses.

[Schedule a Session: Allies for Community Business](#)

The Illinois Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) located throughout the state provides information, confidential business guidance, training, and other resources to start-up and existing small businesses. In addition, the Illinois SBDCs help clients with securing needed business capital, marketing, exporting, commercialization of new ideas, development of innovative products and services. Client projects range from early-stage, pre-revenue concepts to established business operations.

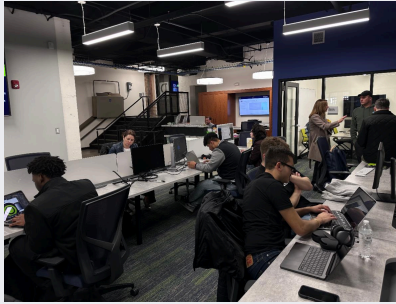
[Check Grant Availability Here](#)

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](#).

[Sign Up to Present at a Member Meetup](#)

[Member Portal Login Page](#)



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!



Innovation DuPage | 535 Duane St. | Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 US

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