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ISTC Awarded GET Cities Grant for Executive Founder Series

*Program designed to drive connections between startup founders
and investors, clients, and corporate sponsors*

February 27, 2023 – (CHICAGO, IL) – [GET \(Gender Equality in Tech\) Cities](#) and their Tech Equity Working Group (TEWG) have awarded [The Illinois Science & Technology Coalition](#) (ISTC) a grant to launch their Executive Founder Series, which is focused on improving gender diversity in seed and series stage founders by facilitating corporate connections between startup founders with investors, clients, and corporate sponsors.

“Our start-up ecosystem drives the Illinois innovation economy. ISTC is dedicated to creating more opportunities for entrepreneurs that promote sustainable growth, including job creation, the attraction and retention of talent, driving more innovative startups state-wide, and improving equity for historically underrepresented groups,” said Colleen D. Egan, President/CEO, ISTC. “The Executive Founder Series focuses on developing systems of support for startup advancement and creating opportunities for founders to not only showcase their products but connect with innovation leaders and investors.”

The 2023 Executive Founder Series is slated to kick off mid-March 2023 and is intended to develop meaningful connections between startup founders in Chicago and corporate executives. The program, hosted by ISTC and initially incubated and seeded by GET Cities, will invite six startup founders to participate in a series of networking opportunities that will offer introductions to seasoned subject matter experts across Chicago’s innovation ecosystem, including civic/nonprofit, corporate, and venture capital leaders.

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“One of the key ways we work to increase equity in tech is by finding the points of leverage in the system where a small change can make a big impact. ISTC’s Executive Founder Series is designed to help founders engage with investors who can move them from seed funding to Series A. Once they reach that point, the odds of success nearly double, making this a catalyzing inflection point if we want to increase the number of successful marginalized founders and the amount of capital they receive,” said Elle Ramel, GET Cities Chicago Director.

The series will consist of an introductory happy hour, a quarterly dinner connecting the inaugural founder cohort with ecosystem leaders, corporate partners, venture capital contacts, and c-suite executives, culminating with a finale happy hour to wrap the program.

About Illinois Science and Technology Coalition:

The Illinois Science & Technology Coalition (ISTC) is a 501(c)(6) member-driven non-profit, nonpartisan organization that cultivates technology-based economic development throughout Illinois. Our mission is to measure, connect, and enrich the Illinois innovation economy. Authorized by state statute in 1989 as Illinois’ technology adviser, we serve as a convener, catalyst, and champion for Illinois’ research, science, and technology communities. By providing our members and partners with a shared voice, the ISTC delivers measurable economic impact and positions Illinois as a national innovation leader. ISTC members represent leaders in the state’s innovation ecosystem and include major Illinois research universities, federal labs, Fortune 1000 corporations, and civic organizations. Our 501(c)(3) Institute focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education, connecting companies with classrooms to better prepare the next generation of innovators and problem solvers

About GET Cities and Tech Equity Working Group:

GET (Gender Equality in Tech) Cities, led by SecondMuse Foundation and Break Through Tech in partnership with Pivotal Ventures, is an initiative designed to accelerate the representation and leadership of women, transgender, and non-binary people in tech through the development of inclusive tech hubs ,across the United States. Currently, GET Cities has established local tech hubs in three U.S. cities: Chicago, Miami and D.C.

Tech Equity Working Group (TEWG), powered by GET Cities Chicago, is a rolling cohort of accelerators, incubators, funds, and mission-aligned ecosystem supporters designing city-wide solutions and collective infrastructure to address gender and racial inequities for Chicago-based tech founders.

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