

# Innovate Springfield joins the Center for State Policy and Leadership, becomes first hub of Illinois Innovation Network

Innovate Springfield, a downtown Springfield innovation and business incubator, has joined the University of Illinois Springfield's Center for State Policy and Leadership, effective Aug. 1, 2018, under an agreement aimed at expanding economic growth, entrepreneurship opportunities and social progress in the capital city.

In joining UIS, the four-year-old incubator, founded in 2014 by the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, will be the first hub of the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN). The new initiative, led by the U of I System, was announced in fall 2017 and is being developed to accelerate statewide job creation and economic development through groundbreaking research and innovation.

Joining UIS and IIN will amplify Innovate Springfield's efforts to bring new businesses and high-impact social programs to central Illinois. The incubator will be able to partner with UIS faculty and students, as well as with IIN hubs that will ultimately include the U of I's universities in Urbana-Champaign and Chicago, other downstate sites and the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI), a new Chicago-based institute that will be the cornerstone of the network.

At the same time, UIS students and faculty will benefit from new learning and research opportunities that will be available through Innovate Springfield and IIN.

"As the first statewide hub of the new Illinois Innovation Network, UIS faculty, students and local companies will work side-by-side and with experts across the state to develop solutions, promote entrepreneurship and empower inventors of the future," said Chancellor Koch. "It's an ideal combination for all entities involved in this partnership."

Innovate Springfield will receive \$1.5 million in funding over the next three years to expand programs supporting start-up businesses, entrepreneurs and innovation that promotes the public good. Funding grew from a U of I System offer to match any local funding provided to create the Springfield hub. The city of Springfield, Land of Lincoln Economic Development Corporation, and the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln agreed to contribute a combined \$250,000 annually over the next three years. With the system's match, the agreement will provide a total annual investment of \$500,000.

As part of UIS, [Innovate Springfield](#) offices will continue to be located downtown at 15 South Old State Capitol Plaza, operating under the Center for State Policy and Leadership.