



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES THINKCHICAGO: LOLLAPALOOZA 2019**

*200 of the Nation's Top Technology and Engineering Students in Chicago To Learn About Chicago's Growing Technology Industry and Vibrant Urban Culture*

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the launch of ThinkChicago: Lollapalooza 2019, a three-day event from July 31–August 2 that will introduce the city's fast-growing technology industry and one of the country's most popular musical festivals to 200 of the nation's top tech, business, and design students from across the country. ThinkChicago immerses future leaders within Chicago's innovation ecosystem, giving them an opportunity to meet Chicago icons and pitch their own ideas.

"Ensuring future entrepreneurs and business leaders decide to live and work in Chicago is critical creating a top-tier tech ecosystem and inclusive growth," said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "If we want to enhance educational equity for every student, expand economic opportunity to every neighborhood and strengthen public safety across our city, it is going to take each of us and bold, innovative ideas."

"ThinkChicago reflects the core commitment that the University of Illinois System has carried for more than 150 years – to nurture the next-generation talent and the new waves of innovation that will drive economic growth across the city, our state and beyond," said Tim Killeen, president of the University of Illinois System. "So we are delighted to continue our proud partnership with World Business Chicago and Lollapalooza to showcase the many exciting opportunities available in Chicago and keep building on a statewide alumni network that is already nearly 400,000 strong."

Tech continues to be Chicago's fastest-growing industry sector, with one of the largest tech talent pools in the United States. Chicago has the fourth-largest data professional workforce in the country and produces the third-highest number of IT degrees, with Illinois producing the second-highest amount. Chicago's tech employment is 344,000, representing 7.2% of the workforce, with a GRP of \$50.5 billion.



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“Through ChicagoNEXT and its ThinkChicago program, World Business Chicago continues to drive inclusive access to Chicago’s tech and innovation community,” said Andrea Zopp, president and CEO of World Business Chicago. “We look forward to welcoming students from across the country to experience Chicago’s booming tech sector.”

Students from 17 states and 41 schools were selected to participate. Student participants include homegrown talent from the University of Illinois System, City Colleges of Chicago, and other major universities in the Chicago area, including Chicago State University, Columbia College Chicago, DePaul University, Dominican University, Illinois Institute of Technology, Loyola University Chicago, Northeastern Illinois University, Northwestern University, Robert Morris University, Roosevelt University, and the University of Chicago.

The students also attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions, and nationally ranked institutions such as Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, Stanford University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

For the first time, a majority of participating students are female.

“ThinkChicago gives students an unparalleled opportunity to be immersed in Chicago’s vibrant tech and innovation scene,” Mark Tebbe, chairman of ChicagoNEXT, said. “We are connecting top talent from around the country with Chicago’s leading businesses, providing students the opportunity to advance their careers and companies the ability to expand their talent pool.”

ThinkChicago has an alumni base of more than 1,700 talented students and professionals, many of whom now work for startups, leading tech companies, innovation spaces, and venture capital firms in Chicago. This summer’s program is the 16<sup>th</sup> installment of ThinkChicago—which also takes place during Chicago Ideas Week—and the 7<sup>th</sup> year that it is being held during Lollapalooza.

“We look forward to our partnership with ThinkChicago each year. It’s a privilege to host some of the nation’s brightest minds at Lollapalooza,” Charlie Jones, partner at C3 Presents, the promoter behind Lollapalooza, said.

Participants will attend a variety of programs, including:

- Access to all four days of Lollapalooza, including a behind the scenes tour



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- A visit to Illinois Institute of Technology's Kaplan Center that will include a keynote from Howard Tullman and a design thinking training from IIT Institute of Design's Jeremy Alexis
- Visits to more than 20 tech companies and innovation hubs, including:
  - 1871
  - CCC Information Services
  - JPMorgan Chase & Co.
  - mHub
  - Relativity
  - Sprout Social
  - tastytrade
  - Uptake
- A Civic Tech Panel with:
  - Derrick Brownlee, Managing Deputy Chief Innovation Officer, City of Chicago
  - Kate Calabra, Associate, Partnership Development, City Tech Collaborative
  - Akshay Singh, Co-Founder, President & Chief Technology Officer, Quicket Solutions
  - Thomas K.R. Stovall, Founder, ImBlackInTech
  - Sam Vance, Civic Innovation Fellow, Microsoft
- A Diversity in Tech and Entrepreneurship Panel with:
  - Veronica Aguilar, Program Manager, ChicagoNEXT, World Business Chicago
  - Cassandra Blackburn, Head of Inclusion and Diversity, Relativity
  - Shaniqua Davis, Founder, and CEO, Noirefy
  - Alan Durand, Director, Human Resources, Uptake
  - Drew Stern, Managing Director & VP, Esquify, and Programming Board, StartOut

ThinkChicago is organized by the Mayor's Office, ChicagoNEXT of World Business Chicago, the University of Illinois System, and Lollapalooza.

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