

INNOVATE DURHAM

2022
PROGRAM



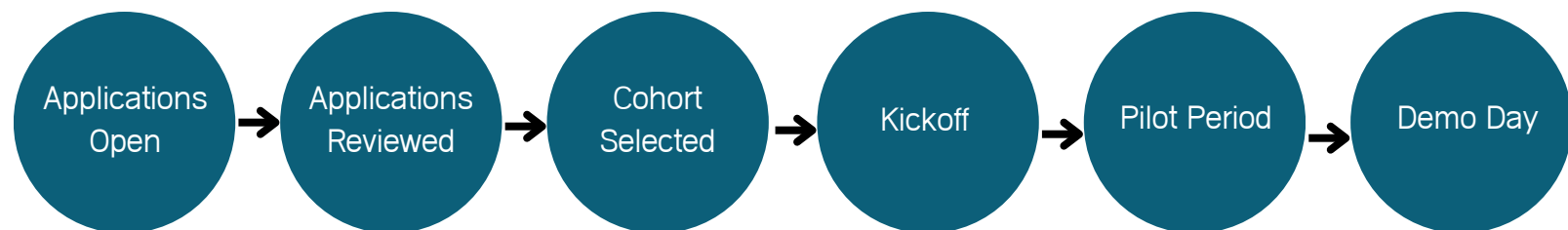
Prepared By:

Durham County Strategic Initiatives
City of Durham Innovation Team

INNOVATE DURHAM PROGRAM

Innovate Durham allows the County and City to collaborate with creative, passionate, and pioneering entrepreneurs and businesses to learn about and test new products, programs, and services. The 16-week pilot period pairs these businesses with County and City departments to share ideas, gather data, iterate, and refine products that improve our services and the lives of our residents.

Innovate Durham launched its first cohort in 2017. Since then, 24 companies have partnered with City and County departments to pilot their products and services through the program. Each cycle begins with an open application period. Submissions are reviewed by a committee of City and County staff and a community representative. After cohort members are selected, the team organizes a kickoff event, followed by a 16-week pilot timeframe with periodic cohort meetings. The program concludes with "Demo Day," when organizations have the opportunity to showcase the results of their partnerships.



CENTERING EQUITY:

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE APPLICATION PROCESS

This year, the Innovate Durham team placed significant focus on racial equity, both in advertising the program, and in the application itself. The application emphasized that we were seeking submissions from businesses that reflect the diverse makeup of Durham. Every applicant was asked to outline their values around and commitment to equity in their work.

This year's applicant pool was the most diverse yet, with 80% of business owners identifying as racial minorities and half identifying as women. In the final cohort that was selected, Black business owners make up 60% of the total leadership positions throughout the cohort companies. Additionally, many of the businesses in this year's cohort have equitable outcomes as a specific goal of their companies and services.

2022 COHORT

Lavni, Inc. partnered with Durham County EMS to understand the challenges first responders are faced with and to provide them with quicker, more convenient access to mental health services



ZROverse is carving out a pathway to train hard to hire populations for new collar jobs applicable to metaverse technology and explored how a digital, visual representation of City work might allow all residents to be involved in decision-making



Resolved Analytics worked with the County's general services department to explore the application of sustainable and cost-effective heat pump systems and how they might tackle climate change by lowering carbon emissions from building operations



Durham Success Summit launched a digital platform offering curriculum, mentoring, and opportunities to young Black men in Durham to support skill development and employability, incorporating data and findings from key contacts in the economic and workforce development fields



SmartBridge led a virtual pitch training for all of our cohort members so that they can continue to grow and communicate the amazing results of their work in an understandable and impactful way



2022 COHORT



The cohort's accomplishments were showcased through regular cohort meetings and at Demo Day in November 2022.

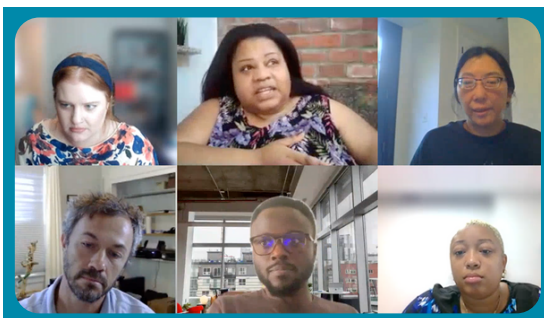
Lavni, Inc. worked with Durham County EMS to help facilitate connections for EMS personnel to mental health professionals. During the pilot period, three EMS staff entered the platform and one helped beta test its functionality.

Durham Success Summit worked with the City's Office of Economic and Workforce Development and Office of Performance and Innovation and the County's Economic Development Division to gather data and establish connections in service of the over 8,000 black men between 16 and 24 years old who live in Durham.



ZROverse, Inc. hosted a metaverse workshop in City Hall. Surveys showed that there was a 55.6% increase in hard to hire participants that felt the metaverse "is exciting and they want to learn more" after the workshop, compared to their attitudes before the workshop.

Resolved Analytics worked with Durham County General Services to begin an assessment of county buildings that can help the county better understand opportunities for including geothermal HVAC solutions to reduce the carbon emissions generated by building operations.



Smartbridge offered virtual pitch training to companies during one of the cohort meetings. In another meeting, leadership from Durham County gave a presentation detailing the local government procurement process participants. Holding cohort meetings remotely gave participants flexibility to attend or watch meeting recordings afterward.

2022 PROGRAM EVALUATION

Successes

All of the participating companies within the 2022 cohort would work with City of Durham and Durham County again.



Innovate Durham provides a unique experience for entrepreneurs to connect and partner with local government departments and agencies.

"I've lived in a lot of cities and states and haven't come across a program so intentional about connecting people with government processes. The ability to sit side-by-side with people and get government feedback from their lens has been amazing."

"The most beneficial element for my department was the connections made with the local entrepreneurial/startup community."

Challenges

Overall, participating companies felt that the program could use some restructuring to extend the amount of time that they have to develop their businesses, outcomes, and relationships with city/county teams.

"I wish we could have had another in-person meeting where cohort members could work together; maybe hands-on collaboration on a specific pain point where everyone brainstorms together. You learn so much from people who run the program, but can also learn from other entrepreneurs going through the same thing."

"Some changes to the preparation and initial application/intake process could promote better synergistic partnerships between companies and departments."

"I did not have the time to commit to the project and could have used more flexibility with the schedule as I wasn't able to attend most meetings."



INNOVATE DURHAM REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

City of Durham and Durham County teams are working to redevelop the Innovate Durham program. This initiative is one that greatly impacts local government's footprint in Durham's entrepreneurial community and is a priority for both Durham City and County leadership. The feedback gained from 2022 cohort participants will allow this development to be focused on human needs and outcomes of the program. Our approach to redevelopment includes establishing funding for the program, creating standards of operation for staff tasks, developing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between City of Durham and Durham County, and continue the work of prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the program. Each of these elements are aimed at increasing the long-term sustainability and viability of the program.

Plans for the future of the Innovate Durham program will be presented to city-county leadership upon completion.

Funding
Opportunities

Standards
of Operation

MOU

Diversity,
Equity, &
Inclusion





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thank you to the participants of this year's cohort:

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- ZROverse
- Resolved Analytics
- Durham Success Summit
- SmartBridge

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