Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology Announces Student Illinois Innovation Challenge

The Illinois Innovation Challenge aims to foster creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills among students, encouraging them to propose innovative ideas to address specific opportunities in state government.

CHICAGO – To launch the Illinois Innovation Challenge, the Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) has partnered with HIGH-TECH CHI, a citywide celebration of computer science education co-hosted by Chicago's Department of Family and Support Services, CS for Success, and Discovery Partners Institute.

High-Tech CHI will provide hands-on experiences for students in grades K-14, families and community members to learn about the latest technologies and relevant computing-based pathways by convening workforce development partners, industry leaders, educational institutions, and others to create interactive exhibits and on-the-spot career training and preparation opportunities.

"We are excited to partner with HIGH-TECH CHI to foster innovation, generate interest and to promote computer science education in Illinois," **said Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology's Acting Secretary and State CIO Sanjay Gupta.** "Together, we will inspire the next generation of innovators, problem solvers and create a thriving tech ecosystem in Illinois."

In the spirit of this event, the Illinois Innovation Challenge will provide students with a platform to innovate and ideate solutions to some of the challenges faced by state government.

Student teams will select an opportunity from the following topics:

- **Develop an Intelligent Chatbot:** Utilize advanced technologies like Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Generative AI to craft a chatbot. This chatbot will be able to listen to suggestions for improving state government. Moreover, it can determine which government department should deal with these ideas and guide them in the appropriate direction.
- **Help People Find Information:** Create a system that collaborates with people from Illinois when they have questions. It can help them find the right forms or information on the government website. It can even chat with people in a natural way, almost like having a conversation with a human.
- **Manage Audio and Video Files:** Propose a program that can catalogue audio and video files. It will organize them, add descriptions, and make them smaller in size so they don't take up too much storage space. It should also make sure that only authorized people can access these files.

Proposed solutions may include, but are not limited to, a roadmap, actionable plan, tool, or code that addresses the opportunity. For all Challenge details, including participation eligibility and criteria, visit: https://doit.illinois.gov/initiatives/doit-steam.html

"The Innovation Challenge welcomes students creative ideas aimed at improving state operations," stated Mary Reynolds, Education Group Chief Information Officer at DoIT. "This opportunity shows students the role

technology plays in government applications and hopefully encourages them to explore computer science and information technology as a career," said Reynolds.

DoIT may implement or utilize all or a portion of the proposed solutions that best address the selected opportunity. Winning projects will be highlighted on the DoIT STEAM website and DoIT STEAM Newsletter.

The Illinois Innovation Challenge will convene at High-Tech CHI on December 9th, 9:30AM - 2:30PM CT at the Google office in Chicago, located at 320 N Morgan, Chicago, IL 60607.

Interested individuals can register to attend the event and participate in the Illinois Innovation Challenge now at: hightechchi.eventbrite.com. Space is limited.

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