



STARTUP KNOX

ECOSYSTEM GUIDE



“I believe it is our time in East Tennessee. It is a season when East Tennessee is becoming an entrepreneurial epicenter. I promise the atmosphere in Knoxville has never been as hot to crush paradigms, disrupt the status quo, and launch new business as it is today. The foundation is set; what will we do with it?”

– Bill Malkes, co-founder and former CEO of GRIDSMART Technologies, Inc.

WELCOME! ENJOY THIS RESOURCE.

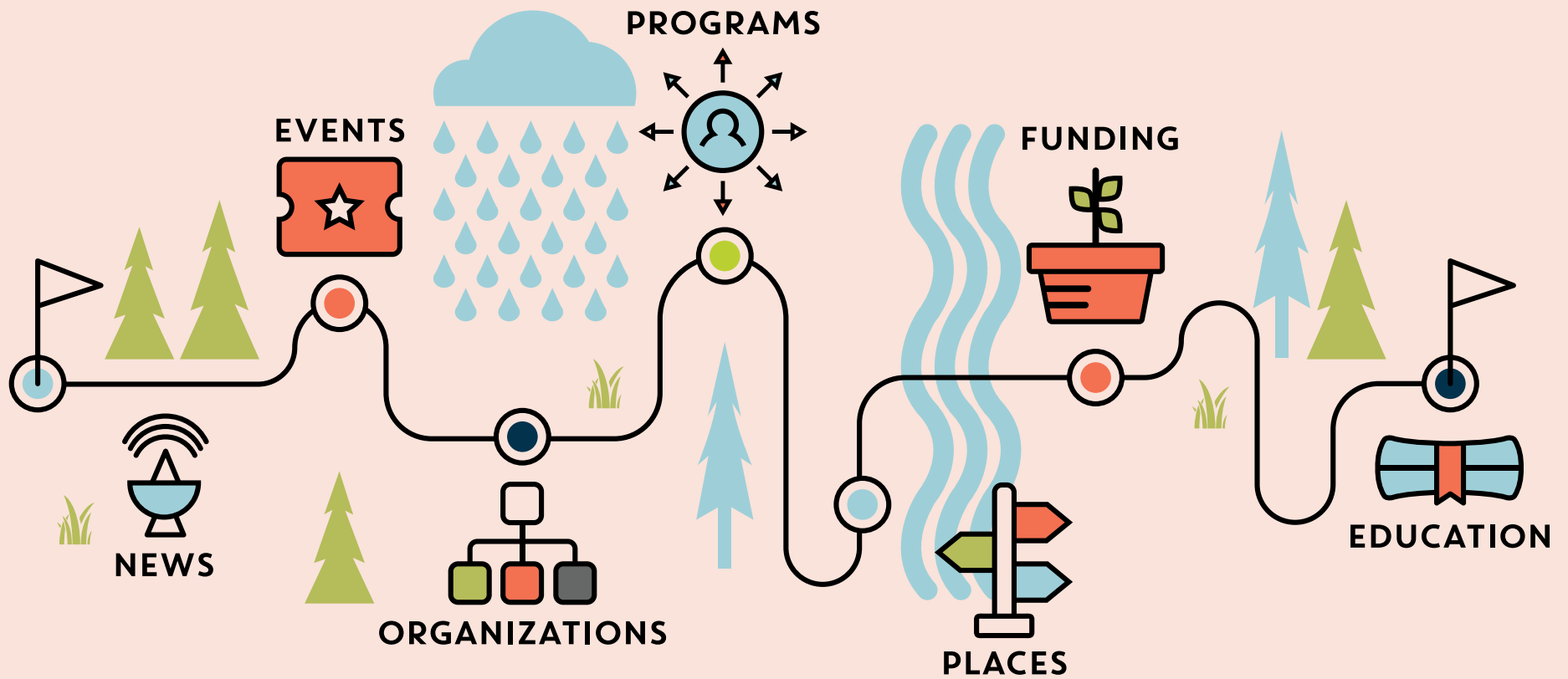
We're excited to bring you the Ecosystem Guide, a comprehensive guide to the local startup ecosystem in the greater Knoxville area.

Thanks to all of the people and organizations that make Knoxville a great place for entrepreneurs to live, work, and play. It takes a network of diverse, energetic, determined people to launch and grow new ventures.

Whether you've lived here your entire life, or you recently moved to the area, or you're visiting, we want you to know that our community is friendly, inclusive, and ready to help you grow both personally and professionally.

We've organized resources into 7 sections: News, Events, Organizations, Programs, Places, Funding, and Education. Each resource has a name, a clickable website address, a brief description, and a QR code that you can scan with your phone, which is especially useful if you're reading the print edition.

Since the startup ecosystem is constantly evolving, it's possible that we may have inadvertently missed a resource or two. Please send us your feedback at www.startupknox.com. Let's get started!



NEWS 6 EVENTS 8 ORGANIZATIONS 10 PROGRAMS 12 PLACES 14 FUNDING 16 EDUCATION 18



NEWS

Teknovation

www.teknovation.biz

Written by Tom Ballard and powered by PYA, Teknovation features stories of technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship in Knoxville, the Southeast, and nationwide. It's a must-read email delivered every weekday morning at 6:00am.



Knox.biz

www.knox.biz

Knox.biz is the business section of the Knoxville News Sentinel, part of the USA Today Network. It features business news from Knoxville and East Tennessee on its website and it also publishes a monthly print journal.



Inside of Knoxville

www.insideofknoxville.com

Knoxville Urban Guy covers real estate, new business openings, and cultural events happening in downtown Knoxville.



The Pitch

www.launchtn.org/media/newsletter

Powered by LaunchTN, the pitch delivers innovator profiles, 36|86 Entrepreneurship Festival scoops, events across the LaunchTN statewide network, featured openings from the LaunchTN job board, and resources for entrepreneurs.



Disrupt the Continuum

www.launchtn.org/podcast

A LaunchTN podcast that tells the stories of entrepreneurs, investors and ecosystem builders who challenge the status quo and carve their own paths. Tune in to find out how industry leaders got where they are today, and hear captivating stories of innovation that will motivate you to make your next move.



Startup Southerner

www.startupsoutherner.com

Startup Southerner is a media platform that explores the dynamics of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the South. From community-contributed posts to in-depth articles, it strives to make information about participating in the new economy accessible to everyone.



Hypepotamus

www.hypepotamus.com

Fueled by the same entrepreneurial spirit that drives those it covers, Hypepotamus generates awareness about the Southeast's innovation community.



Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

www.tnecd.com

Weekly newsletter with the biggest headlines in business across the state.



Made for Knoxville

<https://madeforknoxville.com>

500 entrepreneurs. 5000 connections. Unlimited opportunities. Made for Knoxville is a multimedia campaign by the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center to elevate awareness of Knoxville's diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem. Its aim is to connect and amplify the regional entrepreneurial community ranging from "solo-preneurs," makers, growth stage tech companies, investors, and established institutions.





EVENTS

Innov865 Week featuring Startup Day

www.innov865week.com

Innov865 Week celebrates Knoxville's entrepreneurial spirit by bringing together startups, entrepreneurs, investors, business leaders, students, and the East Tennessee community for a week of educational panels, pitch competitions, investor round-tables, and social events in September. The biggest event of the week is Startup Day in which startups pitch for prize money.



What's the Big Idea?

www.knoxec.com/what-we-do/programs/whats-the-big-idea

What's the Big Idea 48 Hour Launch is a weekend-long business start-up summit designed to inspire entrepreneurial action. The competition brings together bright minds to participate in an intensive period of prototyping, community building, planning, incubation, and launching. The culmination of the event is the pitch in which participating startups compete to win prize money.



Knoxville Technology Council Events

www.knoxtech.org

KTech hosts a monthly Lunch & Learn on topics ranging from cybersecurity to design thinking at the University of Tennessee Research Park at Cherokee Farm. KTech also hosts Networking Happy Hours at local craft breweries and an annual Technology Gala in the fall.



The Maker City Summit

www.themakercity.org/summit

The Maker City Summit is a day full of inspiration, practical know-how, and dialogue about growing a successful business doing what you love. The Summit features collaborative panel discussions, workshops, and keynote speakers addressing the opportunities and challenges of running a creative micro-business. The Maker City also hosts Maker Meetups throughout the year.



36|86 Entrepreneurship Festival

www.launchtn.org/3686fest

36|86 Entrepreneurship Festival in Nashville brings together innovators and difference-makers for two days of networking, programming, and entertainment on the latest in technology and entrepreneurship.



Pinnacle Business Awards

www.knoxvillechamber.com/pinnacle/

This black-tie affair is the business community's marquee social event and celebration, with more than 600 local business leaders and guests attending each year. The annual gala celebrates regional business excellence, honoring outstanding professionals in nine categories (Impact, Innovator, Small Business, Mid-Sized Business, Large Business, Minority-Owned Business, Woman-Owned Business, Young Entrepreneur, and Leadership) for their contributions to the greater Knoxville economy.



Innov865 Investor Series

www.innov865.com/events/innov865-investor-series

The Innov865 Alliance created the Innov865 Investor Series to give Knoxville's entrepreneurs more opportunities to hear from and interact with investors in our region.



CodeStock

www.codestock.org

CodeStock draws ~1,000 developers from the region and around the world to Knoxville for a two-day event of technology and information exchange. CodeStock was created to Educate, Inspire, and Connect the technology community.



Endeavor Summit

www.endeavorsummit.com

Knoxville's annual Endeavor Young Professionals Summit motivates the city's emerging leaders to engage in their community and take ownership of their professional growth. Compelling keynote speakers and dynamic discussions empower attendees to grow personally and professionally and invest in regional progress.



ETEC Friday Morning Meetings

www.eteconline.org/weekly-breakfast-meetings

Every Friday from 7:30-8:30a.m. the East Tennessee Economic Council, a membership organization, invites speakers to share interesting and pertinent information about the community, science, technology, special initiatives, and other fascinating topics. The meetings are held in the UT Outreach Center in Oak Ridge.



Let Her Speak Women's Summit

www.facebook.com/letherspeakus

The annual Summit brings together amazing women from the greater Knoxville area to share their stories and their vision for supporting women in business in the community.



Women in Entrepreneurship Coffee

www.knoxec.com/what-we-do/events/

This monthly coffee group is for women in any stage of business to meet, network, and support each other in their entrepreneurial adventures.



Knoxville Women in Technology Meetup

www.meetup.com/Knoxville-Women-in-Technology

A networking group for women in technology with a monthly dinner.



KnoxDevs Quarterly

www.knoxdevs.com

KnoxDevs Quarterly features Pecha Kucha style presentations by local thought leaders. Twice a month, KnoxDevs hosts its KnoxDevs Lunches and KnoxDevs Beers.



LambdaSquared

www.lambda-squared.com

LambdaSquared is a 2-day, single track, conference focusing on all things functional programming.



BSides Knoxville

www.bsidesknoxville.com

BSides Knoxville is a security conference in the spirit of Security BSides. While the focus of the event is on information security, there are presentations on various topics of interest to the infosec community.



Knoxville City Hackathon

www.knxhx.org

During 28 caffeine-filled, sleepless hours, members from the greater Knoxville community brainstorm, build, break, test, and deploy for the chance to win amazing prizes. There is also plenty of time to interact with professional mentors and engineers, meet recruiters, and listen to great tech talks and tutorials from sponsors.



VolHacks

www.volhacks.org

Students from the University of Tennessee build apps and compete for prizes. They also connect with mentors and listen to tech talks from local experts and sponsors.

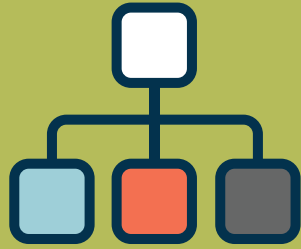


KnoxData

www.knoxdata.org

KnoxData is a data science meetup covering machine learning and advanced visualizations. It's open to anybody interested in the multidisciplinary field of data science.





ORGANIZATIONS

Knoxville Entrepreneur Center

www.knoxec.com

Knoxville Entrepreneur Center is a business accelerator located in Market Square built to serve as the front door for entrepreneurs in East Tennessee. It offers many programs which are featured in this guide.



Knoxville Technology Council

www.knoxtech.org

The Knoxville Technology Council (KTech) connects, develops, promotes, and advocates for the technology industry in the Greater Knoxville region. KTech unites the region's technology leaders and empowers businesses and entrepreneurs through networks, events, and resources.



Knoxville Chamber

www.knoxvillechamber.com

With more than 2,200 member businesses, the Knoxville Chamber serves as the collective, influential voice for the regional business community.



KnoxDevs

<https://knoxdevs.com/>

A nonprofit umbrella organization of groups that connect and support software developers in Knoxville, TN.



Innov865 Alliance

www.innov865.com

The Innov865 Alliance develops, supports, and promotes the Knoxville region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. It is a collaborative effort to celebrate and showcase Knoxville as a great place for entrepreneurs to start and grow businesses and increase access to capital. Innov865 Week is our signature event; however, the Alliance coordinates other activities throughout the year, including pitch competitions, educational opportunities, and social events.



UT Haslam College of Business, Anderson Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation

<https://haslam.utk.edu/anderson-center>

The Anderson Center's mission is to foster an entrepreneurial culture by developing student skills, providing experiential learning opportunities, conducting meaningful entrepreneurial research, and connecting students with mentors and resources that enable them to successfully start and grow new businesses.



University of Tennessee Research Foundation

utr.f.tennessee.edu

The University of Tennessee Research Foundation is a non-profit organization focused on technology transfer and licensing. It promotes the commercialization of UT intellectual property, encourages an entrepreneurial culture, contributes to state and regional economic development, and promotes research and education to benefit the people of Tennessee and beyond.



East Tennessee Economic Council

www.eteconline.org

ETEC is an independent, regional, non-profit, membership organization created in the early 1970s, dedicated to supporting the federal government's missions in East Tennessee, as well as seeking new ways to create prosperity, promote regional development, and explore opportunities for growth.



The Maker City

www.themakercity.org

Knoxville is The Maker City. The organization helps makers make an independent living doing what they love. The website features a directory of local makers and publishes maker profiles on its blog. Throughout the year, the group hosts social meet ups, educational workshops, and the annual The Maker City Summit.



LaunchTN

www.launchtn.org

LaunchTN is a public-private partnership with a vision to make Tennessee the most startup-friendly state in the nation. Its mission is to empower a high-functioning network of resources focused on core priorities that support Tennessee's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Partnering with Entrepreneur Centers in seven regions (including the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center), LaunchTN creates collaboration among entrepreneurs, the private sector, capital sources, institutions, and government to offer entrepreneurs what they need to succeed and stay in Tennessee to build companies and create jobs. Its website also includes a startup Jobs Board.



Knox Makers

www.knoxmakers.org

Knox Makers is a place for the Knoxville area's engineers, artists, hobbyists, innovators, educators and entrepreneurs to work and play. It is a technology and art collective dedicated to the promotion of creativity, enabled and informed by science. Its lectures, workshops, and outreach programs inspire and educate both members and the general public.



SCORE

greaterknoxville.score.org

The SCORE Greater Knoxville Chapter has over 50 experienced business men and women who volunteer their time to provide a free consulting service to East Tennessee small business owners.



Bunker Labs Knoxville

www.bunkerlabs.org/our-locations/knoxville/

Bunker Labs is a national network of veteran and mil-spouse entrepreneurs dedicated to helping the military community start their own business. The organization is committed to seeing that every entrepreneur in the military community has the network, tools, and resources they need to start their own business.



Knoxville Area Urban League

www.thekaul.org

The Knoxville Area Urban League, an affiliate of the National Urban League, is dedicated to empowering communities and changing lives. Its mission is to enable African Americans, other minority groups and the under-served to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights.



City of Knoxville Business Support

http://knoxvilletn.gov/government/city_departments_offices/business_support

The Office of Business Support helps the business community navigate city regulations, policies, and departments, making it easier to do business in Knoxville. It publishes a Business Resource Guide and convenes the Business Advisory Council.



Tennessee Small Business Development Center

www.tsbdc.org/pscc/

The Knoxville TSBDC provides small business start-up services, including business plan development, financial planning assistance, marketing plan development, sources of capital, & social media guidance.



Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO)

www.eoknoxville.com

EO Knoxville is a membership organization for local entrepreneurs that own companies with more than \$1 million per year in revenue. EO helps leading entrepreneurs learn and grow through peer-to-peer learning, once-in-a-lifetime experiences, and connections to experts.



HackUTK

www.hackutk.com

HackUTK is the resident computer security organization at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. It is an entirely student-run organization with regular meetings, capture the flag events, and industry networking opportunities.



Leadership Knoxville

www.leadershipknoxville.com

Leadership Knoxville's mission is to "build a stronger Knoxville by developing people and groups, leading to a greater community." LK delivers leadership programs, community workshops, and events designed to inspire, challenge and connect people at all levels of leadership development.



Blount Partnership

www.blountindustry.com

The Partnership is a cooperative effort between four of Blount county's key development organizations: Blount County Chamber of Commerce, Chamber Foundation, Economic Development Board and the Smoky Mountain Tourism Development Authority.



Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce

<https://www.oakridgechamber.org/>

The Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce is an organization of business, professional firms, institutions and business-minded individuals united in a common effort to enhance the economic climate of the Oak Ridge Community. Essentially, the Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce is the "voice of business" for the community.



The Business Law Clinic at UT College of Law

law.utk.edu/clinics/

In the Business Law Clinic, third-year law students, working under the close supervision of a full-time law professor with vast transactional experience, represent business clients including startups. Students in the clinic have the unique opportunity to acquire skills, training, and experience essential to working successfully with business clients and thus, to bridge the gap between law school and the practice of law. Meanwhile, startups get important legal counsel at a reduced rate.



Alliance for Better Nonprofits

<https://www.betternonprofits.org>

ABN offers the building blocks nonprofits and social enterprises need to be strong and sustainable through education and training, consulting services, relationship-building opportunities, access to resources, and collaboration in collective impact initiatives. It supports the work of 400+ organizations.

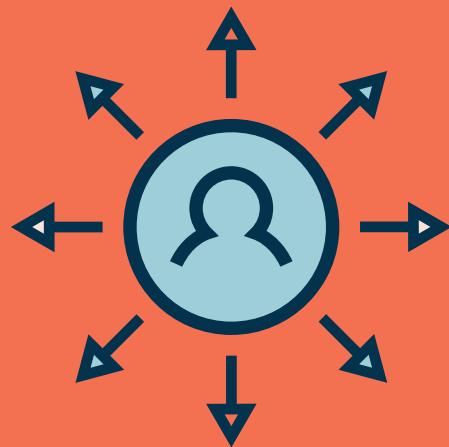


Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council

<https://tnadvancedenergy.com>

TAEBC champions advanced energy as a job creation and economic development strategy. It educates public officials and business leaders about Tennessee's advanced energy assets, establishes strategic partnerships to connect assets with opportunities, and informs policy that expands and strengthens the industry.





PROGRAMS

Liftoff

www.knoxec.com/what-we-do/programs/kec-lift-off/

LiftOff is for new and aspiring entrepreneurs. It introduces the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center, talks about upcoming events, and presents a panel of community business mentors. LiftOff is every other week on Tuesdays and alternates between evening and afternoon sessions.



Co.Starters

www.knoxec.com/what-we-do/programs/co-starters/

Co.Starters is a nine-week business development program that helps aspiring entrepreneurs put ideas into action, and turn a passion into a sustainable and thriving small business.



The Works

www.knoxec.com/what-we-do/programs/the-works/

The Works is an accelerator program for early-stage startup founders who have an amazing business idea and the skills to pull it off.



Etsy Craft Entrepreneurship

www.knoxec.com/what-we-do/programs/etsy/

In partnership with Etsy, a leader in e-commerce for creative entrepreneurs, the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center is offering free classes to help craft makers like you establish an online business to sell your products to a wider market and earn extra income.



Propel Mentor/Protégé Program

www.knoxvillechamber.com/business-resources/small-business-mentorship-services/propel-mentorprotege-program/

The Propel Mentor/Protégé Program is a program of the Knoxville Chamber that pairs small businesses owned by women, veterans, and minorities with an established, community business leader for one-on-one assistance tailored to their specific goals and challenges.



Innovation Corps at the University of Tennessee

haslam.utk.edu/anderson-center/i-corps

The Innovation Corps (I-Corps) was created in 2011 by the National Science Foundation (NSF), in an effort to support technology researchers as they move innovation beyond the lab and into the marketplace. UT is part of the I-Corps South Node which supports regional education, infrastructure, and research around innovation.



Virtual Entrepreneurship Program

www.launchtn.org/vep/

The LaunchTN Virtual Entrepreneurship Program is an adult education initiative for entrepreneurs and people interested in entrepreneurial careers in Tennessee. VEP101 and VEP102 are virtual, self-paced, six-month courses. Each curriculum teaches innovative entrepreneurship in more than 17 hours of video lessons, organized in modules.



Energy Mentor Network

www.tnadvancedenergy.com/energy-mentor-network/

The Energy Mentor Network is run by the Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council in partnership with Launch Tennessee. Its goal is to foster the growth of Tennessee advanced energy technologies and startups by connecting entrepreneurs with mentors and industry specific expertise.



Life Science Network

www.lifesciencetn.org/resources/mentornetwork/

The Life Science Network is run by Life Science Tennessee in partnership with LaunchTN. It is a systematic mentoring program that helps develop quality startups so that they are prepared to make pitches for investment.



Innovation Crossroads

innovationcrossroads.ornl.gov

Oak Ridge National Laboratory, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy and the Tennessee Valley Authority, started the Innovation Crossroads program to help entrepreneurs create the next generation of clean energy companies. At Innovation Crossroads, ORNL will match innovators with technology leaders, experienced mentors, and business and investment networks that can accelerate the transition of their world-changing ideas to the marketplace. Selected companies receive \$200,000 R&D funding, \$90,000 personal living stipend, and access to world-class lab facilities, mentorship, and talent.



Oak Ridge National Laboratory Technology Transfer

www.ornl.gov/technology-transfer

The Technology Transfer program offers a full range of partnering agreements and licensing opportunities to provide industry with access to critical research and development capabilities and increase ORNL researchers' awareness of technical challenges in industry.



Techstars Industries of the Future Accelerator

<https://www.techstars.com/accelerators/industries-of-the-future>

The program is committed to supporting and advancing world-class startups focused on emerging technologies across industries including artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, quantum information science, 5G/advanced wireless technology, biotechnology, and clean energy technology.



Inflection.Point

<http://www.knoxec.com>

Designed to help area companies accelerate their revenue growth, the 13-week program includes an intensive planning process, monthly and quarterly sessions with mentors and subject matter experts, and an updated "Local Executive Access Program" (LEAP). Programming for founders is focused on devising customized growth plans for the participating companies with an emphasis on topics like strategy, talent, cash, operations, and sales.



AgTech Mentor Network

<https://knoxec.com/agtech-mentor-network/>

The goal of the network is to create a meaningful feedback loop for startups engaging industry veterans, startup experts, and farmers that will lead to additional investment and create more viable companies in Tennessee.



Life Science Network

<https://www.lifesciencetn.org/resources/mentornetwork/>

The Life Science Network is a systematic mentoring program that continues to make a positive impact on the entrepreneurial community in our industry. The purpose of the program is to develop quality startups so they are prepared to make pitches for investment.



Automotive & Mobility Mentor Network

<https://tennsmart.org/automotive-mobility-mentor-network/>

The goal of the Automotive & Mobility Mentor Network is to grow the automotive, transportation, and mobility sector in Tennessee by mentoring entrepreneurs who are bringing new technologies and solutions to the market.

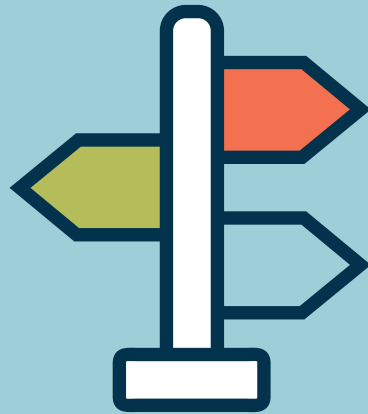


BrandCamp

<https://knoxec.com/what-we-do/programs/brandcamp-2/>

BrandCamp by the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center is a six-week, in depth program led by marketing and branding experts in the advertising agency industry. BrandCamp leads local Knoxville companies through a series of workshops on brand planning, market research, customer discovery, persona-based messaging, and channel planning.





PLACES

CoWorking Knoxville

www.coworkingknoxville.com

CWK offers coworking office space and community programming centrally located in Bearden. Amenities include fast internet, free parking, free coffee, free printing, conference rooms, and flexible membership options.



UpStart Knoxville

www.facebook.com/upstartknox

Located in Cedar Bluff, UpStart provides community for independent Knoxville professionals seeking to engage in the lively exchange of ideas, skills, and resources for greater business development.



Ts117

www.ts117coworking.com

Ts117 is a new 30,000 sq. ft. coworking space located between Y-12 and ORNL at 701 Scarboro Road. Ts117 provides modern, interactive office space for individuals and entrepreneurs as well as small and large businesses.



Aught

www.aughtentrepreneurs.com

A coworking space and cultivated community for female entrepreneurs. Aught hosts business and personal development programs, networking opportunities, and connects entrepreneurs to local resources. It is by women, for women, and supports women in entrepreneurship.



AlmaDiem

www.almadiem.com

AlmaDiem Office and Salon Suites provides office space for positive-minded business owners in a creative, supportive, and energetic environment in the Cedar Bluff area.



Spark Innovation Center at UT Research Park

<https://www.tnresearchpark.org/spark/>

Spark Innovation Center provides high tech startups with top-quality laboratory space, business model development, and connections to investors and top researchers at UT and ORNL. A new Cleantech Accelerator is coming to Spark in 2022 under a U.S. Department of Energy grant to the Midwest Regional Innovation Partnership. Led by the Clean Energy Trust, mHub (Chicago), Centrepolis (Detroit) and Spark are MRIP partners, joined by DOE's Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Argonne National Laboratory and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory as affiliates.



Technology Cooperative

www.techco.org

The Technology Cooperative provides collaborative workspace for members willing to provide free technical learning activities, consultation, and mentoring for students. Programming focuses on the basics of computer programming, 2D and 3D game development, mobile application development, console development, electronics and robotics, and web technologies.



Fairview Technology Center

www.knoxdevelopment.org/business-incubator

Fairview Technology Center's mission is to support the creation and success of growth-based businesses by providing an affordable work environment maximizing their limited start-up capital. By offering quality office and laboratory space, Fairview makes it possible to focus limited capital on research and development and future production of services and goods.



Anderson Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation Business Accelerator

haslam.utk.edu/anderson-center/business-accelerator

The ACEI Business Accelerator is designed to prepare student companies for investment. Participants are supported through the program by entrepreneurs in residence, along with Anderson Center faculty, who provide coaching and mentorship. The program provides students with coworking space and access to a rich network of entrepreneurial resources.



University of Tennessee Research Foundation Business Incubator

<https://utrf.tennessee.edu/business-incubator/>

UTRF Business Incubator offers office space for technology companies affiliated with UT. Ideally, the company would be based on UT intellectual property, or a research relationship is in place or could be established between the company and the university to generate new intellectual property.



The Sky City Entrepreneurial Center

www.skycityinitiative.com

The Sky City Entrepreneurial Center is dedicated to helping small business owners succeed and new businesses launch in Blount County. Located in downtown Maryville, Sky City is at the heart of our region's growth with easy access to all the industry of Blount County as well as Knoxville and Sevier County. Sky City is more than just affordable modern office space, it is the hub of entrepreneurship in our community.



University of Tennessee Research Park at Cherokee Farm

www.tnresearchpark.org

The University of Tennessee Research Park at Cherokee Farm is located just across the Tennessee River from UT's flagship campus in Knoxville. It offers an ideal location for companies and entrepreneurs to collaborate with the talent at UT and provides connections to foster success.



eSpaces

www.espaces.com

e|spaces offers work and meeting space for entrepreneurs, teams and companies from shared coworking space to meeting rooms to private office space.





FUNDING

Three Roots Capital

www.3rootscapital.org

Three Roots Capital is an innovative investment capital company that goes well beyond providing financing. It helps companies prepare to raise capital, assists them in operating more productively and efficiently, and connects them to large networks of investors and service providers. A 501(c)3 and a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), Three Roots was started in response to the need for more investment capital in central and southern Appalachia and in the broader southeast region of the United States.



The Lighthouse Fund

www.lhfknox.com

The Lighthouse Fund is a committed capital, early stage fund formed by leading entrepreneurs and investors in the East Tennessee region. The fund invests in companies, mentors management teams, and utilizes its resources to help companies achieve great outcomes.



Greater Sum Ventures

www.greatersumventures.com

GSV is an entrepreneurial growth equity firm that invests in lower-middle market tech-enabled services companies. GSV has a track record of being a long-term equity investor that adds exceptional value to each portfolio company.



MollenhourGross

www.mollenhourgross.com

MollenhourGross thinks and invests with a long future in mind. The firm invests in and relies on exceptional people to lead, manage, and grow its portfolio companies.



The JumpFund

www.thejumpfund.com

The JumpFund tagline is Women Investing in Women. Its portfolio companies share two things in common – all are led by aspirational women entrepreneurs and all are founded in the Southeast.



TennesSeed Fund

www.tennesseedfund.com

The TennesSeed Fund, an evergreen, seed-stage, proof of concept venture capital fund invests in companies throughout Tennessee. The Fund is managed by TennesSeed Partners, which is a collaboration of Three Roots Capital, Meritus Capital, and Innova Memphis.



Angel Capital Group

www.linkedin.com/company/angel-capital-group/about/

ACG is a network of angel investors that know local and regional startups and bring first-hand knowledge and expertise. ACG connects locally-selected ventures with nationally-selected funds. Its members work together sharing connections and managing risk.



The Angel Roundtable

www.theangelroundtable.com

The Angel Roundtable is a select network of successful entrepreneurs, investors and other community and business leaders in the Appalachian Highlands region who provide investment capital, strategic advice, and mentoring to late seed and early stage companies to help them achieve market leadership.



Queen City Angels

www.qca.com

QCA is based in Cincinnati and actively looks to invest in Knoxville startups. QCA works to improve entrepreneurs' chances of success by finding capital to scale businesses, mentoring founders and their teams, and educating and providing experienced counsel.



Veteran Ventures Capital

www.veteranventures.us

Veteran Ventures Capital invests in companies that have military veteran leadership because it recognizes the value of their experience, training, and character. VVC fuses resources, mentoring, and years of fiscal and operational experience into an investment fund and consulting firm for veteran-led ventures.



SBIR/STTR Matching Fund

www.launchtn.org/entrepreneur-programs/sbir-sttr-matching-fund/

The SBIR/STTR Matching Fund program is a strategic initiative to advance the commercialization of innovations across the state. Developed and administered by LaunchTN, the program is funded for FY20 at \$3 million through the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development.



Innovation Capital Continuum

www.launchtn.org/equity/initiatives/

The Innovation Capital Continuum includes three equity initiatives: the Impact Fund, the Blended Capital Fund, and the Follow-on Fund. The Impact Fund focuses on Tennessee-based seed-stage ventures in the areas of agriculture, healthcare, sustainability, education, clean energy, financial inclusion, and more. The Blended Capital Fund (BCF) provides a customized investment solution for otherwise under-resourced early-stage companies. The Follow-on Fund (FoF) provides capital to companies in which LaunchTN already holds an equity position.



Commercialization Microgrants

www.launchtn.org/microgrants/

The LaunchTN Commercialization Microgrants program is available to qualifying Tennessee-based early-stage companies that are developing technology with a plan for advancing it into the marketplace.



Graves Business Plan Competition

haslam.utk.edu/anderson-center/graves-competition

The Graves Business Plan Competition offers University of Tennessee, Knoxville students enrolled in undergraduate and master's degree programs the opportunity to win start-up capital for an original business idea. Prizes are awarded for first, second, and third place in two business categories: growth and lifestyle.



Boyd Venture Challenge

haslam.utk.edu/anderson-center/boyd-venture

The Boyd Venture Challenge is a seed-fund grant competition for University of Tennessee, Knoxville student-owned companies that is conducted annually during the spring semester. Companies are awarded up to \$20,000 in startup capital. Funds may be awarded to one company or split among several companies.



VolCourt

haslam.utk.edu/anderson-center/vol-court

Vol Court is a six-week entrepreneurial speaker series that culminates in a pitch competition. Participants put what they've learned into practice by pitching their business ideas to a panel of successful entrepreneurs for a chance to win \$1,500, office space in the University of Tennessee Research Foundation Business Incubator, and valuable professional services.



The Development Corporation of Knox County

www.knoxdevelopment.org

The principal role of TDC is to ensure the availability of suitable sites within Knox County for the recruitment of new companies and the retention of existing companies that will result in direct and measurable increases in quality jobs.

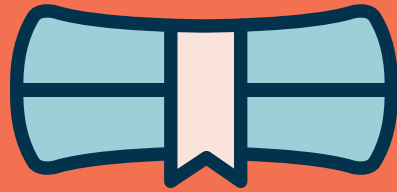


Ballard Innovation Award

<https://www.pyapc.com/insights/ballardinnovationaward/>

The Ballard Innovation Award competition is open to any early-stage company in the East Tennessee area that has established a "proof of concept" with accompanying revenue. The award is named in honor of Tom Ballard, PYA's Chief Alliance Officer and well-respected member of the East Tennessee entrepreneurial community. First place wins a \$50,000 package of capital and services.





EDUCATION

University of Tennessee

www.utk.edu

Founded in 1794 as the first public university chartered west of the Appalachian Divide, UT Knoxville serves the state by educating its citizens, enhancing its culture, and making a difference in people's lives through research and service. The Department of Management and Entrepreneurship at the Haslam College of Business offers several tracks including a degree in management with a concentration in entrepreneurship and an interdisciplinary entrepreneurship minor.



Anderson Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation

haslam.utk.edu/anderson-center

The Anderson Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at UT Knoxville is a university-based resource dedicated to building strong entrepreneurial ecosystems across Tennessee and the region. ACEI fosters an entrepreneurial culture by developing student skills, providing experiential learning opportunities, conducting meaningful entrepreneurial research, and connecting students with mentors and resources that enable them to successfully start and grow new businesses.



Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization

utk.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/ceo

UT Knoxville CEO (Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization) is a club for student entrepreneurs to gather and discuss business ideas, meet local successful business owners, learn about what it takes to be an entrepreneur and to feel supported by their community.



Consortium for Social Enterprise Effectiveness

haslam.utk.edu/csee

The Consortium for Social Enterprise Effectiveness (CSEE) is a 10-month certificate program that strengthens social mission organizations and those who lead them.



Pellissippi State Community College

www.pstcc.edu

Pellissippi State Community College provides a transformative environment fostering the academic, social, economic, and cultural enrichment of the individual and the community. It is committed to success in workforce training and certificate and degree programs. It is a signatory of The National Association of Community College Entrepreneurship pledge.



Maryville College

www.maryvillecollege.edu

Known for offering its students a rigorous and highly personal experience, Maryville College is a nationally ranked institution of higher learning that successfully joins the liberal arts and professional preparation. It is a founding partner of the Sky City Initiative and Entrepreneurial Center.



Tennessee College of Applied Technology

www.tcatknoxville.edu



The Tennessee College of Applied Technology in Knoxville serves as the premier supplier of workforce development throughout the State of Tennessee. TCAT provides competency-based training through traditional and distance learning instruction methods that qualify completers for employment and job advancement.

Roane State Community College

<https://www.roanestate.edu>



Roane State Community College has nine locations across East Tennessee – the Roane County flagship campus; an Oak Ridge campus; campuses in Campbell, Cumberland, Fentress, Loudon, Morgan and Scott counties; and a center for health science education in West Knoxville. It is also home to a Tennessee Small Business Development Center and the Cumberland Business Incubator.

Duncan School of Law at Lincoln Memorial University

<https://www.lmunet.edu/duncan-school-of-law/index.php>



Located in the heart of downtown Knoxville, Tennessee, LMU Law is committed to producing practice-ready graduates who benefit from an innovative curriculum and supportive learning environment.

This guide was made possible by:

Brandon Bruce

Brandon is chair of the **Knoxville Entrepreneur Center**, co-founder of the **Knoxville Technology Council**, chair of **Junior Achievement**, chair of **The Muse Knoxville**, member of the **Innov865 Alliance**, and board member at **UT Research Park at Cherokee Farm**, the **American Museum of Science and Energy**, and **Leadership Knoxville**. He is co-founder of **Uncat** and was previously co-founder and COO of **Cirrus Insight** which was #41 on the Inc. 500 in 2016. Brandon set a Guinness World Record with Knox County Schools and Knox Education Foundation for the largest student coding lesson. Brandon interviews entrepreneurs on the **Startup Knox Podcast**.

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John Bruck

John is a Senior Advisor to the **Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Innovation Crossroads** program and the **University of Tennessee Research Park's Spark Innovation Center**. He is a mentor and EIR in the **Tennessee Energy Mentor Network** and an angel investor with **Queen City Angels** in Cincinnati. John is also an advisor and board member for several early-stage companies including **Nth Cycle** and **Real Good Kitchen**. From 1988 to 2013, John was the Founder, Chairman, and President of BHE Environmental which was #98 on the Inc. 500 list in 1993, and its real estate affiliate, BHE Properties.

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