

Pritzker Administration Releases More Than \$37 Million In Funding For Five Innovation Hubs Including SIUE

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SPRINGFIELD - Governor JB Pritzker announced today the release of \$37.3 million to launch facilities for five hubs of the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN), created to accelerate job creation and economic growth through groundbreaking education, research, and discovery. The funding is made possible by the bipartisan Rebuild Illinois

Capital program, with state investments matched dollar for dollar through university, private, and philanthropic funding sources.

“Rebuild Illinois isn’t just about modernizing our roads and bridges—it’s about building a future for generations to come that is economically prosperous with the promise of opportunity at every turn,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “That’s why we are distributing more than \$37 million to first-rate educational institutions throughout our state to create facilities that will prepare our students for the jobs of today and tomorrow. From researching water resources at NIU’s Northern Illinois Center for Community Sustainability to addressing food deserts and agricultural challenges at SIUC’s Illinois Food, Entrepreneurship, Research, and Manufacturing hub, young Illinoisans will have the opportunity to shape our future by coming up with cutting-edge solutions to our 21st century problems—all while furthering our state’s status as a national hub for all things research and innovation.”

“We can come together to build the pathways that will uplift young people and communities across Illinois and pave the way to a bright future,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “This funding will ensure our institutions of higher education that already make a tremendous impact have the tools to prepare the next generation, so they may access economic opportunities and be part of the innovation that drives Illinois forward.”

Funding will support the construction and renovation of facilities at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), Northern Illinois University (NIU), Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) and the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS). The Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) will oversee the projects’ design and construction in accordance with the protocol for state-appropriated projects.

The IIN operates as a network of networks, connecting entities across Illinois to drive inclusive and integrated research, innovation, and economic development. Hubs utilize a combination of research, public-private partnerships, entrepreneurship, and workforce training programs to spur inclusive economic development in their region and across the state.

IIN will create or fill 48,000 new-economy jobs over the decade following completion of construction, according to an economic impact study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group. In all, the initiatives are expected to have an economic impact of \$19 billion over the 10 years following construction, a return of nearly 40 times the original state investment.

“The Capital Development Board is eager to provide construction for several of Illinois’ premier universities,” said Capital Development Board Executive Director, Jim Underwood. “Investing in higher education ensures we are providing new facilities and campus upgrades that create an elevated learning experience for Illinois students.

The released funding is the latest installment from \$500 million in state capital funds approved by Governor Pritzker and the legislature to develop the statewide education and innovation network, which is led by the University of Illinois System. The state contribution is complemented by more than \$500 million in additional capital and programmatic funding from the U of I System’s Discovery Partners Institute and IIN, pushing the total investment over the life of the initiative beyond the \$1 billion mark.

“Through our partnership with the state of Illinois and Gov. Pritzker, we are seeing the Illinois Innovation Network fulfill its promise of turning the academic and research excellence found at all of the state’s public universities into collaborations that solve real-world challenges and create next-generation innovation and jobs all across Illinois,” University of Illinois System President Tim Killeen said. “This investment by the state will continue to pay dividends for the people of Illinois for decades to come.”

NEIU will create the Business Growth and Innovation Center by using \$2.5 million in state funding to renovate the Carruthers Center and the Parking Facility. The center will provide economic development opportunities to underrepresented and underserved communities, including discovery and commercialization of research, entrepreneurship and workforce development.

In DeKalb, NIU will launch the Northern Illinois Center for Community Sustainability to create new knowledge, inform policymaking and inspire action related to food systems innovation, water resources and environmental change. The state is providing \$15 million to build the 30,000-square-foot facility on the university’s west campus.

At SIUC, the university will use \$2.5 million in state funds to renovate the McLafferty Annex and launch the Illinois Food, Entrepreneurship, Research, and Manufacturing (iFERM) hub. The renovations will include a teaching kitchen and sensory lab, fermented dairy facility and fermented beverage facility for the hub that will solve food /nutrition, agriculture, and health challenges through transdisciplinary research, innovation, and education while providing the infrastructure for development of Illinois agriculture value-added products.

SIUE will use \$2.3 million in state funds to renovate spaces in the Technology and Management Center, and the Biotechnology Laboratory Incubator to launch the Center for Sustainable Communities and Entrepreneurship (CSCE). The center will harness

multiple university assets to convert discovery into economic opportunity while addressing research, workforce and economic development needs in Metro-East Illinois.

UIS will use \$15 million in state funds to purchase and renovate the former Illinois Sheriffs Association building in downtown Springfield. The purchase was finalized on Nov. 18 and design work on the renovation will begin soon. The facility will house the UIS Innovation Center, which will include the Innovate Springfield incubator, as well as activities and programs that support the development of evidence-based, impact-driven programs aimed at advancing the social and economic welfare of the region.