

ion

The Ion and Microsoft Expand Collaboration

To The Ion Community,

We have more good news! On the heels of sharing our first tenant and first program partner announcement, I am excited to announce that we have solidified an expanded partnership with Microsoft! As a founding partner of [The Ion Smart and Resilient Cities Accelerator](#), Microsoft already works closely with The Ion. By expanding its partnership, Microsoft broadens the scope of its work with The Ion, leveraging The Ion's existing virtual programming, events, and outreach. The Ion's broadened collaboration with Microsoft begins immediately, occurring in tandem with and building on Microsoft's "[Accelerate](#)" initiative with the City of Houston. This initiative accelerates innovation in big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and the internet of things, all critical drivers in the digital economy of today and tomorrow.

Microsoft's amplified investment enables The Ion to offer a broader range of events, workshops, symposia, and programs that support entrepreneurship, workforce development, data science, and resilient economic growth for community members, corporations with local employees, startups and social innovators, and nonprofit organizations. Microsoft's partnership with The Ion will anchor a robust range of innovation-driven STEAM programming, business innovation events, and technology upskilling programs to build a dynamic workforce of the future with local talent.

In addition to continuing to support The Ion Smart and Resilient Cities Accelerator, Microsoft will actively participate in The Ion's currently offered programming and events, which include pitch days, community demo days, and business roundtable discussions. The Accelerator works with selected startups as they develop and deploy technology that connects ideas, people, and communities in Houston. To date, the Accelerator has launched two cohorts, worked with 13 companies, and will be launching its Cohort 3 application soon!

Expanding Microsoft's expertise and involvement at The Ion, along with partners [such as Chevron](#), further exemplifies the global business and technology community's commitment to accelerating innovation and creating workforce development opportunities in Houston.

Creating opportunities, however, is not enough. From these opportunities, The Ion will create the pathways and programs that enable individuals to accelerate innovation no matter where their journeys take them. The Ion will continue to leverage these partnerships, as well as its community partnerships and academic partnerships, to activate and develop the talent pipeline and strengthen our workforce to advance and sustain resilient economic growth in Houston.

We are delighted to be expanding our collaboration with Microsoft. We look forward to activating and accelerating the innovation ecosystem in Houston and showcasing our programs not just locally, but globally as well!

Regards,

Jan E. Odegard
Interim Executive Director
The Ion