

Media contact:
Sarah Langer
(919) 513-2800
smlanger@ncsu.edu

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**IEI ANNOUNCES “InnovateNC” PROJECT
RFP released today; applications due by August 17, 2015**

RALEIGH, NC --The Institute for Emerging Issues at NC State University today announced selection criteria for *InnovateNC*, a “cross-city learning collaborative” that will boost the state’s overall innovation strength. The two-year initiative will help up to five NC communities develop and expand their local innovation economies.

“*InnovateNC* is a program designed to help the selected North Carolina communities make substantial, sustainable progress in developing their local innovation-focused economies,” said IEI director Anita Brown-Graham. “Expanding innovation capacity is critical to future economic strength.”

Because the initiative aims to expand North Carolina’s overall innovation strength, the project focuses on communities outside the Triangle and Charlotte, regions that already have thriving innovation assets. Nearly two-thirds of the state’s current high-tech jobs are located in Wake, Durham or Mecklenburg Counties, and cities in those counties are not eligible to apply.

InnovateNC partners include NC State University's Institute for Emerging Issues; Forward Impact; the UNC System; Duke University’s Sanford School of Public Policy; UNC Chapel Hill's Kenan Institute for Private Enterprise; RTI International; UNC-TV; the Council for Entrepreneurial Development; the Research Triangle Foundation; and the NC Board of Science, Technology & Innovation. The project launch is supported by a generous Kenan Funds grant.

Submissions will be evaluated on strength of current efforts, organizational capacity, partners, and ability to financially invest in these efforts. Applications are available [here](#). Deadline for submission is August 17, 2015. Participating communities will be announced on September 4, 2015.

Background on IEI: Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) connects people and resources from all sectors and areas of North Carolina in an effort to ensure our state’s future economic competitiveness. For more information on IEI’s work, visit www.emergingissues.org.

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