



# iSTART

## Case for Support

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### What is iStart?

iStart is a Tulsa based non-profit 501(c)(3) organization focused on the growth of Oklahoma's economic development and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

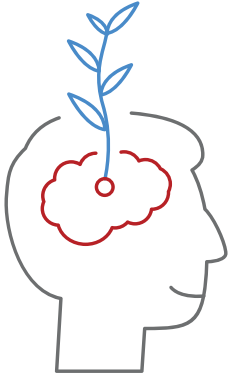
iStart provides an innovative business accelerator & incubator program for local entrepreneurs. The program provides a core curriculum, personalized mentoring from Inc. 500 founders and lean startup methodology. They also provide services to Fortune 1000 companies who are looking to start their own launch pad for start-up acceleration. Along with a reduced fee for service for local small businesses who are seeking temporary business consulting services. iStart's purpose is to support all stages of entrepreneurship while guiding highly scalable business ideas through our accelerator program and training model.

We provide all program participants with a level of service that surpasses their highest expectations. Our organization will be the ideal business partner for entrepreneurs who wish to start and grow their new company. We are also a perfect fit for companies looking to launch their own business accelerators. Through our efforts, we will become the drivers of economic growth in the Tulsa community.

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*“Supporting the Next Great Entrepreneurs”*

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## Founder's Story

iStart's founder is a serial entrepreneur who has taken two (2) companies to the Inc. 500 lists. With a passion for supporting startups and new entrepreneurs, iStart's business accelerator concept started as a for-profit business model. He started the original business accelerator within a for-profit model but quickly realized there was a problem in the market that couldn't be resolved within the current model.

Many startups around Tulsa were searching for a program that can accelerate growth and provide venture capital guidance and established small businesses or startup lifestyle businesses were requesting consulting services, but since they were not highly scalable startups, they didn't fit within the for-profit model.

iStart's founder believes that all entrepreneurs should have access to the resources they need to succeed. Thus, iStart was created to provide mentorships and resources all stages of entrepreneurship, ranging from highly scalable tech startups that can have a large impact on economic development, to lifestyle business like a roofing company who can provide local sustainable employment opportunities. All facets of iStart's Mission will help develop the next generation of Tulsa entrepreneurs and drive local economic development.

## Why we are different

Many business incubators in Oklahoma emphasize office space (we like to say "a desk and some coffee") while providing some one-size-fits-all seminar learning opportunities. iStart's emphasis is on providing effective acceleration through a core startup curriculum and personal mentorship, that will help determine necessary steps for rapid growth, with accountability and support throughout the business relationship. iStart uses a lean business plan/MVP (minimum viable product) model to rapidly scale early-stage, growth-driven companies in Oklahoma.

Beyond empowering entrepreneurs in the larger community, iStart's program to create internal business accelerators embedded in local companies is unlike any program in the nation. It is designed to empower intrapreneurship and drive innovation and economic growth within some of Oklahoma's most successful companies. iStart has branded this corporate training program as the iStart collective.



## Why do entrepreneurs need our help?

Entrepreneurs are the key to transforming Oklahoma's economy. Start-ups have already had a significant impact on Oklahoma's economy. In 2018, small businesses generated 4.8 billion dollars in income from international trade alone. There are 347,165 small businesses employing 712,797 people in Oklahoma (57% of the workforce), which is ranked as the fifth-best state to start a small business in but also ranks near the bottom for venture capital funding.

Everyone in Oklahoma has a stake in the success of small businesses and supporting the state's entrepreneurs can have a transformative impact on families and communities. Entrepreneurs come in all shapes, colors, classes, and sizes. They represent the best of Oklahoma, from the small-town farmers to the local restaurant owners to plumbers and electricians all the way to the manufacturers, engineers, tech experts and doctors. Everyone is impacted by the success of Oklahoma's start-ups.

iStart was developed to help entrepreneurs and businesses launch new ideas. Through its programs, iStart will become a driver of economic growth in the state.

## Business Accelerator & Incubator

At the core of iStart programming is a robust business accelerator. iStart's accelerator begins with 1-on-1 personalized mentoring with mentors who have started companies from the ground floor and grown them to Inc. 500 companies. iStart's mentors work with entrepreneurs to set weekly goals and milestones with a focus on developing a Lean Business Plan and a Minimal Viable Product to quickly accelerate to sustainable revenue generation.

Additionally, the program provides a core curriculum with topics ranging from marketing tips & tricks, financial planning, the lean startup model, HR/accounting, and funding. There are also workshops and networking opportunities where entrepreneurs in the cohort and community business leaders can make connections, discuss ideas, collaborate and solve problems. Having the chance to form relationships and be mentored by Tulsa's best will help new entrepreneurs create networks and achieve success.

After launching their business, entrepreneurs will receive a \$2,500 grant for digital marketing services from iStart's marketing partners. These entrepreneurs turned small business owners will then continue to work with their mentors and network to access funding opportunities if needed and continue to scale their businesses.



## iStart Collective

The most successful companies in America from Amazon to Google are transforming traditional models of entrepreneurship by providing internal idea accelerators & incubators that develop ideas and drive innovation within their companies.

iStart is the first nonprofit organization in the nation that will consult with Oklahoma's most successful companies to create iStart modeled accelerators embedded within their company. iStart will provide companies with the custom support, core curriculum, framework, and training needed to start their own successful business accelerator.

With these embedded accelerators, successful companies can utilize their existing resources to encourage the development of ideas, create new products and start new businesses all while driving economic growth for their employees, their company, and their communities.



## Business Consulting

Entrepreneurs and large companies are not the only Oklahomans who can benefit from iStart's business growth experience. There are thousands of small business owners from landscapers to dentists who need help keeping and growing their businesses.

These owners of established small businesses often face hurdles and challenges and have nowhere to turn due to costly consulting fees. Supporting successful businesses in Oklahoma is what iStart is all about. iStart provides small business consulting services at highly discounted rates to address a range of issues including: Management & strategy, technology, digital and traditional marketing, legal, HR and accounting.



### iStart's impact

Building a startup is not an easy task. Personalized mentorships and unique resources are essential for the economic development of Oklahoma. iStart's unique program was curated to become a reliable source for Oklahoma entrepreneurs. With the ability to either guide an entrepreneur from an idea to their first dollar of revenue, train a corporation that is ready to invest in Oklahoma, or offer pinpoint business consulting, this program is set to have a huge impact.

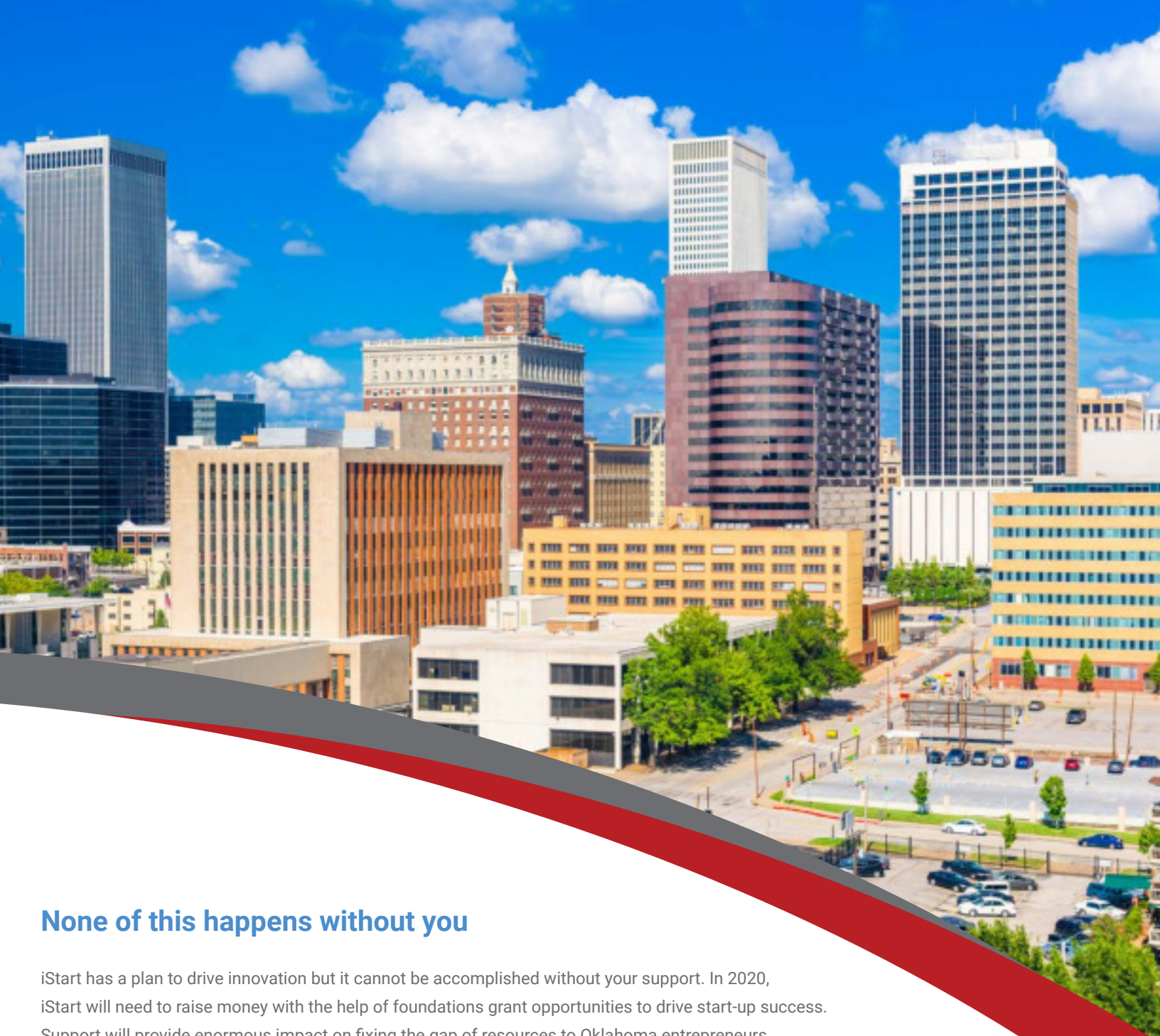
The micro-level goal is to assist new businesses to get started and gain footing. The macro-level goal is to contribute to economic growth in Tulsa and Oklahoma.

*In 2020, iStart's goal is to incubate 48 companies that will create 200 jobs and generate 10 million dollars in salaries alone, by helping:*

-  48 entrepreneurs establish revenue generating businesses
-  Create 4.6 new jobs per business on average
-  86% of participants reach business sustainability
-  Two local Fortune 1000 companies establish embedded business accelerators
-  40-60 established small businesses through business consulting services

*To ensure these milestones are achieved, iStart will measure:*

-  The number of entrepreneurs/businesses in each cohort
-  The time spent in incubation before reaching revenue generation
-  Total number of employees added within each business in the cohort
-  Total number of embedded accelerators
-  Total Earned Equity Income from successful businesses



## None of this happens without you

iStart has a plan to drive innovation but it cannot be accomplished without your support. In 2020, iStart will need to raise money with the help of foundations grant opportunities to drive start-up success. Support will provide enormous impact on fixing the gap of resources to Oklahoma entrepreneurs. The provided 5-year plan demonstrates sustainability and with your early support, iStart can become almost completely self-sustainable and cover 85% of its operational expenses with earned revenue by 2024. By investing in iStart today you can ensure that entrepreneurs and small businesses across Oklahoma have the resources they need to transform the economic landscape for generations to come.

*“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”*

Margaret J. Wheatley