

ICBA Pledges Multi-Year Commitment to Community Bank Innovation

Partnership with The Venture Center extended through 2024

Washington, D.C. (June 8, 2020)—The Independent Community Bankers of America® (ICBA) today announced an additional three-year commitment to its ICBA ThinkTECH Accelerator program as part of a comprehensive mission-driven innovation strategy for the highly-complex and evolving markets in which community banks operate. [Launched in 2018](#), in partnership with The Venture Center and the state of Arkansas, the ICBA ThinkTECH Accelerator brings community banks and fintechs together to develop new technologies specifically for community banks and the customers they serve.

“Because of its highly collaborative nature and direct access to community banking expertise, the ICBA ThinkTECH Accelerator has developed a reputation within the fintech community as one of the best for entrepreneurs looking to enter the community banking industry,” ICBA Senior Executive Vice President of Community Bank Solutions Kevin Tweddle said. “This three- year commitment to the program cements ICBA’s mission to create and promote an environment where community banks flourish.”

The program has also developed a strong reputation with banking regulators as innovation has become a key focus of the financial services landscape.

“Forums like the ICBA ThinkTECH Accelerator program are pivotal in fostering a creative and thoughtful approach to innovation,” said Beth Knickerbocker, chief innovation officer at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. “We look forward to working with ICBA and other stakeholders to continue this important dialogue, to promote greater access to our nation’s banking system, and to support innovation that ensures our industry’s continued health and resiliency.”

“Congratulations to the ICBA and The Venture Center on their long-term partnership through the ICBA ThinkTECH Accelerator,” Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson said. “The state’s investment in this accelerator partnership brings innovative technologies to community banks across America. This partnership impacts neighborhoods from coast to coast as community banks comprise 99 percent of all banks, make more than 50 percent of all small business loans, and employ over 750,000 people. We look forward to welcoming more innovators to Arkansas, the birthplace of fintech, for years to come.”

Since its launch in 2018, the program has produced a number of notable cohort alumni, several of which have maintained their relationship with ICBA as endorsed Preferred Service Providers. Also notable was the ability of several alumni to quickly respond to the unique technological challenges faced by many community banks in addressing the COVID-19 crisis. These early successes highlight the importance of developing a deep understanding of community banking relationships with start-up entrepreneurs.

"After two highly successful accelerator programs in partnership with the ICBA and with support from The State of Arkansas, The Venture Center is honored to continue playing an important role in bringing relevant fintech solutions to our nation’s community banks through

2024,” said The Venture Center Executive Director Wayne Miller. “We are grateful for the opportunity to continue our partnership with ICBA, and to help lead three more years of fintech innovation through the ICBA ThinkTECH Accelerator program.”