

## The Ion and DivInc Create Partnership to Build A More Inclusive Innovation Ecosystem

*Together the organizations will build more high-growth, tech-focused businesses*

HOUSTON – March 2, 2020 – [The Ion](#), the nucleus for Houston’s innovation ecosystem and DivInc, a non-profit serving Texas’ underrepresented entrepreneurs, announced they are partnering to double-down their efforts to build a more inclusive Houston start-up ecosystem. The partnership is DivInc’s first Houston focused initiative.

DivInc’s mission is to bridge the gap between underrepresented entrepreneurs and the resources they need to build profitable, high-growth companies. Its programming is focused on removing barriers for underserved founders by providing access to the essential social, human, and financial capital resources needed to build successful, high-growth businesses. Since 2016, the Austin headquartered non-profit has provided 60+ founders and 50+ tech and tech enabled companies with critical strategies to succeed and grow their startups.

Founded on the principle of inclusivity, the Ion is being carefully constructed to become a place where Houstonians come to accelerate their entrepreneurial journeys and career development paths. It is a positive pillar in the community that brings people together to advance their own – and Houston’s – aspirations in education, workforce development, culture, and economic opportunity. Coupled with The Ion’s recent announcement to merge its member organization Station Houston with Capital Factory, the Houston startup ecosystem is super charged for innovation.

Together, DivInc and The Ion will unleash the untapped and hidden innovative talent within the Houston community. The organizations are already providing new resources and programs to area entrepreneurs to build a more authentically inclusive innovation ecosystem and guiding founders and tech-enabled companies to critical strategies to succeed and grow. Effective immediately, the organizations are working to:

- Increase the number of successful start-ups led by diverse founders;
- Generate cultures of inclusive innovation within the Houston start-up ecosystem;
- Provide mentorship and workshop training specifically targeting underrepresented founders;
- Grow the number of investors and mentors from underrepresented groups

"Our experience equipping diverse entrepreneurs with strategies to create exceptional companies, coupled with the Ion’s enthusiasm and thoughtful approach to building an inclusive space where entrepreneurs from all walks of life can thrive is a winning combination," said Preston L. James, Founder and CEO of DivInc. "No matter where they are in their entrepreneur journey, we want all Houstonians to know DivInc is here to help you achieve your biggest dreams."

### Upcoming Programming & Partnership Kick-Off

The Ion and DivInc’s joint programming signifies the organizations’ commitment to building an authentically inclusive innovation ecosystem for Houston. Upcoming programming, hosted from the Ion’s current space at 1301 Fannin Street, is open to the public. Events include:

- Startup Sistas, which facilitates events for women of color. The first event will kick-off in April 2020
- "Mentor Madness" EPIC office hours going live starting May 2020
- Investor Pitch Bootcamp taking place in June 2020
- [A kick-off event, free and open to the public, to be held Tuesday, March 3 at 5:30 p.m](#)

"As The Ion looked for a partner to provide best practices and resources to our local business communities and leaders that have historically been overlooked, we knew our partner needed to be ambitious, thoughtful and encouraging, but also have a record of success and experience working shoulder-to-shoulder with entrepreneurs," said Deanea LeFlore, Senior Director, Corporate and Community Engagement of The Ion. "Our efforts and

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relationship with DivInc will do just that. We can't wait to help our stakeholders take their businesses to new heights and further demonstrate Houston is the best city in America for diverse entrepreneurs to thrive."

**For event details, please email [events@ionhouston.com](mailto:events@ionhouston.com). For more information about DivInc, please contact Brooke Turner at [brooke@divinc.org](mailto:brooke@divinc.org).**

**About The Ion:** The Ion will anchor the 16-acre South Main Innovation District and is destined to become the epicenter for Houston's innovation ecosystem as an inclusive, dynamic, vibrant and dense hub focusing on quality collaborations between entrepreneurs, incubators, accelerators, corporations and the academic community when it opens in early 2021. The 270,000-square-foot building will accommodate multiple uses, including shared workspace, prototyping and maker resources, event space, classrooms, food and beverage offerings as well as indoor/outdoor communal areas with shared amenities. For more information, please visit <https://ionhouston.com/>.

**About DivInc:** DivInc transforms the existing entrepreneur tech ecosystem into a more authentically inclusive environment. Through our efforts, we inspire, empower and enable underrepresented founders to build successful high growth businesses. We aim to unleash the untapped and hidden innovative talent within our communities and generate an entrepreneur mindset shift for generations to come. For more information, please visit: <https://www.divinc.org/>.

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