



## Distillery Labs Partners with gener8tor for New Accelerator

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(June 1, 2021 | Peoria, Ill.) – Nationally ranked startup accelerator [gener8tor](#), OSF HealthCare, Peoria County, Hanson Professional Services, Central Illinois Angels and Attollo have announced a new partnership to help accelerate the growth of startup companies in the Greater Peoria region. Beginning this fall, two annual gBETA “pre-accelerator” programs will be offered to local entrepreneurs through this collaboration.

[gBETA](#) accelerates the growth of early-stage companies through its network-driven program. gBETA supports five teams per cohort and requires no fees and no equity. Since launching in 2015, gBETA program alumni have raised \$188M+ in capital and created 2,000+ jobs across the U.S. and Canada. gBETA is designed to help startups gain early customer traction for their product or idea, and establish and execute on metrics that make them competitive applicants for full-time, equity-based accelerators or seed investment. Participants receive intensive and individualized coaching and access to gener8tor’s national network of mentors, customers, corporate partners and investors.

The gBETA program in Greater Peoria will be an initiative of Distillery Labs, which is positioned to become the epicenter of the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem and is one of 15 members of the Illinois Innovation Network. Distillery Labs is also located within the Innovation District in the heart of downtown Peoria. The name reflects Peoria’s entrepreneurial heritage that led to its reputation as the “Whiskey Capital of the World” during the last half of the 19th century and now harkens toward the principles needed to build future businesses in the region: the distilling of ideas into thriving new companies.

Distillery Labs Executive Director Paul Leamon says it’s fitting to have gBETA as Distillery Lab’s first, big initiative.

“We’re excited to be launching a program with a successful track record from a world class accelerator such as gener8tor. Entrepreneurs in the gBETA Distillery Labs program will have the opportunity to leverage national resources and a support network to take their idea from concept to potentially the Peoria region’s next Fortune 500 company.”

Peoria-based OSF HealthCare, a 14-hospital system with primary, specialty, and home health care, plus an ever-expanding digital health program, is a major sponsor of the gBETA effort.

Kip McCoy, vice president for Innovation Integration explains, “This next-level support will cultivate entrepreneurs and startups from a number of sources, including those that may result from concepts and inventions from local companies, like OSF, and provide them with additional expertise and access to capital to take their solution to a commercial product or service.”

“The County of Peoria views its partnership and investment in gBETA as vital to the innovation and entrepreneurial economy in our community and region,” said Scott Sorrell, Peoria County administrator. “Investing in gBETA will prepare the entrepreneurs in our community for success and future equity and venture capital funding opportunities that will spur their growth and expansion.”

“The Greater Peoria region recently adopted a new five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. An underlying theme of the plan was a need for greater resiliency, a condition only achieved by having a broader economy that supports small and medium sized businesses,” said Christopher Setti, CEO of the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council. “The gBETA program is an excellent example of putting that strategy into action.”

Peoria has been recognized as one of the [top 50 best cities](#) across the Midwest for startups for its growing amount of resources, low overhead costs, global connections, highly-skilled workforce and network of supportive partners. gBETA aims to be another layer in the growth of Peoria and draw in other resources across the country to amplify the local

entrepreneurial ecosystem and the outcomes it's able to achieve. Peoria will be the 28th market where gBETA is offered; the mentors, investors, and corporate partners from the other 27 markets will be available to local Peoria entrepreneurs through this partnership.

"We are excited to help bring gener8tor and its gBETA program to Peoria's entrepreneurial ecosystem," said Kurt Bialobreski, P.E., PTOE, assistant vice president and Hanson's chief innovation officer. "This program will help bring startups to Distillery Labs and the Central Illinois Living Laboratory, and, ultimately, support the development of smart city technologies in central Illinois."

A not-for-profit that has been seeding Peoria-area start-ups since 2009 is excited to see the effort expand.

Board President Jim Cote said, "Central Illinois Angels is pleased and proud to support the gBETA effort as it becomes established in Peoria. Our members are excited to help new companies learn more about the great business environment that is offered by our region and how we can be a part of their success"

gener8tor is currently hiring a director to operate the gBETA program and is accepting applications from startups to take part in the inaugural gBETA Distillery Labs program. Startups across all industries and geographies within the Greater Peoria region will be considered. Office hours are available to entrepreneurs throughout the Greater Peoria region to get support for their business and learn more about applying for the gBETA program. More information is available at <http://www.gbetastartups.com/distillery-labs>.

The gBETA Distillery Labs program is offered thanks to the support of [OSF Healthcare](#), [Peoria County](#), [Hanson Professional Services](#), [Central Illinois Angels](#), and Attollo.

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#### **About OSF Healthcare**

[OSF HealthCare](#) is an integrated health system owned and operated by The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, headquartered in Peoria, Illinois. OSF HealthCare employs more than 23,600 Mission Partners in 147 locations, including 14 hospitals – ten acute care, four critical access – with 2,097 licensed beds, and two colleges of nursing throughout Illinois and Michigan. The OSF HealthCare physician network employs more than 1,500 primary care, specialist and advanced practice providers. OSF HealthCare, through OSF Home Care Services, operates an extensive network of home health and hospice services. It also owns Pointcore, Inc., comprised of health care-related businesses; OSF HealthCare Foundation, the philanthropic arm for the organization; and OSF Ventures, which provides investment capital for promising health care innovation startups. More at <https://www.osfhealthcare.org>.

**OSF Innovation**, launched in 2016, is a multidisciplinary innovation center focused on internal and external innovation to solve the largest health care challenges. More at [www.osfinnovation.org](http://www.osfinnovation.org).

#### **About Peoria County**

Known as the Heart of Illinois, [Peoria County](#) (est. pop. 180,000) is at the center of a multiple county region along the Illinois River. The region has a booming medical community and is home to a variety of firms that focus on innovation, research, and development. Peoria County boasts big city assets, including a vibrant arts scene, sports venues, recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts and family-friendly adventures, regional airport, and multiple institutions of higher learning. Combined with a low cost of living, affordable housing, cultural festivals, and hardly any traffic, Peoria County is an ideal place to call home. More at <https://www.peoriacounty.org/>

#### **About Hanson Professional Services**

[Hanson Professional Services Inc.](#) is a national, employee-owned consulting firm providing engineering, planning and allied services. Established in 1954, Hanson provides services to public- and private-sector clients throughout the U.S. and abroad from six markets: aviation, government, industry, infrastructure, power and railway. For decades, Hanson has appeared as a Top 500 design firm in Engineering News-Record's listing of premier U.S. design firms and has received numerous workplace and project-related awards. The firm's corporate headquarters is located at 1525 S. Sixth St., Springfield, IL 62703.

#### **About Central Illinois Angels**

[Central Illinois Angels, Inc.](#) (CIA), a not-for-profit corporation, facilitates the introduction of entrepreneurs to potential investors through presentations and other mechanisms. CIA consists of individual angel investors interested in financing privately held companies or ventures that are typically in the startup stage of development and have a high likelihood of growth and success. Since inception in 2009, the members of CIA have invested over \$14 million in its portfolio companies.

#### **About Attollo**

Attollo exists to enable the creation and growth of social businesses by removing financial obstacles that limit their success. By partnering with motivated and passionate entrepreneurs in need of capital, we help to bring their businesses ideas to life and to scale.

#### **About gener8tor**

[gener8tor](#)'s turnkey platform for the creative economy connects startup founders, musicians, artists, investors, universities and corporations. The gener8tor platform includes pre-accelerators, accelerators, corporate programming, conferences, and fellowships.

**About gBETA**

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