**Changemaker Institute (CI) Application 2024-2025**

**A program of The Phyllis M. Taylor Center for**

**Social Innovation & Design Thinking at Tulane University**

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## **Thank you for your interest in applying to the Changemaker Institute, a semester-long program that supports graduate students and exceptional undergraduate students in building a business or program with social or environmental impact.**

## **This application is in a Word format to allow you to add text and images to this document.** Please feel free to add any addendums or graphics that help illustrate your idea and your venture.

## **Please email your completed application to BOTH CI Co-Directors, Julia Lang at** [**jlang@tulane.edu**](mailto:jlang@tulane.edu) **and Maggie Sheffer at** [**msheffer1@tulane.edu**](mailto:msheffer1@tulane.edu)**, by 9 AM on October 15, 2024.**

*If you have any questions about completing this process, please reach out to Julia and Maggie at the emails above.*

## **OVERVIEW**

## The Changemaker Institute (CI) supports budding social entrepreneurs who are interested in building a business or program with social or environmental impact.

The Changemaker Institute (CI) is a semester-long program that supports graduate students and exceptional undergraduate students in building a business with social or environmental impact. Over the Spring ’25 semester, ***CI Fellows meet weekly, in person, for two hours (prospectively 1-3 pm on Wednesdays—to be confirmed***). Our alums describe the program as a “laid back accelerator” and “a family to nurture your ideas.” ***At the close of the program, Fellows share their ventures and their learnings in a public community showcase and receive actionable resources and feedback.***

**Why?**

Starting a business is hard and can be very isolating. Our program unites students across Tulane who are working on a social impact business idea and provides a curriculum, framework and community to nurture ideas and provide and receive feedback and support.

**Who?**

CI Fellows are either founders of their own social impact venture (such as a non-profit, program, student-run organization, or business) OR are innovators building new capacity within an existing organization. Most CI Fellows are Graduate and Professional Students across Tulane. We occasionally accept exceptional undergraduate students who have a strong understanding of the social issue they are seeking to address. **We strongly encourage team ventures, but solo participants are accepted.**

**Where?**

Every Wednesday (probably 1-3 pm, TBC)in the Spring semester at [Propeller (](http://gopropeller.org/about/)[4035 Washington Avenue](https://goo.gl/maps/A9pD8hnSFWxzKWGBA)), a nonprofit organization in New Orleans that grows and supports entrepreneurs to tackle social and environmental disparities. We see CI as a “mini Propeller” and many CI alums have gone on to become Fellows at Propeller.  CI Fellows are responsible for their own transportation and arrive via car, carpool, bike, public transportation, or a Tulane shuttle for transportation (it is about an eight minute drive from both Tulane’s uptown and downtown campuses). Lunch is provided each week.

**How?**

We lead CI Fellows through a process that supports them to develop, research, test, and refine their idea for a business or program with social or environmental impact. Outcomes include:

* *A warm, supportive, inclusive and adaptive environment to nurture your idea*
* *Business development skills via* [*design thinking*](https://taylor.tulane.edu/design-thinking/) *and* [*lean canvas*](https://leanstack.com/lean-canvas/) *methodology*
* *Mentorship from Tulane and New Orleans’ social entrepreneurial communities*
* *A framework and process to deepen their understanding of social issues skills*
* *Preparation for applying to funding opportunities at Tulane and beyond*
* *Introductions to guest experts, field mentors and access to a network of changemakers within and beyond New Orleans*
* *A community of “like-hearted” student changemakers striving to create positive change*

**Draft Schedule ’24-’25**

The draft schedule is below. Please review this schedule to see if these topics would be useful to you prior to submitting your application.

*Please note each workshop is two hours long and workshop topics and dates are subject to change.*

**Nov 20**  **CI Orientation Meeting; Mission + Vision**

**--------** *Winter Break: Mentor Exploration + User Research*

**Jan 15** **User Research Analysis + Synthesis; Value Proposition**

**Jan 22** **Lean Canvas & Testing Assumptions**

**Jan 29**  **‘Funding Your Venture’ Panel**

**Feb 5** **Budgeting Your Startup**

**Feb 12** **Selecting Your Business Entity Classification + Attorney Q/A**

**Feb 19** **Mid-semester synthesis; Plan Your Prototype**

**Feb 26** **Prototype Check In**

*March 5*  *Mardi Gras Break*

**March 12** **Utilizing AI Consulting**

*MARCH 15* [*TAYLOR FUNDING DEADLINE*](https://taylor.tulane.edu/awards/)

**March 19** **Building a Board**

**March 26** **Prototype Feedback (in collab with NOEW)**

**April 2** **Crafting Your Pitch**

**April 9** **Pitch Practice**

**April 16** **Tulane Pitching Event**

**April 23** **CI Showcase at Salon22**

**April 30** **Debrief, , Synthesis & Resources MMoving FForward**

*MAY 15* [TAYLOR FUNDING DEADLINE](https://taylor.tulane.edu/awards/)

## **Time Commitment**

**Participants are expected to attend every meeting noted above (each workshop is 2 hours long).**

**Asynchronous Work**

Participants are expected to work on developing their ventures outside of our meeting times, and to meet with mentors throughout the semester to enrich their work.

**Funding Your Venture**

**The Changemaker Institute**is a strong platform for access to funding for venture development through Tulane-based opportunities and to other, advanced opportunities in social entrepreneurship beyond campus. Each eligible participant - regardless of whether they are working individually or on a team - **can apply** for up to [$4,000 in funding through our two awards](https://taylor.tulane.edu/awards/). CI alumni have also been accepted to local and national incubators including [Idea Village](http://ideavillage.org/), [Propeller](http://gopropeller.org/), and [Echoing Green](http://www.echoinggreen.org/).

*Please note that you do NOT need to participate in CI to access this funding. Any student at Tulane can apply for Taylor awards. If your primary motivation to participate in CI is to access funding, you are welcome to apply for funding independently without committing to this program.*

## **Application Process**

A venture may be led by an individual student or by a team of students, but we**strongly encourage building a team** to help diversify ideas and lessen the workload of each member

* **Part 1: Complete this written application and submit by Oct 15**
* **Part 2: Interview**: Interviews will be held in the following weeks.

**Changemaker Institute Application**

**PART 1: TEAM OVERVIEW**

**How many people are on your team?**

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**What is the title of your venture?**

* If you are working to build capacity within an existing organization, you can add the name of the organization.
* If you don’t have an official title yet, you can simply describe your project in a few words such as “Science Lending Library.”

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**Will you/your team be physically in New Orleans in the spring semester or are you hoping to join CI remotely?**

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## **PART 2: TEAM MEMBER INFORMATION**

* Each team member should individually complete Part 2: Team Member Information
  + If you have multiple team members, please copy and paste this section.
* Note: Contact information of participants will be shared with the CI cohort.

**First Name:**

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**Last Name:**

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**Academic Department/Program (graduate Public Health, graduate Freeman School, etc.):**

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**Expected graduation date:**

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**GPA:**

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**Phone Number:**

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**Tulane Email:**

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**Non-Tulane Email:**

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**Student ID Number:**

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**Personal Statement *(~ 250 words)***

Why is the issue you are seeking to address so important to you? Take this as an opportunity to communicate your passion and interest, and any personal connection to this issue.

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**Why do you want to participate in CI? What are you hoping to learn or gain? *(~ 250 words)***

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**How did you hear about the Changemaker Institute?**

* Did you hear about us through a friend, a website, a social media post, a newsletter? Please let us know. Information you share will help us better connect with changemakers like you.

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**Demographic Information:**

**What is your race? Do you consider yourself...(Select one or more.)**

[ ] White

[ ] Black or African American

[ ] Asian

[ ] Latinx or Hispanic

[ ] Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

[ ] American Indian or Alaska Native

[ ] Prefer Not to Answer

[ ] Prefer to Self-Describe

**What is your gender? (Select one or more.)**

[ ] Woman

[ ] Man

[ ] Trans

[ ] Nonbinary

[ ] Prefer Not to Answer

[ ] Prefer to Self-Describe

**ADDITIONAL TEAM MEMBER INFORMATION**

*If there is more than one person on your team: each team member should write responses to the questions above individually and all responses should be submitted in this section.*

## **PART 3: VENTURE PROFILE + PROPOSAL**

*For teams, this section should be completed as a team.*

**The Problem (*~ 250 words)***

* **What specific problem are you trying to solve?** Try to be as specific as possible and give details about the community you are hoping to serve, who it consists of, where they live, the history of the issue, etc.
* **WHAT**: Describe the social or environmental issue you are trying to tackle. (Give background on this issue—is it recent or ongoing?)
* **WHO**:
  + For a social issue: What group of people is affected by this issue and will therefore benefit from your product/service? Who is your customer? Be as specific as possible and include demographics, geographic location, etc.). *For more information about homing in on your specific customer segment, please visit*[*: Business model canvas: Customer Segments*](https://www.cleverism.com/customer-segments-business-model-canvas/)*)*
  + For an environmental issue: What/who is specifically affected by this issue?
* **HOW**: How does this problem impact the community you are hoping to serve?

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**Project Proposal (*~ 250 words)***

We define “social innovation” as “*novel solutions to a social problem that are more effective, efficient, sustainable, or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals”* (Phill et al., 2008).

* **What is your “Big Idea”? What is new about your idea, and why do you think it will work?** 
  + What value do you deliver to your user/customer/client?
  + Which one of your customer/client/user’s problems are you trying to solve?
  + How would you define your unique “value proposition”? *For more information about Value proposition, please visit* [*Value Proposition – How To Create A Winning Value Proposition*](https://www.garyfox.co/business-model/value-proposition/)

*We encourage you to think through your ideas at this point. However, it is expected that your ideas may change throughout the course of CI. There will be room for flexibility as you learn and grow, but we are looking for detailed and feasible proposals here.*

*This should be an idea for your own social impact venture OR your idea to build innovative capacity within an existing organization. If you are working to build capacity within a pre-existing organization, your research should reflect knowledge about and communication with staff and stakeholders at that organization*

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* **What assumptions do you have, and how might you test them in the next 1-4 months?** Some example assumptions that past CI Fellows initially identified are below for reference. During CI, you will have a chance to further identify assumptions and develop small experiments (prototypes) to test them.
  + *"We assume there aren't already robotics classes available to NOLA Public High School students"*
  + *"We assume that professional women in New Orleans want to diversify their social circle"*
  + *"We assume that patients would prefer to see a doctor via telemedicine for convenience than physically travel to a hospital"*
  + *"We assume that Latinx families are interested in a summer program for their children in Spanish that celebrates Latin music and dance"*
  + *"We assume that principals would rather affordably rent high quality science equipment from a nearby facility instead of paying the high cost to purchase all of the equipment for their own school."* 
    - *For more information about “assumptions* [*Got an idea for your business? Test your assumptions!,*](https://www.iese.edu/insight/articles/design-thinking-test-assumptions/) *or check out this optional* [*resource from the book* Testing Business Ideas](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ELNCG59ikHmuBBWEFN1AMT8K_NZiMCqJ/view?usp=sharing)

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**PART 4: COMPLETED RESEARCH**

**What research have you done on the problem so far? What trends and insights came up, based on what evidence? (~250 word summary of research highlights)**

*Applicants should demonstrate evidence of conducting both primary and secondary research before submitting their application. All participants in CI are expected to have lived or spent significant time learning about the issue their social venture addresses.*

* Primary Research (new research you conduct to learn about your problem or customer base). This can involve questionnaires, surveys or interviews. Talk to at least 3 people (potential users or stakeholders, such as a client, student, professor, subject expert, employee at an organization, community members, etc.). Conversations can be done in person, via the phone, or by emailing questions. Take notes: What do they think of this issue? What ideas do they have? Use the Customer Discovery Worksheet as a guide: <http://bit.ly/CI_CustomerDiscovery> (strongly recommended but not mandatory). *Remember, be professional and gracious when reaching out to others! Your actions will reflect back on Tulane and the Taylor Center.*
* Secondary Research (information previously researched for other purposes and publicly available). Read up on the issue in at least 8 sources including articles from newspapers, journals, magazines, editorials, books, etc. Make sure that you include some peer-reviewed research in your analysis - tools like Howard Tilton Library Website, EBSCO Host, Google Scholar, and Ulrich’s Web can help you identify peer-reviewed journals and articles.

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**Research on COMPETITORS**

Research organizations that are providing similar products and/ or services to your target population. Organizations can be local or national.Using research compiled, fill out the chart below. *Provide bulleted notes in the sections below with concise thoughts (each section should have at least 3 bullets points, except for the organizations’ names)*

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| **Similar Organizations** *(List 3 orgs. Please hyperlink each organization).* | **How is your venture similar to this org? What elements of the org’s profile/work have informed your approach?** | **How is your organization different, and what innovative thinking are you bringing relative to this org?** |
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**Research on INSPIRATION/POSSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS**

**What organizations inspire you? These organizations could be inside or outside of the community you wish to serve and potential future partners.**

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| **Organization**  *List 3 orgs that are doing pieces of your idea that you want to learn from and consider as a partner or collaborator. Please hyperlink each organization.* | **What could the organization contribute to your venture and what approaches or resources can you draw from?** | **What will you be adding, and how do you see your collaboration/partnership producing innovative and effective work?** |
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**PART 5: OBJECTIVES FOR PROGRAM (~250 words)**

*For team ventures, please complete this as a team*

**As a CI Participant, you will be guided through the process of finding and securing a mentor.**

**What expertise are you most looking for in a mentor?***For instance, perhaps you could benefit from a mentor with connections in the educational ecosystem in New Orleans, or specific expertise in marketing/communication, technology, law, youth development, architecture, etc.*

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**What results would you like to achieve by the end of CI, in spring 2023? Please share specific goals, milestones, deliverables, or questions to explore.**

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**What objectives would you want to accomplish with $1,000-4,000? How would the way that you spend this money help you achieve your goals as a venture?**

*Examples: You may want to run focus groups, build a technological component of your venture, create an early prototype, run a pilot program, or visit an organization doing similar work to learn their best practices and potentially partner*

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**What future goals do you have for your venture? What might your venture be doing in 6 months? In 3 years?**

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**RISK (100 – 250 words)**

* What challenges or obstacles do you expect to face? Consider weaknesses (internal things that you and your team have direct control over) and threats (external things that your team does not have direct control over).
* How do you plan to address these challenges or obstacles?

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**PART 6: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Venture Summary**

Please provide a 1-3 sentence summary of your project, suitable for use in publications about the CI and on the Taylor website (Who or what are you hoping to impact and how will you do so?). [See descriptions of last year's cohort here for reference.](https://taylor.tulane.edu/2024/04/meet-the-2024-changemaker-institute-ci-fellows/)

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**Team Roles**

For ventures with multiple team members, please note each person’s role and preliminary title. If you are working alone, list anyone who you might work with on this venture in the future, or what support you can foresee needing.  Please indicate level of commitment for each person (e.g.: brainstormed as potential team member, has been invited to join the team, has accepted an invitation to join, is a co-founder, etc.)

* *Examples: Julian – Marketing Chair (confirmed participation); River – Treasurer (has expressed interest but has not officially joined yet); Yvanka- Community Outreach (an active leader in my sorority, but has not yet been approached about the idea).*

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**Additional Information**

Use this space to share with us any further information you would like us to know about you. What are you involved with on campus, in the community, or beyond? What ideas do you have for CI? What are you most excited about? Who would you love to be your mentor?

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**Thank you!**

**Applications are due on October 15 2024, and we will be in touch to schedule interviews that week.**

*If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Julia Lang at* [*jlang@tulane.edu*](mailto:jlang@tulane.edu) *and Maggie Sheffer at* [*msheffer1@tulane.edu*](mailto:msheffer1@tulane.edu)

**Please feel free to add any additional graphics or text below to help us understand your idea.**