

The Innovation Ecosystem

Texas is widely recognized as one of the best states for business, and Dallas-Fort Worth stands out as a leading hub for innovation, with a strong ecosystem of tech startups, Fortune 500 headquarters, top research institutions, and a supportive community driving breakthroughs in AI, biotech, fintech, advanced manufacturing, and more.



Dallas
Downtown Dallas and its surrounding neighborhoods unite startups, corporations, investors, and universities to drive innovation. Key anchors include the AT&T Discovery District, Blue Cross Blue Shield's C1 Innovation Lab, The Epic, the growing Y'all Street corridor that includes Goldman Sachs' 800,000-square-foot campus and Bank of America's new 30-story tower, and leading research at UT Southwestern and SMU.

Pegasus Park and UT Southwestern form a dynamic innovation ecosystem in Dallas, fostering collaboration between biotech, healthcare, life sciences, and venture capital. Their close proximity and complementary strengths create a powerful synergy that accelerates research, commercialization, and startup growth.



Old Parkland and The Crescent are the heart of Dallas capital, centered in Uptown Dallas within two architecturally significant office campuses. These are hubs for private equity, venture capital, finance, wealth management, corporate advisory services, and stock exchanges.

East Quarter and Deep Ellum are Downtown neighborhoods known for their dynamic blend of innovation, culture, and business. They both continue to evolve and are key hubs for startups, creative industries, and tech-driven enterprises.



Fort Worth
Fort Worth's innovation economy is driven by a dynamic mix of startups, corporate R&D, health care, advanced manufacturing, and aerospace technology. Anchored by institutions like TCU, UNT Health Fort Worth, and the growing Texas A&M-Fort Worth campus, the city fosters collaboration between academia and industry. The Stockyards, Near Southside, and AllianceTexas serve as innovation hubs.

Texas A&M-Fort Worth Campus is being developed on the east side of downtown with the goal of creating a hub for education, research, and innovation. The project includes multiple buildings, including the Law and Education Building and the Research and Innovation Building.



Alliance Mobility Innovation Zone Hillwood's AllianceTexas in north Fort Worth offers mobility companies full access to an extensive testing ecosystem, resources, and partnerships essential to comprehensively test, scale, and commercialize their technologies.

Medical Innovation District is a 1,200-acre hub anchored by five major hospitals, TCU's Burnett School of Medicine, and more than 30,000 professionals working across biotech companies and healthcare institutions. Located in the Near Southside community, the district offers top talent a dynamic place to live, work, and play with strong connections to area universities that offer leading life sciences programs.

Clusters of innovation activity exist all across Dallas-Fort Worth. Below are just a few examples:

Arlington

Arlington's growing innovation community includes Founders Arena, which supports global WealthTech startups; Bell's Weapon Systems Integration lab and advanced manufacturing at Wallbox's EV charger facility, Spark coworking at Texas Live!, and UT Arlington, with over 42,000 students.

Denton

Denton fosters innovation through Stoke Denton, a coworking hub hosting tech events, supporting startups, and creating jobs. The University of North Texas' Innovation Greenhouse and Texas Woman's University CWE Accelerator empower entrepreneurs, strengthening Denton's startup ecosystem and economic growth.

Frisco

Frisco's innovation landscape is enriched by 500+ startups and corporate innovation hubs. Plug and Play operates its sportstech and fintech accelerator in the city. In 2024, Frisco EDC named its first VC in Residence, and in 2025 opened Origin, a 6,000-square-foot hub to boost innovation and startup

Mansfield

The new 240,000-square-foot Mansfield Innovation Community, or "The MIC," anchors The LinQ, a 17-acre innovation district with office and lab space for tech, life sciences, robotics, and advanced manufacturing.

McKinney

McKinney EDC's Innovation Fund supports companies from ideation through Series A with investments up to \$500,000. In 2026, the 6,000-square-foot Innovation Exchange at District 121 opened as a hub for founders, investors, and corporate partners.

Plano

Plano's innovation ecosystem includes major tech and headquarters operations such as Ericsson, PepsiCo Foods North America, McAfee, the Capital One Garage, and Toyota Connected. In 2026, AT&T announced plans to relocate its global headquarters to a new 54-acre Legacy campus.

Richardson

The Richardson Innovation Quarter (The IQ®) is a 1,200-acre urban tech hub fostering innovation and collaboration among over 1,000 businesses and 19,000 workers. It's anchored by The IQ Headquarters, a collaboration with UT Dallas housing six research centers.

Dallas-Fort Worth high-tech jobs compared to other leading innovation ecosystem metros

Metro	2020 Jobs	2025 Jobs	2020-2025 Change	Cost of Living	Cost of Doing Business
New York	487,140	558,717	71,577	238.9	150.8
Washington, D.C.	367,356	370,938	3,583	137.7	115.8
Los Angeles	346,273	353,558	7,285	152.3	122.1
Dallas-Fort Worth	270,809	321,283	50,473	98.4 / 95.9	91.1 / 88.5
San Francisco	291,031	295,320	4,289	163.6	196.4
Boston	263,714	284,064	20,350	148.4	132.7
Seattle	254,841	259,068	4,227	144.5	113.0
San Jose	238,296	242,071	3,775	117.6	103.2
Chicago	236,577	235,799	-778	183.9	172.7
Houston	192,334	218,037	25,703	92.9	89.9

2nd MOST HIGH-TECH JOBS ADDED IN THE U.S. SINCE 2020

4th HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF HIGH-TECH WORKERS IN THE U.S.

3rd HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF COMPUTER OCCUPATIONS IN THE U.S.

Federal Investment in DFW Innovation

ARPA-H - In September 2023, Dallas' Pegasus Park was selected as the national headquarters of the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, known as ARPA-H, Customer Experience Hub. The goal of the Customer Experience Hub is to ensure that future healthcare advancements are patient-centric and deliver improved outcomes for all Americans.

EDA SEMICONDUCTOR TECH HUB DESIGNATION - In October 2023, the Economic Development Administration unveiled 31 U.S. Tech Hubs in the U.S., including the SMU-led Texoma Semiconductor Hub. It will work to strengthen, build on, and drive innovation in the existing semiconductor supply chain in 29 counties in North Texas and Oklahoma through regional collaboration and workforce development.

NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (NCTEDD) - Designated in 2016 by the Economic Development Administration and encompassing the 16-County North Central Texas region, the NCTEDD brings together the private and public sectors in partnership to provide a coordinated strategy and economic development technical assistance. The designation serves as a foundation for regional collaboration and cooperative economic planning.

USPTO REGIONAL OFFICE - DFW is home to one of four satellite offices of the United States Patent & Trademark Office. Located in Downtown Dallas, it works with small businesses and entrepreneurs to help them navigate the patent process, meet with examiners, and access USPTO's comprehensive search databases. It serves as a patent examination office for technology developed in the region and throughout the South.

Organizations

“You should do that!” That’s typically the first response when someone in DFW decides they’re going to start a new business and tells a friend. The next thing that friend likely will ask is, “How can I help?” Our region is abuzz with a wealth of organizations, events, and resources that foster innovation and support entrepreneurial endeavors.



NTXIA at eCAT Center at UNT

North Texas Innovation Alliance

A cross-sector consortium advancing smart city solutions by fostering connectivity for regional innovation in sustainability, mobility, infrastructure, AI and workforce. NTXIA is designed to close the gap between the pace of technological innovation and implementation through collaborative action that drives regional prosperity.



BioNorthTX

The life science trade organization for Dallas-Fort Worth. BioNTX accelerates the growth of the region’s diverse and balanced life science ecosystem. Companies connect with industry leaders, technologies, investors, universities, consultants, a varied population for clinical research, and an experienced pool of scientists, technicians, and resources.



DFW CPG

Founded in 2019 to bring together and serve the consumer packaged goods (CPG) community in Dallas-Fort Worth. The group supports early- to late-stage CPG companies through a mix of networking events, speakers, speaker panels on various topics, and opportunities to connect with experts in smaller groups called DFW CPG Huddles.



Texas Research Alliance

Founded as a regional innovation non-profit by four of the largest chambers of commerce in Dallas-Fort Worth. The Texas Research Alliance works with companies to understand their research and innovation needs and bring its network of university faculty, high-growth companies, and startups to help solve challenges.

Capital



Dallas-Fort Worth offers every stage of capital growing companies need, including angel investors, family offices, venture capital, and private equity firms.

Sample of VC and Angel Investors in DFW

- 1845 Ventures
- Access Capital
- Bios Partners
- Blossom Street Ventures
- Cowtown Angels
- Cypress Growth Capital
- Dallas Venture Capital
- DTX Ventures
- Goldcrest Capital
- Green Park & Golf Ventures
- Interlock Partners
- Mark Cuban Companies
- North Texas Angel Network
- Park Cities Angels
- Perot Jain
- Revtch Ventures
- Sentiero Ventures



Venture Dallas

Venture Dallas exists to amplify the entrepreneurial spirit of Dallas-Fort Worth by connecting innovators with investors, celebrating the region’s pioneering roots, and driving impactful growth in the business community. The organization hosts an annual conference that attracts venture capital investors from around the country. The all-day event features visionary keynotes and panel tracks with industry experts and venture capital leaders, and ample time for networking. Connections are core to the event, where deals are made and founders have secured funding, investment, and mentorship.



Artificial Intelligence in Dallas-Fort Worth

ECOSYSTEM

Dallas-Fort Worth has emerged as a leading hub for applied AI, driven by its strong industry base, deep talent pool, advanced infrastructure, and growing investment activity.

The region is supported by a vibrant and expanding community of AI practitioners and enthusiasts. Dallas AI is one of the area’s largest nonprofit AI forums, hosting educational talks and technical workshops. Mind & Machine, AI Women Leaders, and AI Tinkerers convene builders and founders for practical discussions and hands-on sessions focused on deploying AI in real-world applications. Local chapters of national and global organizations, including Global AI, the Applied AI Association, the CAIO Circle, and the AI Innovation Association, further strengthen the ecosystem.

Plug and Play’s Enterprise & AI vertical in McKinney connects high-growth startups with corporate partners, mentors, and investors. Numerous area venture capital firms, including Sentiero Ventures, Dallas Venture Capital, and DTX Ventures invest heavily in AI companies.

EVENTS

Convergence AI, organized by the Dallas Regional Chamber, brings together a diverse group of leaders, including executives, entrepreneurs, and innovators, to explore the latest trends and developments in artificial intelligence. The focus is on real-world applications of AI in business, making it an essential event for anyone interested in the transformative power of this technology. Technologists will find other AI-focused events throughout the year.

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

Center for Artificial Intelligence and Big Data (CARIDA): The University of Texas at Arlington

Center for Applied AI and Machine Learning (CAIML): The University of Texas at Dallas

Center for Electric, Connected and Autonomous Technologies for Mobility (eCAT): The University of North Texas

AT&T Center for Virtualization Technologies: SMU

AI/ML Consortium to Advance Health Equity and Researcher Diversity (AIM-AHEAD): UNT Health Fort Worth

Events

1 Million Cups—Every Wednesday, 1MC communities around the country meet to give each other support, encouragement, and feedback over a cup of coffee. At 1MC, entrepreneurs present their businesses to inclusive, welcoming audiences. It’s not a pitch; it’s a chance to learn, collaborate, and grow. 1MC locations include Arlington, Dallas, Fort Worth, Frisco, Northeast Tarrant County, and Plano.

IQ Brew—The IQ Brew is held every second Thursday of the month and is hosted at The IQHQ in Richardson. It is a networking and educational series featuring presentations from entrepreneurs, small businesses, and subject-matter experts.

Big Design Conference—Now in its 19th year, this award-winning event is the premier gathering of design, tech, product, innovation, and AI in North Texas.

Code Launch—A startup accelerator event that pairs early-stage tech startups with professional software development teams to accelerate their trajectory toward MVP, seed funding, and beyond.

Startup Grind—A series of events that brings together founders, industry experts, and aspiring entrepreneurs to share insights, experiences, and advice. Startup Grind meetings are held in Fort Worth, Dallas, and Frisco.

DFW Startup Week—A free, five-day celebration of our community that builds momentum and opportunity around entrepreneurship. Multiple special events and summits occur throughout the week. Industry tracks are at the core of DFW Startup Week’s programming. With 11 different tracks that include Marketing, AI, Automation, Quantum, and Healthcare, there’s something for every entrepreneur or innovator, no matter what stage of the journey they’re in.

EarthX E-Capital Summit—EarthX’s annual E-Capital Summit is an invitation-only conference that convenes hundreds of investment firms, early to late-stage innovators, established global companies, industry thought leaders, national policymakers, incubators and accelerators, and researchers. Participants tackle some of the world’s greatest investment and business opportunities in sustainability, resilience, conservation, clean technology, and climate technology.

Incubators and Accelerators

The same dynamic landscape that fuels our largest companies also drives rapid growth for emerging companies. With numerous incubators and accelerators across Dallas-Fort Worth, startups have the support they need to grow and succeed.

<p>BioLabs & Bridge Labs Dallas A 37,000-square-foot shared-lab incubator for startups in Pegasus Park. The 135,000-square-foot Bridge Labs provides “graduation” space for larger biotech firms.</p>	<p>Blackstone Launchpads UTA, UTD, UTSW Located on each campus, the program offers students and recent alumni access to a global network of mentors, advisers, and startup resources.</p>	<p>Capital Factory Texas Serves as a center of gravity for entrepreneurs in Texas. One of the most active venture investors in the state, providing mentorship, coworking, and events across Texas.</p>	<p>CreateFW Fort Worth Located in the Near Southside District, CreateFW is working to address the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and small business owners, particularly in BIPOC areas.</p>	<p>CWE Accelerator Dallas, Denton Training program for women-owned startups facilitated by The Slate in Dallas, Stoke coworking in Denton and the TWU Center for Women Entrepreneurs.</p>	
 <p>Health Wildcatters at Pegasus Park</p>	<p>Health Wildcatters Dallas A 12-week mentor-driven seed accelerator focused on healthcare for entrepreneurs and companies that are developing solutions for the industry.</p>	<p>Impact Ventures Next Wave Accelerator Dallas A 12-week program designed to propel high-growth diverse-led tech startups in the CPG and retail industries.</p>	<p>Founders Arena Arlington Accelerator program designed to support and accelerate the growth of companies operating in the wealth management sector.</p>	<p>MassChallenge Dallas Boston-based accelerator operating in Dallas since 2022. Key areas of focus include defense, health care, pharmaceuticals, and human potential.</p>	<p>Plug and Play Sportstech Frisco Silicon Valley-based accelerator focused on developing technologies evolving human potential and performance. The first cohort started in 2024.</p>
<p>Plug and Play Enterprise & AI McKinney Silicon Valley-based enterprise and AI accelerator. Focus areas include big data and AI, infrastructure and IT, future of work, customer engagement, and cybersecurity.</p>	<p>Plug and Play FinTech Frisco & McKinney Silicon Valley-based fintech accelerator is a joint program based out of Frisco and McKinney. Focus areas include wealth management, payments, retail banking, regtech, and crypto and digital assets.</p>	<p>TechFW Fort Worth Since 1998, this accelerator and incubator has been helping entrepreneurs launch and grow emerging technology companies. ThinkLab, SmartStart, and Fast Forward programs focus on coaching the inventors, founders, and managers of early-stage companies.</p>	<p>RedBird Innovation Center Dallas 20,000-square-foot space in Southern Dallas offering coworking, business incubation, accelerator programs, and event space. Focused on underrepresented founders and creating a more diverse and equitable entrepreneurial landscape.</p>	<p>United Way Social Innovation Incubator Dallas Supporting human, social, and financial capital for early-stage entrepreneurs in the social innovation sector. The program is designed for entrepreneurs who have experienced systemic racial and gender inequities.</p>	<p>More...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1845 Venture Studio Blueprint University The Cedars Union GalXc Accelerator South Dallas Fair Park Innovation Center SKU SMU Spears Launch Accelerator VC Arena

The Insider's Guide to Dallas-Fort Worth

COMMUNITIES / CULTURE / JOBS
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Dallas Fort Worth

Newcomer & Relocation Guide



WINNING MOVES

How these athletes and sports execs found more than a place to play in DFW.

PLUS: NEIGHBORHOODS TO LOVE, FUN FOR FAMILIES, AND WHAT TO EXPLORE IN THE REGION



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