



# Gwinnett Start-up Stimulus

Free office space *and* the chance to win \$25,000 in cold, hard cash with no strings attached. Does this sound too good to be true? Well, that's exactly what Norcross-based [Gwinnett Innovation Park](#) (GIP) is offering a few worthy start-ups.

## GIP Meeting Space

GIP is a co-working facility backed by [Intelligent Systems](#), one of Atlanta's early technology success stories. The facility launched the eHub Nspire Program late last month that aims to provide two qualified Atlanta-based technology start-ups each month with free office space at GIP for one year. Participants will also receive free monthly coaching sessions with a successful serial entrepreneur and access to marketing and public relations advice during the one-year term.



GIP plans to add 10 companies to the Nspire Program in the next 12 months. Entrepreneurs can apply by [submitting](#) their executive summaries online. Applications will be reviewed by GIP Trustees Leland Strange, Bonnie Herron, Bill Goodhew and two other rotating trustees.

## No Strings Scholarships

And if free space isn't enough, beginning in October, Nspire companies can apply for GIP's newly launched eHub Founders Grant. This awards \$25,000 to one technology start-up each quarter over the next 12 months. And, awardees retain full ownership of their company! But to qualify, a company must be an Nspire Program member for three months or longer. GIP Trustees will also be making the selections. Companies will be selected based on business plan reviews and company presentations. The first grant will be awarded in November 2011.



Leland Strange, CEO of  
Intelligent Systems

According to Leland Strange, CEO of Intelligent Systems and sponsor of the grant, both programs are a natural evolution of Intelligent Systems' longstanding support of the technology start-up community in Gwinnett.

*"Gwinnett has one of the fastest growing technology communities in the state but there isn't really a central physical place that entrepreneurs can go to meet like-minded individuals. The Nspire Program seeks to fill that gap,"* said Strange in an interview early last week. *"Access to seed funding is one of the biggest stumbling blocks for many start-ups so through this grant, we are looking to give a few start-ups a joggling start,"* he added.

Early reviews of the programs are positive.

*"The impact of Gwinnett Innovation Park's new Founders Grant and Nspire Program on the technology start-up community in Gwinnett and Metro Atlanta is significant,"* said Nick Masino, Vice President of Economic Development and Partnership Gwinnett at the Gwinnett Chamber. *"The thriving tech industry in our community is the direct result of a concentrated focus on developing entrepreneurs- this program further encourages that valuable niche in our county's economic development."*



Nick Masino, VP of Business  
Development, Gwinnett  
Chamber of Commerce

## Of Economic Development and Philanthropy

Strange, a serial entrepreneur, Georgia Tech graduate and resident of Gwinnett was characteristically understated when asked about the reason for this largesse: "In a way, we consider these programs economic development initiatives. We're simply providing start-ups with some of the tools that they need to succeed. And ultimately, their success will translate into more jobs and revenues for the county and the state."

If you live in Gwinnett or want to locate your start-up there and are outgrowing your basement, this might just be the opportunity for you. Just tell them Venture Atlanta sent you.