



Greetings from FCDI/AMRoC Fab Lab!

We're excited to participate in the Fab27 pitch experience and can't wait to introduce the Fab Community to Tampa Bay, Florida. As a recent 2024 Chevron Fab Fellowship host site we're especially excited to partner with IoT Lab Suriname, from which our Fab Fellow, Julie Sundar, hailed. Our goal is to provide both an exciting in-person event in Tampa Bay along with a virtual component hosted by IoT Lab Suriname, so as many people as possible can participate!

The Foundation for Community Driven Innovation (FCDI) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting academic achievement, economic development and the spirit of innovation through inclusive, accessible, diverse and inspiring programs and active learning projects.

FCDI is the founder and developer of the Advanced Manufacturing and Robotics Center (AMRoC) Fab Lab, a unique, 8000-square-foot public Fab Lab based in an urban mall. Additionally, FCDI hosts ROBOTICON Tampa Bay, an annual youth STEAM Showcase event drawing over 1200 youth, and Gulf Coast MakerCon, Tampa's original Maker Festival.

FCDI also hosts the Equity in Entrepreneurship program, which aims to help bridge the race and gender equity gap in early-stage entrepreneurship to help create more inclusive pathways to the Tampa Bay startup ecosystem. For ages 16+, the program has helped launched more than 40 small businesses in the last four years. FCDI also annually hosts a Young Innovators Challenge in partnership with the Florida Inventors Hall of Fame and the Florida High Tech Corridor, and facilitates competitive youth robotics and drone programs for local youth. More than 80% of the businesses launched by Equity in Entrepreneurship are Black- and Brown-owned, and over 60% are Women-owned.

Since launching AMRoC Fab Lab over 5 years ago, we've successfully undertaken a number of large scale community based programs and initiatives and when the opportunity to pitch to host Fab27 presented itself, we felt it was the right time to take on the challenge!

We work closely with a number of organizations in the area, including the Tampa Bay visitors bureau – Visit Tampa Bay - which has identified 2027 as a "need" year in area, when a number of visitor incentives can be made available and Tampa Bay hotels can provide attractive concession packages.

We're confident that hosting Fab27 in Tampa Bay – which includes a tricounty area spanning from riverfronts to beaches, from fertile agricultural communities to diverse cultural settings – will be a win for Fab attendees and for Tampa Bay. Tampa Bay is inclusive, accessible, scenic and multicultural, providing ample opportunities to explore everything from ecology and environment to industry, the arts and music of more than a dozen different heritage sites and communities.

This year, AMRoC Fab Lab became a Tourism Cares partner, attesting to our commitment to meaningful travel experiences. We can attest to the fact that Tampa Bay is a meaningful and wonderful place to travel to, and invite the Fab Community to come to Tampa Bay for Fab 27! And for those who can't, we're proud to partner with IoT Lab Suriname to expand our offerings remotely and help bring the innovative Fab Foundation mindset to more people in Tampa Bay and beyond!

Creatively Yours,

Terri Willingham
Executive Director, FCDI