

**CONTACT:**

Cameron Adams:

[Cameron@ideavillage.org](mailto:Cameron@ideavillage.org) OR 504.858.3806

**For Immediate Release**

**The Idea Village Transfers Innovation Center in Upper Ninth Ward to the Urban League of Greater New Orleans**  
*Programs will focus on growing the local workforce to support the entrepreneurial community.*

**New Orleans, LA (August 26, 2014)** – Today, The Idea Village announces the transition of the Urban IDEACenter (UIC) to the Urban League of Greater New Orleans (ULGNO), who will focus the center’s activities to support local and regional job seekers and employers. Founded by The Idea Village in 2009, the UIC has grown the resources and connections for New Orleans entrepreneurs in the Upper Ninth Ward. Founding partners included MercyCorps, Regions Bank, Entergy, Habitat for Humanity, and Foundation for Louisiana.

Over the last two years, The Idea Village has delegated other critical initiatives to strategic partners in an effort to scale the impact of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in New Orleans. Most recently, the organization announced the selection of Propeller: A Force for Social Innovation to grow the nationally acclaimed Water Challenge, and in 2012, The Idea Village transitioned the Education Entrepreneur Challenge to 4.0 Schools.

“The Idea Village is dedicated to building a self-sustaining entrepreneurial ecosystem across the city of New Orleans,” said Tim Williamson, Co-founder and CEO of The Idea Village. “The strategic decision to donate this innovation center to the Urban League ensures a long-term commitment to supporting and nurturing local talent in the Upper Ninth Ward.”

The Urban League of Greater New Orleans will now assume ownership of the building, and continue scaling its overall impact by providing services to approximately 500 youth and adult job seekers annually across southeast Louisiana. The UIC, now known as the ULGNO Workforce Development Center, will continue to provide a wide-range of employment training and career education services such as the Job Assistance Program, Urban Youth Empowerment WORKS, Suits for Hire Mentoring Program and the Training to Work (T2W) Reentry programs.

“The Urban League of Greater New Orleans is committed to growing our Center of Community & Economic Development, which encompasses our Office of Workforce Development,” said Erika McConduit-Diggs, President and CEO of the Urban League of Greater New Orleans. “We look forward to deepening our relationship with The Idea Village by connecting the center’s activities to career seekers, entrepreneurs and small business owners.”

The Idea Village opened the innovative center on 3232 N. Galvez as the Entergy Innovation Center with a goal of catalyzing an entrepreneurial support system in key neighborhoods affected by Hurricane Katrina. From 2009 – 2012, the center provided technical business resources to support over 1,000 local residents. In 2012, the Urban League and The Idea Village introduced the “Urban IDEACenter,” renamed to showcase both organizations’ combined commitment to empower the community through entrepreneurship.

In the coming weeks, The Idea Village will announce additional partnerships aligned with the 7<sup>th</sup> annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, March 20-27, 2015, such as the Urban League’s Women in Business Challenge, further solidifying the annual business festival as the hub of the New Orleans entrepreneurial ecosystem.

**ABOUT THE IDEA VILLAGE:**

In 2000, The Idea Village was formed by a group of New Orleans citizens who believed entrepreneurship is a catalyst for positive change. The Idea Village formalized in 2002 as an independent 501c3 non-profit organization with a mission to identify, support, and retain entrepreneurial talent in New Orleans by providing direct service to high impact entrepreneurs, educating the broader community, and supporting initiatives that strengthen our entrepreneurial infrastructure. From 2009-2014, The Idea Village has provided direct support to over 3,411 New Orleans entrepreneurs by engaging over 2,600 professionals to allocate 68,543 consulting hours and \$2.5 million in seed capital. In addition, The Idea Village hosts New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, a business festival that has become the platform for the New Orleans entrepreneurial ecosystem. [www.ideavillage.org](http://www.ideavillage.org)

**ABOUT THE URBAN LEAGUE OF GREATER NEW ORLEANS:**

The Urban League is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-sectarian, community-based organization and a participating agency of the United Way. Established in 1938, the mission of the Urban League of Greater New Orleans is to enable African-Americans and others seeking equity to secure economic parity and self-reliance. Programs of the Urban League’s three Centers of Excellence are focused in the areas of education and youth development, community and economic development and public policy and advocacy. For more information on the Urban League, visit us online at [www.urbanleagueneuorleans.org](http://www.urbanleagueneuorleans.org) and/or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) (@ULGNO).