

# Boulder's Techstars unveils first class of 2017

Five of 13 companies from Boulder

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Thirteen companies will join Boulder's Techstars, a technology accelerator program, for its first class of 2017. The new group of companies, including five from Boulder, hail from six different states and two countries in addition to the United States.

Following on its pledge to increase the number of women and minority owned companies in its programs, Techstars said that 77 percent of this group includes a diverse mix of genders, race and age.

"We're very excited to be part of a team and to learn from Techstars and to leverage that," said Patrick Walsh CEO of Boulder's IronCore Labs, a software security startup. "[It's] an extremely great opportunity for a small startup with a big idea to be chosen."

Techstars is also working with Global EIR (Entrepreneur In Residence coalition), in San Francisco, its first non-profit organization, with the help of TechStars Foundation, which Techstars created and supports. Techstars chose Global EIR because of their belief in its mission, which allows universities to hire or partner with immigrant startup founders to help get visa access. "For the right non-profit, we'd love to continue in the future," said Natty Zola, a managing director for Techstars Boulder.

In addition to IronCore, other Boulder companies in this round include: Airstream Health, founded by Cheryl Kellond, which builds health plans for self insured employers, Blank Slate Systems, founded by Kyle Kuczun and Gabe Johnson, which creates digital design tools for companies using 3D printers and laser-cutters, Sitter, a company co-founded by Kristen Stiles and Matt Stueve which helps find, book and pay for babysitters, and Stateless, founded by Murad Kablan, Eric Keller and Nigel Sharp, which works to provide secure networks to companies based on technology they invented at CU-Boulder.

"We've proven startups thrive when they're surrounded by great mentors and their community," Zola said. "Instead of just investing capital we invest a community."



Kristin Stiles, founder of the Sitter app, sits in her child's play area at her home on Monday in Boulder Nov. 28, 2016. Sitter is one of 13 companies in Techstars first class of 2017. (*Jeremy Papasso / Staff Photographer*)

