IRI Convenes Second Industry Hackathon

Experts Collaborate to Develop New Digital First for Annuities Standards

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, February 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Insured Retirement Institute (IRI) held its second Digital First for Annuities hackathon this week in Columbus, Ohio, bringing together technology experts from across the insured retirement industry to collaborate on innovative solutions designed to reimagine how annuities are marketed, sold, and serviced.

Hosted by Nationwide, the competitive event brought together 80 participants from 38 companies representing a broad cross-section of IRI members, as well as technology providers and industry partners. Participants worked in teams to address seven priority topics focused on advancing seamless, modern, and AI-incorporated digital-first experiences for consumers and financial professionals.

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>
> *Katherine Dease, Chief Technology & Innovation Officer*

Several companies sponsored the IRI Hackathon, including American Equity, Athene, AWS, Equitrust, Financial Independence Group, Luma, Nationwide, Pacific Life, Prudential, Spark, Sureify, and Symetra.

The hackathon is a core component of IRI's Digital First for Annuities initiative, which seeks to establish industrywide standards that make annuities easier and faster to understand, transact, and manage, and enable annuities to show up in the tools financial professionals use. Solutions developed during the event will be evaluated by IRI members as potential roadmaps where new Digital First for Annuities standards will be created to enable the experiences.

"IRI is uniquely positioned to bring together top technology talent from across the industry to create practical digital solutions for the annuity marketplace," said Wayne Chopus, President and CEO of IRI. "Last year's event produced three concepts that formed the basis for new Digital First for Annuities standards to help deliver the digital experiences that today's consumers and

financial professionals expect."

Participants were organized into teams with diverse technical and business expertise and challenged to develop creative, feasible, and scalable solutions within an intensive, fast-paced environment. Projects were evaluated based on innovation, technical design, incorporating AI, and potential to drive meaningful improvements across the annuity value chain.

"This year's hackathon showcased the remarkable energy and creativity in our industry," said Katherine Dease, Chief Technology and Innovation Officer at IRI. "Participants quickly prototyped solutions that have the potential to benefit consumers and financial professionals. Solutions members pursue will have new DFA standards as the foundation."

"Nationwide was proud to be able to host this event, bringing together some of the most innovative minds to solve industry-wide challenges with digital solutions," said Kush Kotecha, president of Nationwide Annuity. "Collaborative events like these show advisors that we hear their concerns and we're taking the right steps toward simplifying the annuity sales process, improving the overall experience for both financial professionals and their clients."

Following the event, IRI members will review and evaluate the proposed solutions to determine their potential for development into open, scalable Digital First for Annuities standards available for broad industry adoption.

The Insured Retirement Institute (IRI) is the leading association for the entire supply chain of insured retirement strategies, including life insurers, asset managers, broker-dealers, banks, marketing organizations, law firms, and solution providers. IRI members account for 90 percent of annuity assets in the U.S., include the foremost distributors of protected lifetime income solutions, and are represented by financial professionals serving millions of Americans. IRI champions retirement security for all through leadership in advocacy, awareness, research, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the advancement of digital solutions within a collaborative industry community. www.irionline.org.
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