

## Northwestern Mutual Expands Business Accelerator for Black Entrepreneurs to Include Five Promising Tech Startups

*Program provides each startup with \$100,000 and access to training and resources*

MILWAUKEE, July 13, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Northwestern Mutual, in partnership with gener8tor, today announced the addition of five tech startups to its Black Founder Accelerator program – an initiative the company launched this past year to provide targeted resources and financing to promising Black entrepreneurs nationwide.

"This next class of five startups builds upon the success of the 10 founders we were proud to team up with in 2021. This group was selected based on their unique business models and drive to build tech solutions that help people live longer, better, and healthier lives across multiple areas of focus, including financial services, insurance, and digital health," said Craig Schedler, managing director of Northwestern Mutual Future Ventures. "With such positive momentum coming from last year's cohorts, including 115 investor introductions and more than 100 full-time employees supported by the 10 startups, I'm both excited to see how this group of founders will make a positive impact in their communities and honored to be a part of a company that continues to meaningfully support Black entrepreneurship."

Black founders receive [less than 1% of venture capital](#). As an extension of Northwestern Mutual's Sustained Action for Racial Equity (SARE) Task Force, the initiative is designed to help address this racial wealth gap. The Black Founder Accelerator program provides those selected with a \$100,000 investment, a 12-week business training program, access to venture capital partners and Northwestern Mutual mentors and more. Past recipients have included Black founders from cities nationwide, including Milwaukee, Wis.

"Northwestern Mutual continues to drive our commitment toward diversity, equity and inclusion, with a focus on the Black and African American community," said Abim Kolawole, vice president – financial planning excellence and strategy at Northwestern Mutual. "Through targeting the funding gap for Black entrepreneurs, our Black Founder Accelerator is designed to reinforce an ecosystem that provides an even greater ripple effect on the next generation and beyond."

The cohort includes startups in Atlanta, Ga., Boulder, Colo., Lexington, Tenn., and Philadelphia, Pa., spanning Northwestern Mutual Future Ventures' key strategic areas of focus including fintech, insurtech, digital health and data analytics. This class of startups marks the first of two the company will recognize and support this year.

"We are both honored and eager to welcome this year's Black Founder Accelerator startups into our portfolio," said Precious Drew, senior managing director of the Northwestern Mutual Black Founder Accelerator, powered by gener8tor. "This partnership with Northwestern Mutual directly supports Black founders nationally by providing important resources, mentorship and funding these innovative entrepreneurs might otherwise not have had access to. We look forward to seeing how they continue to develop their unique solutions."

The five startups listed below were selected to participate in and receive investments from the Northwestern Mutual Black Founder Accelerator, powered by gener8tor:

**Sherisse Hawkins:** Founder and CEO | [sherisse@pagedip.com](mailto:sherisse@pagedip.com)

**Pagedip** (Boulder, Colo.) creates a no-code authoring tool that makes it easy for teams to create and share smart documents. Pagedip's granular "in-document analytics" can be viewed in real-time, providing key insights about reader interest down to the word or widget.

**Bryan Hobbs:** Founder and CEO | [bryan@pruuvn.com](mailto:bryan@pruuvn.com)

**Pruuvn™** (Atlanta, Ga.), a credentialing and data trust company, leverages blockchain technology to develop tools to empower the gig economy. Targeting companies that use contractors, Pruuvn's frictionless SaaS platform simplifies contractor verification, onboarding and compliance from multiple steps to one-click, significantly reducing time to hire and costs.

**Cody Eddings:** Founder and CEO | [cody.eddings@snaprefund.io](mailto:cody.eddings@snaprefund.io)

**SnapRefund** (Philadelphia, Pa.) allows businesses to send payments instantly and securely through a variety of digital payment rails. SnapRefund partners with insurance carriers, MGAs and TPAs to provide them and their policyholders with a simple, mobile-friendly dashboard where claim payments can be sent and received.

**Tiffanie Stanard:** Founder and CEO | [tstanard@getstimulus.io](mailto:tstanard@getstimulus.io)

**Stimulus** (Philadelphia, Pa.) makes the purchasing process more transparent and helps various stakeholders collaborate to achieve their corporate goals, such as improving diverse purchasing. Stimulus Score evaluates suppliers to provide an objective view of performance, which provides a 360 view for buyers to engage better with current or future vendors.

**Victor Brown:** Founder and CEO | [victor.brown@xcellentlife.com](mailto:victor.brown@xcellentlife.com)

**Xcellent Life** (Lexington, Tenn.) provides a comprehensive digital health platform that evaluates more factors utilizing a three-dimensional approach involving advanced methodologies for predictive analytics and artificial intelligence. As a result, this can provide more personalized health insights and identify potential issues more accurately and faster.

## About gener8tor

**gener8tor** is a venture capital fund and startup accelerator. Ranked one of the top-15 accelerators in the United States, gener8tor operates programs for startups, musicians, artists, investors, and workers and prioritizes investing across race, place, and gender. Fast Company named gener8tor one of the 10 Most Innovative Companies in 2020 and one of the Best Workplaces for Innovators in 2021.

## Northwestern Mutual Black Founder Accelerator

The NMBFA is a joint collaboration between Northwestern Mutual and gener8tor to advance Black tech startups based in the United States focused on fintech, insurtech, digital health and data analytics. gener8tor is the administrator of the twelve-week accelerator that runs two cohorts of five Black-led tech startups a year.

## About Northwestern Mutual

**Northwestern Mutual** has been helping people and businesses achieve financial security for more than 165 years. Through a holistic planning approach, Northwestern Mutual combines the expertise of its **financial professionals** with a personalized digital experience and industry-leading products to help its clients plan for what's most important. With more than \$560 billion in combined company and client assets, \$34 billion in revenues, and \$2.1 trillion worth of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual delivers financial security to nearly five million people with life, disability income and long-term care insurance, annuities, and brokerage and advisory services. Northwestern Mutual ranked 97 on the 2022 FORTUNE 500 and was recognized by FORTUNE® as one of the "World's Most Admired" life insurance companies in 2022.

Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company (NM), Milwaukee, WI (life and disability insurance, annuities, and life insurance with long-term care benefits) and its subsidiaries. Subsidiaries include Northwestern Mutual Investment Services, LLC (NMIS) (investment brokerage services), broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, member FINRA and SIPC; the Northwestern Mutual Wealth Management Company® (NMWMC) (investment advisory and services), federal savings bank; and Northwestern Long Term Care Insurance Company (NLTC) (long-term care insurance). Not all Northwestern Mutual representatives are advisors. Only those representatives with "Advisor" in their title or who otherwise disclose their status as an advisor of NMWMC are credentialed as NMWMC representatives to provide investment advisory services.

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