

## Northwestern Mutual's Black Founder Accelerator® program celebrates its third year of empowering Black entrepreneurs

*New cohort is part of Northwestern Mutual Future Ventures' \$20 Million allocation to support Black founders*

MILWAUKEE, Oct. 9, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Furthering its commitment to championing diversity, equity and inclusion, Northwestern Mutual, in partnership with gener8tor, a nationally ranked startup accelerator, announced this year's fall cohort of five Black-owned tech startups to its Black Founder Accelerator program.

Research shows that Black founders receive less than two percent of venture capital. To combat this substantial funding disparity for Black entrepreneurs, each startup is eligible for a \$100,000 investment and inclusion in a 12-week intensive program with access to individualized coaching and mentorship from industry-leading professionals. This is one of many core components to the company's Sustained Action for Racial Equity (SARE) initiative, which was created to advance bold, sustainable change that accelerates Northwestern Mutual's commitment to fight racism, prejudice and social injustice, with a focus on the Black and African American community.

"As we witness the remarkable achievements of each cohort, we are reminded that programs like these are essential in fostering a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem," said Abim Kolawole, chief audit executive at Northwestern Mutual and executive sponsor of the company's SARE initiative. "We hope that the success of these founders will inspire future generations of Black entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams."

The Black Founder Accelerator program's comprehensive offerings have enabled past participants to scale their businesses and enhance diversity of the tech industry.

"This program's success is an honest reflection of our company's unwavering support to create a more diverse industry by helping Black founders propel their businesses forward," said Craig Schedler, managing director of Northwestern Mutual Future Ventures. "We are confident that this next cohort of bright entrepreneurs will use the resources provided in this program to become leaders in their respective sectors."

Participating startups reflect Northwestern Mutual Future Ventures' key strategic areas of focus including fintech, insurtech, digital health and data analytics. The startups include:

**Kingsley Ezeani:** Co-founder and CEO | [cashex.app](#)

[CashEx](#) (Boston) takes away the financial stress of immigrants during their migration journey by guiding them through building credit and establishing a U.S. bank account.

**Kahlil Byrd:** Founder and CEO | [shur.co](#)

[Shur](#) (New York) promotes economic freedom and generational wealth by helping student loan borrowers eliminate early mistakes, build financial plans and adopt an understanding of credit. Shur also provides student loan repayment interruption insurance.

**Matthew Parker:** Founder and CEO | [moderntax.io](#)

[ModernTax](#) (San Francisco) simplifies underwriting by providing companies with on-demand tax and financial information on their customers for a better understanding of a company's financial health.

**Ashton Keys:** Founder and CEO | [athlytic.io](#)

[Athlytic](#) (Detroit) bridges the gap between brands and student-athletes by providing a seamless connection for name, image and likeness campaigns through use of data-driven insights and expert recommendations to pair brands with the perfect athletes for ROI driven endorsement campaigns.

**Jannae Gammage:** Founder and CEO | [tryforesight.io](#)

[Foresight](#) (Kansas City, Mo.) leverages natural language processing and machine learning algorithms to assess credit risk, fraud and bias, which allows traditional banking services to safely open doors for underserved consumers and drive impact at scale.

In addition to the Black Founder Accelerator program, Northwestern Mutual also committed to a [\\$100 million impact investing fund](#) to deliver on the company's commitment to addressing inequality and the racial wealth gap in the U.S. The fund focuses on three key areas: physical and social infrastructure, access to capital for individuals and businesses, and healthy sustainable neighborhoods and communities.

### 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 12-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 comprehensive 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 \$558 billion of total assets being managed across the company's institutional portfolio as well as retail investment client portfolios, nearly \$35 billion in revenues, and \$2.2 trillion worth of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual delivers financial security to more than five million people with life, disability income and long-term care insurance, annuities and brokerage and advisory services. Northwestern Mutual ranked 111 on the 2023 FORTUNE 500.

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