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TechDiversity Accelerator Boosts Innovation for Underrepresented Startup Founders

Powered by The Nielsen Foundation, Tampa Bay Wave's TechDiversity Accelerator Program helps BIPOC and other underrepresented founder-led companies get the jumpstart they need to grow and scale high-growth, early-stage startups.

TAMPA, FL (March 2, 2021) — Tampa Bay Wave, Inc. (Wave), a nonprofit technology startup accelerator dedicated to driving opportunity and prosperity in Tampa Bay, is now accepting

applications for its 2021 TechDiversity Accelerator program for companies located in the U.S. and abroad.

Funded by The Nielsen Foundation, the 90-day TechDiversity Accelerator Program is offered to early-stage companies that are at least 51% owned, controlled and operated by black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) or other underrepresented Entrepreneurs, minorities, women, veterans, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities or combination thereof. Now in its fourth year, the program was created with the vision of supporting and accelerating leadership diversity, equity and inclusion within high-growth, early-stage tech startups.

This year, the Nielsen Foundation increased its funding commitment to expand recruiting activities across the U.S. and Latin America and enhance support to TechDiversity alumni companies. In 2020, Tampa Bay Wave received over 700 applications for its accelerator programs from throughout the United States and abroad, with less than a 2.5% acceptance rate. TechDiversity alumni have hailed nationally from locations including Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York City, Austin, Dallas, Boise and Washington DC; and internationally, from Santiago, Chile, São Paulo, Brazil, Lima, Peru, and more.

“Diverse-led startups need greater access to business and funding opportunities — not only to grow and advance talent in this space, but also to increase the pipeline of diverse-owned businesses in supply chains,” says Andrea Bertels, President and Executive Director of Grantmaking, Nielsen Foundation. “We are so proud to continue to support this program as part of our commitment to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the media and technology industries. The cohort of TechDiversity Accelerator companies continues to get stronger each year, and we have seen first-hand the tangible results of this program on BIPOC and other underrepresented founder-led businesses.”

The [Nielsen Foundation](#) is a private foundation originally funded by Nielsen, a global measurement and data analytics company. The Nielsen Foundation seeks to bridge divides and enhance the use of data by the social sector to reduce discrimination, ease global hunger, promote effective education, and build strong leadership. Tampa Bay Wave, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is also committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in every aspect of their organization and programming. The TechDiversity Accelerator is one of the Nielsen Foundation’s signature programs.

“There is tremendous opportunity to increase founder diversity and funding within high-growth technology startups, and we’re proud to work with The Nielsen Foundation to continue to build this program and strengthen our commitments to advancing diversity and inclusion within the early-stage, startup space,” says Linda Olson, founder and CEO, Tampa Bay Wave.

In 2020, TechDiversity cohort company, SoLo Funds won Established’s “Startup of the Year” competition, a highly competitive startup competition that draws thousands of applications from throughout the world; in previous years, TechDiversity companies, Hoy Health and NeuroFlow both finished in the top fifteen. Past TechDiversity companies have also received high profile features in Crunchbase and Forbes, achieved rapid national growth trajectories and raised large funding rounds (Series A, Series B) in six to eighteen months.

“Companies within the program continue to get stronger each year, and we have seen first-hand the tangible results of this program on underrepresented founder-led businesses,” says Dr. Richard Munassi, Cohort Director, Tampa Bay Wave.

Through the accelerator programming, selected companies will receive executive coaching, comprehensive mentoring from industry experts, strategic introductions, and preparation for investor meetings — all culminating in Demo Day, which is a unique opportunity for founders to present their visions to a room full of national and international investors, leaders and press.

“Thanks to the generous support of The Nielsen Foundation, we are already seeing greater inbound interest in the TechDiversity program due to its growing national reputation, which is also good for the Tampa Bay region, as a major destination for great technology and talent,” said Olson.

Thanks to the generous support of The Nelsen Foundation, the TechDiversity Accelerator program is free to accepted applicants and is a zero equity program. The deadline to apply is April 30, 2021, with the virtual program kickoff scheduled for early summer. To apply to the TechDiversity Accelerator program or to learn more, please visit: <https://www.tampabaywave.org/techdiversity>.

ABOUT TAMPA BAY WAVE:

Tampa Bay Wave, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing entrepreneurs with facilitated access to the resources, expertise, and capital they need to grow vibrant technology-based companies in Tampa Bay. Since March 2013, Tampa Bay Wave has supported more than 300 tech startups thanks to grant funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), plus support from its economic development partners Hillsborough County and the City of Tampa. Tampa Bay Wave also receives support from Bellini Better World, as well as from corporate partners such as the Nielsen Foundation, JPMorgan Chase, A-Lign, Bank of America, EY, Hancock Whitney, Florida Blue, Foley & Lardner, KnowBe4, SYKES Enterprises, Tampa Bay Rays, Tampa Electric, Trenam Law, and Valley Bank. For more information, visit www.tampabaywave.org. Tampa Bay Wave is also the only startup accelerator in Florida that is a member of the GAN network of accelerators.

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