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Tampa Bay Wave Announces 5th Annual TechDiversity Accelerator Cohort



Now in its fifth year, the TechDiversity Accelerator is a collaboration with the Nielsen Foundation that fosters greater diversity and inclusion in the tech startup industry in communities nationwide and beyond.

TAMPA, FL (July 2022) Tampa Bay Wave is proud to announce the 2022 TechDiversity Accelerator program cohort consisting of 15 incredible high-growth tech startups from across the United States and Canada.

Funded by the Nielsen Foundation since its inception in 2018, this 90-day TechDiversity Accelerator program works to support and accelerate leadership diversity, equity and inclusion within high-growth, early-stage tech startups. Selected companies must be 51% owned, controlled and operated by people of color, including Black, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Latino or Latina, Native or other minority entrepreneurs), women, veterans, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities or combination thereof.

"We are thrilled to see the TechDiversity Accelerator reach its fifth cohort of diverse entrepreneurs," said Andrea Bertels, President and Executive Director of Grantmaking at the Nielsen Foundation. "When the Nielsen Foundation began working with Tampa Bay Wave to build this program, we could only dream of the type of growth and traction that the Accelerator and its founders have achieved. We need an inclusive economy that works for all people, and we're honored to support the TechDiversity Accelerator to supercharge the impact these amazing diverse founders can have."

TechDiversity cohort participants were selected from hundreds of applications from companies spanning 30 countries, 28 states and 120 cities across the United States. Past TechDiversity participants have hailed nationally from locations including Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York City, Austin, Dallas, Boise, and Washington DC; and internationally, from Chile, Brazil, Peru, and more.

Through accelerator programming, 2022 cohort 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 national and international investors, leaders, and press.

"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 the Established's "Startup of the Year" competition, a highly competitive startup competition, that draws thousands of applications from around the world; in previous years, TechDiversity companies, Hoy Health and NeuroFlow both finished in the top 15. That trend continued in 2021 with Home Lending Pal placing in the top five, as well as MARVL, Shamrck, and Spontivly finishing in the top fifteen. Past TechDiversity companies also received high profile features in Axios, Crunchbase and Forbes, having achieved rapid national growth trajectories and raised large funding rounds (Series A, Series B) in 6 to 18 months post-accelerator.

Wave's accelerator program is the only Florida-based accelerator program accredited by GAN (gan.co), a network of the most respected accelerators around the world. Thanks to the generous support of The Nielsen Foundation, the TechDiversity Accelerator is free to participants, and Wave takes no equity from the founders.

Among the 15 new TechDiversity cohort companies, there are eight women founders, eight AANHPI founders, two Black founders, three Latino/Latina founders, two LGBTQ+ founders, and one veteran. Eight of the startups are based in thriving tech cities outside of Florida, five from Florida, and two in Canada. The selected cohort features high-potential startups in Enterprise SaaS, HealthTech, FinTech, EdTech, AI, Gaming, and more.

Not only does Wave's TechDiversity program continue to attract startups from across the U.S. and abroad, many of the startups historically are also graduates of other highly-competitive programs such as Y Combinator, TechStars, Alchemist, Harvard Innovation Labs, Zeroto510, Johnson & Johnson J Labs, and TMCx. This year's cohort includes multiple companies with founders who have had prior exits. One founder is also a Tillman Scholar.

THE 2022 TECHDIVERSITY COHORT INCLUDES:

302 Interactive | Orlando, FL

302 Interactive is developing Easel - a design platform with a headless architecture to reduce the time and effort of creating interactive 3D content for the metaverse.

BāKIT Box | Chicago, IL

BāKIT Box is a specialty baking kit service aimed at making baking easy and accessible. We offer a changing menu of culturally diverse baking kits and all the pre-measured ingredients delivered to your door. We are bringing easy baking to the modern age, enabled by technology.

Coralai | Seattle, WA

Coralai is an AI-driven skincare retail ecosystem built to enable individuals to better understand their skin, set personal skin goals, receive tailored product recommendations and routines, and connect with professionals.

Enlightapp | Austin, TX

Enlight helps teachers build meaningful engagement and create inclusive learning environments in the classroom.

Finni Health | Toronto, ON

Finni Health is building the Shopify for ABA Therapy. Over 5 million Americans will be diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Out of these 5 million, only half will go on to receive care. Our mission is to help practitioners build and scale their own at-home autism therapy clinics.

JobGraze | Tampa, FL

JobGraze is an online job platform connecting licensed healthcare professionals and employers.

Krew Social | St. Petersburg, FL

Krew Social is a friend-making app that is focusing on building community within organizations. Numerous studies have shown friendship increases profitability, retention, lease renewals, and many other metrics.

LunaJoy Health | St. Petersburg, FL

LunaJoy is a digital care clinic for women through the lifespan: puberty, pregnancy, postpartum, infertility, miscarriage, perimenopause. We provide in-network therapy, medication management, and coaching.

Maya Ai | Tampa, FL

Maya is a market intelligence engine for data teams. She continuously learns & provides the most marginal opportunities from market shifts.

No Limbits | Iowa City, IA

No Limbits is a ready-to-wear adaptive apparel brand with the mission of increasing comfort, confidence, and independence in those who struggle with clothing due to a disability.

O'Peers | San Francisco, CA

O'Peers offers burnout and stress prevention programs for remote teams. Therapist-directed virtual support groups in which employees discuss their mental health and professional growth.

REES Community | Winnipeg, ON

REES is a simple, secure online platform for reporting sexual harassment, misconduct and assault that can be adapted for use across any decor or industry.

STAKANA | Seattle, WA

Stakana brings AI-powered customer insights to community banks and credit unions. We predict customer behavior to increase revenue, market share, and customer loyalty.

TechComb | Tampa, FL

TechComb streamlines the process of developing computer vision applications providing real-time detection and classification of images. Leveraging this capability, TechComb offers schools a plug-and-play software solution to identify and send alert notifications about harmful threats nearing entering our schools.

Venteur | Berkeley, CA

Venteur is an AI-powered benefits marketplace that enables businesses to offer their employees better health insurance for less money. Instead of offering a traditional group health insurance plan, businesses are able to provide their employees with tax-free money to buy health insurance.

ABOUT THE NIELSEN FOUNDATION:

The Nielsen Foundation is a private foundation originally funded by Nielsen, a global data and analytics company. The Foundation envisions a more equitable world where everyone counts. The Nielsen Foundation's mission is to support organizations that give voice and opportunities to historically-excluded groups and communities. The Foundation supports organizations that encourage educational access and persistence, promote economic mobility and well-being, and advance representation in media and technology. Across these focus areas, the Foundation's grantmaking is firmly grounded in a commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion. For more information, visit www.nielsen-foundation.org.

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 400 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 individuals such as Michael and Korrine Fraser and Kyle Taylor, founder of The Penny Hoarder, as well as from partners such as A-LIGN, Bank of America, Bellini Better World, Encore Bank/STi, EY, Florida Blue, Florida Funders, Foley & Lardner, Frontier Communications, JPMorgan Chase, KnowBe4, MacDonald Ventures, Nielsen Foundation, Rays/Rowdies Foundation, Tampa Electric, Trenam Law, Truist Foundation, and Vinik Family Foundation. Tampa Bay Wave is also a member of the GAN network of accelerators. For more information, visit www.tampabaywave.org