

## From Patients to Policyowners, Black Entrepreneurs Backed by Northwestern Mutual Drive Innovation and Improved Outcomes Across Industries

*Company's Black Founder Accelerator Program expands to 20 businesses nationwide with the addition of five promising tech startups*

MILWAUKEE, Sept. 27, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Northwestern Mutual, in partnership with gener8tor, today announced the addition of five dynamic tech startups to its Black Founder Accelerator, an initiative launched to provide targeted resources and financing to promising Black entrepreneurs. The five startups are the latest to join the accelerator program, which now boasts a stable of 20 high-potential businesses nationwide that deliver a range of services and solutions across a variety of industries.

"It has been an honor to watch the startups we've partnered with achieve remarkable success as they drive innovation, disrupt industries, and lift our communities," said Craig Schedler, managing director of Northwestern Mutual Future Ventures. "I'm confident these new businesses – like their predecessors – will deliver the exceptional performance to match their exceptional promise."

An extension of Northwestern Mutual's Sustained Action for Racial Equity (SARE) Task Force, which launched a [\\$100 million impact fund](#) that directs investments to Black and African American communities nationwide, the Black Founder Accelerator program was created to help close the racial wealth gap. Black founders are generally underfunded, with [less than 2% of venture capital funding annually](#). The Impact Investing Fund is intended to make measurable improvement in racial equity, while also generating a positive financial return for its policyowners.

The program invests in high-growth startups to help close the funding gap, create exciting job opportunities in communities of need, and lead the way for the next generation of innovators. Each startup receives a \$100,000 investment, a 12-week business training program, access to venture capital partners and individualized coaching from industry-leading insurance and finance professionals. Backed by Northwestern Mutual and gener8tor, the startups have the resources to be able to significantly boost their growth trajectory.

"Northwestern Mutual's Black Founder Accelerator is designed to tackle the pronounced racial funding gap by giving Black entrepreneurs greater access to venture capital and opportunity," said Abim Kolawole, vice president of financial planning excellence and strategy at Northwestern Mutual. "We are proud to support the growth and resilience of Black-founded startups and nurture the positive impact these entrepreneurs will have on future generations."

The newest cohort includes startups from around the nation, including founders from Atlanta, Ga., Chicago, Ill., Houston, Texas, Prior Lake, Minn., and Milwaukee, Wis. Chosen startups for the program are aligned with Northwestern Mutual Future Ventures' key strategic areas of focus, including fintech, insurtech, digital health and data analytics. [The summer startups were announced](#) in July.

"We are thrilled to welcome a new class of innovative startups into our portfolio," said Precious Drew, senior managing director of Northwestern Mutual Black Founder Accelerator, powered by gener8tor. "It is a great privilege to provide these startups with the resources they need to continue to grow and develop their companies, which in turn grows surrounding communities."

The following five startups have been selected to participate in and receive investments from the Northwestern Mutual Black Founder Accelerator, powered by gener8tor:

**Soton Rosanwo:** Founder and CEO | [soton@yourcentinel.com](mailto:soton@yourcentinel.com)

**Centinel** (Chicago, Ill.) reimagines insurance coverage by providing claims-free coverage for hard-to-insure risks through its parametric platform.

**Kiley Summers:** CEO | [kiley.summers@spendebt.com](mailto:kiley.summers@spendebt.com)

**SpentDebt** (Houston, Texas) helps eliminate debt faster with micropayments through everyday purchases.

**Nneka Sederstrom:** Founder and CEO | [nsederstrom@uzobiinc.com](mailto:nsederstrom@uzobiinc.com)

**UzObi, Inc** (Prior Lake, Minn.) is a healthcare platform that simplifies, customizes and digitizes advance care planning and puts it at the patient's and provider's fingertips.

**Marlon Ross:** Founder and CEO | [mross@bewellacy.com](mailto:mross@bewellacy.com)

**Wellacy Health** (Milwaukee, Wis.) helps providers better engage, monitor and treat patients' physical and mental healthcare needs.

**Lacrecia G. Cade:** President and CEO | [lacrecia.cade@what-ifcollective.com](mailto:lacrecia.cade@what-ifcollective.com)

**What-If Collective** (Atlanta, Ga.) builds trust between insurance companies and multicultural communities by providing simple, easy-to-understand information about insurance, bringing cultural influencers to the conversation and helping insurance companies create products and services that meet the need of these 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 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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