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Tampa Bay Wave collaborates with The Nielsen Foundation to launch the TechDiversity Accelerator Program in Tampa Bay

The Nielsen Foundation awards Tampa Bay Wave \$100K grant to develop an accelerator cohort exclusively dedicated to diversity

TAMPA BAY, Fla. (February 14, 2018) – Tampa Bay Wave, Inc. (Wave) a nonprofit dedicated to building, launching, and growing tech companies in Tampa Bay, has joined The Nielsen Foundation to launch the newly created TechDiversity Accelerator program in an effort to foster the growth and development of diverse tech startups in Tampa Bay and beyond.

Wave's new TechDiversity Accelerator program, powered by The Nielsen Foundation, is a 90-day program designed for early-stage tech companies 51% owned, controlled, and operated by a minority; woman; veteran; or lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender person or combination thereof. Participating companies will work alongside each other in a collaborative, non-competitive environment and will be provided invaluable resources, such as a dedicated Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR), one-on-one mentoring with notable tech founders, pitch coaching, investment readiness programs, investor introductions, and access to Wave's new seed fund. TechDiversity Accelerator companies will also participate in Wave's Demo Day at the conclusion of the program.

"We are thrilled that the TechDiversity Accelerator with Tampa Bay Wave is one of the Foundation's first signature programs," said Crystal Barnes, Executive Director of Grantmaking of the Nielsen Foundation. "We hope that empowering, encouraging, and accelerating diverse tech businesses through the Accelerator can really move the needle on growing the pipeline of diverse-owned companies around the United States."

The Nielsen Foundation is a private foundation funded by Nielsen, a global measurement and data analytics company. The Nielsen Foundation seeks to enhance use of data by the social sector to reduce discrimination, ease global hunger, promote effective education, and build strong leadership. The Foundation began grantmaking in 2016.

"Tampa Bay Wave is thrilled to launch the TechDiversity Accelerator program, powered by The Nielsen Foundation, here in Tampa Bay. Wave is committed to removing barriers for underrepresented startups," said Linda Olson, President and founder of Tampa Bay Wave. "We look forward to promoting the power of diversity in the tech startup community by creating an inclusive program to hone their talents and fuel their innovative growth. The benefits of startup inclusion stretch across the entire technology ecosystem and will contribute to the strength of our entrepreneurial community."

Tampa Bay Wave will also work with the Checkered Flag Run Foundation, an Arizona-based nonprofit dedicated to diversity to promote the program application process nationwide. Additionally, participating companies will be given an opportunity to pitch their product and services to the members of the AEMS Industry Group, powered by the National Minority Supplier

Development Council, exposing diverse companies to potential large-scale clients.

Wave's accelerator program is the only Florida-based accelerator program accepted into GAN (Gan.co), a network of the most respected accelerators around the world. The Wave accelerator launched in March 2013, and typically runs three cohorts per year. The current accelerator cohort is Wave's sixteenth cohort and comprises 12 companies, 9 of whom are led by diverse teams.

The TechDiversity Accelerator program application will open on February 14, 2018 and will close on March 31, 2018. The program is scheduled to run in the summer of 2018. TechDiversity Accelerator companies that successfully complete the program will participate in Tampa Bay Wave's Demo Day in August 2018, a unique opportunity for founders to present their companies to a room full of hand-selected investors, leaders, and press.

To apply to the TechDiversity Accelerator program, or to learn more, visit <http://www.tampabaywave.org/accelerator/tech-diversity>.

ABOUT TAMPA BAY WAVE:

Tampa Bay Wave, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing local entrepreneurs with facilitated access to the resources, expertise and capital they need to grow vibrant technology-based companies in Tampa Bay and create high wage tech jobs, thus fostering an innovation-based economy for the region. Since March 2013, Tampa Bay Wave has supported more than 200 tech startups in Tampa Bay 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 corporate partners such as Bank of America, Florida Blue, Foley & Lardner, Sourcetoad, Spectrum, Sykes Enterprises, Tampa Bay Rays, Tampa Electric, Trenam Law, and Tribridge. For more information, visit www.tampabaywave.org