

# PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Justin Thompson, Communications Manager  
[justin@mountainbizworks.org](mailto:justin@mountainbizworks.org) or (828) 253-2834 ext. 818

## **Mountain BizWorks Announces New Catalyst Cohort of Fast-Growing Companies Run by Entrepreneurs of Color in Western North Carolina**

*New inclusive entrepreneurship program provides networking opportunities and ongoing business and leadership skills-development*

**ASHEVILLE, NC—October 27, 2020—** Mountain BizWorks, a U.S. Treasury certified non-profit community development financial institution (CDFI), today announced the cohort of fast-growing Western North Carolina (WNC) companies selected for its new, inclusive Catalyst Cohort program. The Catalyst Cohort is designed for existing entrepreneurs of color whose businesses have demonstrated strong job growth potential and want to boost their profitability while further developing their professional networks.

Participants in the one-year course receive intensive growth management training along with the opportunity to connect with experienced mentors and receive access-to-capital support.

“We’re excited to welcome such an impressive group of entrepreneurs,” said Matthew Raker, Mountain BizWorks executive director. “It’s a multi-faceted opportunity. These companies get the chance to support one another on their respective entrepreneurial journeys. Championing the ups and downs of the economy as a group will reinforce the startup ecosystem’s social capital in Western North Carolina. Beyond that, participants will find that the program builds resiliency. It offers an opportunity for catalytic change, in every sense of the word.”

Participants are to be embedded in a peer advisory group that is facilitated by an experienced growth coach—realized through ongoing roundtable sessions. Using this experience, they will gain access to transformational learning opportunities that include one-on-one mentoring, expert speakers and business development services. The goal is to enable members of the cohort to navigate through business challenges using the collective intelligence and wisdom of others.

The program starts on October 29 and runs through November, 2021. The first three months of the program provide exposure to foundational business strategies and coaching on the development of an actionable business plan. There will be monthly mastermind sessions where members share their progress and continue to receive support from the group. Individualized coaching sessions with program facilitators and Mountain BizWorks coaches are also part of the experience. In addition, each participant will receive \$2,000 to apply towards tailored business services that help advance their growth goals.

The goal of the Catalyst Cohort is to drive specific outcomes including reaching big individual business goals, increasing revenue, and building businesses to scale. These include accountability in achieving individual business goals, the ability to set, stick to, and achieve big goals as well as increased confidence. "As you progress through Catalyst Cohort, you will likely start to understand better that you've made the right decisions and are taking the right actions to achieve your goals," Raker added.

The following companies comprise the cohort:

- Peterson Appliance Service - Sale and service of in-home appliances in Asheville
- LuXe Financial Co. - Mortgage and financial services
- Asheville Community Enterprises, LLC - Resources for substance use, mental health, domestic abuse and anger management support
- Kente Kitchen - West African cuisine and African Grocery
- Sole82 - Sneaker boutique store in Asheville
- HERS Limited Liability Co - Healthcare coordination services for women
- MS Lean Landscaping - A service based residential and commercial landscaping company specializing in lawn maintenance, aerating, seeding, and fertilization.
- Sora Surya No - Healer, speaker and life coach
- Spillway Bridge & Co - Gathering place for music, craft & classic brews and top shelf spirits
- GMZ Construction LLC - Masonry and Painting

###

### **About Mountain BizWorks**

Mountain BizWorks has been making business loans ranging from \$1,000 to \$250,000 to small businesses in Western North Carolina for nearly 30 years. Their tailored small business lending and peer learning programs help grow great businesses and expand economic opportunity. They work with companies who may find it difficult to secure funding from banks and other traditional sources. What makes Mountain BizWorks unique is that all loan decisions and relationships are managed locally. They work to ensure clients' success by offering highly customized, peer-to-peer business coaching

by an extensive network of local, successful business owners. This innovative blend of lending and learning helps entrepreneurs overcome obstacles, grow strategically, and create jobs.

For more: [mountainbizworks.org/c2](https://mountainbizworks.org/c2)