

2026 COHORT



Next Level

Growth Exchange



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Next Level: Growth Exchange is a no-cost, non-dilutive accelerator designed to help high-growth, early-stage startups scale in the Maryland, Virginia and Washington, DC.

Through a masterclass-driven program, founders gain access to mentorship, industry expertise, and connections with leading employers and investors. The program equips founders with the relationships and strategic guidance needed to grow their ventures and navigate growth.

The curriculum includes:

- Capital Strategy & Preparedness
- Procurement & Partnerships
- Pitching & Investor Readiness
- Hiring & Culture
- Technology & AI
- Legal Considerations

Participants receive direct engagement with the Greater Washington Partnership network, along with access to corporate partners and investors. The program provides:

- Access to financial, social, and technical capital
- Personalized mentorship and industry connections
- Structured support to refine growth strategy
- A culminating pitch competition

This lookbook highlights the eight founders selected for the 2026 Next Level cohort and the ventures they are building. Their companies represent high-growth sectors shaping the region's innovation economy, including:

- Technology
- Life Sciences
- Aerospace & Defense
- Advanced Manufacturing



Sajith Kumar



Business: Chargerzilla

Established: 2023

Headquarters: Maryland

Industry: EV Charging / Transportation

Business Description: Chargerzilla is addressing critical gaps in the EV charging industry by building the first community-driven AI-powered EV charging ecosystem — uniting drivers, property owners, businesses, municipalities, and charging networks into a single scalable, revenue-generating platform. We empower corporations and small businesses to generate new revenue streams by activating underutilized assets while eliminating charging anxiety for EV drivers. Our solution enables cities, counties, and states to accelerate electrification without the burden of capital investment.

Unique Value Proposition: First community-driven AI-powered EV charging ecosystem — uniting drivers, property owners, businesses, municipalities, and charging networks into a single scalable, revenue-generating platform.

Target Market: Businesses, homeowners, property owners, and EV drivers.



Ruth Abate



Business: Cureiosity

Established: 2025

Headquarters: Virginia

Industry: Health Technology

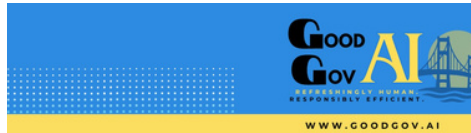
Business Description: Cureiosity is a health technology company that helps patients discover and understand relevant clinical trials by simplifying complex medical data into clear, personalized, and location based results.

Unique Value Proposition: Unlike traditional trial databases, Cureiosity translates complex clinical trial data into simple, personalized matches so patients can act with confidence, not confusion.

Target Market: Patients who want clear, personalized access to clinical trials and trial sponsors who need faster, more targeted participant recruitment.



Johntel Greene



Business: Good Gov AI

Established: 2024

Headquarters: Maryland

Industry: Policy Technology

Business Description: GoodGov.AI empowers policymakers, advocates, and citizens through responsible AI technology and strategic consulting services. We are committed to human-centered policymaking, delivering accurate, reliable information and tools to bridge the gap between communities and their elected officials. By leveling the playing field, we enable everyday people to have a stronger voice in shaping policies that directly impact their lives, while providing professionals with cutting-edge tools for more efficient governance and equitable outcomes for all.

Unique Value Proposition: Our unique value proposition is that we are developing a new way to do local policymaking that removes barriers, to train government relations professionals, and to open doors to more people to engage with their elected officials for better policy outcomes by leveraging AI.

Target Market: Advocates and Legislative Staff.



Andrew Schoka



Business: Hardshell

Established: 2025

Headquarters: Virginia

Industry: Cybersecurity

Business Description: Hardshell is a data-centric AI security platform that protects sensitive datasets before they enter AI/ML systems. We detect and mitigate risks like data poisoning, data leakage, and model inversion that traditional security tools miss, enabling organizations in defense, healthcare, and finance to adopt AI safely.

Unique Value Proposition: AI systems trained on sensitive data are vulnerable to attacks that happen at the data layer, before a model is ever deployed. Data poisoning can corrupt model behavior, and membership inference can extract confidential information from trained models. Current security tools focus on protecting models after deployment. We secure the data upstream, where most AI risk originates, which remains a underdeveloped segment from both a technology and market perspective.

Target Market: On the commercial side, we target regulated industries with strong data security requirements (healthcare, financial services, industrials, etc). On the federal side, we target intelligence and defense customers focusing on deployment of AI/ML models within mission-critical systems.



Naroa Gimenez-Camino

Business: ORAIN Biotechnologies

Established: 2023

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.

Industry: Life Sciences



Business Description: ORAIN Biotechnologies uses JERO, a proprietary cloud-based AI platform that analyzes biology and tissue imaging data to discover biomarkers that predict which patients will respond to therapies. Unlike traditional approaches, JERO uses annotation-free AI to uncover complex cellular patterns without manual labeling, enabling biomarker discovery from small clinical datasets. By helping biotech and pharmaceutical companies identify predictive biomarkers earlier, ORAIN aims to improve clinical trial success and accelerate precision medicine.

Unique Value Proposition: ORAIN's unique value proposition is its annotation-free AI platform, JERO, which can discover predictive spatial biomarkers from small clinical datasets without manual labeling or prior hypotheses. This allows biotech and pharmaceutical companies to uncover treatment-response biomarkers faster and earlier in drug development, improving patient selection and increasing clinical trial success rates.

Target Market: Our primary customers are biotech and pharmaceutical companies developing oncology therapies that need biomarkers to predict patient response in clinical trials. We also work with academic medical centers and translational research groups that generate spatial biology datasets but lack advanced AI tools to analyze them.



Neil Sorkin



Business: Redhelm Labs

Established: 2023

Headquarters: Maryland

Industry: Aerospace/ Defense

Business Description: Redhelm Labs engineers advanced optical power transmission and receiver systems that enable safe, scalable wireless energy delivery for defense and industrial platforms.

Unique Value Proposition: We enable safe, scalable wireless energy delivery using eyesafe laser architectures and high-efficiency receiver systems that reduce deployment risk while extending mission endurance for unmanned and remote platforms.

Target Market: Department of Defense, defense contractors, government research organizations developing unmanned and autonomous systems, and industrial customers with a need for wire-free sensor installation.



Zhen Zhang



Business: Unitra

Established: 2026

Headquarters: Virginia

Industry: Electronic Sports

Business Description: Unitra is a real-time voice translation app that lets gamers speak different languages and understand each other instantly.

Unique Value Proposition: Privacy + Real-time + Affordability — all in one. Unlike competitors, Unitra processes speech locally on your device so your voice never hits the cloud, while still delivering sub-1.5 second translation fast enough for live gaming conversations — at a fraction of the cost.

Target Market: International gamers, streamers, and content creators who want to engage with global audiences in real-time.

NOTES

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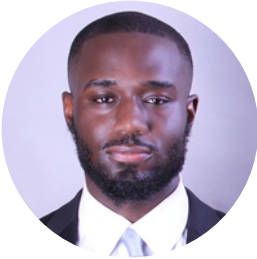
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Ama Asamoah



Emmanuel Larbi

Business: Pattron

Established: 2021

Headquarters: Maryland

Employees: 16



Business Description: Pattron operates within the IT support industry, delivering innovative solutions that transform how IT field support is provided. Our services include: field engineer dispatching; equipment management, including installation, relocation, upgrading, and reconfiguring hardware; IT project management, scoping, and cost estimations; and security systems installation, among other services in IT support.

Industry: Information Technology Services

Target Market: IT managed service providers, data centers, educational institutions, and retail & hospitality chains



@PATTRONTECH



Pattron



@pattrontech



Corie Branch

Business: Clark Building Technologies

Name: Corie Branch

Established: 2022

Headquarters: Maryland

Employees: 54



Business Description: At Clark Building Technologies, we specialize in designing, installing, and servicing a range of technology to meet your needs. Our expertise encompasses security cameras, access control systems, digital signage, audio video and conference room buildouts. Whether you require robust surveillance, secure access management, captivating digital displays, or immersive audiovisual setups, our highly trained technicians are equipped to deliver top-notch solutions. Clark Building Technologies specializes in CCTV, access control, conference room builds, and low voltage cabling.

Industry: Physical security (CCTV and access control)

Target Market: Commercial and government



Clark Computer Services



Clark Building Technologies



@clark_support



@clark_computer_services



Ruchee Chopra



Business: Mizzeto LLC

Established: 2012

Headquarters: Maryland

Employees: 7

Business Description: Mizzeto is a Healthcare IT firm focused on automating and staffing payer operations. We have 3 distinct lines of business: automation, AI data governance, and staffing. With a client-centric approach and extensive expertise in healthcare operations, we deliver cost-effective solutions to our partners. We're proud to be a women & minority owned business.

Industry: IT Healthcare

Target Market: Health Insurance Companies



Mizzeto

mizzeto.com



Bobby Clark

Business: Pyxis Partners

Established: 2020

Headquarters: District of Columbia

Employees: 22



PYXISPARTNERS

Business Description: Pyxis Partners is a public affairs, professional services firm focused on advancing policies and programs that improve health outcomes and strengthen communities. Our core capabilities include community engagement, communications, public policy development and analysis, advocacy and government relations.

Industry: Public Affairs

Target Market: We work with organizations across the U.S. healthcare ecosystem, including public agencies/institutions, think tanks, non-profits and commercial enterprises.



pyxispartners.co



Kizzy Dogan

Business: T&G Commercial Cleaning, LLC

Established: 2023

Headquarters: District of Columbia

Employees: 13



Business Description: Full service woman-owned and operated facility maintenance company serving Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia. Providing maintenance services to schools, churches, retail, government, local, and commercial properties.

Industry: Janitorial

Target Market: Retail, Construction, Education, Government, Religious, and Property Managers

tandgcommercialcleaning.com



Bhawna Goel

Business: Gunvatta USA

Established: 2021

Headquarters: Maryland

Employees: 9



Business Description: Gunvatta offers a wide range of IT related services primarily focused on the healthcare landscape. We bring together a team of experts in their respective fields such as statistics, data mapping and standardization, EMR visual analytics, business development, etc. We are a functional service provider that specializes in data analysis, reporting and expert resources.

Industry: Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology, Information Technology

Target Market: Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology, Hospitals



Gunvatta USA Inc.

gunvatta.com



Tracy Hanks

Business: Rymak LLC
Established: 2016
Headquarters: Maryland
Employees: 5



Business Description: Business management consulting services. Historically, we have specialized in providing agile project solutions. Our senior staff boasts over 50 years of corporate experience collectively developing comprehensive integrated program solutions, focusing its efforts in program management; procurement and contracting; acquisitions support; planning and programming.

Industry: Administrative and support services/IT/transportation

Target Market: State, local and federal government



@RymakLLC



ry.mak_llc

rymakllc.com



Ruth LaToison Ifill

Business: Aridai

Established: 2017

Headquarters: District of Columbia

Employees: 4



Business Description: Aridai is a management consulting firm that leverages its expert staff, innovative technology, modern financial operations and equity & inclusion to deliver high-quality management consulting services and solutions. Aridai provides comprehensive professional services to enhance and support your organization's daily operations and bolster the effectiveness of your workforce. We work with clients to provide premier consulting services in management, leadership development, administration, compliance, information technology, and community development. Our mission is to be our client's favorite partner in performance and social impact.

Industry: Consulting services

Target Market: Government





Donnell Johns



Tanda Johns

Business: Veterans Growing America
Established: 2016
Headquarters: Virginia
Employees: 25



Business Description: Veterans Growing America is an organization dedicated to empowering military-connected entrepreneurs by providing opportunities to grow and showcase their businesses. Through its Veteran Marketplace, monthly military mixers, and community-driven events, VGA fosters economic success, social connection, and business education for veterans, active duty service members, military spouses, reservists, dependents, and DoD civilians. The organization operates locations in Woodbridge, VA, and Clarksburg, MD, offering a platform for military entrepreneurs to sell their products, connect with customers, and build sustainable businesses.

Industry: Retail, events, and education

Target Market: Military connected community and supporters



Veterans Growing America



Veterans Growing America



@veteransgrowingamerica



Caroline Johnston

Business: GreenIsland Bakery

Established: 2009

Headquarters: District of Columbia

Employees: 9



Business Description: Irish European baked good company specializing in a melt-in-your-mouth shortbread range. Offering consumer packaged goods to Whole Foods and Giant, amongst other stores. We also provide custom packaging for the White House Historical Association and more. As a social enterprise, we provide workshops for trauma survivors and a workforce training program for vulnerable and marginalized women who have experienced gender based violence.

Industry: Food services

Target Market: Retailers and corporate gift programs



GreenIsland Bakery



Green Island Bakery



@GIBIrishBakery



@greenislandbakery

greenislandbakery.com



William McAfee

Business: Sustainable Facilities Management Services

Established: 2013

Headquarters: District of Columbia

Employees: 53



Business Description: Sustainable Facilities Management Services (SFMS) is a fully integrated facilities management company that specializes in "Green Building" methodology with a core management team that has over 50 years' experience in facilities management and consulting serving the federal, state, and local governments, as well as the industrial and commercial market place. Our purpose is to contribute to the sustainability of facilities we manage and the quality of life for the people that work there.

Industry: Facilities Management/Energy Efficiency

Target Market: State, Local, Commercial, and Federal Government



Diarra Mckinney

Business: Rosewood Strategies LLC

Established: 2018

Headquarters: District of Columbia

Employees: 4

ROSEWOOD

Business Description: Rosewood is an integrated real estate finance and development company focused on strategic high-impact development opportunities in the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast. Rosewood's purpose is to develop unique and dynamic projects that participate in the revitalization of urban neighborhoods. Rosewood creates new and preserves affordable and workforce housing, and we also finance and develop headquarters and program space for non-profit organizations who need real estate guidance.

Our approach is to identify neighborhoods with high potential for revitalization and to implement creative, strategic, long-term investments in economically viable real estate projects. For over a decade, Rosewood and its principals have executed more than 80 real estate transactions, representing over \$1 billion of gross asset value in Washington, DC and surrounding areas.

Industry: Real estate development

Target Market: Nonprofit institutions



rosewood.dev



ROSEWOOD

rosewood.dev



Ashlee Neverdon

Business: Selfless Life
Established: 2022
Headquarters: Maryland
Employees: 3



Business Description: Selfless Life Home Care is a dedicated home care agency committed to enhancing the quality of life for seniors and individuals with disabilities. We offer compassionate, personalized care services in the comfort of clients' homes, supporting their physical, emotional, and social well-being. Our team of experienced caregivers provides a wide range of services, from personal care and companionship to specialized assistance, ensuring that our clients receive the highest level of care and attention they deserve.

Industry: Healthcare

Target Market: Seniors who require additional assistance at home but want to maintain their independence and quality of life; adults over 18 who need temporary assistance due to surgery, recovery, post-partum care, or other life events; and adults with disabilities or those who lack sufficient support.



Selfless Life



Selfless Life



selflesslife_homecare



Connor Nicholson

Jessica Nicholson

Business: Nicholson Strategic Solutions LLC

Established: 2009

Headquarters: Virginia

Employees: 45



Business Description: NSS is a Woman-Owned Small Business Technology Services company specializing in business automation and artificial intelligence solutions. Founded in 2009, NSS has partnered with federal agencies and government contractors with the goal of helping them achieve better business outcomes and optimize their organizations.

We combine deep human expertise with the latest advanced technologies to drive innovation while reducing costs and exceeding customer expectations. Partner with NSS to enhance your digital transformation journey and leverage some of the most advanced technologies that See, Say, Do, and Learn!

Industry: Government Contracting

Target Market: Government Agency (FedCiv or DOD)



NSS

nssfed.com



Chi Perrus

Business: Paragon Construction Group, INC

Established: 2017

Headquarters: Maryland

Employees: 74



Business Description: Paragon Construction Group, Inc. is a BIPOC-owned and led construction firm founded in 2017 and licensed in Maryland and Washington, D.C. The company was formed to provide general contracting, construction management, owner representation, and real estate development advisory services. In addition, Paragon leverages its platform to empower underserved minority subcontractors and individuals to achieve growth and success through project collaboration. The company has a combined 60+ years of knowledge and experience in successfully navigating residential and commercial construction projects in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

Industry: Construction

Target Market: Affordable housing developers and municipal agencies (i.e. DCHA, HUD, WMATA, etc.)



Keith Pivonski

Business: Energy Finders, Inc

Established: 2022

Headquarters: Maryland

Employees: 3



ENERGY FINDERS

Business Description: Energy Finders is redefining the future of energy, environment, and land revitalization. Our mission is to transform former quarries, industrial byproducts, and coal combustion residuals (CCRs) into sustainable assets that drive environmental progress and economic growth. Through cutting-edge reclamation, responsible reuse, and next-generation clean energy solutions, we ensure that these materials and sites are repurposed for long-term resilience.

Industry: Energy and environment / beneficial reuse recycling

Target Market: Active quarries, inactive quarries, active utility scale power operators, abandoned former utility scale powerplants and reclamation sites.



Energy Finders Inc

energyfinders.us



Bryant Sanders

Business: BBE Innovation Inc.

Established: 2022

Headquarters: Maryland

Employees: 10



Business Description: We provide design, installation, and maintenance of interior tropical plants for commercial clients, with additional focus on streetscaping. Providing tropical, evergreen, and color rotations for the permanent plantings around office, retail, and commercial buildings. From the beginning, we recognized the need for a contractor who could provide all the plant maintenance needs both inside and out for the DC, VA, and MD corporate and commercial sectors.

Industry: Interior and exterior plantscaping

Target Market: Any commercial or government property that requires/needs plant decor to add something to the space.



bbeinnovationinc



BBE Innovation, Inc.



Hyacinth Tucker

Business: The Laundry Basket LLC

Established: 2022

Headquarters: Maryland

Employees: 7



Business Description: The Laundry Basket LLC is a premier laundry and dry cleaning service dedicated to providing convenient, high-quality garment care with pickup and delivery options. Our mission is to make laundry effortless for individuals, families, and businesses while promoting sustainability and workforce development. Through strategic partnerships and cutting-edge technology, we streamline operations for laundromats and dry cleaners, empowering them to grow while maintaining exceptional service standards.

Industry: Personal Services

Target Market: Individuals and businesses that require consistent laundry and dry cleaning services. Additionally, we partner with laundromats and dry cleaners that lack pickup and delivery capabilities, offering them a streamlined platform to expand their services. We also cater to organizations such as hotels, short-term rental hosts, healthcare facilities, and workforce programs that need bulk laundry solutions. Our focus includes underserved communities, veterans, and minority entrepreneurs through workforce development and cooperative business models.



Laundrybasketdelivery



Laundry Basket Delivery



@laundrybasketdelivery

NOTES

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