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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Advancing Economic Inclusion and Mobility: REDF Accelerator Announces New Cohort of Social Enterprise Leaders

20 Visionary Entrepreneurs From 10 Businesses Across the U.S. Converge at REDF Accelerator for Intensive Program to Amplify Social Impact

SAN FRANCISCO (January 16, 2025) — [REDF](#), a leading organization dedicated to advancing employment social enterprises (ESEs) and creating a more inclusive economy, is proud to announce the selection of its next cohort of impact-driven entrepreneurs for the [REDF Accelerator](#). This cohort, composed of 20 inspiring individuals leading 10 ESEs in locations across the U.S., represents a diverse and dynamic group of change-makers committed to driving positive social and economic impact.

The Accelerator is a six-month, hands-on program comprising 100+ hours of applied learning, all designed to help leaders from employment social enterprises increase their revenue and impact while strengthening their employee support services. This year, leadership pairs were selected from each enterprise to facilitate application of the Accelerator's learnings and expand the Accelerator's impact in each social enterprise. Each leadership pair will work with the peer cohort on current challenges and network with coaches and consultants in the field.

A core tenet of REDF's mission is the belief that transformative social and economic solutions must be deeply rooted in the real-world insights of those who have directly experienced systemic barriers to employment. This principle is reflected in the demographics of the Accelerator cohort: 60 percent of this cohort's leaders have firsthand experience of the barriers faced by the people they employ, and 65 percent of leaders identify as people of color.

"I've lived the reality of struggle — food insecurity, systemic barriers, and the fight to make a dream a reality," shares Dion Dawson, president and chief dreamer for Chicago-based enterprise Dion's Chicago Dream. "My experiences taught me that support is more than a paycheck — it's about creating an environment where people can show up as their best selves every day. The Accelerator is the perfect opportunity to dive deeper into how we can integrate technology, partnerships, and policy to expand our impact."

Danielle Parker, Chicago Dream vice president and chief mover, adds, “DCD prides itself on paying our staff a living wage and providing stabilization services to ensure that they thrive. I’m excited to learn best practices and ways to increase our employee support services.”

The selected leaders will attend intensive in-person and virtual programming, focusing on honing various aspects of business development, impact measurement, and sustainable growth. Upon successful completion of the Accelerator program, leadership teams walk away with an implementation plan, inclusive of strategies and prototypes to increase their enterprise’s financial sustainability, grow the number of people employed, and strengthen their programmatic supports. Leadership teams that complete the Accelerator will also be awarded a \$40,000 unrestricted grant to begin applying these learnings, and will gain access to [REDF’s Community](#) of 200+ employment social enterprises from around the country.

“The Accelerator Team is incredibly enthusiastic about welcoming this new cohort to experience our program’s latest iteration,” shares Yodit Beyene, Accelerator Director. “This format encourages ESE leadership teams to participate together, collectively building strategies to apply at their organizations.”

This cohort will convene leaders from eight states, representing a broad swathe of industries, including construction, food service, retail, and environmental services:

Jakki Bedsole & Laura Hackney, [AnnieCannons](#), Oakland, CA
Dusty Cooper & Yael Reichler, [DC Central Kitchen](#), Washington, DC
Danielle S. Parker & Dion Dawson, [Dion’s Chicago Dream](#), Chicago, IL
Christina Biandola & Mahlia Lindquist, [Dragonfly Thrift Boutique](#), Miami, FL
Chana Makale’a Dudoit Ane & Kaulana Thibedoux, [Living Pono Project](#), Maui, HI
Cooper Blackwell & Mysha Holland, [OIC, Inc. of Rocky Mount](#), Rocky Mount, NC
Elvis Eneh & Reda Ibrahim, [RK Contractors LLC](#), Kansas City, MO
Nate Stone & Shane Schachere, [Spir Candle Co.](#), Seattle, WA
Christopher Santillan & Rosa Mayer, [Unlocked Labs](#), St. Louis, MO
Andrew Nishimoto & Liz Luevano, [Wrigley Coffee](#), Long Beach, CA

This cohort will join the 175 ESE leaders that the REDF Accelerator has supported since its launch in 2016.

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ABOUT REDF

REDF invests in employment social enterprises (ESEs) — businesses that provide jobs, training, and support to people breaking through barriers to employment. REDF partners with these businesses and the entrepreneurs who lead them — providing capital, capacity, and community — to amplify their transformative impact. Since 1997, REDF has invested in 302 ESEs in 41 states and DC. Collectively these partnerships have helped 133,500 people enter the workforce and generated more than \$2.5 billion in revenue that is reinvested in employee success — creating a ripple effect that strengthens families and communities and helps build an economy that works. For everyone. For more information, visit www.redf.org.