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Kapor Center, Devlabs & City of Oakland Launch Oakland Startup Network

*Unique Initiative will support Oakland-based Entrepreneurs from
Underrepresented Communities*

(Oakland)--Today, the Kapor Center for Social Impact, Devlabs, and the City of Oakland announced the launch of a new initiative to support Oakland-based tech entrepreneurs. The Oakland Startup Network has created a web of service providers and resources to reduce the barriers to entrepreneurship for underserved and underrepresented entrepreneurs in Oakland.

“At a time when innovators and disruptors are driving our global economy and coming up with solutions to society’s toughest challenges, we can’t afford to miss out on the next great idea by leaving some of the best minds we have behind,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. “With this partnership we can ensure that the financial independence that comes from being a successful entrepreneur isn’t just reserved for a few, at the same time that we benefit as a whole from the contributions that diverse business leaders can make.”

The Oakland Startup Network will provide a number of resources, including bootcamps, workshops, Startup Weekends, technical instruction, meetups, founders’ roundtables, and accelerator introductions for local tech entrepreneurs. It aims to increase the number and success rate of tech startups launched in Oakland by women and people of color, providing a significant opportunity to augment access to social and financial capital.

The Network is fueled in large part by a \$420,000 grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, which sponsored last year’s Inclusion Challenge grant program to fund select organizations that help female entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs of color achieve higher rates of success.

“We’re very honored and highly pumped to work with the Kauffman Foundation on this effort,” said Cedric Brown, Chief of Community Engagement at the [Kapor Center](#). “Oakland has such vibrant energy and a terrific array of assets; the Oakland Startup Network will create economic

opportunities through investing in the learning and growth of diverse founders, which will ultimately benefit the broader community.”

The Oakland Startup Network was one of a dozen nonprofit entrepreneur support efforts selected by the Kauffman Foundation from over 375 applicants across the nation. The intention is to establish Oakland as a model for diverse entrepreneurship, and create replicable programming for other communities.

“We are excited about the possibility of creating a pipeline of outlier tech entrepreneurs from Oakland who are solving difficult problems using software solutions” said Ruben Hernandez, CEO of [Devlabs](#). “We believe in the talent and the commitment of Oakland tech-entrepreneurs to solve problems in their communities and scale them to the world.”

“Oakland needs an ecosystem filled with investors, former founders, and mentors to help early founders like myself survive the unknown of the early years of a startup, commented Leandrew Robinson, Founder and CEO of Hingeto. “High quality programming and resources are critical to entrepreneurs.”

Interested entrepreneurs can find out more at www.OaklandStartup.Net.

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*The **Kapor Center for Social Impact** works to make the technology ecosystem and entrepreneurship more diverse and inclusive. We are particularly interested in positive social impacts for communities that have historically been on the periphery of access to opportunity, participation and influence in the United States.*

***Devlabs** is an Oakland-based accelerator and micro VC fund that works with hundreds of tech entrepreneurs across the Americas. Devlabs provides access to markets and capital for pre-seed stage entrepreneurs who are building tech startups that are solving big problems in education, agriculture, health, and finance.*

*The **City of Oakland** is committed to the delivery of effective, courteous and responsive services. Citizens and employees shall be treated with fairness, dignity and respect. Civic and employee pride are accomplished through the pursuit of excellence by a workforce that values and reflects the diversity of the Oakland community.*