



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Scale Up Milwaukee's SPARC business accelerator program
taking applications for 5th cohort**

*Program open to businesses throughout the region;
applications now available through beginning of March*

MILWAUKEE – Scale Up Milwaukee is launching its fifth SPARC cohort with applications being accepted from business owners throughout Wisconsin and the surrounding region through the beginning of March for the business accelerator program focused on Black-, Hispanic-, and woman-owned businesses.

Programming will be held in a virtual setting and is open to companies owned by women and people of color with annual revenue under \$1 million. Applications for the program can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPARCSpring2021>. The program offers a great opportunity for business owners to recalibrate their approach to business amid the evolving economic and social landscapes impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as efforts to achieve greater levels of social justice.

There will be 10 weekly classes from March through May, providing one-on-one access with program instructors and experts, with more than 30 hours of instruction. Businesses outside of the greater Milwaukee area are welcome to apply.

“All of this has me on a whole new level for my business,” said Charisse Cook, owner of CharVid Janitorial Services that participated in SPARC’s fourth cohort this past fall. “I valued success with profit, but now I see success in a whole different light. To know who I am and what I stand for with wisdom and knowledge is true success.”

SPARC has been instrumental in helping companies most affected by the pandemic to stabilize and grow.

“SPARC has been a great benefit to growing business owners in our region for the past four years. With the need and ability to go virtual, we’ve been able to cast a wider net and provide enhanced tools, partnerships, and resources in our curriculum. Our mission is to transform the culture of growth in our region. Elevating our Black, Hispanic, and women-owned businesses is an essential component of that growth,” said Scale Up Milwaukee Executive Director Elmer Moore, Jr.

Curriculum will focus on how businesses can pivot operations to a digital presence, remote work, crisis recovery and planning, cash flow, and use of government funding from programs like the Paycheck Protection Program.

The SPARC program has 93 alumni businesses that average over 50 percent increase in revenue. JP Morgan Chase provided funding support to launch the SPARC program in 2017.

About Scale Up Milwaukee: Scale Up Milwaukee, an initiative of the Greater Milwaukee Committee, is transforming the culture of growth in the greater Milwaukee area. We host impactful events and accelerators designed to infuse growth into every corner and help spread inclusive economic prosperity.

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