



Elevate Together™ Initiative Raises Nearly \$2.3 Million in First Year to Foster Growth and Profitability for Black- and Hispanic-Owned Small Businesses

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Nonprofit Initiative Founded by The ODP Corporation and Powered by Round It Up America® Awards Over 80 Cash Grants, Funds Technical Assistance Programs and More

BOCA RATON, Fla.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 15, 2022-- [Elevate Together™](#) powered by [Round It Up America®](#), a nonprofit initiative founded by The ODP Corporation (NASDAQ:ODP), today announced that nearly \$2.3 million was raised during the program's inaugural year in support of its mission to help accelerate the creation, growth and prosperity of Black- and Hispanic-owned small businesses.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220215005440/en/>

Through partnerships with the National Urban League and the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Elevate Together™ was designed to deliver education, access and aid to small businesses with five employees or less. With an initial investment of \$250,000, The ODP Corporation helped launch the program in Atlanta, Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia, and West Palm Beach. Throughout the year, local Urban League affiliates and Hispanic Chamber of Commerce chapters in these markets received technical assistance grants to provide eligible small business owners with access to free workshops and bootcamps, professional networks, mentorship services and more.

In 2021, 89 Black- and Hispanic-owned small businesses were awarded cash grants, valued at \$5,000 or \$10,000, to help them continue to innovate, grow and prosper. Selected businesses were chosen based on established criteria created by local selection committees and were evaluated based upon their proposed business plans. Certified mentors from The Venture Mentoring Team were also paired with many of these small businesses to provide advisory support and help guide them on their entrepreneurial journeys.

"Becoming one of the small business grant recipients from the Elevate Together™ initiative enabled us to hire additional staff, secure a new delivery van, and make short-term investments to hopefully expand our product line and open a second location," said Nadeige Sterlin, co-owner of [La Paix Bakery](#) in Miramar, Florida. "I want to continue to pay it forward by sharing our story to help inspire other Black and Hispanic entrepreneurs to keep reaching for their dreams. If we all work together, we can collectively strengthen our community long-term, while saving and creating more local jobs in the short term."

"The Elevate Together™ cash grant helped elevate COVEDOZA in numerous ways," said Elisa Molina, president, creative director and chief executive officer of [COVEDOZA](#), based in Atlanta, Georgia. "It enabled us to invest in high-quality graphic design services to create our first-ever digital and shoppable 2021 holiday gift guide. We were able to revamp our entire homepage and invest in new business equipment that will help us expand our product offerings in 2022. Lastly, the mentorship has also been key in addressing key areas of growth for the business."

"Elevate Together™ was created to help address systemic discrimination and historical racial disparities in business growth and profitability in Black and Hispanic communities," said Gerry Smith, chief executive officer for The ODP Corporation. "We're inspired by the success stories from small business owners whose lives we've touched through this program so far, and we hope to continue building a coalition of like-minded companies to help advance business creation and growth opportunities for Black and Hispanic businesses for years to come."

With support from community partners and corporate partners like NCR Foundation, plus Office Depot and OfficeMax customers and associates, the program will expand its reach in 2022 to provide impactful, measurable and scalable support services and educational opportunities to help small businesses grow in Dallas, Detroit, Fort Worth, Houston, Minneapolis, Phoenix and beyond.

To learn more about Elevate Together™ powered by Round It Up America®, including how to participate as a small business or donate to the initiative to help drive change, please visit www.elevatetogether.org.

About Elevate Together™

Elevate Together™ powered by Round It Up America® is a nonprofit initiative designed to address systemic discrimination and historical racial disparities in business growth and profitability in Black and Hispanic communities. Through a partnership with the National Urban League and the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the initiative delivers education, access and aid to Black and Hispanic small businesses. Founded by The ODP Corporation, Elevate Together™ is supported by a coalition of like-minded companies with a mission to strengthen our local communities, foster job creation, and close the racial wealth gap. Learn more at www.elevatetogether.org.

About The ODP Corporation

The ODP Corporation (NASDAQ:ODP) is a leading provider of business services and supplies, products and digital workplace technology solutions to small, medium and enterprise businesses, through an integrated business-to-business (B2B) distribution platform, which includes world-class supply chain and distribution operations, dedicated sales professionals and technicians, online presence, and approximately 1,100 stores. Through its banner brands Office Depot®, OfficeMax®, ODP Business Solutions™, Varis™ and Grand&Toy®, as well as others, the company offers its customers the tools and resources they need to focus on their passion of starting, growing and running their business. For more information, visit news.theodpcorp.com and investor.theodpcorp.com.

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About Round It Up America®

Round It Up America (RIUA) is a non-profit organization that provides participating businesses, known as RIUA Mission Partners, the opportunity for customers to donate when paying their bill. RIUA Mission Partners select their own charities based on causes that are important to their organization, team members and customers. Companies around the country are making a difference through this powerful platform for charitable giving. For more information, please visit www.rounditupamerica.org.

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