Progressive

Progressive Insurance® Awards $250,000 to Black Entrepreneurs Through Driving Small Business Forward Grant Program

10 recipients will receive funds for use toward the purchase of a commercial vehicle for their business

MAYFIELD VILLAGE, Ohio, August 15 – Progressive Insurance® , the leading commercial auto insurer in the United States, has announced the 10 recipients of its 2023 Driving Small Business Forward grant with Hello Alice in support of Black entrepreneurs. Each small business owner has been awarded a $25,000 grant for use toward the purchase of a commercial vehicle for their business.

While 20 percent of Black Americans start businesses, only 4 percent of Black American businesses survive the start-up stage, as they disproportionately struggle with debt and raising capital in addition to challenges such as a lack of helpful relationships in the business community, according to McKinsey & Company. Progressive is stepping in to provide funding to Black entrepreneurs to help navigate their small business journey.

"At Progressive, we celebrate all business owners, yet we understand Black business owners still face unique challenges," said Karen Bailo, Commercial Lines President at Progressive Insurance. "For the last two years, the Driving Small Business Forward grant program is one of the ways we've been supporting entrepreneurs on their small business journey, and we look forward to seeing how this grant helps these deserving recipients continue their work serving the community."

The full list of recipients for the 2023 Driving Small Business Forward grant program include:

- Derald Gray, owner of DG Visionaries in Indianapolis, IN
- Elizabeth Abunaw, owner of Forty Acres Fresh Market in Chicago, IL
- Theodore Smith, owner of Golfing for Excellence in Washington, D.C
- Muna Mohamed, owner of Kalsoni in Minneapolis, MN
- Shenicia Barnes, owner of Kidz on Wheelz LLC in Mansfield, TX
- Sean Morrison, owner of Lets Ryde NC in Raleigh, NC
- Carmel Mims, owner of Pet Porter Pals in Pasadena, CA
- Robert Randolph, owner of Rob Ran Creative Services in Milwaukee, WI
- Dr. Alecia Gabriel/Deirdre Roberson, co-owners of The Lab Drawer in Detroit, MI
- Kamilah Moss, owner of Tidy Pets Pooper Scoopers in Fort Lauderdale, FL

Meet our grant recipients.

Recipients were selected, in part, due to their strong applications showcasing the impact their business has on the local community. Elizabeth Abunaw, owner of Forty Acres Fresh Market in Chicago, IL, provides affordable, healthy food that is accessible to all people through citywide delivery service, pop-up produce markets at community spaces, and a pending brick and mortar store.

"I founded Forty Acres Fresh Market after witnessing the large disparity in resources and infrastructure in predominantly Black communities," said Elizabeth Abunaw. "My vision was to provide convenient and healthy shopping options and increase healthy food equity and access in areas that needed them."

Another applicant, Shenicia Barnes, owner of Kidz on Wheelz LLC in Mansfield, TX, developed a door-to-door transportation service for children four to 18 years of age to help parents by providing a safe and reliable means of transportation.

"Being raised by a single parent, I was familiar with the challenges of not having access to transportation to school or extra-curricular activities," said Shenicia Barnes. "I started an in-home childcare and transportation service to help local moms with transporting their children to and from school and offer support to single parents."

To administrate the grant program, Progressive worked with business accelerator Hello Alice, the financial technology organization helping over one million small businesses access capital.

“Hello Alice fights for financial equity among small businesses and we are in awe of the hard work and passion displayed by entrepreneurs across the country. We are proud to partner with Progressive and support Black-owned small businesses. These businesses are critical to our economy and the future of our country. “Hello Alice Founder and CEO Carolyn Rodz.

To learn more about each recipient, visit https://helloalice.com/grants/progressive/.

In addition to the Driving Small Business Forward Grant Program, earlier this year, Progressive announced that its Commercial Lines business was expanding its financial support to entrepreneurs with Hello Alice.

Progressive is contributing $100,000 throughout 2023 to the Hello Alice Small Business Growth Fund, which is managed by Hello Alice in cooperation with the Global Entrepreneurship Network. This fund offers financial support to business owners of all backgrounds with grants of varying amounts awarded from the fund three times a year.

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About Progressive

Progressive Insurance® makes it easy to understand, buy and use car insurance, home insurance, and other protection needs. Progressive offers choices so consumers can reach us however it's most convenient for them — online at progressive.com, by phone at 1-800-PROGRESSIVE, via the Progressive mobile app, or in-person with a local agent.

Progressive provides insurance for personal and commercial autos and trucks, motorcycles, boats, recreational vehicles, and homes; it is the second largest auto insurer in the country, a leading seller of commercial auto, motorcycle, and boat insurance, and one of the top 15 homeowners insurance carriers.

Founded in 1937, Progressive continues its long history of offering shopping tools and services that save customers time and money, like Name Your Price®, Snapshot®, and HomeQuote Explorer®.

The Common Shares of The Progressive Corporation, the Mayfield Village, Ohio-based holding company, trade publicly at NYSE: PGR.

About Hello Alice

Hello Alice, a financial technology organization, provides credit, loans and grants, is a free platform serving more than one million small business owners across the United States. Committed to equitable access to capital for the New Majority - women, people of color, members of the LGBTQ+ community, veterans, and entrepreneurs with disabilities, Hello Alice offers funding, education, tools, and curated opportunities. Working with enterprise business services, ecosystem partners, affiliates, and government agencies, Hello Alice provides its growing community with everything they need to grow their businesses. Hello Alice serves a diverse community of business owners across the country. Approximately 68% of owners are BIPOC, 63% are female, and 17% are military-affiliated. For small business owners interested in joining the Hello Alice community, they can sign up for free at www.helloalice.com. To learn more, visit www.helloalice.com, as well as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook.

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