

PRESS RELEASE

Baker Donelson Partners with Innovation Works for 2025 Cohort at Light of Baltimore Incubator

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The law firm of Baker Donelson has announced a partnership with Innovation Works for the 2025 cohort of The Light of Baltimore Incubator at Baker Donelson. Through this partnership, Baker Donelson and Innovation Works, a Baltimore-based non-profit dedicated to fostering economic opportunity and entrepreneurship in historically underestimated communities, are strengthening Baltimore's entrepreneurial ecosystem and ensuring that business owners have the resources, connections, and infrastructure needed to succeed.

The Light of Baltimore Incubator at Baker Donelson was launched in 2022 in partnership with Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and Goldman Sachs *10,000 Small Businesses* to support local businesses in Baltimore. As part of this initiative, Baker Donelson dedicated the entire 23rd floor of its Baltimore office at 100 Light Street as a collaborative workspace, offering resources and strategic guidance to a diverse group of small businesses across multiple industries.

In June 2024, Innovation Works was invited to lead the launch of the 2025 Small Business Incubator Cohort, further expanding the incubator's impact. Through this collaboration with Baker Donelson and JPMorganChase, Innovation Works will integrate its proven model of business development into the program, helping local entrepreneurs access targeted resources, mentorship, and a supportive workspace to strengthen their enterprises.

The 2025 cohort, which includes 25 social enterprises spanning various sectors such as technology, health and wellness, and community development, will be officially launched at a welcome event on March 13, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the incubator space.

Jennifer L. Curry, managing shareholder of Baker Donelson's Baltimore office, said, "We are incredibly proud of the response the Light of Baltimore Incubator has received and the impact it has had in supporting future leaders of the Baltimore City business community. Our new partnership with Innovation Works builds on that strong foundation, and we're excited to have the outstanding resources and capabilities that Innovation Works brings."

Through a structured ecosystem of mentorship, technical assistance, and access to capital, Innovation Works supports over 160 entrepreneurs in its network and has invested in over 40 through its affiliate, Ignite Capital.

By leading the 2025 Light of Baltimore Incubator Cohort, Innovation Works will:

- Provide business coaching and mentorship tailored to the needs of entrepreneurs and small business owners.
- Facilitate access to financial and social capital through its affiliate, Ignite Capital.

- Curate workshops, networking opportunities, and leadership development sessions to equip business owners with the tools needed for sustainable growth.
- Foster a thriving ecosystem where Baltimore's entrepreneurs can collaborate, innovate, and scale their businesses.

President and CEO of Innovation Works and Ignite Capital Jay Nwachu said, "At Innovation Works, we are proud to join forces with Baker Donelson and JPMorganChase in supporting Baltimore's vibrant small business community. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to nurturing economic development and empowering local entrepreneurs with the tools and resources they need to thrive. Together, we're building an ecosystem that fuels innovation and transforms the entrepreneurial landscape of our city."

The Light of Baltimore Incubator at Baker Donelson was born from a visionary conversation between Ms. Curry and Alicia Wilson, former managing director of JPMorganChase's North American Regional Philanthropy Team. Their commitment to economic development and entrepreneurship in Baltimore has resulted in a dynamic support system for small businesses, providing mentorship, capital access, and networking opportunities that drive growth.

About Baker Donelson

Baker Donelson is a national law firm with more than 650 attorneys and public policy advisors representing more than 30 practice areas to serve a wide range of legal needs. Clients receive knowledgeable guidance from experienced, multi-disciplined industry and client service teams, all seamlessly connected across more than 20 offices in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.