JAX Microfinance Fund Receives $250,000 Investment from The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida

More than $550,000 in Philanthropic Capital Increases Lending Opportunities for Small Businesses in Jacksonville

Jacksonville, Fla., June 27, 2023 – The Jessie Ball duPont Fund (duPont Fund) announced today that The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida (TCF) has committed $250,000 to expand economic opportunity through the JAX Microfinance Fund (JMF), which invests in innovative and non-predatory online platforms that lend to small business owners in the seven Northeast Florida counties. Through this partnership, the JMF now has more than $550,000 in capital available to stimulate the economy through microloans to entrepreneurs, particularly women and people of color, across the First Coast.

“This investment by TCF is a powerful source of support for our community’s small business owners, many of whom are unable to access traditional banking options and have historically relied on predatory lending sources,” said Chris Crothers, director of impact investing for the duPont Fund and founder/manager of the JAX Microfinance Fund. “With the support of TCF and our other investors, the JAX Microfinance Fund is poised to help even more entrepreneurs and individuals in our community secure the capital they need to realize their dreams and pursue sustainable wealth-building opportunities.”

“For almost 60 years, The Community Foundation has helped donors grow and deploy their charitable funds for maximum impact,” said James Coggin, senior director for grantmaking and impact investing at TCF. “Our donors have asked for opportunities to make impact investments to increase the supply of affordable housing and grow small businesses, and we are proud to partner with the duPont Fund on this investment from our Local Capital Pool.”
The commitment by TCF nearly doubles the capacity of the JAX Microfinance Fund, which originated with a $300,000 investment from the duPont Fund in 2022. JMF invests in online platforms with the intent to level the playing field for borrowers struggling to access credit. Its first investment was to the crowdfunding microloan platform Honeycomb Credit in 2022. Honeycomb Credit catalyzed $393,282 in flexible, affordable capital needed to successfully support nine local small businesses owned by women and/or people of color. Funds raised on the platform included JMF capital ($152,500 or 39 percent) and crowdfunding from the Jacksonville community ($240,782 or 61 percent).

Further notable community impacts include the following:

● 100% of local small businesses receiving loans were owned by women and/or persons of color
● Funding supported over 43 positions in the local job force
● Businesses successfully completing their Honeycomb Credit campaign include:
  ○ BoricuaJax Café, mobile food truck
  ○ Cultural Kitchen Catering, San Marco
  ○ Irie Diner, Orange Park
  ○ Kravegan, Orange Park
  ○ Murray Hillbilly, Murray Hill
  ○ Regard Libations, mobile bartending
  ○ Tepeyolot Cerveceria, San Marco
  ○ Uzuri Beauty, Orange Park
  ○ Hillary’s Chicago Pizza, St. Augustine

JMF will continue to vet investments in online lending platforms to help local small businesses, and potentially individual borrowers. In addition to connecting business owners with affordable capital, the JMF strives to connect borrowers to local credit unions and CDFIs for credit repair and credit builder programs to support long-term access to affordable capital.

Last year, the JMF embarked on a seven-year investment cycle lasting through 2029. Full deployment of its current capital to small businesses across Northeast Florida is expected by 2024.

The Community Foundation’s investment comes from its Local Capital Pool, an investment option offered to donors with advised funds at The Community Foundation. Donors make a tax-deductible, charitable contribution to their Donor Advised Fund, and The Community Foundation makes low-cost loans to nonprofits and small businesses, yielding a financial and social return through an approach known as impact investing. When the loan term is up, the funds return to the DAF, for donors to re-invest in the Local Capital Pool or to give away as grants to nonprofits of their choosing.

About the Jessie Ball duPont Fund
The Jessie Ball duPont Fund is a private foundation that works to expand access to opportunity and create inclusive growth for the organizations and communities that Jessie Ball duPont knew and loved. We envision a world in which every member of those communities feels they belong, and is engaged in shaping the future of their community. We use our grantmaking, investments, research and partnerships to increase equitable access to opportunities and resources for members of society who have historically been excluded, and placemaking to build stronger communities where all voices are heard and valued. Learn more at www.dupontfund.org.

About the JAX Microfinance Fund
The JAX Microfinance Fund (JMF) strives to level the lending playing field for under-resourced borrowers in Northeast Florida. Under the management of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund at no cost to borrowers or JMF investors, the JMF identifies and invests in non-predatory priced lending options for under-resourced entrepreneurs who are unable to or choose not to borrow from traditional lending sources. These borrowers, the majority of whom are either women and/or individuals of color, reside within seven counties of Northeast Florida, including Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns counties. JMF investors include the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida and a private family. JMF is one of many impact investment initiatives funded and managed by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. Learn more at www.dupontfund.org/how-we-work/impact-investing.

About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida
The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida (www.jaxcf.org), Florida’s oldest and largest community foundation, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Created in 1964, the Foundation has made more than $695 million in grants since its inception, and manages assets that surpassed $630 million at their 2021 peak. In 2021, the Foundation launched the Local Capital Pool, which makes impact investments in affordable housing and small businesses to promote equitable economic opportunity in Northeast Florida. Learn more at https://www.jaxcf.org/impact-investing.

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