

Tampa Bay Wave Launches New FinTech | X Accelerator To Grow Tampa Bay's National Reputation For FinTech Talent/Innovation

Tampa Bay Wave announces FinTech | X, promoting Tampa Bay as a major fintech hub in partnership with University of South Florida's Muma College of Business.



TAMPA, FL, UNITED STATES, December 9, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Tampa](#)

[Bay Wave](#), Inc. ("Wave"), a nonprofit helping entrepreneurs transform innovative ideas into real-world solutions and scalable businesses to fuel social and economic change in Tampa Bay and communities everywhere, announced its newest accelerator program, the FinTech | X Accelerator, with the vision of establishing the Tampa Bay area's reputation as a nationally-recognized hub for fintech talent and innovation.

This new program was formed with help from a multi-year partnership with the [University of South Florida Muma College of Business](#) and a multi-year Foundational level sponsorship from Encore Bank and its processing partner, Smiley Technologies, Inc. Additional support comes from local serial investor, disrupter and myMatrixx founder, Steve and Lindsay MacDonald through their firm, MacDonald Ventures. Other key funding partners include Kyle Taylor, founder of The Penny Hoarder, plus strategic community partnerships with the St. Petersburg Economic Development Corporation and the City of St. Petersburg.

"Tampa Bay Wave is proud to launch this new Accelerator program that will not only provide support to innovative fintech startups throughout the US and beyond, but also showcase the talent and growing network of innovators and capital resources already in the Tampa Bay region." said Linda Olson, President and Founder of Tampa Bay Wave.

FinTech | X is a 90-day program offering access to key resources such as a dedicated Cohort Director, one-on-one mentoring with notable fintech industry leaders and experienced tech founders, sales training, pitch coaching, and strategic introductions in an environment designed to support high-scale growth. Over the course of three months, companies will participate in intensive week-long in-person programming sessions in St. Petersburg for one week per month. Participating companies will also pitch their businesses to an audience of accredited investors,

venture capitalists and other financial industry leaders during a private Demo Day event at the conclusion of the program.

This program will serve as a link between the region's tech startup community and financial services workforce centers located across the region. FinTech|X will also promote greater startup density in Tampa Bay and high-wage job creation, while also addressing the region's below average wages and early stage capital gaps.

"The USF Muma College of Business, and particularly the Kate Tiedemann School of Business and Finance, is becoming known as a place where fintech leaders come to learn and launch businesses," said Moez Limayem, the Lynn Pippenger Dean of the Muma College of Business. "Partnerships like this, with Tampa Bay Wave, will help entrepreneurs do just that."

Beyond the 90-day program, accelerator participants also receive ongoing support through Wave's CORE membership providing year-round critical mentorship, strategic introductions to investors and customers, plus other valuable services to further accelerate company development. Sponsors and Advisory Council members take a keen investment and procurement interest in the emerging technologies and technologists accepted into the Accelerator.

"MacDonald Ventures is excited to support the new FinTech|X Accelerator program presented by Tampa Bay Wave," states Steve MacDonald. "Our organization is deeply aligned with advancing and empowering rising, innovative fintech talent and phenoms. And, as an accounting graduate of University of South Florida, it is rewarding for me to join them in promoting the next generation of tech start-ups who are committed to creating a better world."

The FinTech|X Accelerator is the newest accelerator program offered by Tampa Bay Wave, the only Florida-based accelerator program accepted into GAN (gan.co), a global network of the most respected technology accelerators. FinTech|X is the second industry-focused program in Wave's portfolio of Accelerators, the other being CyberTech|X which focuses on cybersecurity startups. FinTech|X will also be the third 90-day accelerator program that will recruit startups from across the U.S. and beyond, expanding the Tampa Bay region's reputation as a nationally and globally-recognized hub for innovation.

"Encore Bank is excited to partner with Smiley Technologies, Inc. in sponsoring the Tampa Bay Wave Fintech Accelerator. Technology and innovation will continue to shape the competitive landscape of the financial industry, and Encore Bank sees fintech development as a key strategic opportunity for its operations. Encore's hospitality-inspired concierge approach to banking that focuses on both relationships and technology has proven to be a formula for success. We are proud to support fintech startups through the FinTech|X Accelerator and look forward to seeing their new innovative solutions for the financial industry."

"The FinTech|X Accelerator program brings together two of St. Petersburg's Grow Smarter

targeted industries: financial services and technology," said J.P. DuBuque, President & CEO of the St. Petersburg Area Economic Development Corporation. "FinTech | X highlights our market as an emerging leader at the intersection of finance and tech. This program is an outstanding platform to attract innovative entrepreneurs and growing companies to our region."

Tampa Bay Wave launched its business accelerator programs and other services in 2013. Since then, Wave's various programs and services have supported nearly 400 early-stage tech startups that have collectively raised \$445 million and created over 3,000 jobs. Today, Wave supports over 125 tech startups annually, of which more than 85% have underrepresented founders.

About Tampa Bay Wave

Tampa Bay Wave, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing entrepreneurs with facilitated access to the resources, expertise, and capital they need to grow vibrant technology-based companies in Tampa Bays, fostering an innovation-based economy for the region. Wave also receives support from partners such as A-LIGN, Bank of America, Bellini Better World Foundation, Encore Bank/STI, EY, Florida Blue, Florida Funders, Frontier Communications, Hancock Whitney Bank, JPMorgan Chase, KnowBe4, MacDonald Ventures, Rays/Rowdies Foundation, SYKES Enterprises, Tampa Electric, The Nielsen Foundation, Truist Foundation, Valley Bank, and Vinik Family Foundation. For more information, visit www.tampabaywave.org.

About the University of South Florida

The University of South Florida is a high-impact global research university dedicated to student success. Over the past 10 years, no other public university in the country has risen faster in U.S. News and World Report's national university rankings than USF. Serving more than 50,000 students on campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee, USF is designated as a Preeminent State Research University by the Florida Board of Governors, placing it in the most elite category among the state's 12 public universities. USF has earned widespread national recognition for its success graduating under-represented minority and limited-income students at rates equal to or higher than white and higher income students. USF is a member of the American Athletic Conference. Learn more at www.usf.edu.

About Encore Bank and Smiley Technologies, Inc

Encore Bank is a private boutique bank that couple experience with innovative technology to provide unprecedented levels of personal service and experiences to its clients through a hospitality-inspired concierge approach. Encore Bank provides a full suite of financial products and services to businesses, business owners, professionals, their families, and contacts with purpose, passion, and precision.

Smiley Technologies seeks to modernize core banking applications and services so that banks can use their data in the most efficient and meaningful way. Learn more at <https://www.bankencore.com/about-us/> and <https://www.sibanking.com/>.

About MacDonald Ventures

MacDonald Ventures is a tech angel investment company dedicated to building leaders for a better tomorrow. Steve MacDonald is a serial entrepreneur; a visionary who nurtures, mentors and invests in tech start-ups committed to creating a better world. With more than \$400 million in exits in companies he founded, his rise to multi-million dollar success started with the founding of TechHealth in 1999 and myMatrixx, his pharmacy benefits firm, in 2001. Learn more at <https://macdonald.ventures/>.

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