

Startup Accelerator Realist Lab Awarded Millions in State Funding to Support Underserved Entrepreneurs

The Connecticut-based nonprofit is one of several local organizations to receive government grants for the development and expansion of small businesses

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[Ventures](#), a venture capital firm for groundbreaking startups with diverse teams, today announced that its nonprofit arm [Realist Lab](#) received \$5 million in funding. The fellowship program and nine other organizations were awarded grants through Governor Ned Lamont's initiative to support underserved businesses. Realist Lab will use the subsidy to deliver training and resources for local business owners.

The program is a two-phase approach that addresses internal and external barriers to small business growth.

The 12-week startup accelerator will provide training in core business practices, founder wellness, and tailored specializations in technology and consumer products. The second phase will offer additional resources to graduates from the accelerator and help them launch, raise capital, and expand in a stable and profitable way. Governor Lamont announced grant recipients during a [press conference](#) at the State Capitol in October.

“We're incredibly grateful for the generous support from the state of Connecticut and excited about Governor Lamont's long-term strategy to support small business growth,” says Marie Rocha, general partner & founder of Realist Lab and Realist Ventures. “As a nonprofit, grants and donations are critical for launching and expanding the program.”

Entrepreneurs can apply to the program via the website and must have a business based in the state of Connecticut. Additionally, eligible businesses must be 51 percent owned and operated by someone who identifies as a person of color, including Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, and Asian American owners or a woman.

“We’re different from the traditional accelerator or incubator,” says Marie Rocha. “Our revolutionary venture launch model not only tackles the funding gap, but it also encourages support for founders beyond the program.”

This year, Realist Lab will also launch Help Fest, a crowdsourcing event to help entrepreneurs access information and share questions about starting and growing a business. Originally started as a social media event during the pandemic, the upcoming gatherings will be held in local coffee shops and co-working spaces.

ABOUT Realist Lab

Realist Lab is a nonprofit initiative that aims to support diverse founders and build a more equitable and inclusive future. The program’s data-driven empathy approach helps entrepreneurs gain access to capital,

mentorship, and business skills training. Based on a transformative venture launch model, Realist Lab includes a 12-week fellowship program and a post-acceleration phase for cohort graduates. The organization is led by a team of software engineers, serial entrepreneurs, and finance experts. To learn more, please visit <https://www.realistlab.org/>.

ABOUT Realist Ventures

Founded in 2018, Realist Ventures is a venture capital firm that invests in technology and software startups led by founders of diverse backgrounds. Businesswoman and software engineer, Marie Rocha formed the company to transform the outdated venture capital model and address the comprehensive needs of underrepresented founders. Realist Ventures and its nonprofit arm, Realist Lab, are part of a supportive ecosystem that helps make fundraising more equitable. For more information, please visit <https://www.realistventures.com/>.

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Marie Rocha, founder of Realist Ventures and Realist Lab

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