

**SURGE ANGELS APPLICATION GUIDE**

This guide is created to assist all interested alums with completing the 2023 Surge Angels Application.

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### Mission & Program Overview

The mission of the Surge Institute is to educate and develop leaders of color who create transformative change for young people, their families, and our broader communities. Our most entrepreneurial-minded alumni desire and imagine opportunities where they can create such change outside of the system, something of their very own. But every entrepreneur needs a boost in moving their idea toward impact.

The Surge Institute is proud to offer Surge Angels, a program providing Surge Alumni with the resources and start-up support to build out their ventures and affect the change they seek. Surge Angels exists to educate and prepare rising entrepreneurs and business leaders of color in education. More specifically, these entrepreneurial go-getters, all share an important core goal. These leaders of the near future, the vanguard of innovative educational solutions, all aim to increase both high-quality education options and access for low-income children. This is also the core value of Surge Institute, and Surge Angels is the means to accelerate this progressive goal.

**Opportunity.** Surge Angels offers participants an opportunity to close the gap between ideas, business preparedness, and implementation. Getting started is always the hardest part, and there are so many factors and intricate ins and outs to making our dreams a reality. A successful business venture needs to begin from a place of knowledge, confidence, and support. This is where the Surge Angels program comes in.

**Support.** Surge Angels is a six-month-long program with a cohort of Surge Alumni. Individual participants or teams will be guided and supported in business essentials such as strategic planning, financial understanding, operational training, and marketing insight. They will be matched with executive coaches with entrepreneurship experience. They will also earn startup capital and tailored support for each alum's entrepreneurial enterprise.

**Confidence.** At the end of the program, each participant or team will present their business proposals to an investment committee. This public showcase is more than just a "test drive" of an alum's concept, but an opportunity for real investment, as well as a place to make connections with investors and connectors with regional, national, and even global reach.

**Someday is Now.** For those alums dreaming about a way to turn their Capstone or Freedom Dreams project into reality, this is your chance. For those who have wanted support to workshop their idea, this is the place. For those who want to focus and be held accountable for pursuing their dream, this is the time.

Program participants will be prepared for acceptance in other pitch competitions, venture funds, and accelerators on a local and national scale. Surge Angels programming has been rigorously and thoughtfully developed to provide participants with a foundational knowledge of business acumen (including strategic, financial, operational, and marketing skills) and professional leadership development. After participating in monthly workshops, participants will have the

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opportunity to share their proposals in front of an investment committee at a public showcase event. Finally, participants will emerge from the program having not only learned more about starting a new venture and some may have been granted capital, but also empowered to execute their ideas that will help to improve outcomes for students, families, and communities.

**Surge Angels is a program rooted in rigorous hard work, but with our incubator that means big potential for success.**

### Program Components

- Access to Capital
- Business Coaching
- Community
- Topic-Specific Programming (Business Essentials, Entrepreneurship Skills, Authentic Leadership, etc.)

### Time Commitment

- In-Person Sessions: Wednesday evening - Friday afternoon for opening, mid and closing retreats
- Founders Mixer: 4 hours, one time
- Virtual Sessions: 4 hours, every other month
- Coaching and Mentoring: 2 - 3 hours every month
- Entrepreneur Focus Time (Thinking, Planning, Small Group): 5 hours per week
- Pre-Work: 3-5 hours per month

## Application & Eligibility Requirements

Candidates for the Surge Angels Programs are African-American, LatinX or AAPI education leaders who have participated in a Surge Fellowship and completed the fellowship program by October 2023. They have been identified as individuals with a passion for serving high-needs communities.

- Candidates for the Surge Angels Programs must be alumni of the Surge Fellowship.
- Candidates should identify as early-stage entrepreneurs who have or will have completed a Surge Fellowship program by October 2023
- Candidates must be based in the US
- Applicants must be pursuing an education-related or education-adjacent organization, nonprofit or for-profit organization that will directly or indirectly improve outcomes for BIPOC students, communities and families.
- Candidates must be the founder, co-founder, or leader of an early-stage venture (no more than 1 year in business), currently in operation or development, with no paid employees or staff. Up to 3 founders can be on a team.
- The candidate's venture must solve an equity challenge with a need in the market that potential customers are willing and able to pay for
- Candidates have the potential to solve the identified equity challenge at scale (local or national)

- Candidates have the potential for an earned revenue/funding stream leading to sustainability in 12-18 months.
- Candidates must have a sound strategy and plan for product/service development and delivery
- Candidates must have leadership potential and the ability to build and maintain relationships
- Candidates must show a demonstration of strong commitment to the venture area in which they plan to work
- Candidates must have the abilities and expertise among team members required for the venture to succeed
- Candidates must possess practical skills, including problem-solving, strategic, and organizational abilities
- Candidates must have personal integrity and a commitment to ethical behavior
- Candidates must be able to commit to the entire program and attend all sessions.

*Each application will be evaluated by a selection committee that includes the VP of Alumni Impact, Alumni Program Manager, and Surge staff.*

### **Selection Criteria**

#### **Applications are rated based on:**

##### Purpose/Passion

Show us that you have a clear idea for improving outcomes for African-American, Latinx, and AAPI students and communities. What is your “why?” and what is your “how?”

##### Organization and Programs

Articulate what the organization does and how it does it. Are there other organizations that offer the same programs? If so, tell us what makes your venture unique. How will you differentiate?

##### Potential for Impact

How will your venture impact students or communities or change systems? What innovative way are you addressing problems? How will you measure outcomes? What does long-term success and results look like for you?

##### Proposed Structure

Is your proposed organization non-profit or for-profit? Is this a beginning idea or do you already have revenue?

##### Monetary Plans

At the conclusion of the Surge Angels program, participants will pitch to a panel of judges for their chance to be awarded a portion of the available investment funds. If you are awarded a Surge Angels grant, how will you spend it? Clear articulation of your goals and a reasonable idea of how you'll use the investment is key.

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The deadline for application submission is 11:59 PM CST on October 15, 2023. The application must be completed and submitted online. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Contact the Alumni Impact team at [alumni@surgeinstitute.org](mailto:alumni@surgeinstitute.org) with specific questions.

### Program Schedule

Surge Angels is a six-month program that begins in January 2024 and ends in June 2024.

Surge Angels includes a kickoff celebration, six entrepreneurship, and leadership advancement content-specific sessions, and coaching, and culminates with a pitch competition. All cohort members are expected to participate in each monthly session whether in-person or virtual and complete coinciding materials to meet the anticipated milestones each month.

Session content topics, facilitator bios, and materials will be distributed to selected participants during their acceptance communication and leading up to each session.

Date	Event
September 25, 2023	Application Opens
October 15, 2023	Application Closes
November 8, 2023	Selected Candidates Notified
January 25 - 27, 2024	Session 1 (In-person)
February 16, 2024	Session 2 (Virtual)
March 14 -16, 2024	Session 3 (In-person)
April 26, 2024	Session 4 (Virtual)
May 10, 2024	Session 5 (Virtual)
June 27 - 29, 2024	Final Session: Pitch Competition (In-person)

**Other:** ASU + GSV - April 14th - 17th, 2024 (this is contingent on scholarship availability)

**Other:** Funders, Founders and Friends Mixer - date TBD

**Other:** All changes to the above scheduled will be communicated to selected founders.

### Surge Angels FAQ

#### Why do Surge Angels? What's in it for you?

- Join a community of practice about entrepreneurship
- Learn the skills needed to take your venture to the next level
- Work with a coach and mentors around your new venture idea
- Receive angel investments in your idea
- Explore cities in community

#### Who is eligible for Surge Angels?

Candidates for the Surge Angels Program are alumni of a Surge Fellowship program with a passion for serving high-needs communities.

*See above for the full list of eligibility and application requirements.*

#### What types of ventures are eligible for Surge Angels?

*We will select entrepreneurs/founders of early-stage ventures based on the following criteria:*

- Solves a problem with a need in the market that potential customers are willing and able to pay for or that can drive impact sustainably through philanthropic support.
- Potential for solving the identified problem at scale (locally, regionally, or nationally)
- Potential for an earned revenue/funding stream leading to sustainability in 12-18 months.
- Sound strategy and plan for product/service development and delivery.
- Leadership potential and the ability to build and maintain relationships.
- Demonstration of a strong commitment to the venture area in which they plan to work.
- Abilities and expertise among team members required for the venture to succeed.
- Practical skills, including problem-solving, strategic, and organizational abilities.
- Personal integrity and a commitment to ethical behavior.

#### What types of ventures are not a great fit for Surge Angels?

- Established organizations looking to scale (i.e., post-revenue, with employees beyond the founder)
- There is a stage that is too early for Surge Angels, and that may be characterized by not knowing where to take a Capstone project forward, or not understanding where revenue is coming from.
- Not related to education or education-adjacent fields

#### Does my project have to be related to my Capstone/Freedom Dreams project?

No. We will echo some of the same processes as Capstone/Freedom Dreams planning, but there is no connection necessary.

#### If I want to build on my Capstone idea, can I?

Absolutely. If you have a new idea you want to pursue, we welcome that, too.

### **Does my co-founder have to be a Surge alumnus/alumna, too? Does she/he/they have to meet all the criteria for Surge?**

No. Our goal is to help launch ventures of Surge alumni to serve African-American and LatinX communities. If your endeavor meets that goal, great.

### **How can I get help with my application?**

Tiara will host application office hours multiple days throughout the application period. This time is devoted to help with brainstorming & providing perspective during the application round and throughout the program. Other Surge staff are happy to help as time allows.

**Click here to schedule application office hours with [Tiara Wheatley, Vice President - Alumni Impact](#).**

### **What is the application/selection timeline and overall time commitment for Surge Angels?**

Surge Angels will run from January - June 2024.

#### Application/Selection Timeline

- **Application Period:** September 25th, 2023 - October 15th, 2023
- **Round 1 Notifications:** Notification of next steps: November 8th, 2023
- **Round 2:** Interviews: November 13th-17th, 2023 - please plan to be available this week for a 30-minute virtual interview.
- **Final Applicant Notification:** November 21, 2023

#### Program Timeline

- **Session 1:** In-person January 25 - 27th, 2024
- **Session 2:** Virtual - February 16th, 2024
- **Session 3:** In-person - March 14th - 16th, 2024
- **Session 4:** Virtual - April 26th, 2024
- **Session 5:** Virtual - May 10th, 2024)
- **Final Session:** In-person - June 20th - 22nd, 2024
- Other: ASU + GSV - April 14th - 17th, 2024 (this is contingent on scholarship availability)
- Other: Funders, Founders and Friends Mixer - date TBD

### **How many alumni can participate in the program?**

In order to ensure that we are able to serve the needs of all founders, we anticipate that our 2024 Surge Angels cohort will have 10 - 15 participants.

### **If we have recommendations for speakers or coaches, should we suggest them?**

Absolutely. We have a rough outline of the content we'd like to cover to build skills in business planning and to prepare our alumni for entry into other entrepreneurial contests. However, the actual content we'll cover will depend on the needs of the participants. We'll gauge that with the application.

### **How many participants will receive investments?**

Investment decisions are made by a panel of judges who will join us on pitch night to hear each participant's pitch and collectively decide how to allocate the available funds.

### **What happens after this program?**

Program participants will be prepared for acceptance in other pitch competitions, venture funds, and accelerators on a local and national scale. Your preparation through Surge Angels will get you ready for other programs, like [Camelback Ventures](#), [4.0 Schools' Fellowships](#), [SVP Fast Pitch](#) Competition, [A Better Chicago](#), [NewSchools Venture Fund](#), and others. Depending on your idea, whether non-profit or for-profit, pre-revenue or scaling quickly, we'll help you connect to other programs that can set you up for the next phase of growth and impact.