

## Fast Forward Announces \$1.25 Million in New Funding from Google.org, BlackRock, and Omidyar Network, Unveils 2016 Cohort and Launches Summer Advisor Program

*Nine Bay Area entrepreneurs, including Aston Motes, Seema Shah, and Anil Kamath, will provide intensive mentorship to the cohort*

SAN FRANCISCO - (June 29, 2016) - Today [Fast Forward](#), the only accelerator exclusively for tech nonprofits, announces \$1.25 million in philanthropic funding from [Google.org](#), [BlackRock](#), [Omidyar Network](#), [AT&T](#), [The Nasiri Foundation](#) and [Rita Allen Foundation](#). Fast Forward is also unveiling the nine tech nonprofits in its 2016 cohort and announcing the launch of its Summer Advisor program, which will connect seasoned Bay Area entrepreneurs with the cohort for in-depth mentorship.

[Google.org](#) and [BlackRock](#) each provided \$250,000 in grants, while [Omidyar Network](#) has committed \$500,000 in unrestricted funds over two years. This funding will support Fast Forward's ongoing initiatives to grow the tech nonprofit ecosystem and enables the accelerator to invest \$25,000 in each organization in the 2016 cohort. These strategic partnerships blend funding, mentorship and office space to advance Fast Forward's mission to apply the best technology to the toughest social problems.

"We are thrilled to support Fast Forward's efforts in helping technology-led nonprofits to scale," said Rob Veres, venture partner at [Omidyar Network](#). "We believe that nonprofits play a critical role in building ecosystems and tackle challenges that impact entire sectors."

Fast Forward's first-ever Summer Advisor program links seasoned Bay Area entrepreneurs with the 2016 cohort founders for hands-on, comprehensive mentorship throughout the accelerator. Fast Forward's Summer Advisors include Aston Motes, 1st employee at [Dropbox](#); Seema Shah, former Head of Product at [TaskRabbit](#); Rekha Pai Kamath, Head of New Business Incubation for [Juniper Networks](#); Anil Kamath, VP Technology at [Adobe](#); Raphael Lee, creator of [Airbnb's](#) Data Tools team; Rahim Fazal, Founder of Involver (acquired by [Oracle](#)); Arjun Dev Arora, founder of [ReTargeter](#); Michele Law, Chief Revenue Officer of [Castlight Health](#); and Philippe Suchet, Founder of Zappli (acquired by [Shopzilla](#)).

The 2016 cohort includes:

- [CommonLit](#): equips educators with high-quality, standards-aligned digital literacy tools
- [Democracy Earth Foundation](#): incorruptible digital governance technology
- [HackClub](#): platform for high schoolers to start awesome after-school coding clubs
- [Intelehealth](#): open-source mobile telemedicine platform for last mile health care delivery
- [JustFix.nyc](#): arming tenants in neglectful housing situations with tech for legal empowerment
- [Learn Fresh](#): education game developer integrating professional sports to teach math

- [Open Media Project](#): live and on-demand searchable media software for governments
- [Think of Us](#): tech that improves the lives of foster youth and systems they are connected to
- [We The Protesters](#): digital tools for activism to end police violence and systemic racism in the US

“We started Fast Forward two and a half years ago because there are some problems markets can’t solve. By leveraging tech, nonprofits can scale and provide unprecedented impact in hard to reach communities,” said Fast Forward President Kevin Barenblat. “The number of applicants to our accelerator has grown 300% since year one, and we are thrilled to have incredible backers like Google.org, Omidyar Network and BlackRock supporting our mission.”

Fast Forward’s funders play an integral role in mentoring and supporting each organization in the class. Employees donate time to share their tech expertise with each startup through mentor “speed dating” which often extends into long-term, mutually beneficial mentor-mentee relationships. These partnerships have allowed Bay Area companies like [BlackRock](#) and [Google](#), Fast Forward’s first corporate funder, to expand their corporate social responsibility efforts in an impactful, meaningful way.

"We are pleased to support the Fast Forward accelerator for a second year. Fast Forward's model of identifying and mentoring tech-focused nonprofits seeking to create disruptive change and inclusion is a natural fit with BlackRock's philanthropy mission of building access to better futures for the underserved," said Deborah Winshel, Global Head of [BlackRock](#) Impact and Corporate Philanthropy.

Fourteen tech nonprofits have already graduated from Fast Forward’s accelerator “bootcamp,” which connects these organizations to \$25,000 in funding, 100 mentors, hands-on support, and the opportunity to pitch their product to hundreds of investors and philanthropists. Fast Forward’s alumni have collectively impacted over 4.7 million lives and raised \$16 million in follow-on funding after the program.

#### **About Fast Forward:**

Fast Forward accelerates tech nonprofits. Every year Fast Forward brings a new cohort of startups building tech solutions to global issues like health care, human rights, education, and the environment through its 13-week accelerator program. The accelerator connects each team to seed funding, over 100 mentors, and community to help scale their solutions and maximize impact. In two years, Fast Forward has helped 14 tech nonprofits impact over 4.7M lives and raise \$16M in follow-on funding. Fast Forward also runs a program called Tech for Good, and created the only cohesive online directory of tech nonprofits. The organization was founded in 2014 by seasoned tech and nonprofit entrepreneurs, Kevin Barenblat and Shannon Farley, and is based in San Francisco. For more information visit [www.ffwd.org](http://www.ffwd.org)

#### **About BlackRock:**

BlackRock is a global leader in investment management, risk management and advisory services for institutional and retail clients. At March 31, 2016, BlackRock's AUM was \$4.737 trillion. BlackRock helps clients around the world meet their goals and overcome challenges with a range of products that include separate accounts, mutual funds, iShares® (exchange-traded funds), and other pooled investment vehicles. BlackRock also offers risk management, advisory and enterprise investment system services to a broad base of institutional investors through BlackRock Solutions® . As of March 31, 2016, the firm had approximately 13,000 employees in more than 30 countries and a major presence in global markets, including North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Middle East and Africa. For additional information, please visit the Company's website at [www.blackrock.com](http://www.blackrock.com)

**About Google.org:**

Google.org, the philanthropic arm of Google, uses the power of information to help people better their lives. We develop and invest in tools and partnerships that can help bring shared knowledge to bear on the world's most pressing challenges in the areas of climate change, economic development and global health. For more information, visit [www.google.org](http://www.google.org).

**About Omidyar Network**

Omidyar Network is a philanthropic investment firm dedicated to harnessing the power of markets to create opportunity for people to improve their lives. Established in 2004 by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar and his wife Pam, the organization invests in and helps scale innovative organizations to catalyze economic and social change. Omidyar Network has committed more than US\$969 million to for-profit companies and nonprofit organizations that foster economic advancement and encourage individual participation across multiple initiatives, including Consumer Internet & Mobile, Education, Financial Inclusion, Governance & Citizen Engagement, and Property Rights. To learn more, visit [www.omidyar.com](http://www.omidyar.com), and follow on Twitter @omidyarnetwork #PositiveReturns.

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