

# FIFTH WAVE INITIATIVE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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## WHAT IS IT?

Canada's first feminist accelerator program for women founders in southern Ontario's media ecosystem.

The Fifth Wave Initiative is a year-round program offered by CFC Media Lab and its partners to support the growth and development of women entrepreneurs in the digital media sector in southern Ontario.

## OUR APPROACH IS DIFFERENT

We accelerate organic growth, based on the human needs and lived experiences of women entrepreneurs, while fostering a welcoming, inclusive, intergenerational program culture where everyone can thrive. We support women entrepreneurs as they grow their business their way, with a focus on equitable models for structure and governance.

All participants in Fifth Wave Initiative must first apply to join Fifth Wave Connect, a prerequisite for eligibility for Fifth Wave Labs and Fifth Wave Outreach. Applications to Fifth Wave Connect can be submitted at any time by using the online form available [here](#).

Companies seeking to participate should be: (1) owned and/or led by women; (2) based in southern Ontario; and (3) focused on tech, tech-enabled products, content and/or services in the digital media sector.

## KEY GOALS

- Helping women-owned/led companies grow, strengthen and become truly financially sustainable
- Facilitating access to values-aligned capital to women entrepreneurs
- Supporting organic enterprise growth through bespoke programming
- Providing a welcoming culture and transformative experience for everyone, including mentors, investors, coaches and partners
- Enabling thoughtful, intentional disruption
- Encouraging and leveraging the power of intergenerational learning

- Creating an environment where women’s earned/learned experiences and insights are valued
- Improving support and outcomes for women founders by recognizing and valuing their primary caregiving responsibilities (where applicable)

## INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

Fifth Wave Initiative is committed to at least 30% participation by members of underrepresented groups. These include, but are not limited to, LGBTIQ+ women, women with disabilities, neurodiverse women, Indigenous women, women of visible minorities, women in rural or remote regions, newcomers to Canada, and women from Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs).

## FIFTH WAVE CONNECT

Fifth Wave Connect participation is provided to qualifying companies without charge. None of the programs of Fifth Wave Initiative provide direct capital investments, nor is an equity stake required for participation. Entry into the program is based upon application and review by the CFC Media Lab team. Companies are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. Fifth Wave Connect companies may vary the intensity of their participation over time, according to their stage of development and goals set with their advisors.

Key activities for Fifth Wave Connect members include:

- Networking within the Fifth Wave community
- Structured support from within the Fifth Wave partner, mentor and faculty network
- Direct services provided by Fifth Wave program and event partners
- Weekly virtual ‘Between Founders’ calls exclusively for Fifth Wave members to connect, socialize and collaborate
- Bimonthly one-on-one connection events with highly valued Fifth Wave mentors
- A complimentary 1-year pass to Feminist Enterprise Commons

## FIFTH WAVE LABS

Fifth Wave Labs is a nonresidential four-month intensive bootcamp-style program for up to 10 companies per cohort each year through 2023. Sessions are customized to capitalize on the expertise of diverse world-class faculty, mentors, advisors, partners and staff.

At the orientation session, each founder is paired with a highly qualified, values-aligned lead guide (coach) who helps guide the four-month journey. Fifth Wave companies receive bespoke coaching in business development, market, sales, strategy, partner development, business modeling, financing, planning for scale, staffing, company culture and wellness, and/or various forms of fundraising. All programming is delivered through a feminist lens, focusing on topics such as community impact, ecosystem mapping and engagement, thoughtful disruption and unintended consequences.

Founders within Fifth Wave Labs will also receive intensive coaching on how to fund growth and how to pitch their company to different audiences, including customers and investors. They will receive exposure to CFC Media Lab's extended investment network in Ontario and beyond.

## FIFTH WAVE OUTREACH

A key deliverable for Fifth Wave Initiative is creating and facilitating scale-up opportunities for businesses to increase revenues, including support for commercializing or monetizing a product and/or entering new markets nationally and internationally. The scaling stream of Fifth Wave Initiative programming, known as Fifth Wave Outreach, is specific to our established partnerships and bespoke to the women founders deemed most suitable for each activity.

## ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The CFC is committed to providing accessible practices that are in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). If you require accommodation at any stage of the application process, or have any questions regarding appropriate accommodations, please contact Deborah Fallows, Executive Lead, People & Culture, at: [dfallows@cfccreates.com](mailto:dfallows@cfccreates.com).

## CONTACT

For questions, please email [info@fifthwave.ca](mailto:info@fifthwave.ca).