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Five finalists announced for JLNO's 2024 Woman Entrepreneur Fellowship Pitch Competition

A yearlong program that supports female business owners

NEW ORLEANS (April 10, 2024) – The Junior League of New Orleans (JLNO) is pleased to announce the five finalists competing in its [Woman Entrepreneur \(WE\) Fellowship Pitch Competition](#) Thursday, April 11 at 6 p.m.

The JLNO WE Fellowship Pitch Competition, presented by Fidelity Bank P.O.W.E.R., kicks off a yearlong program supporting female business owners with funding, mentorship and in-kind support. The pitch event will be held at JLNO headquarters located at 4319 Carondelet St. in New Orleans and is open to the public.

These finalists represent a diverse range of innovative ventures.

- **aKrewe Nola Consulting**, led by Kristen Dufauchard, specializes in corporate marketing, event planning and training with a focus on community-building through The Business Exchange, a networking platform fostering idea exchange and professional growth.
- **Feels**, under the leadership of Caitlin Knoepp, offers a digital gifting platform empowering companies to make charitable donations as a meaningful corporate gift choice.
- **Kinkz Hair Products**, led by Alana Scott, is dedicated to empowering women to embrace natural hair with confidence.
- **Lagniappe Baking Co.** led by Kaitlin Guerin, provides an elegant pastry experience celebrating local ingredients and Southern heritage.
- **The Pretty Chemist**, under Robyn Smith's leadership, creates natural hair and skin care products through expert consultation and private labeling services.

JLNO President Ashley Cangelosi Llewellyn emphasizes, "The WE Fellowship demonstrates the Junior League of New Orleans' commitment to empowering women through mentoring, training and support. Launched in 2016, the program celebrates

women-owned businesses and highlights the dynamic impact of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in our region.”

With 42% of U.S. businesses owned by women and employing over 9.4 million workers, the WE Fellowship program aims to provide greater access to female mentors, resources and role models, fostering entrepreneurial success.

The WE Fellowship Committee selected finalists for individual meetings with a growth consulting firm to develop a 10-minute pitch, with a judging panel selecting the 2024 Fellow. “Our WE Fellows gain knowledge, connections and visibility through this process,” says JLNO WE Fellowship Committee Chair, Diana Vasquez. “This program is vital for women entrepreneurs who contribute to our local economy and community by showcasing their talents and skills.”

The 2024 Fellow will receive a \$5,000 cash grant from Fidelity Bank P.O.W.E.R, \$5,000 of in-kind legal services from Jones Walker, access to JLNO's headquarters facility, tuition for JLNO's Get on Board nonprofit board training, strategic business consulting from Trepwise and more.

"Fidelity Bank is dedicated to empowering women entrepreneurs through the WE Fellowship grant," says Tammy O'Shea, Chief Marketing Officer at Fidelity Bank. “We aim to encourage innovation, growth and success within the women-owned business community.”

Past JLNO WE Fellowship winners include Pillar Homecare, Bomb Ass Fro, Water Block Kids, Cocktails and Sons and Windowsill Pies. Eligible women must have at least a 50% stake in an enterprise operating between one to five years, with revenue under \$750,000.

To register to attend the WE Fellowship Pitch Competition and to learn more about the program, visit jlno.org/community/woman-entrepreneur-fellowship/.

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***Editor’s Note – Click [here](#) for images. If you would like to attend the pitch competition on April 11 or secure an interview, contact Alicia Vial at alicia@gambelpr.com.**

About Junior League New Orleans

Junior League of New Orleans is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to advancing women’s leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration and training. More information on the organization can be found at www.jlno.org

