

# Open Access Celebrates Successful 2nd Annual UpNext Mixer

*Championing Community Development and Diversity at DC's The Gathering Spot*

WASHINGTON, DC, US, July 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The 2nd Annual Up Next Mixer was a resounding success, bringing together Fellows, Alumni, Board Members, and Sponsors for an evening of inspiration and networking. Held at The Gathering Spot in Washington, DC, the event was marked by enthusiastic participation and the vibrant energy of the community.

Financing community development investments in Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) communities often requires a creative mix of public, private, and philanthropic resources. The Open Access fellowship, a three-month immersion experience, creates an opportunity for professionals from diverse backgrounds to be exposed to the world of community development

finance by being placed in an environment where they can receive tutelage and be trained to ultimately pursue career paths in this industry. The annual UpNext Mixer is essential as it provides a platform for these professionals to network, share experiences, and foster relationships that strengthen the community all while advancing the mission of creating inclusive and equitable development. The event underscores the value of Alumni engagement and community support, crucial for sustaining the momentum of the Open Access initiative.

Hosted by Rashidah "Roz" Billups, Executive Director of Open Access, the evening included an engaging panel discussion moderated by Jeff Monge, Co-Founder of Open Access and Managing



Partner at Monge Capital. The panel featured industry leaders David Clower, Sandra M. Moore, and Bianca Cole, who shared their insights and experiences. They emphasized the importance of community and the significant impact of the organization's collective efforts in community development finance.

David Clower, President & CEO of National Trust Community Investment Corporation, talked about the importance of doing good in the world while also making a good living, proving that profit and purpose can coexist harmoniously. Bianca Cole, Tax Credit Underwriter at PNC and an Open Access '22 Fellow, highlighted the significance of community support and paying it forward. Sandra M. Moore, Managing Director and Chief Impact Officer at Advantage Capital shared a success story, adding that the "collective efforts in community development finance are paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable future. It's inspiring to see so many dedicated individuals committed to this cause."

The event was also well-attended by alumni fellows from the previous 2021-2023 cohort. "It was wonderful to meet the new Open Access fellows, reconnect with alumni and friends, and celebrate the incredibly impactful leadership of Jeff, Gina, and Roz, says Jocelyn M. Moore, CEO, Jocelyn Moore Consulting, LLC. "I encourage anyone seeking to drive sustainable change in community development finance to support the Open Access Fellowship."

Event sponsors U.S. Bank, TELACU, Dantes Partners, and UMEZ significantly impacted the organization's mission to empower diversity within community development finance through their generous support. Donors also played a vital role in the event's success.

"I had a wonderful time at the Open Access 2nd Annual Up Next Mixer event," shared Desiree Thomas, 2021 Open Access Fellow and Vice President/Director of Climate Finance, TruFund. "It was great connecting with alumni and meeting the new fellows. Thanks to the founders and staff of Open Access for your continued commitment to diversifying the community development industry, one cohort at a time. It was wonderful to see Dantes Partners and U.S. Bank sponsoring the mixer this year. I look forward to next year's event."

Contributions are essential to the continued progress of Open Access's initiatives. Those interested in supporting the cause can text "UpNext" to 53555 to [make a donation](#).

Revisit the highlights: View the Mixer [Recap Video](#), and read the Open Access [Impact Report](#).

2024 Program Sponsors:

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Pictured from Left to Right - (Top left) Jocelyn M. Moore, Jocelyn Moore Consulting, LLC, Jeff Monge, Monge Capital, and Roz Billups, Open Access | (Top Right) Bianca Cole, PNC | (Bottom Left) Sandra M. Moore, Advantage Capital | (Bottom Right) David Clower, NTCIC.

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