

UpSurge Baltimore is building an engine to propel Baltimore into the top tier of US innovation cities. Their work centers on founders, tech-enabled and national-scale businesses, helping to launch, support, grow and celebrate high-impact startups. UpSurge is also developing strategies to attract new companies, talent and capital to Baltimore.

We don't envision Baltimore as just the next great tech city, but as the country's first Equitech City.

We believe that Equitech is a force multiplier on a tech economy - where diversity is a competitive advantage. It's the cultural framework for UpSurge, a lens to attract, align and support startups – not a filter to exclude them. Over time, not only will entrepreneurs and investors around the world look to Baltimore as a launching pad for transformational companies, but more Baltimoreans will see the knowledge economy as a pathway for their own upwardly mobile futures.

OUR STARTUPS NEED ACCESS TO THE RIGHT INVESTORS

- FOR CAPITAL, GUIDANCE, AND NETWORKS.

“The VC industry is undergoing a period of transformation and innovation. As the traditional VC model—with heavy concentration in particular demographics and geographies—has been questioned in recent years, we have seen a concerted effort to look beyond traditional VC hubs and develop new ways to capitalize startups.” – Pitchbook’s 2021 Venture Outlook

As an investor, you play a pivotal role in Baltimore’s startup ecosystem. UpSurge wants to help you make the most of your local investments of both money and time. When a startup ecosystem builds velocity, investors and companies win.

HOW CAN YOU HELP GROW THE LOCAL ECOSYSTEM?

FOCUS LOCALLY

- Look at a range of local companies and consider meeting with those that fit your investment approach or in sectors where you have expertise, even if they are not actively raising capital.
- Prioritize investment in local startups that fit your investment criteria.
- Work with UpSurge to identify incentives that encourage companies you invest to move to Baltimore (e.g., low to no-cost office space, moving and/or living stipends, access to skilled resource providers).
- Teach or guest lecture at local universities on topics that support the startup ecosystem, like entrepreneurship and venture capital, among others.
- Help us connect the local ecosystem using technology, like a Built In for Baltimore – or other online forums – to provide others an understanding of the strength of our local community.



PROVIDE MENTORSHIP AND ADVICE

- Agree to mentor and support early-stage entrepreneurs.
- Provide feedback to company leaders on their business models, products or services.
- Help local founders refine their pitches, so they can best position themselves to attract investment.
- Hold periodic office hours with local companies to get to know more founders, provide feedback and answer 'right-now' questions. Don't rely just on warm intros from expected sources; widen your aperture to include companies from new channels.
- Have some fun! Post-Covid, attend local happy hours and meet-ups to engage with founders and other high-potential talent. Help us build out a calendar of events that brings people together in meaningful ways.

BUILD BRIDGES BEYOND BALTIMORE

- Connect UpSurge with fellow investors or companies when they are planning visits to Baltimore so we can meet with them to understand their priorities and to share the benefits of our ecosystem. Where appropriate, we can introduce them to local founders and companies, provide tours of our academic labs, and answer their questions about investing and growing in Baltimore.
- When engaging companies and investors outside of Baltimore, share Baltimore's vision to be the country's first Equitech city and suggest opportunities to learn more.
- Think about your portfolio and broader network to help us identify:
 - Portfolio companies we can talk with about the advantages of Baltimore as a headquarters or office location.
 - Investors who should be looking at Baltimore companies.
 - Sector experts who can provide educational opportunities locally as part of UpSurge's coaching curriculum.
- Connect with the Baltimore diaspora to tap into and recruit talent that is aligned with our aims.

WALK THE WALK

- Get smart about [the data that shows](#) the advantages of investing in companies with diverse teams and leaders and share your knowledge with others in your circles.
- Embrace inclusive practices to drive growth, improve recruitment and enhance the culture of your firm.
- Think through your firm's investment biases, policies and practices critically to identify ways to give a fresh look at founders and companies from underestimated communities.

SPREAD THE MESSAGE

- Share your news with us, like funds/closes, new investments, new hires, and other key activities so we can share and build excitement around local activity.
- Write – in your channels and ours – about the Baltimore innovation ecosystem to help make the case to others locally and nationally.
- If you host podcasts or Clubhouse sessions, feature Baltimore entrepreneurs and investors.

LET'S CONNECT!

Reach out to the UpSurge staff with your big wins, ideas, opportunities and introductions. Visit upsurgebaltimore.com/connect to stay in touch or to join an UpSurge team. We look forward to building Baltimore with you.