M&T Bank Newsroom

M&T Bank Announces Winners of Fifth Harrisburg Small Business Accelerator Program

Jazmin Slaughter received the $5,000 grand prize to support her business 'A Hint of Jazz'

(Pitch competition winner Jazmin Slaughter pictured alongside representatives from M&T Bank)

HARRISBURG, PA.; June 22, 2026 — Jazmin Slaughter, owner of A Hint of Jazz public relations agency, won the $5,000 grand prize of the pitch competition held June 17 to culminate the fifth Harrisburg Small Business Accelerator Program sponsored by M&T Bank.

Slaughter runs A Hint of Jazz guided by her mission to help local brands turn visibility into real opportunities through strategic storytelling, partnerships, and connections.

"I am so proud to have earned such a monumental achievement as a small business owner right here in Central Pennsylvania. This is a full-circle moment. A Hint of Jazz Management celebrated five years in business one month before the live pitch," said Slaughter. "Being a part of this program and getting the opportunity to learn, workshop, and envision a business plan, understand my balance sheet, and develop branding strategies are all tools that M&T was able to provide to this year's cohort. Everyone did such an awesome job, and a big part of business is networking. I met a class full of amazing entrepreneurs in the region who I'm excited to see continue to grow in their work as well. I'm still in shock, but this is something I worked hard for and earned, and I'm just so grateful and appreciative to have been presented with this opportunity."

The pitch competition capped the eight-week business accelerator program that launched April 29 in partnership with the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE) at Harrisburg University of Science and Technology. The Harrisburg Small Business Accelerator Program focused on business planning, establishing credit, accessing capital, marketing, branding, networking and much more. Courses were held weekly at Harrisburg University.

Kristina Ekwe, owner of Touch of Elegance, earned the pitch competition's second-place prize of $3,000. Mieshia Jackson, owner of Chef Mi + Kids, won the third-place prize of $2,000.

"Small business owners invest an incredible amount of time and energy into building something meaningful," said Nora Habig, M&T's regional president for Central and Western Pennsylvania. "This program creates space for them to focus on long-term growth while connecting with experts and peers who can support their goals. We're proud to celebrate what this year's participants have accomplished and look forward to seeing the impact their businesses will continue to make across the Capital Region."

The Harrisburg Small Business Accelerator Program was offered to entrepreneurs who met the following eligibility requirements:

- In business between two – five years;
- Annual business revenue of $50,000 – $500,000;
- Principal owner must be 18 years or older; and,
- Small business owners must reside in Harrisburg, PA and surrounding towns.

"Small businesses are the backbone of our economy," said Pennsylvania State Senator Patty Kim. "Now more than ever, we need to do everything in our power to ensure that local entrepreneurs get the mentorship and support they need to be successful. I am honored to have been able to be a part of the pitch competition, which helps do just that. This year's hardworking participants truly gave this program their all, and I want to sincerely congratulate our winners on a job well done."

The Harrisburg Small Business Accelerator Program launched in 2022, providing small-business owners with free access to resources and education to grow their business. The 2022 program received the Catalyst Award from the Harrisburg Regional Chamber and Capital Region Economic Development Corporation for its impact on businesses in the area.

About M&T Bank
M&T Bank Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Buffalo, New York. M&T's principal banking subsidiary, M&T Bank, provides banking products and services with a branch and ATM network spanning the eastern U.S. from Maine to Virginia and Washington, D.C. Trust-related services are provided in select markets in the U.S. and abroad by M&T's Wilmington Trust-affiliated companies and by M&T Bank. For more information about M&T Bank, visit www.mtb.com.

About the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE) at Harrisburg University
The Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (CIE) empowers innovators to build successful ventures, including Harrisburg University students and faculty, as well as entrepreneurs in the community. In addition, CIE offers opportunities for partners to invest in important scientific discoveries, technological innovations, and academic research.

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