

Applications now open for the Knight Emerging City Champions fellowship!



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Date 2025-04-16 11:16

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Charles Thomas
Director / Charlotte

Dear Friend,

We've got some exciting news to share! The Knight Emerging City Champions (KECC) program is now accepting applications for the 2025–2026 cohort—and we're particularly excited to encourage applicants from Charlotte's Historic West End to apply. Powered by **880 Cities** and funded by Knight Foundation, KECC is all about empowering the next generation of civic leaders with bold ideas for building stronger, more vibrant communities.

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We're looking for future leaders with creative solutions to local challenges. Project proposals should aim to:

- **Enhance community connection** – by building trust through shared public spaces, local information-sharing initiatives or other civic engagement tools
- **Foster creative expression** – by preserving and advancing arts and culture in Charlotte
- **Build community resilience** – by supporting and fueling entrepreneurship to strengthen our local economy

Selected Champions will receive:

- \$5,000 in seed funding to launch their idea
- \$500 in tech support
- A fully-funded trip to Toronto, Canada for a 3-day Studio
- Access to ongoing mentorship, training and peer support

To be eligible, applicants must:

- Live in the U.S. and be 18–35 years old at the time of applying
- Attend a virtual orientation on August 4, 2025 (6–8 PM EST)
- Travel to Toronto, Canada for the KECC Studio (August 13–16, 2025)
- Propose a project that supports community connection, creative expression and/or local resilience in Charlotte

 **Applications close on May 28, 2025, at 11:59 PM EST.** Interested in applying? Details for a virtual info session hosted by 8 80 Cities on May 8 are available [here](#). I'll also be hosting an in-person session in Charlotte for prospective applicants—more details coming soon.

Please apply or share this opportunity with someone who's ready to make an impact, especially those in our Historic West End. We're excited to see the fresh, bold ideas that will shape the future of our city!

See you out there,

Charles Thomas



ABOUT KNIGHT FOUNDATION

We are social investors who support a more effective democracy by funding free expression and journalism, arts and culture in community, research in areas of media and democracy and the success of American cities and towns where the Knight brothers once published newspapers. Learn more at KF.org.



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