

Winston Supports Black Tech Founders

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As part of the firm's Racial Justice & Equity CEASE Initiative, Winston & Strawn played a pivotal role in the formation of Fifth Star Funds—a non-profit that helps level the playing field for Black and other underrepresented tech entrepreneurs by providing equitable access to early-stage venture capital.

Founded in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, Fifth Star Funds fills a crucial need for Black business owners who face systemic funding inequities. In America, Black founders receive only 1% of the available venture capital compared to 77% for White-owned businesses.

Winston provided formation counsel, 501(c)(3) incorporation and tax guidance, and intellectual property advice to support Fifth Star Funds' vital mission. The firm also provides pro bono legal services to the startups that Fifth Star Funds invests in.

"We are proud to play a role in Fifth Star Funds' unique approach to addressing racial inequality in Chicago and beyond," said Chicago Associate Jeff Huelskamp.

Anyone can support Black tech founders by making a tax-deductible donation to Fifth Star Funds. One hundred percent of the fund's returns are reinvested.

The Winston team that supports Fifth Star Funds and the founders it invests in includes Chicago Partner Dennis Kelly, Chicago Associate Jeff Huelskamp, Dallas Associate Ben Chrisman, Houston Associate Bradley Ratliff, and San Francisco Associate Irina Lyapis.

For more information about Winston's Pro Bono practice and Racial Equity & Justice CEASE Initiative, click [here](#).

You can learn more about Fifth Star Funds in this [Crain's Chicago Business](#) story.

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