THE FOUNTAIN FUND

Fall 2026 Newsletter

CHARLOTTESVILLE



MOLLIE CASH

Client Partner Spotlight: *Mollie Cash*

When **Mollie Cash** faced losing her job as a Reentry Case Manager unless she cleared her court restitution, she struggled to find a traditional loan. As someone navigating the steep financial barriers that follow a criminal conviction, Mollie found every door closed until she turned to us. **The Fountain Fund took a chance on her when no other lender would**. "There is not a single lender, probably on this planet, that would take a high risk loan like I was." Clearing that debt enabled Mollie to **finish probation and earn a promotion at work**.

Having experienced the dignity of our process firsthand, **Mollie now connects her own clients to the Fountain Fund** for assistance with everything from driver's license reinstatements to reliable transportation. For Mollie, the Fountain Fund is far more than a lender; it is a team that genuinely celebrates her clients' success and treats every person who walks through the door with belief in their future.

"There is not a single lender, probably on this planet, that would take a high risk loan like I was." — Mollie Cash



PARTNER ORG PROFILE: ONE STOP SHOP

Charlottesville's One Stop Shop is a community reentry event that connects returning community members directly to essential housing, legal, healthcare, and employment supports under one roof. Designed to eliminate the runaround for returning citizens navigating community stabilization, the free event **pairs essential wrap-around services with food, music, and networking**. It transforms a complex ecosystem of local resources into an inviting, relationship-first gateway to long-term stability.

Pictured: *From left, Taj Mahon-Haft, Director & Co-founder of The Humanization Project; Virginia Delegate Katrina Callsen, and Tez Tolbert at the One Stop Shop in September.*



TEZ TOLBERT

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

From Incarceration to National Leadership

Martize "Tez" Tolbert's path from incarceration to national leadership at the Fountain Fund is a masterclass in resilience and purpose. Featured in *Vinegar Hill Magazine*, Tez's story highlights how he turned obstacles into a blueprint for transformative community leadership.

As National Director of Client and Community Engagement, Tez brings deep authenticity to the Fountain Fund's mission. Having navigated the friction of reentry himself, he understands that economic mobility requires more than capital. It requires **trust, mentorship, and proximity**.

Tez's relationship-first approach is redefining what community support looks like across Charlottesville and the Fountain Fund's national affiliate sites. By turning yellow-pad action plans into lasting financial roadmaps, he proves daily that when returning citizens are met with trust and capital, they don't just reenter society, they transform it.

"We don't say no to people. We just say, 'You're not ready yet. But here's the steps it takes to get ready.' Then we give them the support they need."

— Tez Tolbert

CHARLOTTESVILLE AT A GLANCE:

Our hometown Client Partners are thriving!

630+ LOANS	**470+** CLIENT PARTNERS
$2.7M+ TOTAL LENDING	**$1.7M+** RECYCLED CAPITAL

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"That was the first time somebody believed in me. That was the first time somebody said yes to me. That was the first time somebody shook my hand and gave me a check... They believed in me and didn't judge me on my past mistakes." — Client Partner

NEWS FROM HEADQUARTERS

OUR MISSION: *The Fountain Fund increases economic opportunities for formerly incarcerated people to improve their lives and remain in their communities.*

LENDING HOPE

Sharing Our Model Nationwide

Across the country, The Fountain Fund is stepping onto regional and national stages to **change the narrative around reentry and fair lending**. In October, Executive Director Erika Viccellio and National Director of Client and Community Engagement Tez Tolbert presented about the Fountain Fund's leadership development program at Stand Together Foundation's national Catalyst convening. Erika also joined site directors Aaron Morin (Boston) and Mike Butler (Philadelphia) at the GreenLight Fund Summit in Oakland to collaborate on community-driven solutions with other grantees from around the country. Building on his work at Prosperity Now's lending forum, Mike Butler was invited to deliver a plenary address at their Atlanta Regional Summit this November. From Richmond Site Director Tom Mundy testifying before the Virginia House of Delegates to staff delivering national summit keynotes, our team is demonstrating that **when you extend resources and opportunity to returning citizens, entire communities prosper**.

That national influence extends directly to media platforms, where our leaders share lived experience to reframe the reentry conversation. On *A Life, Unedited*, host Marc Hunt sat down with Tez Tolbert and Loan Operations Specialist Sankofa Alkebu-Lan to discuss the hidden barriers after incarceration and how the Fountain Fund extends trust and capital. On Charlottesville's Envision Radio, Director of Lending Shantel Hopkins reflected on his personal transformation and how his grandmother's advice to "be his own man" inspires him to **lead with grace** when coaching Client Partners.

Grounded in this deep field experience, our team continues to invest in internal excellence. This summer, Shantel Hopkins and Sankofa Alkebu-Lan attended Credit Builders Alliance's intensive training in Miami on competitive scholarships, earning prestigious **Master Trainer certifications**. Using a **train-the-trainer model**, Shantel and Sankofa are sharing their knowledge with our team and Client Partners to deliver even more powerful financial coaching.



From left, podcast host Marc Hunt, Sankofa Alkebu-Lan, and Tez Tolbert.

"Good people, good organizations do exist. Because all I ever wanted was an opportunity." — Sankofa Alkebu-Lan



Sankofa Alkebu-Lan and Shantel Hopkins in Miami.

"We attended the CBA conference as participants and presenters, and then in the same year became Master Trainers. And now the world is just open." — Shantel Hopkins

WE ARE GROWING!



Brooks Wellmon
NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPY

We are thrilled to welcome two new additions to the Fountain Fund team. **Brooks Wellmon** joins as National Director of Philanthropy, building creative funding pipelines that secure sustainable resources for Client Partners nationwide. **Sherman Collins** steps into his role as Loan Specialist after a decade as an East Coast commercial driver, bringing a deep heart for ministry and community service to our lending team. As Sherman shares, "What stands out to me is that the Fountain Fund is mission-driven. They care more about helping people than just a loan." Please join us in giving both Brooks and Sherman a warm welcome!



Sherman Collins
LOAN SPECIALIST

NEW ORLEANS UPDATE

In March 2022, the Fountain Fund launched a partnership with First 72+ in New Orleans, combining holistic reentry services provided by First 72+ with micro-lending to support Client Partners on their financial journeys. Since the partnership began we have provided **more than 100 low-interest loans totaling more than $250,000**. Because of changes in leadership and staffing, we are winding down operations in New Orleans and will not be extending new loans there. We remain deeply committed to supporting our existing New Orleans Client Partners through the remainder of their loan terms, celebrating their ongoing achievements and honoring the lasting impact of our work together.

NATIONWIDE LENDING IMPACT

Since our founding in 2017

$6.5M+ IN LOANS	**1,327** LOANS
1,113 CLIENT PARTNERS	**$3.2M+** RECYCLED INTO THE FUND