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Ulta Beauty Announces 2026 MUSE Accelerator Cohort

The Muse Accelerator Program Celebrates Five Years of Supporting Emerging Brand Founders

- **Ulta Beauty announces the 8 brands selected for the fifth annual MUSE Accelerator Program**, a 10-week program providing early-stage brands with funding, mentorship and retail-readiness resources.
- **The 2026 MUSE Accelerator will award \$410,000 in funding** –\$50,000 to each participating brand, plus an additional \$10,000 award to a recipient selected by Ulta Beauty and the Fifteen Percent Pledge – to help founders accelerate growth and prepare for national retail distribution.
- **Since launching in 2022, Ulta Beauty's MUSE Accelerator has supported 30+** early-stage brands, awarded more than \$1.5 million in funding and provided 150+ coaching hours.

BOLINGBROOK, III.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Ulta Beauty, the nation's largest beauty retailer, has selected the 8 beauty and wellness brands that will participate in the fifth annual MUSE Accelerator Program, as part of Ulta Beauty's ongoing dedication to supporting brand development and retail readiness.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:
<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260902181965/en/>

2026 MUSE Accelerator brands

Starting September 14, these early-stage brands spanning

haircare, skincare, fragrance, cosmetics and body care, will kick-off an enriching 10-week journey that includes a robust curriculum, mentorship and funding to fuel growth and prepare for retail distribution.

Meet the 2026 MUSE Accelerator Cohort:

- **Jade Mui-Wong & Tina Mui, AWARE Hair:** AWARE Hair is a professional scalp wellness brand redefining proactive care at the root. Designed for the modern needs of scalp and hair, the brand's high-performance formulas support holistic scalp health without compromising luxurious salon results.
- **Osaremi Sade Parham, Blue Water Girls:** A Caribbean-inspired beauty brand bringing the feeling of a private island escape to sun and body care. Through clean, glow-enhancing formulas and joyful storytelling, the brand inspires everyone to embrace the sun and celebrate their natural radiance.

- **Alexis Flores, Dos Mundos:** Dos Mundos is a Latin-owned luxury fragrance house rooted in culture, memory and the feeling of living between worlds. Through scent, the brand translates Latin stories into modern, intimate and elevated fragrances made to feel personal, emotional and deeply lived-in.
- **Jordan Polk, MIA Outdoor Hair[™]:** Redefining hair care for life outdoors with high-performance formulas designed to address the unique stressors hair and scalp face outside. The brand's hero product, HairBlock[™], is a texture-aware leave-in serum powered by a three-UV-filter system and sustainable biotechnology to help support hair against the drying and damaging effects of sun, salt water and chlorine.
- **Jenny Ching Lien Farelli, Mochiglow:** A fine fragrance house inspired by the scents of Asian desserts & drinks. Mochiglow transforms flavors like rice, mochi and matcha into perfumes that capture feelings of joy, comfort and nostalgia.
- **Monica Stevens, MoKnowsHair:** A salon-quality collection of products for all curl types and textures, formulated by Master Cosmetologist MoKnowsHair, to help you have the BEST, healthiest version of your hair.
- **Ernestine Cecelia Meadows, Prados Beauty:** An award-winning beauty brand founded by Xicana and Yoeme makeup artist Cece Meadows to create authentic representation and visibility for Indigenous communities in the beauty industry. Through high-performance, culturally inspired cosmetics and meaningful collaborations with Indigenous artists, Prados Beauty celebrates identity, creativity and community while making beauty a space where everyone belongs.
- **Sana Mithani & Lizna Kabani, Prereq Care:** The self-care bridge for how Gen Alpha actually lives, co-founded with 50 real preteens and teens who shaped every decision from formula to packaging. On-the-go, microbiome-friendly, dermatologist-approved formulas manage odor, calm redness and protect the skin barrier through the shifts of puberty — built for backpacks, not bathrooms, and all the in-between moments of life.

“For five years, MUSE has elevated emerging voices with the potential to shape the future of beauty, providing founders with greater access to the resources, mentorship and support that can help them succeed,” said Lauren Brindley, chief merchandising and digital officer at Ulta Beauty. “We’re proud to have supported 32 brands and counting and look forward to seeing the impact this next cohort will have on our industry.”

MUSE Accelerator: Five Years of Impact

Launched in 2022, the MUSE Accelerator supports Ulta Beauty's ongoing efforts to magnify, uplift, support and empower underrepresented voices in the industry while curating an inclusive assortment that represents *All Things Beauty, All In One Place*[®] for beauty enthusiasts. In the program's five years, the MUSE Accelerator has become a proven incubator, thoughtfully identifying and nurturing founders with strong vision, efficacious products and scalable potential.

Through MUSE, Ulta Beauty has:

- Supported **30+** early-stage brands
- Awarded **\$1.5MM+** in funding
- Provided over **150** coaching hours
- Launched **multiple brands** into the Ulta Beauty ecosystem for distribution, including Pound Cake, Octavia Morgan Los Angeles, Scarlet by RedDrop and Ocoa

About MUSE Accelerator

Each brand in the 2026 MUSE Accelerator cohort receives \$50,000 in financial support to help accelerate their business and valuable resources to establish a foundation for long-term success. Additionally, Ulta Beauty and long-time partner Fifteen Percent Pledge will select one member of the cohort to receive an additional \$10K award, based on the brand's sales growth, whitespace opportunity and community impact. In total, Ulta Beauty will grant \$410K in funds to eight brands.

A core component of the Accelerator is the 10-week curriculum intentionally designed to equip participants with real-life skills to succeed in retail, including brand strategy and positioning, fundamentals for retail success, and supply chain logistics, as well as the opportunity to pitch Ulta Beauty retail merchants and network with investors.

MUSE participants will also hear first-hand from influential voices in the beauty and wellness space through intimate fireside chats featuring Deepica Mutyala, CEO and founder of Live Tinted; Grace Ray, CEO of Cécred; Nancy Twine, founder of Briogeo; Jessica Cruel, editor in chief at Allure Magazine; Chelsea Riggs, founder of Amika; Dianna Ruth, founder of Milk Makeup; and Cristina Nuñez, founder of True Beauty Ventures, among others.

2026 MUSE Accelerator Mentors

In addition to obtaining the necessary knowledge and financial support needed to grow a business, MUSE participants are surrounded with a network of experienced leaders from Ulta Beauty and other brand founders within Ulta Beauty's brand portfolio, creating impactful connections and relationships that endure beyond the 10-week program.

The MUSE Accelerator mentors for 2026 are:

- Shontay Lundy, Creator and Founder of Black Girl Sunscreen
- Priscilla Tsai, Founder and CEO of Cocokind
- Gina Woods, CEO and Co-Founder of Donna's Recipe
- Nils Johnson, CEO and Co-Founder of Good Molecules
- Alicia Grande, Founder and Chief Visionary Officer of Grande Cosmetics
- Ju Rhyu, Co-Founder of Hero Cosmetics
- Malena Higuera, CEO of NOYZ
- Julissa Prado, CEO of Rizos Curls
- Tony Prado, Co-Founder and COO of Rizos Curls

"We are honored to return as mentors in Ulta Beauty's 2026 MUSE Accelerator Program," said Julissa Prado and Tony Prado, co-founders of Rizos Curls. "Rizos Curls lives by the 3 C's of Curls, Community and Culture, and we are deeply connected to empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs with the insights and resources that have been instrumental in our own journey as founders. Having experienced firsthand the wide scope of building and scaling a brand, we know how meaningful it can be to have access to mentorship, community and the right resources to succeed at retail. We're proud to play a role in MUSE to help the next generation turn their visions into lasting and impactful brands."

New this year, Ulta Beauty is introducing Alumni Spotlights to its programming to celebrate the MUSE participants who have accelerated their businesses since completing the program

and pass on valuable learnings to this year's cohort. Featured alumni include OCOA, Octavia Morgan Los Angeles, Scarlet by Red Drop and POOM Cosmetics.

OCOA, a 2024 MUSE Accelerator alum, launched in more than 460 Ulta Beauty stores and on Ulta.com in August 2025. As the first Dominican hair care brand at Ulta Beauty, OCOA is now celebrating its first year at Ulta Beauty – an exciting milestone in the brand's continued growth and journey since participating in the Accelerator program.

"Being accepted into the MUSE program transformed the entire trajectory of our business," said Cory Varona and Nicol Varona, co-founders of OCOA. "The program didn't just prepare us for national retail, it provided the financial investment, world-class mentorship and internal sponsorship needed to scale into over 460 Ulta Beauty stores just a year later in 2025. It truly takes a village to thrive at this level, and the generosity of the brand mentors, merchant partners and the entire Ulta Beauty team gave us the blueprint and confidence to execute our dream."

To learn more, visit <http://www.ulta.com/muse-accelerator>.

About Ulta Beauty

Ulta Beauty (NASDAQ: ULTA) is the largest specialty beauty retailer in the U.S. and a leading destination for cosmetics, fragrance, skin care, hair care, wellness and salon services. Since opening its first store in 1990, Ulta Beauty has grown to more than 1,500 stores across the U.S. and redefined beauty retail by bringing together All Things Beauty. All in One Place®. With an expansive product assortment, professional salon services, and its beloved Ulta Beauty Rewards loyalty program, the company delivers seamless, personalized experiences across stores, Ulta.com and the Ulta Beauty App – where the possibilities are truly beautiful. Ulta Beauty is also expanding its presence internationally through its subsidiary, Space NK, a luxury beauty retailer operating in the U.K. and Ireland, its joint venture in Mexico, and its franchise in the Middle East. For more information, visit www.ulta.com.

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