FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pacific Northwest Economic Region Seeks Innovative Companies for Second Cohort of Congregate Solutions Accelerator

Solutions-focused accelerator to build resilience in the Tourism, Performing Arts, Travel, and Hospitality (TPATH) sectors in the Pacific Northwest

SEATTLE, March 21, 2022– The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) has announced they are now seeking companies and startups from the innovation economy to join the second cohort of their Congregate Solutions Accelerator. The Congregate Accelerator supports the scaling of solutions that help build resilience in the tourism, performing arts, travel, and hospitality (TPATH) industries following the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Congregate Accelerator aims to bring industries facing deep challenges together with innovative companies that can solve their issues.

The second cohort of the Accelerator is now accepting applications, with the central focus on two identified challenges from the TPATH industries: (1) business travel and (2) overcoming workforce and labor challenges. Companies with unique skills and products that can demonstrate and pilot solutions to these challenges are encouraged to apply.

Over the course of the program, members of Congregate's second cohort can expect to connect directly with industry partners on projects related to the workforce and business travel challenges. The program offers opportunities to partner with confirmed industry partners such as Argosy Cruises, the Alaska Native Heritage Center, the Seattle Seahawks, and others. Applicants can review the current industry partner challenge statements and apply to work directly with one of the current partners or apply generally to the program to be paired with a partner at a later time.

Congregate is seeking applications from northwest technology companies that are in the startup or "pre-scaleup" phase that have a proven product or service or have raised at least a seed round that is ready to scale. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis through early April, and programming will begin thereafter.

The Congregate Accelerator does not require an exchange of equity from participant companies. Startups are offered a multitude of opportunities including one-on-one mentorship from experts, access to thousands of dollars in credits from Amazon Web Services, market research, and the opportunity to access new customers in the travel and hospitality sectors. Once selected, the Accelerator will include 8 to 10 weeks of education on marketing, pilot programs, and scaling, as well as curriculum tailored to startups at this phase.

Members of the inaugural cohort have said of the Accelerator:

"The accelerator has been a great experience and excellent investment of our time. Congregate has connected us with potential customers in the TPATH sector that would have taken us years to reach on our own. We are excited to continue working with these partners to explore ways augmented reality can expand their reach and accomplish their mission."- Julia Beabout, CEO of Novaby

"Startups live and die on traction. Ideas and technology aren't enough, and cold calls aren't a good start. Warm introductions from credible and respected sources to innovative potential customers who have the problem your company solves can make all the difference. That's what sets Congregate apart from other accelerators. The education and guidance they provide is top notch and their diverse and insightful team have real contacts with potential customers for our cohort - contacts who actually return phone calls and emails. It's easily one of the most valuable experiences I've had as an entrepreneur, and this is only year one. Tara, Lindsay, Nirav, and Steve are setting the bar high, and that's good for all of us." -Kahlil Ashanti, Founder & CEO of Mantis XR

Participating in the Congregate Accelerator as an industry partner, Molly Schlobohm, President/COO of Argosy Cruises, said, "The Congregate Program led us to ideas and projects that we would never have thought of otherwise."

More information about the Congregate Accelerator Program, the challenges, industry partners, and how to apply to the next cohort can be found at www.congregate.resiliencefoundry.org.

ABOUT CONGREGATE
Congregate is a 12-week challenge-based solution accelerator program run by the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) as part of its Resilience Foundry initiative to build strong and resilient new economies in the Pacific Northwest. The Accelerator brings industry experts from the tourism, performing arts, travel, and hospitality (TPATH) sectors together with industry experts to support and partner with innovative startup companies with capabilities to help reopen these sectors quickly and safely. The program is funded by the SPRINT Challenge, a grant program of the U.S Economic Development Administration. PNWER along with their partners at the Washington Information Technology Association, Alaska Travel Industry Association, and Future Borders Coalition have implemented an accelerator that connects the Northwest innovation economy to the TPATH industries. PNWER is a registered nonprofit in the state of Washington and will not receive equity in any of the startups that participate in the Congregate program.

ABOUT PNWER
The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is a public/private non-profit organization created by statute in 1991. Member jurisdictions include Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and

Washington, and the Canadian provinces and territories of Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon. PNWER's mission is to increase the economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the region, identify and promote "models of success, and serve as a conduit to exchange information.

ABOUT SPRINT GRANT
The Congregate Solutions Accelerator is funded by the Scaling Pandemic Resilience through Innovation and Technology (SPRINT) Challenge Grant, which was awarded to PNWER by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.