

JEWELRY

Natural Diamond Council launches program for BIPOC designers

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The Natural Diamond Council has launched a scholarship opportunity for BIPOC designers. Image credit: Natural Diamond Council

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

The Natural Diamond Council (NDC) is partnering with jewelry designer Lorraine Schwartz on a new program to support up-and-coming designers.

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The Emerging Designers Diamond Initiative will award \$1 million of diamond credit to support BIPOC, or Black, Indigenous and people of color, jewelry designers. The goal is to help as many emerging designers as possible, awarding each designer \$20,000 in diamond credit.

"Creativity and innovation are the forces that drive our industry forward and in order for that to happen, we need more diverse viewpoints," said David Kellie, CEO of **NDC**, in a statement. "This initiative is designed to support emerging BIPOC designers by giving them access to the diamond jewelry industry, which has traditionally been limited, and fostering their ingenuity and successes.

"We know that more diversity is needed in our field, and that this will benefit the designers and the industry as a whole," he said.

Supporting emerging designers

Applications for the program, which is available on a first come, first serve basis, are now available online.

Designers who do not currently work with diamonds are encouraged to apply. It can be an especially difficult industry to break into, as it is challenging to purchase diamonds for designs without established histories with suppliers or references.

A selection committee which includes Ms. Schwartz and Mr. Kellie, among others will review and approve designer applications on a rolling basis until the \$1 million diamond credit is spent. Each designer will receive mentorship along with their credit, helping them build relationships with diamond suppliers and others in the industry.



The Natural Diamond Council rebranded from the Diamond Producers Association to delineate itself from the lab-grown business and stress its natural, sustainable roots. Image credit: Natural Diamond Council

Winning designers will be encouraged to experiment with diamonds of various colors and sizes, reflecting how unique natural diamonds can be.

In 2020, the Diamond Producers Association rebranded itself as the Natural Diamond Council to better reflect its mission and acknowledge the split in the jewelry industry with more lab-grown, man-made gems coming onto the market.

Founded by seven leading diamond producers including De Beers Group, the Natural Diamond Council has an enhanced educational mandate to become the ultimate business-to-business and consumer resource, digital and non-digital for all things natural diamonds ([see story](#)).

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