



# The Running Industry Diversity Coalition (RIDC) Announces 'RUN THE BLOCK' Grant Recipient



The wait is over! ... Drumroll, please!

Congratulations to **Carol Holland and Jesse Holland**, the inaugural RUN THE BLOCK program recipients! They will receive \$200,000 and dedicated mentorship from the RIDC network.

Native to Prince George’s County, Maryland, Carol Holland is an engineer, former All-American track star, and Athletic Hall of Fame member at the U.S. Naval Academy, and her husband, Jesse Holland, is a college professor, journalist, and author. RUN THE BLOCK will help them open **Haraka**—their future run specialty store that will supply running and walking shoes, accessories, clothing, and nutrition, serving communities in the local area and the broader District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia regions.

“We are so pleased to be the inaugural recipients of this much-needed grant,” stated Carol and Jesse Holland, future owners of Haraka. “Too often, many communities in our area don’t have the equipment, support, and encouragement they need to get outside and enjoy the benefits of exercise. We look forward to serving the runners, joggers and walkers of all ages in our area and bring running shoe expertise to our community, honoring our amazing tradition of track and field excellence and delivering a much-needed service to Prince George’s County!”

— Carol and Jesse Holland, RUN THE BLOCK recipients

**WATCH: MEET THE HOLLANDS (7-minute film).** The shorter version can be found [here](#).



Anyone could apply to [RUN THE BLOCK](#) with at least 51% Black ownership, a criterion aimed at increasing access to financial support and mentorship for businesses substantially owned and run by Black individuals and addressing historical barriers to access capital.

“When we launched RUN THE BLOCK, we envisioned it as a catalyst for business success and generational wealth in the communities we serve. This year marks a pivotal step in that journey,” stated Kiera Smalls, Executive Director of the RIDC. “The stories we heard from applicants nationwide were deeply inspiring, and we’re thrilled to partner with Carol and Jesse as they launch and grow their run specialty store. As they grow within run specialty, the RIDC is committed to supporting them, helping pave the way for future retail owners. Together, we’re building a more inclusive industry that welcomes community leaders and professionals from all backgrounds, bringing fresh perspectives to elevate the running industry as a whole.”

— Kiera Smalls, Executive Director of the RIDC

The RUN THE BLOCK Selection Committee consisted of run industry leaders ranging from market-leading brands and owners of run specialty stores to business growth development; **Kerin Hempel**, former CEO of New York Road Runners; **Jason Hunt**, co-owner of Elite Feet; **Joy Hunt**, co-owner of Elite Feet; **Parker Karnan**, Founder and General Manager at Karnan Associates; **Skot Welch**, President and Founder of Global BridgeBuilders, Co-Founder & Managing Partner of New Community Transformative Fund; and **Rick Wilhelm**, Vice President, U.S. Specialty Retail Accounts at Brooks Running.

Please help us spread word about this announcement: We're thrilled to share our [shorter film and photos](#). Catch a glimpse and share on your social channels! For those attending [The Running Event \(TRE\)](#), you'll have the chance to meet and connect with Carol and Jesse. Connect with them on social media now at: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Threads](#).

**A heartfelt thank you to Brooks Running for their generous donation to make this program a reality, and to Charm City Run, Playmakers, Strava, and OutsidePR for their additional support. We also thank the initial review team: Lindsey Mulder, DeAnthony White, Shannon Woods, Kathy Dalby, and Chris Lampen-Crowell.**

In partnership,  
Kiera Smalls, Executive Director  
Abigail Hollie, Program Manager

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