Seattle's SWELL launches Rhythm, a revenue-first accelerator, as women founders fund their own startups

Startup operator Nicole Doyle leads Rhythm Accelerator, an eight-week, equity-free program starting January 11, 2027. Venture capital for women-only startups has fallen to 0.7% so far in 2026.

SEATTLE, Nov. 17, 2026. The SWELL, a Seattle incubator for women founders, is now accepting applications for Rhythm, an eight-week, equity-free accelerator that helps founders land paying customers. The first cohort, with 25 seats and a minimum of eight founders, starts January 11, 2027, at The SWELL inside SURF Incubator in downtown Seattle, and applications close December 29. Startup operator Nicole Doyle, who led Founder Institute Seattle's Spring 2026 cohort and runs Virent Ventures Studio, leads the program.

The launch comes as more experienced tech workers start companies of their own. Through mid-August 2026, layoff notices in the Seattle-King County region covered more than 9,000 workers, three-quarters of them in tech, according to the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County. Venture capital reaches few of the women who make that move. All-female founding teams received 0.7% of US venture capital through September 30, according to the PitchBook-NVCA Venture Monitor.

Rhythm is for early-stage founders who want sales that repeat, from the first paying customer to sales at volume. The whole program is built around one question: has anyone agreed to pay you for this? It builds the business whatever a founder decides about capital, and raising venture capital is just one path it teaches. The program is built for women founders and open to anyone.

Tuition is $800 for SWELL members and $1,400 for non-members. Cooley LLP is sponsoring four scholarship seats for SWELL members to participate at no cost to them.

Doyle's Spring 2026 Founder Institute cohort enrolled 25 founders. Twenty graduated, and one raised a $600,000 pre-seed round. "Early-stage founders lose months chasing pitch competitions that rarely produce funding," said Doyle. "In Rhythm, success means paying customers, and a sales rhythm you can keep running after week eight. At The SWELL, founders keep their desk, their peer circle and their community after the program ends."

The SWELL now has 60 members and filled its first 50 seats in eight weeks. Its members are already building this way: 72% are bootstrapped and one is venture-backed. In a September survey of SWELL founders, 80% came from corporate careers, with a median of 17 years in their sector, and half had been laid off. 90% said AI made the move to founder possible. None wanted to go back to a corporate job.

“We stopped waiting for a VC to say yes,” said Sally Revell, founder of The SWELL. “The odds are stacked against women founders, so we solve the problem for ourselves. Our members fund their own companies, find their first customers and lift each other up. That’s how Seattle’s next wave of businesses gets built.”

Tricia Smith, AI business strategist and founder of The Jule Group, is in the January cohort. "I'm building The Jule Group on client revenue, and I want that revenue to be predictable. Rhythm gives me eight weeks of structure with founders doing the same work, and Nicole's eyes on my pricing and pipeline," she said.

Founders can sign up at swellincubator.com/accelerator. Sign-up takes about fifteen minutes with no payment, followed by a twenty-minute fit call with Doyle. Founders still deciding what to build can start at The SWELL's free Thursday drop-in at SURF, 9:30 to 11:30am.

About The SWELL
The SWELL (Seattle Women Entrepreneurs, Leading and Lifting) is an equity-free incubator for women founders at SURF Incubator in downtown Seattle. Founded in July 2026 by former Google, Amazon and SAP leader Sally Revell,

it filled its 50 founding seats in eight weeks and now has 60 members. Membership is $200 a month.

About Nicole Doyle
Nicole Doyle is the CEO of Virent Ventures Studio LLC, where she works with founders on operations, revenue and growth, and the founder and CEO of Aspir. She is part of the leadership team at Founder Institute Seattle.

Media contact
Sally Revell, sally@swellincubator.com, 650-526-2592

Interviews with Doyle, Revell and January cohort founders, plus photos of The SWELL at SURF Incubator, are available on request.