

GradBridge Chooses Delaware for Headquarters

Fintech startup and student loan platform creating 49 new jobs at Newark's Iron Hill Corporate Center following MidAtlantic search

WILMINGTON, DE (Jun. 1, 2026) – A Delaware-founded financial technology startup and private student lending platform has selected a property in Newark's Iron Hill Corporate Center as the site for its headquarters and next stage of growth, where it will create 49 new high-paying jobs.

GradBridge LLC, a venture-backed startup, is a second-look private student lending platform designed to serve the more than a million near-approval borrowers declined annually because they fall just outside traditional credit criteria. It selected the 9,321-square-foot location on Prides Crossing after assessing multiple markets, including Philadelphia. Company leaders determined that Delaware's financial services legal framework, proximity to financial services talent and presence of established institutions such as Barclays, JPMorgan Chase, WSFS and Sallie Mae made the state the best location for GradBridge's executive leadership, finance, compliance, credit, data/analytics and management operations and long-term growth.

The company had four permanent full-time employees in Delaware at the end of 2025 and plans to create 49 new full-time positions in the state over the next five years. The positions will all be salaried, benefit-eligible roles, and nearly all will pay more than \$110,000 annually.

GradBridge's location in Newark, which includes investment of up to \$250,000 to update and fit out the new space, is a deliberate and long-term commitment to Delaware. It also is a strategic fit for Governor Matt Meyer's agenda to grow the statewide innovation economy – particularly in sectors such as fintech – by attracting and retaining high-growth, high-wage companies with technology and inventiveness at their core.

"Delaware is proving once again that it is the best place for high-growth companies to launch, scale and succeed," said Governor Matt Meyer. "GradBridge's expansion in Newark brings nearly 50 high-quality jobs to our state and reinforces Delaware's reputation as a leader in financial innovation. This investment is a win for our workforce, our economy and the future of fintech in Delaware."

Intentionally capital-light, GradBridge is a regulated financial technology company operating within a sponsor bank framework and an originate-and-sell structure that supports scalability, disciplined risk management and efficient capital deployment. It is backed by Acorn Investment Partners, a portfolio company of funds managed by Oaktree Capital Management L.P., which provides capital stability and a consistent liquidity that supports the company's ability to grow. Key operating partners include CampusDoor, Hatch Bank, Nelnet/Firstmark and Gestalt.

GradBridge is led by an experienced management team with deep backgrounds in student lending, consumer credit, customer experience, compliance, finance, analytics and operations as well as startup execution experience and large-scale financial services leadership. This includes prior roles at Sallie Mae and Navient, which are institutions with significant Delaware and regional presence.

"We at GradBridge are passionate about removing financial barriers to higher education, and I am grateful to both the Council on Development Finance and Delaware Prosperity Partnership for supporting that goal," said GradBridge Chief Executive Officer Jen O'Donald. "With their support, we will build more than a headquarters, we will create economic opportunity by investing in local talent and bridging the gap to graduation for more students nationwide."

Delaware Prosperity Partnership has engaged with GradBridge's leadership team as the company has built out its business plan, pursued its headquarters strategy and considered strategic markets for future growth. On Monday, DPP supported the company's request to the state Council on Development Finance for a Jobs Performance Grant of up to \$780,000 and a

Capital Expenditure Grant of up to \$7,500 from the Delaware Strategic Fund. Distribution of these monies is dependent on the company meeting commitments as outlined to the CDF, which reviewed and approved GradBridge's request for

total grant funding of up to \$787,500.

About GradBridge

GradBridge is a fintech company focused exclusively on second-look private student lending designed to transform how students access the funding they need to graduate. Founded by veteran student loan executives, GradBridge provides a first-of-its-kind, student lending approach for upperclassmen and graduate students who are making academic progress but narrowly miss approval from traditional lenders. With a mission to close the gap between ambition and opportunity, GradBridge transforms loan denials into graduation success stories, unlocking long-term financial independence and brighter futures. Apply now at www.gradbridge.com.

GradBridge contact

Martha Holler
ShinePR for GradBridge
610-620-4264 (cell)
martha@shinepr.com

About Delaware Prosperity Partnership

Delaware Prosperity Partnership is the nonprofit public/private organization leading Delaware's economic development efforts to attract, grow and retain businesses; build a stronger entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem; and support private employers in identifying, recruiting and developing talent. Collaborating with statewide partners since its creation in 2017, DPP has supported more than 90 location and expansion projects that account for more than \$3.72 billion in projected capital investment and almost 12,000 new and retained jobs.

Media Contacts

Susan Coulby
Senior Manager, Communications
302-983-5710 (cell)
scoulby@choosedelaware.com