

Christine Uwimbabazi, Prime Care Transportation

Originally from Rwanda, Christine Uwimbabazi came to WEDI in 2017 when she was launching her company [Prime Care Transportation](#) which provides clients with reliable rides to and from doctor's appointments, dialysis treatment, and hospital visits. She learned about WEDI through her friend Hope Rwigamba (a Relationship Manager at WEDI) who is also from Rwanda. At the time, Prime Care Transportation had only one vehicle, but Christine was eager to expand her fleet.

She applied to WEDI's microloan program to purchase the additional insurance among other items. While she was expecting just the financial support, she was pleasantly surprised to learn that WEDI provides much more than funding. According to Christine, "It's not just about the loan itself, but the help you get when you apply. By giving us the opportunity to connect with other organizations and mentors, WEDI bridges the gap for minority-, immigrant-, and women-owned businesses." With WEDI's help, she grew to have 24 cars and 18 employees (though the COVID-19 pandemic has forced her to scale back a bit from her peak).

Beyond helping Christine grow Prime Care Transportation, WEDI has become a family. "Anytime, I go back to WEDI, I have my backup," she says. "I know they are there for me. They are like the grandma and grandpa I don't have." She also values the many ways WEDI supports immigrants and refugees, like helping them acclimate to their new hometown and participate—on both economic and civic terms—in their adopted communities. In fact, Christine is so happy with the support she has received from WEDI that she has become one of the best recruiters for new clients: "Whenever I meet a new entrepreneur, I always say why don't you call WEDI?"

While the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated that Christine temporarily cut back her fleet of cars, it has in no way limited her plans for growth. With help from her WEDI Relationship Managers and mentors, Christine learned to ask herself the right questions

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to help set her future goals which include adding support staff; expanding services like healthcare, senior assistance, and eventually a daycare; and adding a second service region. As Christine shared, “You can have a business and you can have money, but if you don’t do the necessary steps—having the right paperwork, the right accountant, the right payroll system—you end up losing it. And that’s what WEDI has done—help people learn how to be successful.”

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