

## **Contestant Capacity**

### *Organizational Background*

Friends of Guest House is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit. Guest House helps women in Northern Virginia successfully reenter the community from incarceration--changing the success rate from 30% (no reentry support) to more than 90% (Guest House graduates). A typical Guest House client lacks a high school diploma, lacks formal job skills, and lives below the poverty line. About two-thirds are mothers of minor children (average: two children each).

We serve our clients through our three core programs: Residential, Aftercare, and Outreach. Residential is our most intensive program. Up to 26 clients stay in our residential facilities; with an average stay of three months. Friends of Guest House offers the only 24/7 residential program tailored to reentering women in Northern Virginia. The Aftercare and Outreach programs provide additional support, on a non-residential basis, to women involved in the justice system. Friends of Guest House's programs for reentering women address the "four pillars of livability": housing, employment, healthcare and family/community reconnection. In so doing, we make it possible for our clients to break the vicious cycle of incarceration by addressing its root causes.

One of the oldest women's reentry programs in the U.S., Guest House has received many honors, including the Virginia House of Delegates commendation H.R. 171: "an expression of ... admiration and respect for the organization's commitment to helping women re-enter society."

Friends of Guest House's Aspire Challenge Solution will serve women--as women are the fastest growing correctional population in the country, expanding at twice the rate of men.

Partnering in this project with Friends of Guest House will be Resilience Education, an entrepreneurship education group that operates within the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business. Please see "Classroom Instruction," below, for more about Resilience Education's capacity.

### *Background of Management Team*

Kari Galloway, Executive Director

Kari joined Guest House in 2005 and is credited with leading the organization's tremendous growth ever since. She has over 25 years of experience in social services and community advocacy, and owned her own small business. She is widely involved in the area's social-services community and is considered a thought leader in the area of women's reentry/justice reform, for example: member, Governor's Regional Re-entry Committees in five Northern Virginia jurisdictions; member, Statewide Recidivism Reduction Planning Team for Women in Virginia; former chair (2010-2012), Focus Area Committee on Women's Re-Entry, statewide Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Re-Entry Council. Education: M.A., Organizational Leadership, Gonzaga University.

Dallice Joyner, Deputy Director

Dallice became Deputy Director in 2016, working closely with the Executive Director and program staff to ensure high-quality programs. She treasures "the human touch"—supporting women as they reenter the community and connecting with their children, families and other support systems. She has more than 10 years of background in nonprofit organization leadership, bringing strong strategic and resource development skills. Education: M.A., Education (Community Health Concentration), University of North Carolina - Greensboro.

Marisa Tordella, Operations Manager –Official Contact Person: [marisa@friendofguesthouse.org](mailto:marisa@friendofguesthouse.org) 703-674-6921  
Marisa earned her Bachelors of Science in Finance with a concentration in Corporate Finance from New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business. She will design and implement all Aspire Challenge programming. Prior to joining Guest House, Marisa worked in the private sector in Account Management, and as the Director of Marketing and Sales at Diamond Brite Metal Processing.

## **Entrepreneurial Education Delivery System**

### *Participant Recruitment Plan*

Participants will be recruited through Friends of Guest House's network of current clients and hundreds more of our graduates who remain involved in a variety of ways. The minimum educational qualification will be a high school diploma or a GED. A recommendation from the applicant's current or former Guest House Case Manager is required for acceptance to the program. Preference will be given to applicants who currently own their own businesses or are in the process of starting their own businesses.

### *Classroom Instruction*

Friends of Guest House will deliver a proven, existing intensive entrepreneurship education curriculum through our partnership with Resilience Education. Resilience Education provides high-quality, customized educational programs to organizations like Friends of Guest House. The Entrepreneurial Reentry Sequence curriculum includes three courses: Financial Capability, Entrepreneurial Reentry and Foundations in Business. The program is delivered via the Socratic Method: class participants read and evaluate real-world cases and participate in cooperative debate to develop potential solutions. All sessions are discussion based and require full student engagement.

The Financial Capability curriculum is presented first and delivers financial literacy education. Coursework includes: banking, budgeting, credit scores, and choosing a credit card. Upon completion of the Financial Capability curriculum, participants will understand how financial services companies operate and how to make sound personal financial decisions. The curriculum highlights the importance of solid personal financial practices in starting and operating a business for an increased likelihood of economic success.

Entrepreneurial Reentry is the second course in the three-part sequence. Coursework includes: business plans, revenue growth, expansion opportunities, and operations management. Upon completion, participants will have an understanding of the entrepreneurial process, challenges for entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial techniques. During the Entrepreneurial Reentry sequence, one individualized mentoring session will focus exclusively on discussing entrepreneurial interests and a vision and goals planning session. Please see "Mentoring," below, for more about the mentoring component.

Foundations in Business is the final course in the three-part sequence. Coursework includes: process, strategy, financing, marketing, human resources, leadership, contracting and market/product development. Upon completion, participants will have an understanding of how to start a business and will be able to create and refine their business plans.

The curriculum will be delivered in 75 minute sessions twice a week over a 20-week period. Each program in the three-part Entrepreneurial Reentry Sequence will feature 10 real-world cases, representing 30 sessions. Ten additional sessions will be dedicated to the creation, refinement, and completion of participants' business plans, business plan presentations, business plan critique and feedback, and final preparation for microloan application. All 40 sessions require attendance in a classroom environment.

Each class will be facilitated by a member of the Friends of Guest House Management Team, the Friends of Guest House Board of Directors, or qualified volunteers. Facilitators will be trained by Resilience Education in order to guide healthy debate and conversation and ensure participation by all. Volunteers include MBA participants or graduates, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce members (Friends of Guest House is a member of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce), or members of the Del Ray Business Association (Guest House is in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria, Virginia).

Each cohort's classroom instruction will culminate with a Business Plan Presentation Competition. Program participants will present their final business plan to a panel of five judges. The panel will include one or two representatives from the following organizations Friends of Guest House maintains connections with: Alexandria Business and Professional Women, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships and the Del Ray Business Association. Panelists will provide feedback to each participant and select a winner, a first runner-up, and second runner-up. The winner will be awarded \$1,500 to invest in their business, first runner-up \$300, and second runner-up \$100. Feedback will be incorporated into each participant's business plan presentation in preparation for presentation to potential lenders. The top three finishers from each cohort's presentation competition will receive additional access to capital assistance, detailed in the final section of this solution.

In order to provide online resources and supplemental materials Friends of Guest House will solicit community supporters to donate computers to program participants. Online resources will include additional readings and lists of additional external resources.

Each program participant will receive a stipend of \$37.50 for each session. The stipend addresses two issues. First, to alleviate the cost of transportation for each session. Second, in recognition of the financial hardships of this population, the stipend will enable program participants to invest in their education, without sacrificing income potential. Participants who maintain perfect attendance will have the opportunity to earn a total of \$1,500 while furthering their entrepreneurship education.

Friends of Guest House will offer two entrepreneurship sessions over a 12-month period, each representing a cohort of 10 participants, for a total of 20 participants.

### *Mentoring*

All participants will have a minimum of five 75-minute one-on-one entrepreneurial mentoring sessions. Mentors will include: local business owners, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce members, Del Ray Business Association members, Alexandria Business and Professional Women members, members of the Fairfax Office of Public Private Partnerships, members of the Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia, and working professionals. Sessions will focus on exploring personal entrepreneurial interests and visions and individualized business plan review.

In our commitment to provide gender-responsive programming, all mentors will be required to complete trauma sensitivity training before working with mentees. In our experience, and according to the Vera Institute of Justice, abuse is a better predictor of female incarceration than race, socioeconomic status, or educational attainment. The overwhelming majority of female returning citizens are survivors of trauma; all current and future Friends of Guest House programming is trauma-informed.

### *Community Connections*

Friends of Guest House has served the Northern Virginia community since 1972. Over the last 43 years we have cultivated an extensive network of community connections and social service providers. All program participants will have the opportunity to leverage our existing network of social service providers to receive referrals for health care, housing, counseling, support groups, legal aid, emergency food, transportation, and clothing.

In order to connect with the local business community, program participants interested in joining a local business association in their current or target market will have the opportunity to apply for financial assistance to join community business associations. The maximum amount available for each participant will be \$150. We will also host a networking event with the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce.

## **Access to Capital**

### *Access to Micro-Lending*

The Business Plan Presentation Competition, detailed above, will include prize money to be invested in the winners' businesses.

In addition to the panel of five judges for the competition, local capital providers will be invited to attend, including the Fairfax County's Community Business Partnership Business Finance Center Microloan Program team and the City of Alexandria Micro Loan Program team. The Community Business Partnership Business Finance Center offers microloans from \$2,000 to \$10,000. The City of Alexandria Micro Loan Program provides loans up to \$25,000 to businesses in the City of Alexandria. Most notably, the program targets businesses owned by low to moderate income, minority and women entrepreneurs and businesses located in underserved areas, an ideal match for our program participants.

Throughout the Entrepreneurial Reentry and Foundations in Business curricula participants will begin to develop and refine their business plans for application for micro loans. Mentoring sessions will include opportunities for individual review and feedback. Proper document preparation and business pitch skills will be demonstrated in the Business Plan Presentation Competition, detailed above.

Once program participants have leveraged all of the resources made available through this program, Friends of Guest House will cover up to three micro loan application fees through this award.

### *Connection to Capital and Funding Opportunities*

Preparation for capital access will begin with personal financial education. The Financial Capability curriculum is designed to educate participants on the importance of personal financial stability in business ownership. Most notably, with respect to capital access, is personal credit building. The Financial Capability curriculum has an entire 75-minute session dedicated to FICO Scores.

In an individual mentoring session, program participants will be taught how to access and read their credit report; in addition, the cost of viewing their FICO Score will be covered through this program. Mentors will review materials with each participant specific to their personal credit situation and establish two personal short-term goals and three personal long-term goals to improve their credit score.

In addition to the resources provided by Friends of Guest House through this award, program participants will have the opportunity to attend two events of their choice at the Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia, specific to their individual capital raising interests. Example event topics include: Building Better Credit, Crowdfunding, and Options for Funding Your Business.

Preparation for the Business Plan Presentation Competition will serve as direct preparation for meeting with capital providers. Upon completion of the Business Plan Presentation all participants will receive individualized feedback from all five judges to improve their business plans and business pitch skills. The top three finishers from each cohort's competition will receive individual appointments with the Alexandria Small Business Development Center on Loan Application Assistance.

Friends of Guest House will hold two social mingles for program participants and potential capital providers to share their business ideas. Attendees will include board members (including five business owners), their professional connections, and members of the various community and business associations mentioned throughout this application.