

## Contestant Capacity

### *Organizational Background & Management Team:*

[Higher Purpose Co.](#) is a minority owned social enterprise based in Clarksdale, MS located less than 25 miles from the Mississippi State Penitentiary in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, the poorest region in the United States. Higher Purpose Co. utilizes a triple bottom line business strategy encompassing people, place, and profit to establish a disruptive culture focused on accelerating social impact. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for people of color, and others, through innovative learning experiences and community based projects driven by social impact. We focus on four areas to implement social change: entrepreneurship, civic leadership, financial literacy, and community development. In 2016, we provided entrepreneurship training to over 200 participants. The majority of our participants are low-income minorities; we did not ask participants to disclose their criminal history. The goal of our entrepreneurship training was to empower participants with resources and skills to start their business venture. According to the Bureau of Justice, Mississippi has one of the highest incarceration rates in the United States. It is important to note that between 2002-2012, the average sentence in Mississippi increased by 28 percent. Last year, 8,154 Mississippians left prison, but few places exist to help them transition back into society.

[Tim Lampkin](#) is the CEO of Higher Purpose Co. In 2016, he partnered with the McClean Institute at the University of Mississippi to organize an entrepreneurship training and graduation at the Marshall County Correctional Facility. In 2015, Lampkin launched Higher Purpose Co., a growing social enterprise. He previously worked as a Community Development Officer for Southern Bancorp Community Partners (SBCP) one of the most recognized CDFI's in the country. Prior to his role at SBCP, Lampkin worked with Delta State University providing technical assistance to entrepreneurs and nonprofits in four counties in the Mississippi Delta. Lampkin has completed the FastTrac entrepreneurship program through the Kauffman Foundation and has a B.S. in Business Administration from Mississippi Valley State University, an M.B.A. from Delta State University and he is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Education in Adult and Lifelong Learning from the University of Arkansas. Lampkin was highlighted by White House Rural Council in 2016 for his efforts to empower minority millennials in rural communities. He has been featured in [Magic Johnson's Playbook](#), [Daily Yonder](#), [Dakota Fire](#), and the [Huffington Post](#). He is the contact person for the Aspire Challenge application and can be reached at 662-902-4831 or [tim@timlampkin.com](mailto:tim@timlampkin.com).

**Jean M. Hooper** is currently employed by the Mississippi Department of Corrections. She has working in Community Corrections as a Probation/Field Agent for 11 years and was recently promoted to Probation/Parole Supervisor. Hooper is a certified law officer with a degree in Criminal Justice from Coahoma Community College and a B.S. in Social Science from Delta State University.

[David Jones II](#) of Pioneer Collective has five years of experience using his passion for creativity, technology, and disruption for community building and compelling visual storytelling. The Pioneer Collective is a unique agency comprised of marketing experts, visual media specialists and content creators that incorporate a social mission in their business. Jones' past clients include HGTV, the American Heart Association, ArtPlace America, NAPA Auto Parts and Southern Methodist University (SMU).

**Edgar Sculark** is a community leader, motivational speaker, and pastor. He worked for the Mississippi State Penitentiary Parchman for 10 years. Sculark is also experience in sales for small businesses. His passion for community improvement led him to organize leadership workshops and health fairs in the Mississippi Delta.

[Joel A. Dawson](#) is a former Marine and a combat action veteran of Operation Desert Storm. He is the premier business pitch trainer/consultant in the South. Dawson has trained companies to pitch at The Louisiana Oil & Gas Expo, INNOV8 Acadiana Summit, Delta Regional Authority, and New Orleans Entrepreneurial Weekend (NOEW 2016). The story of Dawson's life is told in his book *The Puddle: The Choice to Live or Die* describing his time in jail to building a successful business. Joel is one the top 20 speakers in the world according to Toastmasters International.

### **Entrepreneurial Education Delivery Solution**

#### ***Recruitment:***

We look to serve participants living in a five county area in the Mississippi Delta which's include Coahoma, Bolivar, Tunica, Quitman, and Tallahatchie. Despite the negative economic conditions, this area is a huge international destination because of the blues and civil history. We know there is a huge demand for handmade products and unique services for local residents and international tourists. The goal is to develop our marketing for the program to help recently incarcerated individuals to tap into the creative economy and create social enterprises. Our management team will primarily work with local law enforcement agencies including the police departments, sheriff departments, youth courts, and the Mississippi Department of Corrections Parole Office to identify applicants for the Aspire program. Access to resources and education was one of the suggestions from the recent Byrne Criminal Justice Implementation Grant in Coahoma County. The surrounding counties included in the target area have similar problems with crime and this program will also serve as a tool to help reduce recidivism. The Mississippi Access to Justice Commission also works with recently incarcerated individuals in our area and they have also agreed to refer participants to our program. We will also work with the local office of the Mississippi Department of Employment Services and the Mississippi Department of Human Services to recruit applicants as well. Because we are primarily focusing on African American males we will utilize non-traditional forms of recruiting such as reaching out to the local barber shops, construction companies, and car wash facilities that typically hire people with criminal records. Utilizing our combined social media following of 3,650 and 2,919 newsletter subscribers we will spread the word about our program. We intend to accept up to 25 people into the Aspire program within 4 months after notification of the award. Subsequent cohorts will be initiated every 4 to 6 months; participation is expected to build based on word-of-mouth success-stories. Our application review process will be fair and firm to ensure we select participants who are ready to rewrite their past to achieve economic success.

#### ***Classroom Instruction:***

Rewrite Academy will base our classroom instruction on *The Ice House Entrepreneurship Program*, which is an experiential, problem-based learning program designed to expose participants to the fundamental aspects of an entrepreneurial mindset and the limitless opportunities it can provide. Appropriate for the Delta, this curriculum is inspired by the life-story of Clifton Taulbert, a "unlikely entrepreneur" from Mississippi. The program combines more than ten years of research and observation. The curriculum centers on fundamental concepts which expose participants to the underlying thinking that enables entrepreneurs with limited resources to identify, evaluate, and transform ideas into successful endeavors. Ice House uses problem-based, experiential learning which mirrors the learning process entrepreneurs intuitively undertake. Working in peer groups, participants identify a problem to be solved, determine what they already know, what they need to know, and how and where to access new information that may lead to the resolution of the problem. Participants apply their ideas in the real world by working through their solutions to problems with local entrepreneurs, who can provide guidance and support as well as help their ideas evolve.

**Lesson 1 & 2: Power of Choice and Recognizing Opportunity** The participant will learn about the ability to choose is fundamental to an entrepreneurial mindset, empowering participants to create the life they imagine. Problems will be reframed as potential opportunities, recognizing that solving problems for others is the key to small business success.

**Lesson 3 & 4: Ideas into Action and Pursuit of Knowledge** – Participants will be equipped with an entrepreneurial mindset that is action oriented. This lesson will focus on testing ideas in the real-world before making large scale investments of time, effort, and money. We will also encourage participants to explore self-directed learning through formal and informal methods.

**Lesson 5 & 6: Creating Wealth and Building your Brand:** Participants will learn how to be resourceful, leverage limited resources to achieve goals. We will also teach participants to build a brand of reliability where actions speak louder than words and following through on simple solutions leads to unforeseen opportunities.

Lesson 7 & 8: Creating Community and Power of Persistence -An entrepreneurial mindset understands the power of creating an intentional network of experienced entrepreneurs who can provide critical guidance and support. Perseverance and determination are vital to an entrepreneurial mindset, enabling ordinary people to face challenges and overcome setbacks on the road to success.

The Ice House program enables aspiring entrepreneurs to “bootstrap” their way into a successful business rather than undertaking significant financial risk. Drawing from best practices of design thinking, participants learn to identify problems, find solutions, and make customer connections through an iterative experimental process. The participants will be assisted with developing the strategy, marketing, and financing for their business. We will utilize the [Lean Canvas](#) to help the formerly incarcerated individuals to build a solid business plan. Participants will be provided a list of digital resources to expand their business idea. Our management team will also identify some key business websites and provide complimentary access for each participant. They will also have the opportunity to show us what they have learned by preparing a soft launch for our Business Expo that will showcase their ventures. Prior to the graduation ceremony each person will pitch their business to the management team and potential investors. We anticipate awarding three winners with a cash prize and technical assistance from each cohort. This approach will encourage the recently incarcerated individuals to continue their business. Each participant will receive a Certificate of Completion endorsed by our partners and sponsors to boost their confidence, credit-worthiness, reputation, and/or employability of successfully completing the entrepreneurial training course and achieved the milestones therein. Higher Purpose Co. will implement two 5-week cohorts and seeks to serve up to 50 low income minority recently incarcerated individuals.

*Financial Literacy & Leadership Development:*

We will leverage our relationships with our partnerships to emphasize the financial literacy and leadership components by hosting guest lectures. Free credit counseling will be offered by our partners and we will make sure each participant receives a copy of their credit report and scores at no cost. Referrals to credit counseling will be made as needed based on our analysis of the financial health of each participant. Our financial partners have committed to catering the financial literacy education to integrate smoothly with our entrepreneurial education. We will also provide civic leadership skills and educate the participants about how to lead by example and the ways they can enhance in their communities using their time and talent. Great leaders are also know how to network and follow up. The participants will be practice how to introduce themselves and network with strangers. We also explore the humanity of leadership, both within themselves and the people they interact with on a daily basis.

*Mentoring & Community Connections:*

We will work to review the individual needs of each participant and match them with mentors in the respective industries. There are several successful businesses in our area that will be introduce to our cohorts. We will host a Mentor Mixer to make introductions. It is important for us to ensure we provide genuine mentors to help the participants make smart decisions in life and business. Higher Purpose Co. will also utilize the power of co-working encourage peer-to-peer mentoring. Co-working is a style of work that involves a shared working environment, often an office and space for other business activities. Utilizing this model will hold participants accountable for each other’s success. We will utilize the [Mississippi Re-Entry Guide](#) to help participants connect with other resources to improve their quality of life. Housing is a major issue for parole eligible individuals. Mississippi requires inmates to have an approved address on file before being released. It was recently reported that 191 individuals cannot be released at this time due to this outrageous policy. Over a year, that costs Mississippi taxpayers \$3.44 million, based on the state Department of Corrections’ average cost of caring for inmates. We do have relationships with the following entities Region One Mental Health. CCC Workforce Development Center, Coahoma Community College, the Carnegie Free Library, and the Department of Human Services, and Aaron E. Henry Health Clinic. Several of these agencies several multiple counties include in our target area. The Mississippi Access to Justice Commission has committed to bring in speakers and pro bono attorneys to assist participants with the expungement process. Members of our project team are actively involved with several local businesses, tourism commissions, and the chamber of commerce’s.

### Access to Capital

Higher Purpose Co. has well-established relationships with several financial institutions including: Southern Bancorp Bank, Southern Bancorp Community Partners, Renasant Bank, Communities Unlimited, and Hope Credit Union. Four of our financial partners are Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) which have all recently received new funding from foundations, corporations, and/or USDA to increase their lending to small businesses, specifically in persistent poverty counties in the Mississippi Delta. Our financial partners provide responsible and responsive credit, capital, financial products and services to residents and businesses. Renasant Bank provides SBA 7(a) and 504 loans to small business owners which we will educate our participants about how these loan programs can help them launch their venture. Higher Purpose Co.'s financial partners actively seek opportunities to support new businesses and job creation. For example, Southern Bancorp has established a 10-year goal to support 35,000 jobs through entrepreneurship programs and by providing capital to small businesses. In addition to that, the [Walton Family Foundation](#) recently invested \$750,000 in Southern Bancorp loan fund to accelerate entrepreneurship in the Delta area.

Small businesses are key components of economic opportunity in all communities. Empowering people to create and innovate, while creating additional income, directly aligns with prosperity. A study of the Delta's workforce found that "91 percent of all net new jobs created over the past two decades came from locally-owned establishments with nine or fewer employees (Delta Regional Authority, 2014)". Higher Purpose Co.'s creative approach to entrepreneurial development will enable the success of locally owned businesses. Activities will include small business technical assistance, entrepreneurial education, and access to capital. Through our established network of lenders, participants in the Aspire Challenge will have direct access to lenders and financial coaches. When funding is available, Southern Bancorp offers matched savings accounts for lower income small business to start or expand a business.

Our project management team will assist participants with business planning and documentation needed for loan capital. Our financial partners will be able to assist participants with loan applications and supporting documents such as the business plans, financial projections, marketing plans, operating agreements, tax ID, and state business registration. Higher Purpose Co. will host a Meet the Bankers event to personally introduce participants to the financial institution. We will do our best to ensure each participant fully understands their options to obtain capital to support their business ventures.

Higher Purpose Co. CEO Tim Lampkin has direct contact with entities that host business pitch competitions, including the [Delta Regional Authority](#), [Innovation Mississippi](#), and [American Underground](#). These pitch competitions are connected with venture capitalist and angel investors. Members of the Aspire project management team also have worked with [Backstage Capital](#) which supports founders of color, women, and LGBTQ entrepreneurs. Higher Purpose Co. is currently in the process of applying to become the first trustee in Mississippi for [KIVA](#), the world's largest microloan platform. Kiva trustees source entrepreneurs and publicly endorse them as borrowers on the Kiva website. Higher Purpose Co will have no financial liability for loans, but our reputation will be tied to the repayment rate of the borrowers we endorse. Kiva lending will accelerate access to capital for those who do not qualify for traditional funding. The participants will also be introduced to the resources available by the USDA, EDA, and foundations to secure funds to support their ventures. We will also train participants about how to properly use crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter, Indiegogo, and CauseVox to launch their businesses. Support from our financial partners listed in our appendix demonstrate their commitment to collaborating with Higher Purpose Co. on its Aspire project by helping participants launch sustainable businesses and by providing loans to those who are qualified, regardless of their criminal background.

**Appendix**

<b>Partners/Supporters:</b>	<b>Contact:</b>
Renasant Bank <a href="https://www.renasantbank.com/">https://www.renasantbank.com/</a>	Pam Hadley Vice President - Community Outreach & Mortgage PamH@renasant.com 662-680-1106
Southern Bancorp Bank & Southern Bancorp Community Partners <a href="https://banksouthern.com/">https://banksouthern.com/</a>	Dominik Mjartan Senior Vice President & CEO Dominik.mjartan@banksouthern.com 501-372-4201
Communities Unlimited, Inc. <a href="https://www.communitiesu.org/">https://www.communitiesu.org/</a>	Deborah Temple Senior Manager – Entrepreneurship Deborah.temple@communitiesu.org 870-535-0011
Hope Credit Union <a href="https://hopecu.org/">https://hopecu.org/</a>	Thaddeus T. Fairley Sr. Program Officer Thaddeus.Fairley@hopecu.org 662-332-7576
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis <a href="https://www.stlouisfed.org/memphis">https://www.stlouisfed.org/memphis</a>	Teresa Cheeks Wilson Senior Community Development Specialist 901-531-5109 Teresa.Cheeks.Wilson@stls.frb.org
Delta Regional Authority <a href="http://www.dra.gov/">http://www.dra.gov/</a>	Chairman Chris Masingill Cmasingill@dra.gov (662) 624-8600
Coahoma Community College – Workforce Development Center <a href="http://www.coahomacc.edu/programs-of-study/workforce/workforce/index_r">http://www.coahomacc.edu/programs-of-study/workforce/workforce/index_r</a>	Steven R. Jossell -Executive Director sjossell@coahomacc.edu 662 627-9139
University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service – Center on Community Philanthropy <a href="http://clintonschool.uasys.edu/community-philanthropy/">http://clintonschool.uasys.edu/community-philanthropy/</a>	Kevin Hunt, Community Philanthropy Fellow klhunt@clintonschool.uasys.edu 501-993-6354
Mississippi Access to Justice Commission <a href="http://www.msatjc.org/">http://www.msatjc.org/</a>	Tiffany Graves – Executive Director tiffanymgraves@gmail.com 601-896-7955

**Relevant Links:**

[Higher Purpose Co. 2016 Impact Report](#)

[Mississippi Parole law costing taxpayers millions](#)

[Mississippi Blows Millions Jailing the Release-Eligible](#)