



South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ)

February 12, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

EMC Strategy Group, LLC is pleased to submit this proposal for the SBA Aspire Challenge Program as part of the America Competes Act. EMC is a San Antonio, TX based consulting firm that specializes in Business & Economic Development, Government Relations, and Nonprofit services. EMC's proposal is called, **South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ)** and includes ten (10) core solutions, which address the Aspire Challenge targeted points: Entrepreneurial Education (including: recruitment, instruction, mentoring, and community connection) and Access to Capital resources to formerly incarcerated individuals.

EMC's leadership has over 20 years of professional experience in government, business, and nonprofit sector. EMC's Owner & Founder Janice M. Gonzalez previously served as the Business & Economic Development Director for the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce and will serve as the team leader for the **South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ)**.

South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ) core solutions include: (1) recruitment/outreach, (2) civic engagement, (3) mentorship, (4) entrepreneurial education, (5) access to funding opportunities, (6) complete business start-up services, (7) certification assistance, (8) procurement navigation, (9) marketing and brand-protection and (10) recognition.

EMC Strategy Group, LLC currently has active projects in the region that the STX-BIZ Venture will target and has resources and the capability in place to begin the project immediately upon approval. We have included professional biographies, which highlight our professional experience. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this proposal for the Aspire Challenge Program and look forward to hearing from your office soon. We may be reached directly at 210.960.4340, ext. 102. Please visit our firm website to learn more about us www.emcstrategygroup.com. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Janice M. Gonzalez
Owner & Founder

Ernie Gonzalez, Jr.
President & CEO



South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ)

JANICE M. GONZALEZ, OWNER & FOUNDER



Janice M. Gonzalez, a native of Chicago, has lived in numerous areas in North and South America. Exposed early to the manufacturing world, Janice lived in and around NAFTA. Her father served as President of the Maquiladora Association, which opened unique opportunities for Janice. At an early age, Janice was committed to becoming passionately involved to make a change wherever she could. She demonstrated this by working on political campaigns at a local, state and national level. She interned and worked for several manufacturing companies in the United States and Mexico. Janice served as a Human Resources Director for a family owned grocery chain in the Rio Grande Valley. She also served as a Public Relations Director for large Dental Company in Cameron County. Her experience in government and nonprofit is extensive. Janice served as the Assistant Chief of Staff for U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd in Washington, DC where she worked with key legislative offices in both the United States Senate and United States House of Representatives. As a senior aide to Senator Dodd, Janice also worked globally with chief diplomats, executive branch cabinet members, corporate

CEOs and lobbyist representing national organizations. Janice also served as Assistant City Secretary for the City of Brownsville. While with the City of Brownsville, she served on several community committees and boards and worked directly with the City Manager and members of the City Commission. Janice also served as Business & Economic Development Director for the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce. In that role, she provided leadership to a team of volunteers and professional staff to help strengthen economic conditions in West Texas and Southern New Mexico. She worked directly with the City of El Paso, El Paso County, Governor's Office, Department of the Army and Air Force to expand business opportunities for locally owned businesses seeking state, local and federal contracts and grants. Through her leadership, she organized monthly business development training opportunities for members of the chamber of commerce. Janice has served as a government relations consultant in Austin and Washington, DC with an emphasis on nonprofit work and business and economic development by assisting chambers of commerce and small business owners. She previously owned J & E Consultants in Washington, DC and currently serves as the Owner & Founder of EMC Strategy Group, LLC.



Former U.S. Senate Staffer



South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ)

ERNIE GONZALEZ, JR, PRESIDENT & CEO



Ernie Gonzalez is a 20 plus year veteran in the government and nonprofit sector. Ernie Gonzalez has devoted his professional life to public service. After graduating from high school, Ernie enlisted and served honorably in the United States Marine Corps. During college Ernie interned and worked for the Brownsville Police Department and Cameron County District Clerk's Office. Ernie's quest for public service continued as he became active in local and national politics. Ernie has worked on numerous local, state and national political campaigns. He served as Special Projects Director & Legislative Aid for Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC. While with the U.S. Congress, Ernie covered economic development, education, special projects, judicial nominations, veteran affairs, law enforcement and executive branch relations. His congressional work also included working with cities, counties, school districts, colleges and universities to secure state and federal funding. Ernie's nonprofit experience is extensive. He held several leadership positions in the Boy Scouts of America in the Rio Grande Valley, Washington, DC, El Paso and San Antonio. These positions included Public Relations

Director, Executive and Chief Operating Officer. Ernie is a member of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. His volunteer service has included leadership positions in chambers of commerce in Brownsville, Harlingen, Washington DC, El Paso and San Antonio. Ernie has served on the following chamber committees: Armed Services, Business Development, Economic Development, Education, Government Relations and Transportation. His past affiliations include former Rotarian, Past President of the University of Texas at Brownsville Alumni Association, Knights of Columbus, Marine Corps League, Texas Young Democrats, Vice President of the Congressional Hispanic Staff Association, and the Junior Chamber of Commerce (JAYCEES).



Former Congressional Staffer



South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ)

The Project

Objective: The South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ) is a project administered by EMC Strategy Group, LLC, a minority/woman owned consulting firm, based in San Antonio, TX. STX-BIZ will serve as a resource for formally incarcerated individuals who are non-violent offenders in targeted rural communities that are economically challenged. STX-BIZ will conduct outreach and enter into memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with state and federal probation offices in South Texas and engage state and federal agencies, SBA approved micro lenders, nonprofits, local governments, school districts, technical schools and institutions of higher-learning in the deliverance of its program. Targeted areas include: Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells and Maverick Counties. Most of the STX-BIZ targeted communities have no active chamber of commerce or economic development corporation and have 10% unemployment rate and less than 1% regional economic growth rate. STX-BIZ will address all points in the SBA's Aspire program by incorporating ten core solutions, which include: **(1) recruitment/outreach, (2) civic engagement, (3) mentorship, (4) entrepreneurial education, (5) access to funding opportunities, (6) complete business start-up services, (7) certification assistance, (8) procurement navigation, (9) marketing and brand-protection and (10) recognition.** STX-BIZ will aim to position business start-ups to: achieve success, be self-sustaining, provide employment opportunities, partner with other businesses and be civic-oriented. EMC Strategy Group, LLC currently serves the communities of Brooks, Duval and Jim Wells Counties and provides Business & Economic Development and Government Relations Consulting Services for the Cities of Falfurrias, Freer and San Diego, TX. EMC conducts monthly Business & Economic Development Workshops in each of these cities. If funded, EMC Strategy Group, LLC, through the South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ), will be able to serve the targeted population identified in the Aspire Challenged Program. EMC has a strong working relationship with the SBA and utilizes and promotes SBA services at all of our workshops, social media and our firm website. EMC Owner & Founder Janice M. Gonzalez, formally served as the Business & Economic Development Director for the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce.



South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ)

STX-BIZ Core Solutions:

(1) Recruitment/Outreach – EMC will create awareness by forming partnerships with state and federal probation offices which will allow us to reach our targeted program clients/users. Our promotion will also include conducting outreach and launching an awareness campaign to city, county, state and federal agencies, nonprofits, religious institutions, school districts, technical schools and institutions of higher-learning. Our awareness campaign will include press releases to local media outlets (TV, radio, newspaper) and paid advertisements on social media.

(2) Civic Engagement – All program clients/users will be asked to commit to becoming active members of the local community where their business is located. EMC will also include local service organizations, such as; Lions Club, Kiwanis, Rotary, American Legion, etc., in our monthly STX-BIZ workshops. Each service organization will have the opportunity to conduct membership recruiting and awareness presentations at STX-BIZ workshops. EMC believes that civic engagement is paramount for any business as it tries to connect with the local community. All STX-BIZ clients/users that join a local service organizations will be recognized at the annual STX-BIZ Recognition Awards Reception.

(3) Mentorship – EMC will assign all STX-BIZ clients/users to a mentor that will serve as a motivator, coach or connector to other resources. EMC leadership will serve as the primary mentors for our clients/users. Our team has over 20 years of business, nonprofit and government experience and possess a wealth of knowledge that can navigate our clients/users to brainstorm, strategize and find solutions to address their business challenges. EMC will also include larger companies, such as; prime contractors to conduct presentations at the STX-BIZ monthly workshops. Connecting larger companies to smaller ones will create partnership opportunities for our clients/users whenever possible that may allow them to be more competitive when seeking procurement opportunities. All mentors will be recognized at the annual STX-BIZ Recognition Awards Reception.

(4) Entrepreneurial Education – EMC has conducted over 25 monthly workshops in three communities (Falfurrias, Freer and San Diego, TX) since August 2016. EMC has created a proven model through our business & economic development workshops that engages local business owners and provides them important information to help their businesses grow. The workshops include partnerships with state and federal agencies, SBA approved micro-lenders, technical schools and institutions of higher-learning. EMC will continue this model through the STX-BIZ program and encourage all clients/users to participate in all workshops. EMC will create a perfect attendance award for clients/users and recognize winners at the annual STX-BIZ Recognition Awards Reception.

Entrepreneurial Education Examples

- Quarterly federal, state, local (FSL) Insight – Provide testimonials and guidance on how to do business with federal, state and local agencies.
- Teaming Agreements (Mentor Protégé/Joint Venture) – Bringing prime/sub-contractor, suppliers, and HVAC to work together on a larger scale project.



South Texas Business Venture (STX-BIZ)

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION CONTINUED

- Bonding – How to be bonded and the importance of bonding your company.
- Presentation – How to present your business to the federal, state and local agencies.
- Small Business Administration (SBA) – A once a month seminar on the different certification programs your company may qualify for.
- Training with the Small Business Specialist – Proposal, Pricing, Marketing to the federal government and Understanding Statement of Work.
- General Service Administration (GSA) – The know how to work through with GSA and government contracting. Q &A
- Individual Interviews – Provide local business with sub-contracting, teaming and marketing opportunities with prime contractors.

(5) Access to Funding Opportunities – EMC has a strong working relationship with two SBA approved micro-lenders (LiftFund & PeopleFund) and local banks in our service area. EMC has included these lenders and local banks in our monthly business & economic development workshops. EMC will continue to partner with these lenders and include them in monthly STX-BIZ workshops. EMC will assist clients/users through the funding application progress as they seek funding through approved lenders. Success stories will be featured in the STX-BIZ monthly newsletter.

(6) Complete Business Start-up Services - Owning a business can be exciting, rewarding and yes, a challenge. Many aspiring entrepreneurs get overwhelmed with filing the proper state and federal required registrations and documentations. They also sometimes have limited experience on how to set up: a website, business social media, business phone lines, business bank accounts, business plan, develop a marketing strategy and how to get access to starting capital. EMC will offer all STX-BIZ users/clients a one stop shop to address all business start-up needs. EMC's Owner & Founder Janice M. Gonzalez served as the Business & Economic Development Director for the largest border city in the United States, El Paso, TX. She has first-hand knowledge and experience to get businesses up and running quickly.

EMC Business Start-up Services:

- Register company name with IRS and secure EIN Number.
- Register company name with Texas Secretary of State.
- Register company with DUNS number.
- Certification for: Veteran Owned, Woman Owned, Minority Owned and Business.
- Small Business Registration through U.S. Small Business Administration.



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EMC BUSINESS START-UP SERVICES CONTINUED

- Procurement Assistance.
- Bonding.
- Develop marketing strategy, company brand and launch awareness campaign.
- Design business logo and business cards.
- Develop business social media.
- Develop website.
- Set-up business phone line.
- Set-up business email.
- Develop company presentation packet.
- Provide client prospect list.

(7) Certification Assistance – EMC will offer all STX-BIZ clients/user certification assistance that will provide qualifying businesses to greater state and federal resources and increased access to procurement opportunities. Certification training opportunities will be offered at STX-BIZ workshops by the proper certification agency.

Certification Assistance for Small Business Owners Examples:

Disadvantage Businesses (DB) Program - Program created to help small disadvantaged businesses compete in the American economy and access the federal procurement market.

HUBZone (Historically Underutilized Business Zone) - Program stimulates economic development and creates jobs in urban and rural communities by providing federal contracting preferences to small businesses. These preferences go to small businesses that obtain HUBZone certification in part by employing staff who live in specially designated areas.

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) - Program was created to provide a equal opportunity to small, minority, and women-owned companies wanting to do business with TXDOT and other agencies receiving federal funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Women Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) - Certification for women-owned businesses, one of the most widely recognized and respected certifications in the nation. Accepted by thousands of corporations within the country and federal government agencies.

Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) - Designed to facilitate the participation of minority and women-owned businesses in state agency procurement opportunities.

Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) - Certification for minority owned businesses so they can do business in corporate America.

Veteran Owned Business



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(8) Procurement Navigation - EMC will assist all STX-BIZ clients/users in understanding the local, state and federal procurement process and requirements. We will include procurement training opportunities at the STX-BIZ workshops. Our goal is to educate our clients/users educated on getting access to timely, relevant and new business opportunities. In today's economic environment, companies need to do all they can to seek and win new business. With EMC procurement program, members can do just that.

Bid Match

- Matching open solicitation on the federal, state and local level
- Provide synopsis information to businesses that are matched
- A listing of open solicitation (Bid Sheet)

Discover Forecast Sales Opportunities

- Early awareness of opportunities to help businesses.
- Searching for opportunities with complete and accurate information.
- We look for partners and subcontractors for clients/users.
- EMC will search opportunities for clients/users. Accessing federal, state and local government opportunities. EMC will find clients/users company new opportunities, help clients/users company sell effectively and grow business in the federal, state and local government. Your company will receive a list of qualified pre-RFQ opportunities, active forecasting leads plus rich market information that gives you custom-tailored insights and historical purchasing data that helps clients/users company find added value.

(9) Marketing & Brand Protection – EMC's leadership has extensive experience in marketing and brand protection. EMC's Owner & Founder Janice Gonzalez served as a Public Relations Director for a South Texas Business and EMC's President & CEO Ernie Gonzalez served as a Public Relations Director for a national nonprofit organization. All STX-BIZ clients/users will receive extensive training at the monthly workshops on how marketing and brand protection can help their business grow.

Marketing Workshop Training Opportunities for STX-BIZ clients/users:

- **Marketing and Communications** – Review business current marketing and communications plan. Develop action plans to create business awareness through shared and owned media, such as; social media, website, local media outlets (TV, radio, newspaper).
- **Website & Social Media Development** – Aid in the development of business website and business social media. Stress the importance of search engine optimization and analytics to draw potential customers to business online resources.
- **Brand Protection** – Review current business brand and develop action plans to enhance business name recognition including company logo, language (buzz words), themes, and uniformity.
- **Networking** – Review current community partnerships and memberships and work with business owner to determine potential positive outcomes of expansion of business outreach.



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(10) Recognition – Recognition is a huge part of acknowledging achievement and success. EMC will plan and execute the STX-BIZ Annual Awards Reception to recognize clients/users. The awards reception will include multiple recognition opportunities. EMC will provide the SBA District Director or other SBA senior leadership the opportunity to serve as key speaker at the awards reception and assist in the presentation of the awards. EMC will feature honoree success stories in the dedicated STX-BIZ Facebook Page, EMC website and STX-BIZ newsletter.