

# Tree of Life, Inc.

Temporarily operate from (GVRA Office)1220 Hogansville Rd. LaGrange, GA 30240

2/10/2017

Small Business Administration, Aspire Solution

## **I Contestant Capacity**

### **Organizational Background:**

- a. **Organization's Name**  
Tree of Life, Incorporated
- b. **Telephone number**  
(706) 333-8728
- c. **Email address**  
jennifer@treeoflifeincorporated.org
- d. **Official Contact person and title**  
Jennifer Grier,CEO

Tree of Life Incorporated, established June 2014, is a nonprofit organization. The mission of this agency is to build positive self-esteem and develop healthy relationships of individuals with barriers in the community by providing them with the tools and resources to help them become self-sufficient and independent. Tree of Life is a state provider for Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. GVRA refer clients to receive the following services: job readiness training, career sampling training, work evaluation training, job coaching training, and community work adjustment training.

The demonstration of need will address individuals in the Troup County, Georgia area who are offenders reentering the community by enrolling them into the Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs Project. This project will help to decrease recidivism. This project will assist enrollees with planning (career counseling), training (skills training, budget/finances planning, business planning, job shadowing/mentor shadowing), and connecting to resources (SBA Funding) to help them become productive citizens in the community.

### **Background of Management Team:**

Tree of Life has established collaboration with Troup County Department of Community Supervision office. DCS employs evidence based practices to hold offenders accountable and reduce the state's recidivism rate. DCS also provide offenders the opportunity to make positive changes while in the community by providing individual support, programs and assistance. Tree of Life's Director and case manager will work closely with, Chris Walker, Community Coordinator for DCS in Troup County, GA to implement the Tomorrow's Entrepreneurs' Project.

## **II Entrepreneurial Education Delivery Solution**

### **Participant Recruitment Plan**

The goal of this project is to help individuals who are re-entering society receive the proper tools and resources to become productive citizens in our community. Through the partnership with DCS, Tree of Life recruitment plan includes referrals from Mr. Walker. All participants enrolled must have a referral from DCS. Upon referrals, Case Manager with Tree of Life will complete orientation and the initial intake; after the intake process the client will complete career counseling which includes an individual service plan to identify goals for the next six months.

### **Classroom Instruction**

**(First Step-PLANNING)** Tomorrow's Entrepreneur Project is a 16 week Curriculum Program in partnership with local colleges and business leaders. This program is designed to assist individuals re-entering society by enrolling them into an intensive educational curriculum. After the client has been referred from DCS and completed orientation, he/she will complete two weeks of identifying their interests. Within these two weeks, the case manager will work closely with the participant in a classroom setting to identify the following: strengths, challenges, transferable skills, right social fit, environmental demands, establish employment goal, good work ethics, and budget/financial planning.

**(Second Step-TRAINING)** After the client has identified the above objectives for employment and entrepreneur selection, for the next 10 weeks, the client will participate in skilled training. (\*From the results of the first two weeks, the case manager will work with the client to make their selection). Instructors for the skilled training will be selected from local colleges. The class schedule will be prepared for morning and evening to assist the student with flexibility. Along with this curriculum for the next ten weeks, business planning, marketing, human resources, leadership, and strategy preparation will also be implemented. The skilled training options are as follows:

- HVAC
- Retail/Customer Service
- Barber
- Landscape
- CNA
- ServeSafe (Food Safety)
- Spartan Chemical (Cleaning)

### **Mentoring**

**(Third Step-PLACEMENT)** After client successfully completes the planning and training stage, the client receives a certificate from the college. Then he/she moves into the community by being placed with a mentor to job shadow. In this stage, the client is placed in the community to participate for 4 weeks in a setting to demonstrate everything they have learned the weeks prior. The following are work behaviors and skills observed during this timeframe:

- Demonstration of quality and quantity of work
- Attendance and Punctuality

- Ability to delegate and manage
- Problem Solving/Decision Making
- Demonstration of Leadership

**Community Connection**

The Troup County, GA community has currently established an initiative to assist individuals transitioning back into society. Tree of life will work closely with this initiative and its leaders to prepare a strategic plan specifically for this project. Tree of Life will coordinate and cooperate with other local businesspersons and leadership to help develop and establish connection for students after they have completed the program.

### **III Access to capital**

#### **Access to Micro-lending**

After students have completed the final mentor/job shadowing stage, the participant through collaboration with the local Small Business Development Center, will be connected to opportunities to receive funding to start up their business venture. At this stage, the participant will also have completed the business plan, the marketing piece, and the strategy piece to be ready to present and pitch their idea to the local SBA Director. All participants will be scheduled an appointment and interview to present to the local SBA after successfully completing the program.

#### **Connection to capitol and funding opportunities**

The entrepreneur ecosystem will be the positive results of the strategic planning of the local leaders, innovators, investors, and supporters in the community. This is a widespread community involvement. Through the development of partnerships, participants will be connected to a strong network of partners and investors who are vested in building strong sustainable communities. All participants of the project will meet together on a continuous basis with stakeholders to continue to build the future of the community. When participants receive funding, they will be placed with a SCORE Mentor to continue to lead and guide the participant at every stage of business. Along with the mentor, the participant will also receive follow ups from Tree of Life Case Manager and DCS Coordinator on a regular basis.