



Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the world and more than a third of people who are released to state prison are arrested and return to custody within three years. Louisiana's incarceration rate has shot up 35 percent over the past 20 years — currently at 816 per 100,000 people, double the national average. These high incarceration and recidivism rates costs the state \$600 million to \$700 million a year. The State is working to adjust its re-entry programs to help reduce recidivism and Supply Chain Visions' Aspire program aids that effort in tapping into the entrepreneurial spirit within the re-entry population and has, to-date, not been considered. By identifying potential entrepreneurs from the formerly incarcerated population and helping them develop a viable business, we will greatly reduce the likelihood of recidivism. We will also build small businesses that are more likely to hire formerly incarcerated employees, further disrupting the re-incarceration cycle.

Supply Chain Visions, Inc. (SCV) has demonstrated excellence in implementing SBA business support programs within the ScaleUp America program. Within this program, our approach and expert business staff is employed across three ScaleUp areas, Roanoke VA, Portland, ME, and North Central PA. The entrepreneurial ecosystem of the Louisiana Region will receive a dynamic and creative demonstration of success from the Aspire Program, creating awareness and positive support for SBA programs within the region. Our team will use the proven curriculum used in our three ScaleUp programs as well as provide management assistance and support, deliver assistance and expertise for access to capital, and create opportunities to build and strengthen business connections. If awarded to SCV, 100% of the services budget will be dedicated to small businesses. Our corporate information is called out below.

SCV's core competency is bringing expert business consulting to business executives ranging from startup entrepreneurs to the C-Suite of Lockheed Martin. Two members of our team, Robert Fulgenzi and Tim LaPlante will lead the work and serve as the conduit to the rest of SCV's business experts as required. This team has worked together for more than 20 years.

Robert Fulgenzi has nearly 30 years of business management and consulting. As a small business owner, he executed enterprise-wide process improvement efforts for Fortune 500 clients such as Tyson Foods, International Paper, and Philips Petroleum. He has also successfully led or supported over \$600 million in US Government projects. Previously he led business incubation programs in Oklahoma, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Mexico. He initiated a parolee business incubation program in Oklahoma, prior to being recalled to active duty to serve in Iraq. Today he teaches and mentors small business owners through the SBA ScaleUp program.

Mr. LaPlante is a leading business consultant and coach in the Southeast Louisiana region, having managed small businesses supporting the South Louisiana petrochemical industry. For the past three years, he has driven small business development in the region as a Business, Finance and Management Instructor at an inner-city Community College and as a SCORE mentor. In addition, he is co-founder of the Entrepreneurial Resource Center at Baton Rouge Community College. This proven team has worked together for more than two decades and, combined with our proven curriculum and approach, helps ensure measurable success of Aspire in the New Orleans region (including Baton Rouge).

Brookings Institution study noted that the New Orleans region is outpacing the rest of the nation with startups per capita at 56% above the national average. New Orleans was ranked No. 1 on Forbes' list of "America's Biggest Brain Magnets" and as their No. 3 city for technology jobs. And Inc.com declared New Orleans to be the "Coolest Startup City

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in America". We will take advantage of this vibrant ecosystem, integrating re-entrants into it by augmenting the current re-entry programs in a State that leads the Nation in incarceration statistics and recidivism.

Recently incarcerated individuals face nearly unsurmountable odds in finding a job after serving their sentence. Nationwide, it was found that fewer than 36% of recently incarcerated individuals were employed 30 days after release. People released from prisons and jails in Louisiana face far more obstacles in finding a job than anywhere else in the United States. Louisiana has 389 restrictions on employment for felons; the national average is 123. The restrictions include bans on obtaining certain types of business or property licenses and bans on specific occupations such as police officers, security guards, secondary school teachers, veterinarians and pharmacists. Our solution is to help these individuals envision, plan, finance, and operate their own small business through the Aspire program.

This program will support current re-entry programs centered around the Orleans Parish Prison's (OPP) two primary re-entry programs, the Southeast Regional Re-entry Program and OPP's Day Reporting Center. These programs continue to see success, reporting a reduction in recidivism of 47%. The New Orleans region is well suited to support small business development, with two local university small business centers providing incubator and meeting space, as well as four non-profit foundations with space for lease. Capital for recently released individuals is a genuine challenge, but New Orleans is better suited than most comparable cities. National SBA Microloan Intermediaries, such as KIVA, Accion and Liftfund are well established in New Orleans, and local non-profits such as Goodwork Network and Fund 17 (named for the 17 wards of the city) specifically target funding opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses. As in ScaleUp, our experts will actively recruit from those demographics and fill the entrepreneurial gaps in current programming.

Current re-entry programming does not cover the aspiring entrepreneurs within or recently released from the system. Programs include Certified Treatment and Rehabilitative Programs, High school education/GED programs, and job skills training for primarily manual labor fields. While these programs are effective and cover the needs of many offenders, they do not foster or grow the ability and business management skills of entrepreneurs. The Aspire program fills the current gap in that area and is a welcomed addition to the services provided our rehabilitated persons. This "fit" is driving the collaborative relationship between the current Re-entry Program managers and our team, allowing access to the pipeline of recent (past two years) and upcoming released offenders.

SCV will tailor its successful recruiting approach, used in three ScaleUp areas, for the New Orleans region. We developed a working relationship with the Department of Corrections and their Re-entry Programming and began the tailoring of the curriculum based on research from those organizations. Building on lessons learned from ScaleUp, the process begins with defining a market through the release and parole databases and using our relationship with the DOC. Individuals with aspirations of opening or re-opening their businesses will be identified and engaged through coordinated outreach with the DOC and current Re-entry Programs. The market is then engaged through referrals from community champions, cohort members, and financial institutions.

Recruiting and selection for this program are essential to success. Recently incarcerated individuals want to assimilate as soon as possible and may want to distance themselves from any connection to their term of incarceration. The Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office is the lead government agency in New Orleans attempting to reduce recidivism through effective re-entry into the community. Our team will use four major programs as our core recruitment base: Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office Southeast Regional Re-Entry Program, Leo Hayden,



Director; Warren McDaniels Transitional Workforce Center, Major J. Spinney; Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office Day Reporting Center; Orleans District Probation and Parole Office, which supervises 6,500 offenders.

Our instruction delivery methodology involves providing businesses a tailored, proven curriculum that is directly connected to the business advisory services and peer-to-peer learning workshops and roundtable discussions that will drive concept understanding and implementation rapidly. Rather than a lecture-based approach, SCV approaches and structures cohort meetings like graduate seminars, not freshman lectures. Our cohorts will contain 5-8 entrepreneurs and will run in the early spring and fall. Our team relies on a standard curriculum to guide cohort meetings, but successful engagement with ScaleUp participants means much more than lecturing from a book. Through three years of ScaleUp, SCV has learned how to create development plans for each participant. SCV knows how to facilitate discussions, to drive connections within the cohort, to coach and engage rather than preach. Our instruction includes online engagement using social media and freeware to communicate and supplement the roundtable sessions. From room setup to catering, SCV has defined the mechanics and logistics for success.

Because SCV's experts are consultants, businesspeople, practitioners, and entrepreneurs, we know enough to capture and reuse our expertise; we do not reinvent the wheel. From roundtable discussions to workshops to one-on-one sessions, our team has defined and documented our best practices. With this strong foundation, SCV can recreate a successful program for Aspire, because we do not have to begin from scratch. This success is not just the ability to enable aspiring entrepreneurs, but to document lessons learned, processes and success measures to support SBA's evaluation of the pilot as a whole and in part, such as the curriculum and coaching focus areas.

The curriculum selected and used effectively in ScaleUp North Central PA, Portland and Roanoke will be refined to focus on the aspects of business critical to start-ups. The curriculum is tailored on historical ScaleUp knowledge and covers the areas identified both in published research and in our experience as being critical to entrepreneurial success, including strategy, sales and marketing, financial literacy, financing, and operations (including negotiations, cost take-out and personnel management). Each session consists of two parts. The first part is a class discussion follow-up from the previous week's topic, allowing the entrepreneurs to highlight their implementations of the lessons and any challenges faced. This is structured through required reading and documenting participants' growth plan in the specific area. The second part is a peer-to-peer discussion of a new topic, building directly on the previous discussion(s), and adding detail to the entrepreneurs' business plans.

SCV's development approach is centered around direct entrepreneur coaching. This coaching begins during the recruiting phase, as the participant is interviewed and relates their business vision. From that point, our instructors design a development plan for the individual while the individual develops their business plan. These plans typically include readings, coaching sessions, mentor/contact development, etc. and are communicated with and tailored to the participant at the onset of every coaching session. These sessions begin with the entrepreneurs' vision and help them model the tasks and approaches needed to achieve their vision. Our instructors and coaches are entrepreneurs, who have started businesses and who have taught and coached entrepreneurs. One assignment each participant will receive is the development of mentors within their professional network to aid them in their personal and business development, after they leave the Aspire program and follow their business plan to grow within the local ecosystem.

Integrating our entrepreneurs into the local business ecosystem is critical to Aspire's success and requires strengthening the cohorts' social capital throughout the regional customer/supplier base and beyond. Once the



internal bond is created within the cohort, SCV will promote networking outside of the cohort within distinct communities and across the larger business ecosystem (through local events like New Orleans Entrepreneur Week). Through networking, matchmaking and roundtable events, the local community will be brought to the cohort. In some cases, the cohort will venture to industry in the form of “local trade missions,” to locations where there is a concentration of potential customers, distribution partners, and strategic allies. This concept is based on SCV’s previous and ongoing successful work in the global market as a highly cost effective method of connecting buyers with producers and financiers within and across ecosystems.

Access to capital is an aspect of the methodology that connects cohort members with external resources needed for growth. These resources include both funding resources (including grants and micro-loans) and strategic partners that can invest in the firm’s growth as a direct investor or as an ecosystem and/or value chain partner. SCV’s cadre of experts is familiar with every avenue of funding, from loan and micro-loan applications to presenting and supporting analytics for equity financiers and crowd-funding options. Through the firm’s extensive connections, the SBA ‘Loans and Grants Search Tool,’ the Aspire staff will work with each participant to secure the external resources needed to achieve their growth plan regardless of their incarceration.

Access to capital for previously incarcerated individuals offers distinct challenges. “Traditional” funding for most in this community many times originates from extended family loans and the sweat investment of relatives. This fact and its underrepresentation on financial statements (along with the incarceration record) presents challenges in communicating true value and potential to mainstream financial institutions. The knowledge that SCV’s staff brings to this challenge stems from our firsthand experience in the region and supporting prior incarcerated persons. Combined with our broad knowledge of small business start-up/growth and our staff’s experience as loan and credit officers, SCV tailors a nuanced approach to each cohort member’s financial needs. We also build profiles of local, regional, and national financiers to best align specific culture and challenges to a set of potential capital partners. Finally, our team has developed, specifically for ScaleUp, a Guide Book called “Non-Traditional Funding for Small Businesses”.

The key to finding access to capital is in the development and preparation of each cohort member. In a series of five in-depth training sessions each member of the group will develop each section of their business plan, covering the business description, managers and employees, operations and location, marketing, and finally the pro forma budgets and loan request. These sessions will use the Louisiana Small Business Development Center Step-by-Step Business Plan Workbook, as it is one of the most common business plan templates in the New Orleans area. In five follow up one-on-one sessions, each member will refine the business plan in preparation for the pitch to the Microloan Intermediaries. Overall the program will first run for six weeks to identify the first cohort of 7-10 potential entrepreneurs, then the training and preparation cycle will cover the next eight weeks with a second cohort beginning in the fall.

The Supply Chain Visions staff is integrated and poised within the New Orleans’ entrepreneurial and re-entry community to produce a successful Aspire pilot. Included in the \$75,000 award, is the same level of detailed process and lessons learned reporting we make available in ScaleUp America. We will deliver a successful pilot, enable two cohorts of re-entrants to succeed as entrepreneurs, and provide the SBA with the information needed to measure and recreate the success.