

Contestant Capacity

This solution is a joint proposal between Big Data Group LLC www.bigdatagroupinc.com and reSET www.resetco.org leveraging our respective organizational strengths in delivering an innovative and high quality series of opportunities for the formerly incarcerated through candidate selection, entrepreneurial education, individualized mentoring and access to capital.

Big Data Group LLC is professional services organization developing and delivering solutions for commercial and Federal clients in the areas of predictive analytics and data management. Current Federal clients include the FDIC, Veterans Administration, and the United States Treasury with engagements providing unique data oriented solutions to assist with some of the most complex and challenging data environments.

Mr. Gregory S. Wojcieszak, President, will be charged with the data analysis and delivery of identifying previously incarcerated individuals in the greater Hartford, CT area. Mr. Wojcieszak also manages an educational foundation for African-American young men and through this experience he has significant experience in working with previously incarcerated young men and adults and providing them with educational opportunities from high school through their undergraduate degrees.

reSET, Social Enterprise Trust, is committed to advancing the social enterprise sector, by building a network of supportive programs, services and resources to help early stage entrepreneurs grow their businesses and their impact. reSET capitalizes on the opportunity to leverage its extensive network, experience and thought leadership to support the growth of high impact start-ups, in an effort to drive sustainable economic development in the greater Hartford community. As such, reSET is uniquely positioned to deliver entrepreneurial education for the previously incarcerated.

Our intent is to deliver this program in the greater Hartford, CT area and align with the local community in the selection of individuals for inclusion in our program.

Ms. Ojala Naeem, Director of Operations, is a motivated, passionate and high-performing leader with high-level experience within the social innovation industry. She has demonstrated demonstrates proficiency in operations, financial, and project management with an expertise in business development strategy, community development, and IT operations. Ms. Naeem will manage the delivery of entrepreneurial education, mentoring and funding sources.

Primary contact for this solution is Mr. Gregory S. Wojcieszak, President, Big Data Group LLC, greg@bigdatagroupinc.com, (703) 268-9468

Entrepreneurial Education Delivery Solution

1. **Participant Recruitment Plan.** Our team intends to leverage our best in class analytics and big data expertise to help in the identification of individuals for inclusion in our program. We intend to use a series of deep analytics to analyze the backgrounds of applicants including: matching education, family background, prior work experience, conviction record, personal interests and other determining factors to best select individuals for inclusion in the educational program. Additionally, our intent is to continue the follow-up of individuals through the program and beyond to further refine our model to assist in the selection of individuals for future programs. We believe that this iterative effort coupled with intense personal interviews will increase the success rate for our participants.
2. **Classroom Instruction.** reSET, Social Enterprise Trust recognizes that in many ways, entrepreneurship is not inclusive. There are serious barriers to becoming a successful entrepreneur, which often prevent the individuals who would benefit the most, from ever getting a chance to succeed. Financial barriers prevent previously incarcerated or low-income individuals from assuming the financial risk associated with building a business. Institutional racism and sexism create numerous barriers to accessing key resources and building productive networks. Knowledge and educational barriers mean that many individuals with innovative ideas often lack professional skill sets to bring their ideas to market. And, in many cases, entrepreneurs lack the relationship capital and networks to connect with the resources that they require. Compounding the problem, disadvantaged communities with the deepest insight into the causes of these inequities too often face the most significant barriers to engaging in social innovation. reSET offers a suite of resources to support early stage entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. The majorities of these resources are designed to address a diverse range of start-up needs. reSET's programming is flexible, and leverages our extensive network to contribute to a regional ecosystem capable of attracting and nourishing entrepreneurship. reSET's core offering, and the subject of this proposal, is its Accelerator Program – a four month program built to equip entrepreneurs with the knowledge, networks, and resources to grow their businesses and their impact. reSET also runs a co-working space called the reSET Business Factory, and facilitates pro-bono office hours with service providers, mentors, and business professionals.

Our intent is to create two cohorts with between four and six individuals per cohort as our experience indicates that this is the optimal size for teaching and mentoring entrepreneurs.

We intend to leverage this program designed to equip entrepreneurs with access to the knowledge, networks, and resources they need to grow and scale their businesses and their impact; and modify it to meet the specific needs of the previously incarcerated. Our program focuses on connecting entrepreneurs to early stage customers, industry specific experts and mentors, and provide coaching through the process of business model development. The program also provides access to financial capital, through both a reSET managed cash prize pool, as well as through avenues to traditional investment. Our program eliminates the traditional financial barriers associated with enrollment for cost burdened entrepreneurs, and allows for flexibility and individual content selection, by combining a series of four mandatory weekend “boot-camp” style summits, with a series of optional “a la carte”

expert lead workshops and seminars which cover a range of topics in business development.

The program is tailored to offer four core components of value: Business Development Theory – through workshops, seminars and guided exercises, reSET trains entrepreneurs in the fundamentals of business model design, customer development and financial modeling, as well as networking, presentation and business management skills.

To build a strong foundation for their businesses, entrepreneurs need access to specific expertise and resources. reSET offers access to pro-bono services from lawyers, accountants, marketing and IT professionals. We also take an active role in connecting participants to experts in their industry.

The program will directly impact the local community in several significant ways: In the short term, we provide a supportive outlet for a community that faces significant barriers to entrepreneurship. Leveraging infrastructure and a network built through years of running our hallmark program, this education is designed to provide relevant training, and stage appropriate support to early-stage, non-traditional entrepreneurs. More local entrepreneurs creating businesses leads to more commerce, jobs, and economic prosperity flowing to those who need it the most.

In the long term, we make a significant impact in the community by inspiring local entrepreneurs and change makers to rethink the problems that surround them in terms of opportunities for social innovation. reSET strives to shift the dialogue, level the playing field and empower members of the local community to become social entrepreneurs. reSET invests its time and resources into entrepreneurs, not individual business ventures. As a result, each entrepreneur that comes through our doors leaves with the skill set, network and community necessary to continue creating impact through one or many ventures.

3. **Mentoring.** Operating in parallel to the accelerator program, reSET manages a network of over 100 registered mentors, representing 38 industries, who participate in the accelerator by delivering content, running workshops, holding pro-bono office hours, and developing longer-term coaching relationships with the participating ventures. The program's curriculum borrows from Lean methodology, a cutting edge approach to start-up development that stresses building customer centric business models, and staying reactive to customer demand by pivoting to better achieve product/market fit. The mentor network boasts individuals with a breadth of industry expertise, as well as entrepreneurs with hands-on business building experience. Community – a vibrant and supportive community adds unprecedented value to entrepreneurs. Not only does a community provide important emotional support, but also serves as a hot-bed for innovation, collaboration and the sharing of networks and resources.
4. **Community Connections.** reSET is deeply rooted in the greater Hartford Community thorough our mentoring network and funding sources. We intend to further drive these contacts to assist in the selection of individuals into our program; and, assist in driving funding for their ideas.

Access to Capital

We have access to a variety of unique entrepreneurial funding sources through the State of Connecticut, The Small Business Express program ("EXP") that provides small businesses with various forms of financial assistance, using a streamlined application process to expedite the delivery of such assistance.

reSET is the only organization in Connecticut that has been chosen by Kiva. Kiva Microfunds is a 501(c)(3) organization that allows people to lend money via the Internet to low-income entrepreneurs and students in over 80 countries. Kiva's mission is "to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty." Since 2005, Kiva has crowd-funded more than a million loans, totaling nearly \$950 million, with a repayment rate of between 98 and 99 percent.

We also have significant experience in working with the SBA in their Microloan program as well as their intermediaries in connect entrepreneurs to these funding sources. Additionally, we intend to leverage our mentor network for microloans and seed capital to fund selected participants.

reSET has substantial expertise in working with individuals in completing the myriad of paperwork associated with funding ideas and we have a proved track record of matching our educational programs and their outcomes to funding sources.