

Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program



United Fitness

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Project Abstract

Fitness and health is *the* motto we at **United Fitness** live by, one that has transformed each and every one of us into something greater than ourselves. Our mission is to amplify personal health and inspire motivation; to spark positive change within our community; to enhance people's lives and boost their self confidence. The **Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program** will train, educate, and mentor returning citizens through an intensive certification program to be transformed into fitness entrepreneurs. Our students will learn that through positive change, prosperity, and stability they too will become a beacon of strength in their communities. As fitness trainers, independence and ease of entrepreneurship is a guarantee to reduce recidivism rates. Health is wealth and with the Aspire Challenge prize along with our already established business in Bound Brook, New Jersey we can extend our mission and impact the participants' own communities.

Through the Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program students will obtain the required fitness certifications, a complete business plan, and have access to capital to begin their entrepreneurial endeavors. We will use the Young Biz Business Today entrepreneurial education curriculum and the International Sports Science Association (ISSA) Certified Fitness Trainer (CFT) education curriculum. This program will provide in-person classroom instruction, textbooks, workbooks, CPR training and certification, trainer insurance coverage, technology lab, and resources for students to develop a business plan, financial skills, leadership skills, marketing and product development, and professional skills. **United Fitness** is located along the NJ Transit Raritan Valley Line and is walking distance from our facility. The New Jersey recidivism rate is 53% for released inmates return within 3 years. This statistic is cited from the Department of Correction of New Jersey. By providing a vocation and the opportunity for self-employment their chances of recidivism can be greatly reduced.

Staff and Organization

United Fitness, established on May 2015, promotes positive growth in health and wellness through meaningful relationships with its members. Partnering with a local supplement company, Nutrabo, members have access to quality athletic nutrition. Currently the Bound Brook Revitalization Partnership (BBRP) is improving the District's economic viability.

Jacob Hishmeh, a former incarcerated individual himself, is the founder of United Fitness and a member of the Rutgers Mountain View Program (MVP). After serving his four year sentence at Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility, he went to complete 3 years of the Exercise Science program at Rutgers University. Landing into financial distress, Hishmeh decided to pursue a career in fitness entrepreneurship. Hishmeh holds a personal trainer certification from ISSA and has extensive experience in fitness, nutrition, as well as developing and growing a business. Erica Restrepo, manager and consultant, has assisted Hishmeh in the development and growth of **United Fitness**. Restrepo's experience in fitness and nutrition allows for a superb customer service. Francis St. Fleur, a personal trainer, holds an Exercise Science Degree from Rutgers University and is currently employed as a crisis intervention specialist at Bonnie-Brae residential school for at risk youth. Laura Polakiewicz holds a Business Degree from Kean University; Polakiewicz has prior experience teaching freshmen high school students classes in sports marketing at the Bound Brook High School. Councilman Reverend Philip M. Fiadino, founder and director of the Dorothy Day House in Bound Brook, NJ will serve as a counselor and consultant for the program. Mabelyn Ramos, the care consultant, holds a Psychology Degree and a minor in international studies from New Jersey City University. Ramos

<http://youngbiz.com/store/products/business-today/>

<http://www.issaonline.edu/certification/issa-online-personal-training-certification-courses.cfm>

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<http://www.bbrpnj.com/mission.html>

<http://mountainview.rutgers.edu/about-the-mountainview-program>

<http://www.bonnie-brae.org/about/who-we-are/>

currently works as a care manager under the “ NJ Children’s System of Care” and is pursuing her masters in social work at Rutgers University.

Program Description

The Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program will provide formerly incarcerated individuals with the knowledge and resources to start and grow their own business. Through classroom instruction, workshops, projects, internships, mentorships and online support, the students will be prepared to accomplish their dreams.

Recruitment will take place at institutions¹ where formerly incarcerated individuals reside. There are 13 prisons and over 100 halfway homes for ex-offenders. Presentations at these institutions will give potential participants an opportunity to learn and inquire about the program. Circulars and websites will be created to ensure all in the New Jersey area will learn about the Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program at **United Fitness**. Enrolling students must at least be 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or equivalent. Interested ex-offenders will submit a two page essay which will give insight into their ambitions, business ideas and goals.

After careful deliberation, a total of fifty participants will be accepted and divided into two cohorts. The Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program will run for approximately 14 weeks, twice a year. Classroom instruction will be held in United Fitness’s upstairs 3,000 sq. ft. *Amp Up* studio, where participants will meet weekly for about 100 hours within the span of 14 weeks. Access to the student lounge and computer lab will be available for a few hours a day . The student lounge will include a study area, hockey table and games, along with the computer lab section. The Program website will contain a student portal, where material covered will be available along with a student discussion board to allow for peer support and continued education, as well as entrepreneurial workshops and webinars available in the area.

Phase I of the program will consist mostly of entrepreneurial and fitness education along with a research paper. This paper will be the foundation for the participants’ own business plan. It will include market analysis, financial literacy, and company information. Guest Speakers, Elise Francis and Mark Glazier will lecture students about their own personal experiences. Francis has recently established her mobile personal training business called EFFIT. Glazier is the CEO and founder of supplement company Nutrabio. Glazier’s products include proteins, vitamins and minerals, as well as weight loss supplements. These speakers will contribute proven business tactics that lead to success in their respective field.

Phase II will feature guest teacher, Alvaro Acosta who will go in depth with management techniques and skills. Acosta studies Sports Management and Finance at Seton Hall University and plans to graduate in May 2017. Acosta is currently a marketing intern at **United Fitness**. Another component of Phase II will consist of group projects. The students will work in teams to prepare and present a lesson addressing topics such as process, strategy, and finance under the guidance of a mentor. While it is important, for the teams to teach viable and concrete information, the process

¹ Bonnie-Brae ; NJ STEP; Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility; Albert C. Wagner Youth Correctional Facility;
Garden State Youth Correctional Facility;
Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women

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involved will promote leadership and management skills. This phase will conclude a CPR class and with the ISSA CFT examination.

In Phase III, students will begin an internship at United Fitness provided they pass the ISSA CFT exam. Responsibilities of the intern will include designing and delivering fitness programs for members of our gym as well as business management duties which will include sales, customer relations, and business performance analysis. The internship will conclude with a detailed report consisting of the fitness program evaluation, challenges faced, and accomplishments. Phase III will also feature a guest speaker from Central Jersey SCORE² who will go over loan types, funding and “what financial lenders look for,” thus concluding Phase III.

Phase IV will consist of a final exam that covers all of the entrepreneurial education and students who pass this exam will be awarded the Certificate of Completion for The Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program. This phase of the program will include further preparations for meeting financial lenders through mock interviews with peers and mentors. It will conclude with a networking function in the United Fitness *Amp Up* studio.

Evaluations will be given on a daily basis, to ensure comprehension of material covered, and to determine if a topic will require in depth learning as a group or on an individual basis. These evaluations will be in the form of quizzes. In addition, biweekly exams will be handed out for the same purposes.

The program participants will be assigned to a mentor at the beginning of the course and one-on-one sessions will be provided on a weekly basis. The mentor’s responsibility will include recording individual student progress and drafting a business plan. Business plan drafts will be due by the end of each phase of the program and meeting reviews will be setup to discuss the strengths and areas of opportunity. Once the program is completed participants will still have access to their mentor up to four months. If the participants do not reach out to their mentor within that four month timeframe, the mentor will contact them to follow up. Ramos and Rev. Fiadino will be available for support throughout the program about any social matters that may hinder the student’s progress.

In addition to the education, internships, projects, and mentorship, the Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program will assist those participants with bad credit and participants who may need to open bank accounts. Resource partners from the Central Jersey SCORE will provide the services for those who need the assistance. Participants will be connected with SCORE and the Rutgers NJSBDC³ for workshop and webinars for continued support and education well after the Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program completion. The program website will continuously post workshops, webinars, or any other opportunities for assistance available in the area.

The goal of the Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program is to have all fifty participants successfully accomplish their fitness training business. By staying connected with the participant, **United Fitness** ensures that the student continues to have access to assistance needed. If the participant later decides that starting their own business is no longer the route they wish to pursue, we will set them up with interviews at established fitness centers in the Central New Jersey area. This way the rate of recidivism for the individual is still greatly reduced by providing employment.

² <https://centraljersey.score.org/>

³ <https://www.business.rutgers.edu/rnsbdc/about-us>

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Access to Capital

The Amp't Up Studio space will be converted for social networking events. Participants will have the opportunity to present business ideas to the guests. The goal for the student at the networking event will be to set up meetings with the financial lenders. All participants will go over documentation and techniques for meetings with their mentor. Documentation will include the final draft of their business plan as well as a loan proposal.

The Central Jersey SCORE offers workshops to prepare entrepreneurs for entry into starting a new business. The "Access to Capital and Business Loans" workshop will suit the Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program participants. The Rutgers NJSBDC also provides workshops and events, such as the "Building and Financing Your Business Meet With SBA Lenders."

Participants will also be connected with A Non-Profit Economic Development Corporation UCEDC⁴. This non-profit also includes the SBA microloans in their array of financing options. This organization is known to lend to underserved populations as well as to borrowers with little to no credit history, low-income borrowers, and women and minority entrepreneurs.

The networking event hosted by the Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program participants and **United Fitness** will be one way for participants to meet with lenders. The Rutgers NJSBDC and the UCEDC are two other means for participants to meet with financial lenders. From these events, participants will be required to have at least three meetings with lenders and attend as many of these events as possible.

If the Aspire Challenge is awarded to United Fitness, we believe that the Personal Trainer Entrepreneurship Program for formerly incarcerated participants will prosper as ambassadors of health and wellness and succeed financially. Not only will they contribute to the economic development of communities, but will also inspire and enhance the lives around them. The fitness industry is surging and provides a meaningful and sustainable line of work for those willing to endear the endeavor.

⁴ <https://ucedc.com/about-us/>

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