

PHOENIX'S GUIDE TO RE-ENTRY AS AN ENTREPRENEUR

**Submitted by: Mclane Investment Group, LLC
 & Aqua NoVa Restoration**

Submitted to: Small Business Administration



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Organizational Background:

Mclane Investment Group, LLC is the parent organization of a Women Owned (51%) Small Business currently providing services under a DBA, Aqua NoVa Restoration, (ANR). ANR's core competencies are as follows:

- Woman Owned Small Business and Felon/Formerly Incarcerated Small Business Owner
- Provides Pressure Washing Services
- Provides Training
- Offers Residential, Commercial and Industrial Exterior Cleaning Solutions
- Office Cleaning
- Recently Added to both Sam.gov and SBA.gov registries
- Geographical focus is: Virginia, Washington, D.C. and Maryland
- Official Contact Person: Stephanie Dawson, dawson.sdd@gmail.com, 703-200-7231

ANR is uniquely positioned to offer training to deliver entrepreneurship training to formerly incarcerated individuals due to the majority owner having experience directly related to the subject of being a convicted felon who served an eight-year sentence in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. It should be noted that although I have not offered resources or programming to formerly incarcerated individuals in a professional capacity, however, having been one myself, I feel I offer the unique perspective that is required in-order to make the Aspire Program successful. I have been independently working on my own to write a re-entry guide "Phoenix's Guide To Re-Entry" (under the guise of re-entry being akin to a Phoenix's resurrection), which I had planned to sell or give away to the formerly incarcerated with a specific niche specialty in Ex-Offenders from the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP), in order to help the returning ex-offender be better prepared to obtain work that is above a minimum wage capacity upon release from custody. I have a large, online community of ex-offenders that works together to provide each other with services and information that will assist all of us with the appropriate resources and tools we need to maximize our success. Upon noting this opportunity, I have submitted this documentation and am currently listed at sam.gov as a company eligible to provide goods and services to the federal government under my company name: Aqua NoVa Restoration, a DBA under Mclane Investment Group.

The proposed geographic service area I would provide Entrepreneur Training and Services in would initially be Northern Virginia, Washington, D.C. and Maryland, or the National Capital Region of Washington, D.C., although I believe that I could provide services Nation-wide if I were given the resources, support and planning that would facilitate such a program. My entrepreneurial ecosystem is on Facebook and n LinkedIn. My network of formerly incarcerated individuals is nationwide.

Background of Management Team:

Besides being the majority owner of an Exterior Pressure Washing Service Provider, I also have a full time job working for a Federal Solutions Provider for Information Technology Services to a number of Federal Government Agencies. I operate Aqua NoVa Restoration with my business partner (and boyfriend) Mac Kriesch. I assist my business partner after my regular full time job and on weekends in the operation of Aqua NoVa Restoration and handle the back-office functions. My management team would be selected from other felons/ex-offenders who are currently running successful businesses in the geographic areas which I would intend to provide the aforementioned training. I can provide my resume and information about my background and successes upon award however it is sufficed to say that I have had all my rights restored, successfully completed probation requirements, have bought a home of my own and am considered by all accounts to be a fabulous success and uniquely qualified to reach and impact the intended target market audience.

Entrepreneurial Education Delivery Solution Participant Recruitment Plan

Identification and outreach to participants would include a program that I would seek to partner with the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, (FBOP) to include a mini (preliminary) training session to the FBOP general population that is being released in the 3-6 month time period (first tier) in which the FBOP currently has probation officers and other community service workers who appear at the FBOP individual prisons to have Q&A sessions with inmates who are about to be released. I would ask for inclusion into this program that would include a 30 minute presentation to include key information and contact information for inclusion into the program upon release. This would allow for the ability to reach the incarcerated community at the grass roots level and provide handouts that could be circulated through the FBOP Educational Centers and RDAP Programs Nationwide that would provide SBA approved and created incentives for those who participate. I would also seek to partner with the Federal Halfway House locations (second tier) which are in the National Capital Region and offer a 60 minute presentation to include key information and contact information for inclusion into the program as well as buy in to program goals and participation from the Administrators of the Halfway house Management to allow us to either provide these training programs to their population or to allow for the Halfway house population to attend in-person SBA programs offsite (third tier) at Halfway house approved times and locations. I would create a marketing program that would specifically target and identify Ex-Offenders through multi-media advertisement on cable and radio advising of the training and giving a phone number and or website URL to obtain additional information. I would use Facebook resources only available to former inmates through my network and resources of those I have known and have been associated with through my participation in FBOP programs, Halfway house programs, and facebook groups. If I were awarded an opportunity to participate in the training and creating appropriate resource materials, these would include:

- Needs Assessment -which could be done either manually or online to determine what kind of training would be most appropriate for the individual. Helping the individual decide what is the right business for them to pursue
- Financial Literacy – How to build individual and company credit, how to find and apply for SBA microloans and grants for education, SBA Microloan Intermediaries, Angel Investors, teaching basic business pitches in a “shark tank” environment, crowdfunding, venture funding, Kickstarter, bootstrapping, family and friends, Corporate Seed Funding, Incubators or accelerators
- Basic Information Technology Training to find resources and use government websites to information and resources that would assist them in obtaining business goals,
- Grant Literacy for Education, Dept of Labor Grants, Pell Grants, Scholarships, Work-Study
- How to leverage SBA Designations (SDVOB, 8(a), WOSB, HUBZone, etc)
- How to apply for federal contracts (NAICS, PSC codes, sam.gov, FBO, OSBP, etc), How to partner with State and local governments
- How to partner with larger businesses for success (such as Booz Allen SB office)
- Networking for success (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc) Chamber of Commerce, etc
- How to apply for Loans for housing, USDA, FHA, HUD, etc
- Community Resources -
- Networking
- Publically and personally recognizing participants involvement, hard work and success
- Other incentives

I would organize cohorts at least twice annually if that is all the funds would allocate, but ideally these services could also be provided in Online Webinar based training that could be provided on a as needed basis and accessed from any location at any time. Classroom Instruction would ideally include both a in person classroom setting that would accommodate as many people as were interested in attending and would be based on a registration to participate either online or via telephone for those who may not have web access. The curriculum I would envision would include guest speakers who are Ex-Felons who now own or operate businesses successfully and other partnerships with community resources participation such as Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), HelpForFelons.org, Department of labor grants, augmented with SBA Re-Entry for Entrepreneur's website with links online for resources including online training, mentoring program, loan resources, educational assistance, printed re-entry guide books to follow along in training, other resources as identified.

In person training, would include:

- In person cohort basis training with two minimum per year to meet in person for classroom instruction that starts with the needs assessment and exploring the type and kind of business the individual is interested in, how to determine the statistical and demographic needs of the services they are interested in supplying with key components on some basic ideas on what kinds of businesses are needed to provide goods or services in the geographic areas in which the participants live
- Provides basic introductory instruction of basic business concepts that lead to progressively more intense classwork over a 16 week period of time.
- Provides online version of the coursework that was provided in person for the student to follow up on the information or to obtain additional classes and resources through web links to programs and services
- Holistic view of services – from employment, education, ability to access information technology, programs to purchase laptops or software programs for use in business, child care resources, state and federal programs to assist a person with obtaining the services they need to create an environment in which they can ultimately be successful, how to re-instate rights to vote and etc
- A-to-Z business skills – providing information on how to obtain a local business license, where to apply for incorporation and the types, LLC, INC., etc. how to maintain financial records, where to pay taxes, obtaining insurance(s), how, when, where and why for all requirements for legitimately operating a business, human resources and all requirements for the same.
- Marketing your business or product, who is the target market audience, obtaining leads, advertising, free resources for marketing, websites, craigslist, service providers, word of mouth, business cards, brochures, Better Business Bureau, commercial and government contracting
- Facilitating the class work and study guides, all components which would result in a drafting a business plan in the initial stages to completing the business plan ideally with a business up and running
- Graduation Programs that would include certificates for completion, researching how the classes can qualify for educational credits of some type
- Recognizing and celebrating Mentors Participation and participants successes
- Other incentives.

Mentoring:

Designing the Mentoring component should be consistent with a partnership with the Department of Justice to facilitate a lead agency operating a reentry program that will allow for the appropriate planning and implement the mentoring component as most advantageous to both agencies. This would also include a component in coordinating participation with State and Local area services and Community Service Organizations as well as mentorship programs within the SBA with designated Mentors appointed from the Business Community.

This would also include participation from mentors that I would identify both through my own network and those that I believe that the SBA could assist in identifying to match them to serious students who had been identified as the most likely students that could successfully utilize the tools provided during the training to become successful in real world business environment.

Integral key steps to work through developing an approach to a successful mentoring program would include:

- Defining the Mentor's role and associating guidelines for participation from potential Mentors
- Developing a Mentoring model - whether it is one-to-one or group mentoring, provide support and to serve as a positive role model, assistance in helping the participants stay focused, problem solving, resources for solutions
- Coordination with the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Probation offices and Halfway houses
- Mentoring with large businesses that offer a Small Business Program (such as is often the case in information technology work)
- SBA Resources
- Community Connections re: Chamber of Commerce, United Way of the National Capital Region, Salvation Army, churches, etc.
- Hiring a Mentoring Coordinator that would take on all aspects of the Mentoring program including the recruiting, screening, training, matching and supervision of the program.
- Creating Public Awareness of the Program, speaking in front of groups and companies to request participation in the Program specifically in the OSBP in larger companies who have federal government contracts, Recruitment Programs, helping participants and mentors develop positive and supportive relationships
- Participants to Mentors, creating an environment where the participant graduates from the program and into the business world and then returns to provide mentoring to upcoming participants
- Offering incentives to Mentors and large business that participate in the program

Additional strategies could be greater developed upon successful award as a program participant.
My contact information is as follows:

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Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this SBA Program through Challenge.gov