



City of San Antonio

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DEPARTMENT: Economic Development

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Rene Dominguez

COUNCIL DISTRICT(S) IMPACTED: All

SUBJECT:

Briefing on Launch SA's FY 2018 Annual Report.

SUMMARY:

This is a briefing by Launch SA's Director, Ryan Salts, on their FY 2018 Annual Report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 2012, a taskforce of business owners and advocacy organizations were convened to brainstorm methods and strategies for promoting small and new business growth in San Antonio. Business participants represented a wide array of industries, including retail, food and dining, engineering, technology, public relations, trade services, and private investors. Business advocacy organizations included various chambers of commerce, the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), LiftFund, the Westside Development Corporation (WDC), and San Antonio for Growth on the Eastside (SAGE).

The taskforce identified the need to establish a culture of entrepreneurship throughout the San Antonio community and increase coaching and mentoring opportunities for future and existing small business owners.

The value of existing resources was also highlighted during the taskforce discussions, as well as the need for increased marketing of these resources. The development of Café Commerce, rebranded in 2016 as Launch SA, was recommended as a mechanism by which to implement these types of programs. The taskforce further recommended the outsourcing of operations and management of Launch SA to promote an organic and innovation-focused approach to service delivery. Thus, the City sought to identify a partner to further develop, implement and manage Launch SA.

In November 2013, City Council approved Ordinance 2013-11-07-0755 that authorized a professional services agreement with LiftFund for the operation and management of Launch SA, which includes both a virtual and physical location where entrepreneurs gather, collaborate, and learn more about entrepreneurship and small business resources. To provide the physical location, 10,000 square feet were remodeled on the first floor of the San Antonio Central Library. In September 2018, City Council approved Ordinance 2018-09-13-0709 authorizing the first five (5) year renewal option.

ISSUE:

Since Launch SA was opened in June 2014, the entrepreneur and small business resource center has engaged in partnerships with community business resources and established programming to establish a culture of entrepreneurship and help small businesses grow.

Programming at Launch SA consists of the following:

- 1 Million Cups and Pitch Tab are similar programs that allow local entrepreneurs an opportunity to present their business ideas to a diverse audience of fellow entrepreneurs, advisors, and mentors via live presentation with audience feedback and questions.
- Break, Fast, and Launch is a culinary business accelerator that works one-on-one with entrepreneurs and startups in the culinary industry to provide accounting, marketing, real estate, and business plan assistance to increase the sustainability of new restaurants, food trucks, bars, and related culinary ventures.
- San Antonio Entrepreneurship Week (SAEW) inspires individuals to take the leap toward entrepreneurship by providing education and highlighting various entrepreneurial resources in the San Antonio community. The five-day event showcases various topics, including elevating entrepreneurs, creative culture, social equity, culinary, innovation, and community.
- Impulsa is a pilot Spanish business accelerator program for established businesses in San Antonio.
- Social Innovation Lab Provides tools and pathways for social entrepreneurs to build innovative businesses that create value in the community.
- Mentor Roundtables Are hour-long mentor driven conversations about business tactics and strategies. Topics are selected based on member needs and feedback
- Venture Challenge SA challenges entrepreneurs to create and achieve personalized business milestones over a period of time in hopes of being awarded funding during a pitch competition, as well as further the entrepreneur's team, product and company.

The above programming resulted in over 2,500 attendees, over 550 active participants and over \$1.3million in investments.

In addition to the programming above, in FY 2018, Launch SA documented over 4,300 unique walk-ins and hosted over 550 events and trainings. There are over 132 business resources partners that include chambers of

commerce, universities, and Geekdom to name a few. In FY 2018, Launch SA survey clients who responded that their sales had increased by 64%, they received over \$620,000 of investments, and generated 175 jobs with the help of the services provided by Launch SA.

To provide guidance on the programming and services listed above, Launch SA established an advisory board made up of multiple successful entrepreneurs, to provide guidance regarding the strategic vision for Launch SA, as well as feedback on building community involvement, delivering relevant programming and services, and strengthening the impact of Launch SA on the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This briefing is for informational purposes only and no action is necessary.