



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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In Control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Rene Dominguez

COUNCIL DISTRICT(S) IMPACTED: All

SUBJECT:

Briefing on Launch SA's Programming and FY 2017 Annual Report

SUMMARY:

This is a briefing by LiftFund and the City of San Antonio Economic Development Department (EDD) on Launch SA's programming and FY 2017 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 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.

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. In FY 2017, over 1,700 individuals attended 107 presentations by various entrepreneurs;
- 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. In FY 2017, 28 individuals participated in the program;
- 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. FY 2017 was the first year Launch SA implemented SAEW that included more than 300 attendees and featured 50 sessions and 80 speakers at 10 venues throughout downtown San Antonio. The five-day event showcased various industries, including technology, arts and culture, cuisine, and fashion; and
- 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. In FY 2017, Venture Challenge SA was hosted during National Small Business Week and included 124 participants where select awardees were provided a portion of \$48,000 in funding. This year's grand prize and audience award winner, NovoThelium, is a biotechnology startup that is developing a scaffold for nipple regeneration for patients who have undergone a mastectomy.

In addition to the programming above, in FY 2017 Launch SA documented over 7,500 unique walk-ins, provided over 1,400 hours of business consulting, and made over 1,650 referrals to their 91 business resources partners that include chambers of commerce, universities, and Geekdom to name a few. In FY 2017, Launch SA also helped facilitate the creation of 181 businesses and 141 jobs.

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.