



*Helping Businesses **START** and **GROW!***

**Microbusiness Enterprise Corporation of Ascension**

Entrepreneurship Development Center  
Organizational Prospectus



The Microbusiness Enterprise Corporation of Ascension (MBECA) is an entrepreneurship development center which offers a variety of specialized training and technical assistance programs to individuals interested in starting a business, improving an existing business, or gaining management training to improve their marketability in the workplace.

MBECA was founded in 2003 to provide economic development through managerial, technical, and entrepreneurship training and specialized assistance for micro businesses of Ascension, St. James, Iberville, and Assumption Parishes. The mission of MBECA is to inspire economic development through entrepreneurship and small business development.

## PROGRAMS

### **Small & Emerging Business Development Program (SEBD)**

As part of the Small and Emerging Business Development Program offered by the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, small businesses are offered technical assistance and specialized training to start or improve small to moderate size businesses. To do this, eligible entrepreneur applicants receive assistance in a number of training programs and may also receive direct assistance with business plans, marketing plans, advertising, graphic design, web design, accounting software training and a number of other services that are provided by professionals in the field. Since the program is partially based on financial need, clients in the SEBD program are asked to contribute a portion of the total cost of the services provided. Certain eligibility requirements must be met.

### **Business Start-up Workshop**

The business start-up workshop is a thirteen – fifteen week program offering start-up business owners opportunities to participate in an intense business planning and creation workshop. Concepts include entrepreneurship competencies analysis, personal financial management, credit counseling, business formation, market planning, personnel planning, operations management, and financial planning, and access to lending. Participants have a business plan upon completion of the workshop.

### **Youth Entrepreneurship**

Through the collaborative efforts of Louisiana Economic Development Small Business Services and selected school districts, students learn how to run and start a microbusiness. Trainings include personal effectiveness, financial literacy and business planning. These multi-class training workshops not only provide participants with the skills necessary to start and run a business, it also develops managerial competencies and work-related skills.

### **The Louisiana Entrepreneur Accelerator Program (LEAP) & LEAP Center**

LEAP is time-specific, mentorship-driven program designed to provide entrepreneurs with clinical skills to help them make rapid progress on small business growth by combining research, coaching, on-site mentoring, and strategic effectiveness. The program consists of a nine month program where a strategic development plan is created in a mastermind laboratory environment and then implemented under the guidance of expert coaches in the field. The plan outcomes will be designed to reach the specific goals of the entrepreneur managed by expert facilitators and coaches and implemented over a reasonable amount of time.



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### **LEAP Center**

MBECA has created an innovative addition to the LEAP Program known as the LEAP Center. Located in Ascension Parish's Lamar Dixon Expo Center, the LEAP Center of Ascension is designed to assist small businesses with "just-in-time" development strategies for short-term problem solving in addition to long-range planning and execution through its LEAP Program. The accelerator allows small firms access to a personalized office space where business owners have access to a board room, training center, and a centralized receptionist. In addition to enrollment in the LEAP Program, participating entrepreneurs have ongoing access to MBECA's counselors and advisors through specialized training and technical assistance programs.

### **Edward Lowe Foundation Peer-to-Peer Roundtables / PRESS Program**

MBECA has become a certified Edward Lowe Foundation Peer-to-Peer Roundtable and PRESS Program institution. These programs bring first and second stage entrepreneurs together for monthly experiential problem solving sessions that empower owners to develop solutions to daily challenges guided by a certified facilitator. The "year-long" program brings proven leadership and problem solving methodologies through peer sharing activities. Program completers will be re-engaged in a peer network program to offer ongoing success strategies to participants.

### **MBECA Women's Business Center**

To assist with growing women and minority owned businesses, MBECA has created a business center program focused on women and minorities, particularly focused on African American and Hispanic women business owners. The program deploys technical assistance and specialized training programs in addition to programming geared toward assisting women in overcoming barriers in specific industries such as heavy industry, manufacturing, transportation, and construction; all growth industries in Ascension Parish. The programs will feature on unique components such as bonding, certification, training, procurement, and licensure required to perform in contracting and sub-contracting roles. Additionally, MBECA aims to partner with other resource partners such as the United States Small Business Administration to bring further focus to the effort of engaging women business owners in the region. The highlight of the MBECA Women's Business Center is its annual Superwoman Conference, a day of learning, empowerment, networking, peer learning, mentoring, and problem solving dealing with the daily challenges faces by women business owners who juggle multiple tasks such as time management, child care, image building, authoritative language, and achieving success, and numerous other topics. In addition, the conference features and business expo and experiential exercises that are focused on women including relaxation techniques, dressing for success, yoga, massage therapy, selling, the language of assessing and assisting male-driven industries, and healthy lifestyles through weight management and exercise.



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## HISTORICAL PROGRAMS

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### **Microenterprise Development Initiative (MEDI)**

Through the Microenterprise Development Initiative (MEDI), participants learned how to run and start a microenterprise business (cottage-industry or home-based business). The program was FREE to qualified individuals who were eligible for TANF benefits. The MEDI program provided training to individuals at or below the poverty level on three levels: personal effectiveness, financial literacy and business planning.

Workshops provided participants with the skills necessary to start and run a business and resulted in the completion of a business plan which could be used to search out additional grant or loan funding.

### **Project RAISE**

MBECA's Project RAISE provided training for disaster recovery, personal coping skills in the post Katrina/Rita environment, business planning, business re-design following disaster, entrepreneurial education, financial awareness, and financial preparation for disasters. The program also offered technical assistance on topics such as business management, strategic planning, loan application, accounting, insurance, marketing and legal services.

## MBECA COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

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MBECA works with local, parish, and state economic development organizations by playing an active role in economic research and planning, coalition building with national, statewide, and local organizations.

To support community activism, MBECA hosts a number of annual events to educate and recognize entrepreneurs.

MBECA strives to create community partnerships in order to achieve its mission of growing the economies of the communities it serves through entrepreneurship development.

In total, MBECA has assisted over 500 businesses since its inception and anticipates future years of service to grow entrepreneurship; Louisiana's strongest economic engine.



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