



## **American Entrepreneurship Award names 2016 winners**

- Award program for start-up companies in the Bronx and Miami-Dade names winners***
- Organisers announce major increase in award funding to \$125,000 and declare four winners and two runners-up***
- Award ceremony at The Bronx Museum of the Arts attended by Assemblyman Michael Blake***

**New York, 29 June 2016.** The American Entrepreneurship Award (AEA), a program created to support start-up businesses and entrepreneurs, has announced the winners of its first contest. The award focuses on traditionally underserved communities in the United States and this year operated exclusively in the Bronx, New York, and Miami-Dade County, Florida. The AEA organisers, international business group, the Libra Group, had originally pledged a prize of \$25,000 in business start-up funding in each of the award regions. The quality of entrants was, however, so high that Libra raised prize funding to a total of \$125,000 with multiple award winners being declared in each region. Winners will also receive mentorship and a range of business support services.

The winners in the Bronx are an eco-lighting company and an organic drinks company with the runner-up award going to a food market. Winners in Miami-Dade span a mobile medical laboratory, an online healthcare marketplace and a legal services access system. The panel of judges selected winners from hundreds of entrants on the basis of business plans that exhibited sustainability, financial prudence and innovation, while accruing revenue and creating jobs predominantly in the Bronx, New York, or Miami-Dade County, Florida. Entries were accepted from individuals or groups with no previous business experience, or from existing unlisted companies with an all-new business idea that was not related to their core activities.

The AEA was launched in October 2015 with an initial commitment of \$500,000 from the Libra Group, a privately owned diversified business group with 30 subsidiaries active across six continents. The winners' trophies for the Bronx were presented at a ceremony at The Bronx Museum of the Arts on June 27, 2016. Speaking at the event was Michael Blake, Assemblymen for New York State's 79<sup>th</sup> District, one of the AEA's official partners.

The AEA is a champion of entrepreneurship and earlier this year teamed up with local non-profit organisation, Workshop in Business Opportunities (WIBO), to provide entrepreneurship education for small business owners and budding entrepreneurs from the Bronx.

Winning companies in the Bronx are:

Watt + Flux ([www.wattandflux.com](http://www.wattandflux.com)), an LED Inspire Company, winning \$25,000 in funding. This company upgrades existing inefficient lighting systems in businesses, schools and marine vessels to new LED lighting systems that save time and money, and reduce environmental impact.

Ginjan Bros ([drinkginjan.com](http://drinkginjan.com)), winning \$25,000 in funding. A NYC based drinks company that develops and markets traditional African beverages. Their first product offering is "Ginjan", a popular West African drink made with all-organic fresh ginger, cold-pressed pineapples, fresh lemons, vanilla, anise extracts, and organic cane sugar.

The runner-up, winning \$12,500 in funding, is South Bronx Food Market ([www.southbronxfarmersmarket.com](http://www.southbronxfarmersmarket.com)): a market that offers healthy, home-style menu items and meals made fresh daily with minimally-processed and locally-sourced ingredients.

The winners in Miami-Dade County who were announced at a ceremony at The Idea Center at Miami Dade College on June 20, 2016 are:

Statlab Mobile ([statlabmobile.com](http://statlabmobile.com)), winning \$25,000 in funding. A complete mobile medical laboratory with the capabilities to test blood and urine samples at any location. The company's goal is to provide quality blood testing for the insured and the uninsured at a fraction of the traditional cost.

ValueDOC ([doctors.valuedoc.com](http://doctors.valuedoc.com)), winning \$25,000 in funding. A free health and wellness marketplace where self-pay patients find pre-screened doctors offering services like dental cleaning, doctor visits, urgent care, acupuncture, and massage therapy, all at discounted prices up to 80% off retail. Doctors can be found based on their years of experience, convenience and patient reviews. Appointments can be booked online via credit card.

The runner-up, winning \$12,500 in funding, is CourtBuddy ([www.courtbuddy.com](http://www.courtbuddy.com)). An automated legal services matching system that pairs small businesses with attorneys. The legal services offered are à la carte, so clients pay based on their budget.

In addition to the funding, which comes in the form of an interest-free loan, each winner will receive business support spanning legal, accounting, communications and IT consultancy services. They will also be assigned a mentor who will provide advice and guidance throughout every stage of their business start-up.

Commenting on the winners, Jimmy Athanasopoulos, Head of Social Responsibility at the Libra Group, stated: "This is the inaugural year for the American Entrepreneurship Award and has demonstrated the rich seam of innovation and sound commercial thinking in this country. We hope that the success of these smart young companies will inspire others to have the same self-belief and take the bold step of translating an idea into a business plan. New businesses are the raw materials of economic growth – they create employment and have the power to transform communities. We sincerely congratulate

these winners whose innovation and sound commercial thinking has won the admiration and endorsement of the panel of judges.”

Assemblyman Michael Blake added: “The American Entrepreneurship Award is a game changer for entrepreneurs from the Bronx. This funding and counseling will help Bronxites realize their dreams, grow their businesses and hire more Bronxites from our assembly district. I thank everyone at the Libra Group for believing in our vision to create economic opportunities so that we continue #BuildingABetterBronx.”

Other finalists in the 2016 award were:

Noga Tech, the Bronx. The company’s patent pending product is a multifunctional backpack that can be utilized as a briefcase or messenger bag and additionally serves as a high-visibility safety vest, with the added benefit of being on trend with current fashions.

WeIntervene ([www.weintervene.com](http://www.weintervene.com)), the Bronx. A start-up that serves as an online Referral Management System, empowering school counselors to find, share, manage and monitor community resources needed by students and their guardians. The scope of resource provision spans health and wellbeing, counseling, and extra-curricular programs.

AlulA ([alulaaero.com](http://alulaaero.com)), Miami-Dade County. An on-board aviation communications device (AlulA Heart) which enables affordable transmission of valuable ‘black box’ data in real time by broadcasting it to a new and innovative land-based, crowd sourced aircraft data receiver network.

Pepe Loves Books, Inc. ([www.alphatechblocks.com](http://www.alphatechblocks.com)), Miami-Dade County. The company creates connected toys and mobile applications for early childhood education. Their first toy is AlphaTechBlocks™, the world’s first interactive alphabet blocks and a child’s first introduction to the digital world.

To learn more about the American Entrepreneurship Award, please visit [www.americanaward.com](http://www.americanaward.com).

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### **About the American Entrepreneurship Award and Libra Group**

The Libra Group is an international business group comprising 30 subsidiaries active in 35 countries across six continents. The group has principal operations in shipping, aviation, real estate, hospitality and energy as well as a range of diversified investments. The American Entrepreneurship Award is managed by Libra Group’s Social Responsibility division that undertakes numerous education, entrepreneurship and philanthropic initiatives globally. The Libra Group also funds and manages the Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award ([www.hellenicaward.com](http://www.hellenicaward.com)), now in its fourth year of operation. The Libra Group is owned by the Logothetis family. For more information, please visit: [www.libra.com](http://www.libra.com).

AEA program partners in New York include:

- Workshop in Business Opportunities (WIBO), a non-profit organization providing entrepreneurship education for small business owners from the Bronx.
- The New York Department of Small Business Services, which provides a suite of initiatives that connect New Yorkers to good jobs and creates stronger businesses;
- Shark Branding, a branding and marketing firm which is lending expertise and resources to the AEA community in New York
- Assemblyman Michael Blake from the 79<sup>th</sup> District in New York State, including Concourse Village, Morrisania, Melrose, Belmont, Claremont and East Tremont. His vision of "3, 2, 1" focuses on economic development through Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises & Technology, Education and Equality for All, especially for women and veterans.