



Entrepreneurs set to win up to \$25k startup funding as Envolve launches entrepreneurship award across eight USA cities

Former American Entrepreneurship Award expands its business plan competition with interest-free funding opportunities for diverse early-stage entrepreneurs in New York City, Miami, Washington DC, Baltimore, Atlanta, Charleston, Detroit and Flint

Washington, D.C. – June 27th 2018: Today, Envolve Entrepreneurship, a 501(c)(3) entrepreneurship organization, launches the Envolve Award USA (formerly the American Entrepreneurship Award), a regionally-focused business plan competition that recognizes the best examples of entrepreneurship among diverse and underserved entrepreneurs. The organization aims to embolden early-stage businesses by providing these entrepreneurs with easy access to capital, knowledge, and resources via its secure website www.EnvolveGlobal.org.

The Envolve Award USA is open to both experienced and aspiring entrepreneurs in largely underserved communities across the nation. This year the competition is open to entrants from former American Entrepreneurship Award legacy locations Miami-Dade County, Florida and the Bronx in New York City. Additionally, the 2018 competition expands and is offered for the first time to applicants from Washington DC, Baltimore, MD, Atlanta, GA, Charleston, SC, Detroit and Flint, MI, and the Greater New York City area. Registration commences today, June 27, 2018 and winners will be declared in late fall of 2018.

The application is accessible on Envolve's website, and winners will receive funding of up to \$25,000, in addition to mentorship, and a range of business support services. Interested small business owners [complete a simple online registration form](#) to generate a user profile and submit their application.

"At Envolve we are doing our part by providing financial assistance, workshops, and other provisions to sustain those left out by traditional financial institutions," said CEO of Envolve, Christopher R. Upperman.

The launch marks the third annual cycle of entrepreneurship award programming for the newly rebranded organization. Envolve hopes that its expansion to new cities will increase participation and help shift focus around developing innovative ways to deploy capital among diverse entrepreneurs. The organization hopes to serve as an example for others around the importance of supporting the underserved and how the provision of education and resources can serve as a tool for success.

2016 award winners are enjoying great commercial success. In particular, Court Buddy of Miami, an online legal services access company, has raised more than \$1 million in capital and featured in [Forbes](#) following its award triumph. In the Bronx, Watt+Flux, a woman-owned LED retrofitting company has secured numerous contracts, while brothers Ibrahim and Mohammed Diallo of [Ginjan Bros](#) have enjoyed commercial success with their ginger-flavored beverage.



Meanwhile, [winners from 2017](#) are gaining traction in numerous markets such as beauty and skincare, food waste conversion, healthy snacks, and environmental solutions, to name a few.

To leverage its award programming and connect with underserved entrepreneurs in a meaningful way, Envolve partners with like-minded support organizations, like Kiva and SCORE in each award location in order to contribute to the support of applicants and winners. With the 2018 award season underway, Envolve encourages others throughout the ecosystem to join along in their efforts to support worthy entrepreneurs.

Commenting on the USA award launch and 2018 program collaborators, Christopher Upperman stated: "Startup funding is almost non-existent, or simply not reaching the hands of diverse and underserved entrepreneurs. We're excited to provide additional financing options in complement of our award for our upcoming 2018 winners as a [Trustee](#) through our partnership with Kiva." Along with this, Kiva will work with Envolve to promote more ways to fund winners and also provide webinars for the broader pool of applicants. "In addition to financial tools, we believe in the importance of meaningful guidance and mentorship, and what better way to increase impact by joining our efforts with SCORE? We are excited we have others in the fight who are as committed to inclusive entrepreneurship as we are."

"A critical element for entrepreneurs to accomplish their goal is mentorship," said CEO of SCORE, Ken Yancey, Jr. "SCORE's mission is to foster vibrant small business communities through mentoring and education. It is a pleasure to partner with Envolve to support and foster entrepreneurs in underserved communities. This partnership between SCORE and Envolve increases support for diverse entrepreneurs and we are excited to have this opportunity."

Envolve has pledged financial support of up to \$250,000 in interest-free and no-equity business start-up and scale-up funding to be disbursed potentially among multiple award winners in each region. Each winning entrepreneur has an opportunity to be eligible for up to \$25,000.

Envolve, created in 2018, leverages the success of two previous entrepreneurship award programs: The Hellenic Entrepreneurship Award (HEA) and the American Entrepreneurship Award (AEA), founded by international business the Libra Group to stimulate economic growth, innovation, and social change. The awards have declared 35 winners across the USA and Greece since 2012. Envolve will continue this commitment to serve and develop individual entrepreneurs, along with cultivating ecosystems domestically and abroad.

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Envolve

To learn more about Envolve, please visit www.envolveglobal.org.

Envolve is a 501(c)(3) organization that strives for a global society where all business owners can prosper and grow. The organization is committed to developing and cultivating entrepreneurial ecosystems, by ensuring business support services are more readily



available to diverse entrepreneurs. To learn more about the Libra Group, please visit www.libra.com.

Score

To learn more about SCORE, please visit www.score.org.

SCORE is the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors, with more than 10,000 volunteers in 300 chapters.

As a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), SCORE has helped more than 10 million entrepreneurs through mentoring, workshops and educational resources since 1964.

Kiva

To learn more about Kiva, please visit www.kiva.org.

Kiva is an international nonprofit, founded in 2005 and based in San Francisco, with a mission to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty. We celebrate and support people looking to create a better future for themselves, their families and their communities.