



GWINNETT COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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MEDIA ALERT

APPLY NOW FOR THE NEW START ENTREPRENEURSHIP INCUBATOR

October 18, 2023 - The Gwinnett County Public Library is now accepting applications for its next New Start Entrepreneurship Incubator Program (NSEI).

NSEI provides business education for formerly incarcerated individuals through in-person classes, online coursework, and a robust network of mentors and community partners. NSEI is specifically geared towards the reentry population, which, in Georgia, is disproportionately minority populations and people of color.

This six-month course is designed to help community members who have served time in jail or prison create and sustain their own businesses.

"Formerly incarcerated individuals are an overlooked population of aspiring entrepreneurs, often lacking the means, access, and support to launch a small business successfully," said Charles Pace, Executive Director of the Gwinnett County Public Library.

NSEI originated as a grant project in 2021, funded by Google in partnership with the American Library Association.

Coordinated by a team of five library staff members, NSEI includes cohorts of 15 to 20 students who attend monthly presentations by local business experts on topics such as finance, marketing, licensing, and writing a business plan. Following each meeting, participants complete assigned online coursework and receive one-on-one support from experienced small business mentors. The library provides free laptops and Wi-Fi service to those who need them.

The program's culmination occurs at Launchpad, where the young entrepreneurs pitch their businesses to community business leaders. In 2023, the Gwinnett County Public Library Foundation awarded \$5,000 to the top three entrepreneurs.

As of January 2023, the program has graduated 29 entrepreneurs in just three cohorts. The most successful graduate has 14 full-time employees and operates a commercial cleaning business.

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