

First Diversity Business Accelerator Accepting Applications for Spring 2019

CONNECT ALL @ the Jacobs Center Seeks Local Startups for Inaugural Accelerator Program

SAN DIEGO (Dec. 26, 2018) – [CONNECT ALL @ the Jacobs Center](#) (CAJC), the region’s first diversity focused business accelerator program, today announced it will launch its first cohort of local entrepreneurs this spring and is accepting applications now through Jan. 16.

A partnership between the City of San Diego, the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation and CONNECT, CAJC is geared specifically for diverse and financially disadvantaged founders of San Diego-based, early-stage startups that are poised for growth and job creation.

CAJC’s main goal is to provide opportunity for diversity focused entrepreneurship and spur economic development in historically underserved communities. The program is funded by a \$2.5-million Community Development Block Grant secured by the City of San Diego Economic Development Department through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and private funding from partners, such as MUFG Union Bank N.A. and bkm OfficeWorks.

“We are extremely excited to begin accepting applications for our first group and to kick off the business accelerator program that will provide the tools and resources that local entrepreneurs and business owners need to survive and thrive in today’s hyper-competitive market,” said Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation President and CEO Reginald Jones. “Together, we will be working to expand and strengthen our local economy by making it more diverse and inclusive.”

Companies accepted into the CAJC business accelerator will participate in a six-month program tailored to support their various needs, including expert mentors, opportunities to access capital, and free co-working space complete with office equipment, such as high-speed internet and printers. All components of the program will be free to participants; no equity stake required.

Located in a specially designed 4,300-square-foot business accelerator space in Joe and Vi Jacobs Center in Southeastern San Diego, CAJC also offers a no-cost Business Resource Center where entrepreneurs “not quite ready for the accelerator” and others can connect and learn about local services and support programs to help move their ideas and businesses forward.

“It’s a fact that diversity in startups is good for the bottom line. By establishing these practices from the beginning, these companies foster corporate cultures that are open, inclusive and innovative,” said CONNECT President and CEO Greg McKee. “Leveraging our longstanding Springboard Accelerator Program model and partnering with the Jacobs Center, we will be able to reach rich pools of talent that have previously been overlooked by traditional innovation institutions. This is what San Diego needs as a region to be successful now and in the future.”

The first group of CAJC business accelerator participants will be announced early next year with the program set to start in spring 2019.

To learn more or apply for the business accelerator program, visit connectallsd.org.

About CONNECT ALL @ the Jacobs Center

CONNECT ALL @ the Jacobs Center (CAJC) is the region’s first diversity-focused business accelerator program, guiding startups that want to grow rapidly with all the support they need to be successful. A partnership

between the City of San Diego, the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation and CONNECT, the program provides participants with mentors, free co-working space and access to capital.

CAJC will also include a Business Resource Center, so that all entrepreneurs and small businesses can learn about local services and support to move their ideas and businesses forward. The program is funded by a Community Development Block Grant through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that the City of San Diego Economic Development Department secured, and private funding from partners, such as MUFG Union Bank N.A. and bkm OfficeWorks.

To learn more or apply for the business accelerator program, visit connectallsd.org.

###