



## **Jewish Poverty Challenge: An Initiative of the NJHSA Center for Innovation and Research**

### **Background:**

Launched at the NJHSA 2019 Annual Conference in Atlanta, the NJHSA Center for Innovation and Research is sponsoring a Jewish Poverty Challenge to support Network member agencies in their efforts to develop and implement innovative responses to the dynamic of poverty in the Jewish community.

Phase One of the Challenge introduced Annual Conference attendees to the concepts of social innovation and prizes were awarded to two innovative responses that were developed during a one-hour pitch deck competition.

Phase Two of the Challenge will provide intensive support, coaching and guidance from the consulting team of Start Co. Start Co is a Memphis based consulting firm which focuses its efforts on supporting social innovation with non-profits, municipalities and the corporate sector. Start Co. has focused several of its projects on working with communities to develop innovative responses to poverty.

### **Description of Intensive Incubation Program:**

For Phase Two of the NJHSA Jewish Poverty Challenge, Start Co. will execute an intensive incubation program for up to six (6) concepts proposed by NJHSA member agencies, two or three in year 1 and two or three in year 2 (the "Intensive Incubation Program"). Phase Two is open to all NJHSA member agencies in good standing and is not limited to those who attended the 2019 NJHSA Annual Conference and participated in Phase One of the Challenge. (If you have a question about your agency's membership status, please contact [Karen Rosen](#), Director of Membership.)

Phase Two of the Challenge will help agencies prepare promising concepts for market, strengthen business cases for new or existing solutions, and develop plans and approaches to scale successful solutions. The main objectives of the program are: (i) work with an agency so they are able to develop a successful road map for their proposed initiative; (ii) provide triage and accountability to the process; (iii) identify and engage resources where appropriate; and (iv) provide innovative insights and direction along the way. There are three components to this three-to-six-month intensive incubation program:

1. Phase One- Discovery- Start Co. will guide agencies through a customer and system discovery process of testing four hypotheses around their concept. This is done through triage sessions scheduled intermittently during the phase. In addition, Start Co. will provide guidance and support to help agencies gain a more complete

understanding of the regional landscape of similar and complementary service providers. As part of this, the agencies will explore the relevant political and civic relationships and engage in data mining to uncover deeper insights. The primary objectives of this phase are (i) challenging original assumptions; (ii) finding themes and cluster topics; and (iii) exploring more formidable service/program offerings.

2. Phase Two- Delivery - Start Co. will support agencies as they begin to mock-up, design, and build services and programs taking what they learned in the research and discovery phase. The goal is to build a prototype of the actual service or program that an agency can use to run limited tests to obtain feedback and strengthen assumptions. Start Co. will help agencies work through other interventions in addition to the core service/program including but not limited to civic or partner realignment, management and operational practices, process modification, and volunteer/donor mobilization. Like the discovery phase, the delivery phase is an iterative process.
3. Phase Three - Dollars - Start Co. will support the building of a business case to support the service or program. This process includes using the feedback and lessons learned in the prior two phases to build a case for financial support and other required resources. The participants will begin building operational and organizational frameworks to support clients, funders and partners all as part of the overall solution. This phase usually takes the form of a presentation that includes, but is not limited to an executive summary, competitive/partnership landscape review, risk mitigation plan, and a growth/operating model the agency can leverage and adapt depending on resource providers' needs.

Start Co. and the Network designed the Intensive Incubation Program to deliver content, provide advisory support, and, as needed, assist agencies in designing and building components of their solutions. Each week, Start Co. will provide coaching and advisory assistance to each agency's team, assist in the extraction of information from partners and contacts, and engage in back-end work and support. Start Co. will deliver the assistance via phone calls, video conferences, and if cost effective and convenient, in-person meetings with Start Co. staff. More specifically, Start Co. expects to spend 4-5 hours per week to help participants engage in the following:

1. A level setting and information gathering assessment to determine the stage of development of the underlying concept;
2. As needed, design and build-out sessions to accelerate business model development, testing, implementation, fundraising and growth;
3. A system of check-ins and accountability through an internal incubation portfolio management process;
4. Direct engagement with teams to build productive approaches and practical interfaces with leadership to facilitate success; and
5. Educational and information content to support agency success.

Start Co. will provide agencies (and the Network) with the following reports and feedback:

1. A weekly meeting summary
2. Quarterly executive review sessions
3. Periodic (quarterly) reports tracking key metrics

Start Co. will also assist each agency in preparing a comprehensive annual report which includes a review of the prior year's progress and identifies the next year's priorities, key activities and related key performance indicators.

Initially, Start Co. will use the following metrics (or categories of metrics) to track the progress and learning through the incubator. Start Co. will supplement these metrics as it engages with individual agencies.

1. Assets built
2. Successful adoptions
3. Revenue/funding attainment
4. Efficiency measure (costs, time, program impact, etc.)
5. Mentor hours

On average agencies should be prepared to commit 10-20 hours per month to participate in and benefit from the intensive incubation programming. To provide some flexibility, Start Co. may be able modify the duration of the incubation program and make other minor adjustments in response to unforeseen circumstances.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

The Network wishes to challenge its agencies to create high impact and sustainable solutions to poverty. Initially focusing on vulnerable Jewish populations, the Jewish Poverty Challenge, will seek solutions which might be applicable to all vulnerable populations, but will focus on those that take into account nuances and challenges unique to Jewish clients. More specifically, to be eligible for selection, at least 50% of the targeted clients (individuals or families) should be Jewish. The applications need not focus on completely new / start-up services or programs. Challenge submissions can also focus on the enhancement or scaling of existing approaches, although in the case of existing approaches, selection will depend in large part on the potential for dramatically increased and sustainable impact.

Submissions will be judged based on the responses to four core categories:

1. The Idea
  - a. Ideas or concepts for creating something new or changing an existing approach that promises substantially increased impact;
  - b. Opportunity for scale;

- c. Operational and financial feasibility;
  - d. Evidence of need; and
  - e. Potential for improved and sustainable impact based in part on collaboration(s) that bring an integrated array of services to address the multi-faceted vulnerabilities associated with Jewish poverty.
2. The Team
    - a. Experience in designing and implementing unique funding arrangements and related collaborations;
    - b. Demonstrated abilities in one or more of the core competencies; and
    - c. Openness to following the results of the research, discovery, and experiments as opposed to locked into preconceived notions.
  3. Readiness
    - a. Capacity or willingness to make capacity to engage in this incubation program;
    - b. Capacity or willingness to make capacity to transform the results of the incubation process into a funded test and/or program.
    - c. In communities with multiple agencies, collaboration among the agencies will be strongly encouraged. Open to new service concepts as well as the enhancement of existing services, the Challenge will focus on “new ideas” – new ideas with the potential to dramatically improve impact and sustainability.
  4. Collaborations
    - a. Evidence of strong, meaningful collaborations engaged in crafting, implementing, funding and delivering a new or improved service or program. with an emphasis on engaging other Jewish organizations in your community or region.

It is important to note that the incubation process will challenge many of the assumptions, preconceptions and approaches applicants bring to the process. The applications are not expected to include fully-developed concepts or business models. When appropriate, applications should identify those aspects of their idea or concept they hope to test, refine or develop in the course of the incubation process.

### **Awards:**

1. The Network currently has the resources to provide intensive acceleration for up to six (6) agencies over the next 12-24 months.
2. The Network expects to select 2-3 agencies for the acceleration to begin this summer. If more are ready, the Network may select additional agencies for commencement this summer or may schedule intensive acceleration starting in the fall of 2019.
3. If the Network does not identify a sufficient number of agencies ready to commence intensive incubation, the Network may engage with a larger number of agencies to help them prepare for intensive incubation when they are ready.

## **Timing:**

1. Application Period
  - a. Commences April 23, 2019 and ends May 31, 2019
2. Information Session (online)
  - a. The Network and Start Co. will host two one-hour information sessions, the first on May 2, 2019 at 1pm EDT and the second on May 10, 2019 at 1pm EDT. Agencies who are interested in applying for the Intensive Incubation Program of the Jewish Poverty Challenge are encouraged to participate in one of the two information sessions being offered.
  - b. The Network and Start Co. will publish on the Network's web site the answers to questions raised during these sessions.
3. FAQs
  - a. As noted, applicants can ask questions during each of the information sessions and the Network/Start Co. will make the answers available to all applicants.
  - b. Also, applicants may submit their questions in writing by sending an email to **info@networkjhsa.org**. The question period will end at the close of business on May 10, 2019.

## **Evaluation:**

1. Phase I – Written Application Review
  - a. Dates - June 1, 2019 - June 9, 2019
  - b. Based on the evaluation criteria listed above, an evaluation committee (the "Evaluation Committee") consisting of Start Co., the Network's professional staff and others from within the Network who are not participating in the Challenge, will select applicants for Phase II Review.
2. Phase II - Phone Interviews
  - a. Dates - June 10, 2019 - June 14, 2019
  - b. The Evaluation Committee will engage in 1-2 hour discussions by phone and/or video link with the Phase II applicants.
  - c. Based on the results of these interviews, the Evaluation Committee will select 2-3 applicants for immediate participation in the intensive incubation program. Start Co. expects to announce the selections during the week of June 17, 2019.

## **Other:**

1. Selected agencies will be expected to provide periodic updates to other Network members and, as appropriate, share best practices and be open to sharing insights and learnings with colleagues.
2. The Network will consider providing assistance to a subset of those not selected to help them prepare for intensive acceleration.