

City Startup Labs Charts a New Course

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To: [Steve Johnston](#)

CityStartupLabs

Creating a New Class of Entrepreneurs

We're Charting a New Course!



CHARLOTTE, NC (April 4, 2017) - Since its inception, the mission of Charlotte-based [City Startup Labs \(CSL\)](#) has been to provide entrepreneurial education, skills development and support essentially to black male millennials. However going forward, CSL is casting a wider net to include black millennial women and returning citizens (the formerly incarcerated) as well.

According to Henry Rock, Founder & Executive Director of CSL, “there are several reasons for this change – first of all, we have had numerous requests from young women to participate, only to be left disappointed, given our focus on men. Secondly, we’re at a time when we can’t afford to leave innovation on the margins, especially when we have a city trying to come to terms with issues of socio-economic mobility and how that intersects with a burgeoning desire to flex its entrepreneurial muscle. *And by the way, I see City Startup Labs right at that nexus.* Lastly (though there are several other very valid reasons), having what I like to call a “new class of entrepreneurs” – from and among African American millennials – has benefits that can accrue to us all.”

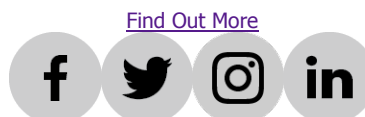
He goes on to say, “regarding our returning citizens - we’ll be designing a program based on the CSL method, specifically for their needs and point of view. We want to foster a different model for restorative justice through social enterprise and human-centered design.”

City Startup Labs first ran a two-year pilot, in collaboration with the [Urban League of Central Carolinas](#), and since last year has been aligned with [Ventureprise](#) at the University of Carolina at Charlotte. In that time, CSL has had three cohorts of black male millennials, including one recently completed. Currently there are six ventures from the pilot up and running.

City Startup Labs was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the [Unite Charlotte Fund](#) to develop and implement the program for returning citizens. It has also received an award from the [Reemprise Fund](#) to begin studying the effect this education can have on addressing the economic mobility of the millennial participants in Charlotte.

As a result of this shift, CSL will spend the next few months recalibrating and planning for new sessions to begin in the fall.

For more information on how get involved, as a student/entrepreneur, mentor/coach, sponsor or donor follow-up here...



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