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City Startup Labs Receives Charlotte's 1st Kauffman Foundation Grant

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Sent: Wednesday, May 02, 2018 11:00 AM

To: [Steve Johnston](#)

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CityStartupLabs

Creating a New Class of Entrepreneurs

City Startup Labs Receives Kauffman Foundation Grant To Aid New Initiative



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CHARLOTTE, NC (May 2, 2018) - In late June of this year Charlotte-based [City Startup Labs \(CSL\)](#) will be launching an entrepreneurial pilot targeting *returning citizens* or the formerly incarcerated - ReEntry Entrepreneurship Program (REEP). This new effort will be made possible through a grant from the [Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation's Inclusion Initiative](#), along with another received from the United Way of Central Carolinas through their 2017 [Unite Charlotte award](#).

Since its inception, the mission of CSL has been to provide entrepreneurial education and support, particularly for black male millennials. However starting this past fall, it conducted its first co-ed class, which wrapped up with a Demo Day on March 29th. 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. *I see City Startup Labs positioned right at that nexus*. Lastly, having what I like to call a "new class of entrepreneurs" – from and among African American millennials – has benefits that can accrue to all of us here in Charlotte."

He goes on to say, "Regarding our returning citizens - we've designed a program using the CSL methodology, specifically for their needs and point of view. *We want to create a different model for restorative justice through our unique approach to developing entrepreneurial talent and enterprise deployment.*"

The grant from the Kaufmann Foundation is its first for an organization from the City of Charlotte, and City Startup Labs is one of 20 nationwide recipients chosen out of an applicant pool of 780.

"We believe that everyone has a fundamental right to turn an idea into an economic reality, regardless of who they are or where they're from," said Chris Harris, senior program officer at the Kauffman Foundation. "Our Inclusion Open grantees have demonstrated uncommon

solutions to leveling the playing field for entrepreneurs who have been excluded due to demographic, socioeconomic and geographic barriers.”

About the Kauffman Foundation: The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation is a private, nonpartisan foundation that works together with communities in education and entrepreneurship to create uncommon solutions and empower people to shape their futures and be successful. The Kauffman Foundation is based in Kansas City, Missouri, and uses its \$2 billion in assets to collaboratively help people be self-sufficient, productive citizens. For more information, visit www.kauffman.org



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