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PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT:

The ACADIA Project (TAP)

Project Information:

The [Aurora Cultural Arts District](#) (ACAD) has convened two additional partners - ['Fax Aurora](#) and [Community Enterprise Development Services](#) (CEDS), to develop The ACADIA Project (TAP). This exciting new program will identify refugee and immigrant artists in Aurora and help them build their creative businesses to market and sell their works. This program is open to artists working in the visual arts, culinary fields, makers and other creative endeavors. As part of this program artists and creatives will receive free mentoring, marketing and portfolio workshops, access to financing, display space and help presenting their work to American buyers.

The majority of program activities will be located in the Aurora Cultural Arts District, along the Colfax Corridor. This area is among the most culturally diverse areas in Colorado, with nearly 40% of the adult population identifying as foreign born. 136 languages are spoken in Aurora's public school system and communities. These refugees and immigrants bring with them a set of artistic skills and abilities that are easily transferrable to America, where they find a ready audience that seeks out unique artistic expression. The target area has high levels of poverty, 43% of families living below the poverty line; therefore, assisting newly arrived individuals with developing their artistic endeavors addresses economic challenges, ensures the success of the local community and diversifies the local art scene.

The idea for the program was borne from community conversations with over 18 partners in early 2015. These groups desired more engagement with our refugee and immigrant neighbors, varied approaches to economic development and support for these groups.

ACAD, CEDS and 'Fax Aurora collectively bring unique skill-sets and relationships to ensure the success of TAP. ACAD brings their experience in building creative businesses and supporting local artists. 'Fax Aurora contributes a wealth of relationships with small business owners and business experts in the target market. CEDS will identify refugee and immigrant artists and will consider program participants for micro-loans to build or expand their business.

Project partners have received a \$10,000 grant from the Denver Foundation in early 2017 to launch TAP. The project will initially engage 10 artists and hopes to expand their reach in the future. The application will be available now at [auroraculture.org](#) and as well as with the TAP partners.

Project Timeline:

March 19th: Applications Deadline for artist candidates - <http://www.auroraculture.org/the-acadia-project/>

March 28th: First 10 Applicants will be chosen

March 30th: Program Begins with Mentoring and Opportunities to sell their work through December of 2017

Partner Bios:

Aurora Cultural Arts District:

The Aurora Cultural Arts District (ACAD) is a thriving, walkable and vibrant community characterized by a diverse group of creative businesses including world class performance venues, an arts education non-profit, art galleries, studios, an art incubator, public gathering spaces, multicultural restaurants and diverse businesses. The art district was created to support the existing creative locations and to foster more art venues in the neighborhood creating an amenity and outlet for both the neighborhood and surrounding communities. It also serves as an economic driver for area businesses, residents, artists and stakeholders. Started in 2009 in partnership with community champions, the City of Aurora and its neighborhood partners.

'Fax Aurora:

Bob Hagedorn

Executive Director

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Fax' Aurora is a Business League for Original Aurora, made up of over 120 business owners. They have provided leadership by creating an organization that has a unified voice to tackle issues of crime, clean up and small business development, in particular on the Colfax Corridor. To ensure an equitable organization, where the voices of local business owners and residents are expressed, Fax Aurora offers free membership to small businesses. Members include many minority-owned businesses including motels, automotive, beauty services, childcare, markets, restaurants and more.

Community Enterprise Development Services (CEDs):

Alexandria Wise

Executive Director

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The CEDs supports the entrepreneurial dreams and efforts of refugees and immigrants to achieve financial self-sufficiency through business ownership. The organization supports local entrepreneurs with microfinancing coupled with business advisory services that helps build client's wealth and business capacity. CEDs has disbursed over \$1.5 million of loan capital into the local community (in 102 loans) and has created and/or retained 184 jobs.