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New training, funding and mentorship program targets entrepreneurs in Aurora's immigrant and refugee communities

Immigrants and refugees in Aurora will have access to training, funding and guidance to launch their own small businesses through a first-of-its-kind collaboration between [Community Enterprise Development Services](#), the [Community College of Aurora](#), and the [City of Aurora's Office of International and Immigrant Affairs](#).

As part of the collaboration, CEDS created the Aurora International Impact Fund, committing a minimum of \$95,000 for entrepreneurs enrolled in the program. CCA is providing business launch support for entrepreneurs through three-part Entrepreneurship program that includes: fast-track Boot Camp training, credit certificate and transfer degree programs, and incubator space with meeting, marketing and coaching resources. The launch of CCA's program was facilitated, in part, by an \$83,000 Innovation Challenge grant from the Colorado Community College System. In alignment with its Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the Office of International and Immigrant Affairs, the City will assist with outreach, marketing and supplemental resources.

The Aurora International Impact Fund will provide 38 loans to 19 entrepreneurs for a total minimum injection of \$95,000 investment capital. Entrepreneurs will receive two loans, as needed, at various growth points to ensure capital is strategically deployed.

CCA's Entrepreneurship Program is a pioneering initiative that supports budding entrepreneurs in their most difficult time – the first year in launching a business. Entrepreneurs who qualify for the incubator component have access to free on-campus workspace and equipment – such as computers, design equipment, prototyping machines, conference rooms and other benefits. The incubator also provides entrepreneurs with a year of coaching and guidance through weekly group meetings and one-on-one sessions with a business coach and other experts.

The Aurora International Impact Fund and CCA Entrepreneurship Program are open to any Aurora-based entrepreneur and are expected to serve significant numbers of aspiring entrepreneurs in Aurora's refugee and immigrant communities. CEDS and the Aurora Office of International and Immigrant Affairs will conduct extensive outreach potential applicants. Interested entrepreneurs may contact: Alex Wise with CEDS at 303-835-1836.

“We are thrilled about the launch of this partnership and the rich array of resources for small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs. This partnership provides a way for us to support the talents, ambitions and dreams of our diverse community and helps to bridge trust with populations that are sometimes hard to reach,” said Ricardo Gambetta, manager of the Office of International and Immigrant Affairs.

Aurora is one of the most diverse large cities in the U.S., with one in five residents having been born outside the United States. Aurora has been recognized by the National League of Cities as one of six nationwide recipients of a City Cultural Diversity Award, which commends municipal programs that encourage citizen involvement and who develop creative and effective programs to improve and promote cultural diversity through a collaborative process with city officials, community leaders and residents.

About Community Enterprise Development Services

Community Enterprise Development Services (CEDS) is an independent 501(c)(3) organization that financial self-sufficiency by assisting refugees, immigrants and low- to moderate-income people in metro Denver who desire to own or strengthen businesses, develop assets and empower themselves financially. Established in 2008, CEDS is certified through the U.S. Department of Treasury as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and

approved by the Small Business Administration as an SBA Microloan Intermediary Lender.

About the Community College of Aurora (CCA)

The Community College of Aurora (CCA) provides high quality instruction and student support services to Aurora and eastern Denver, Colorado. The college offers courses on two campuses and online courses for degree or certificate completion. CCA students engage in programs that help them realize their potential by preparing them for transfer to a four-year institution and employment. For more information, visit us at www.ccaurora.edu.

About the City of Aurora Office of International and Immigrant Affairs

The Office of International and Immigrant Affairs was created in 2015 to facilitate the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into Aurora's civic, economic and cultural life. The office oversees the development and implementation of a strategic citywide plan regarding policy, programs and initiatives toward the local immigrant and refugee populations. This office oversees the coordination of the Aurora Immigrant and Refugee Commission, Aurora International Roundtable, Aurora Global Fest and the Aurora International Cabinet.

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