

Serve as a 2017 Start:ME Business Mentor

Put your business skills to work this Winter

What Is Start:ME

Start:ME is an intensive 14-week accelerator that provides the most promising micro-entrepreneurs (businesses with 1-4 employees) in marginalized metro Atlanta communities the business acumen, mentorship support, and early-stage financing to develop their businesses. When successful, these micro-businesses generate income for entrepreneurs while building neighborhood vitality.

Start:ME is proud to work in the following communities:

- **Clarkston** since 2013
- **East Lake and neighboring Kirkwood** since 2015

The program conducts weekly sessions from **January through April 2017**, working with 15-18 promising micro-entrepreneurs in each community as they develop their businesses through access to:

- Intensive skills-based business training
- Mentoring by a select group of business leaders with expertise in finance, legal, and other areas
- Opportunities to work with lending experts
- Networking in the community to promote and grow their business
- \$30,000 in low-cost loans for the top business ventures, as selected by the entrepreneurs themselves

We believe entrepreneurship is a team sport. The program is developed and delivered by Emory's Goizueta Business School in partnership with organizations and supporters from:

- **Clarkston** – Friends of Refugees, Clarkston Community Center, Partnership for Community Action;
- **East Lake/Kirkwood** – East Lake Foundation, PNC Bank, Drew Charter School, East Lake Neighbors Community Association, Kirkwood Neighbors Organization, Villages of East Lake; and
- **Metro-wide** – Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs

Who Are Our Start:ME Entrepreneurs

Since 2013, Start:ME has worked with **80+ micro-entrepreneurs** in the Clarkston and East Lake/Kirkwood communities to launch and grow businesses across a variety of industries, including tutoring assistance, health products, electrical repair, cleaning services, baked goods, driving lessons, event planning, retail art studio services, upcycled clothing, jewelry, organic farm products, and more.

Our entrepreneurs do not pay a program fee to participate; however, they are required to be 100% committed to their businesses and fully engaged in all of our peer-learning and support activities. As we say, their tuition is their time!

Who Are Our Start:ME Mentors

Start:ME recruits and deploys experienced, professional volunteer mentors to provide critical support for participating micro-entrepreneurs. Mentors provide ideas and feedback, support and commitment, and look for opportunities to connect our entrepreneurs in ways that further support their businesses.

Ideally, a Start:ME mentor should have:

- Experience establishing a successful business and/or experience in a business environment;
- Demonstrated affinity for finance and accounting, business planning, operations, marketing and/or business law;
- Passion for community development;
- Commitment to attend a minimum of 10 out of the 14 sessions conducted:
 - Clarkston – Wednesday evenings from 6-9 PM at Clarkston Community Center
 - East Lake – Tuesday evenings from 6-9 PM at Drew Charter School Jr./Sr. Academy
- Time available between sessions to work directly with entrepreneurs

** Estimated time commitment is 35-40 hours over 3 months*

How Does the Mentor Program Operate

Mentors will be introduced to micro-entrepreneurs during one of two pre-program sessions and onboarded by mid-January 2017.

- During the first 4-6 program sessions, entrepreneurs work with a number of different mentors by carefully rotating table assignments. During this initial period, we gather feedback on which mentors are forming strong working relationships with which entrepreneurs.
- For the second half of the program, we match/assign specific entrepreneurs with dedicated mentors. Time is set aside for mentors to discuss the progression of each entrepreneur with Start:ME program managers throughout the course of the program.

How to Learn More/Become A Start:ME Mentor

To express interest in becoming a mentor, please complete the [online interest form](#). For questions, contact Erin Igleheart at erin.igleheart@emory.edu. All mentors must attend an onboarding session prior to joining the program.

To learn more about Start:ME, please visit startmeaccelerator.org.