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## **HANO Graduates Inaugural Resident Entrepreneur Training Initiative Class**

*Four participants complete 10-Week Entrepreneur Program in Partnership with Start Smart, LLC*

**New Orleans, LA (June 19, 2018)** –On Thursday, June 21, 2018 at 5:30 p.m., the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) will celebrate the completion of the Agency’s Inaugural Resident Entrepreneur Training Initiative (RETI) class launched to assist public housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program participants striving to grow successful small businesses. The ceremony will take place at the Bienville Basin Leasing Office (Classroom B) located at 215 Treme Street.

The inaugural session began in April and included a free, 10-week intensive entrepreneur training curriculum, in partnership with Start Smart, LLC, offering guidance on how to enhance individual strategies for the innovative, new business owner. The first four graduates; one business owner and three others interested in starting businesses, gained the *Small and Emerging Business Development* and *Hudson Initiative* certifications that will assist in acquiring federal, state and local contracts.

“As HANO continues to provide affordable housing opportunities for low-to-moderate income citizens of New Orleans, it is also our mission to lay the foundation for economic sustainability through public-private partnerships,” said HANO Executive Director Gregg Fortner. “To do so, it is necessary for the agency to prioritize the provision of training and educational support for resident-owned, start-up businesses, giving them the tools and resources needed to become successful business owners.”

Participants attended interactive sessions and weekly workshops on how to start, plan and grow a business, and also learned how to build credit to increase the possibility of securing business loans. The class also included an intensive entrepreneur training

curriculum offering guidance on how to enhance individual strategies for the innovative, new business owner.

The program was administered by a team of consultants from Start Smart LLC, who serve as mentors, provide personal and business credit counseling, and assist each participant in preparing a bank, management or lender-ready business plan. Following the completion of the program, Start Smart's team will continue to support the entrepreneurs with the launching of their individual businesses.

“Our goal with the RETI program is to create a national model for engaging, training, and supporting the entrepreneurial dreams of public housing and Section 8 residents by helping them start and grow businesses and create jobs for their communities,” said Norman D. Roussell, CEO of Start Smart, LLC.

The next RETI session will begin on July 11, 2018. Potential candidates must be a HANO public housing resident or HCV (Section 8) program participant who is interested in starting a new business or growing their existing small business. **To apply, visit <https://www.retiprogram.org/> and/or attend one of two orientation sessions scheduled to take place on Thursday, June 28 at 5:30pm and on Sunday, July 8 at 9:30am.**

#### **About Start Smart, LLC**

Headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana, Start Smart is a national provider of mission-critical consulting and training solutions for government, corporate and non-profit clients. Start Smart is dedicated to helping clients build more competitive and higher-performing organizations.

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