



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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WHAT IS IN2NYC?

The International Innovators Initiative (IN2NYC) is a program that creates a pathway for international entrepreneurs to build their businesses in New York City and create jobs for New Yorkers. IN2NYC facilitates collaborative partnerships between City University of New York (CUNY) schools and international entrepreneurs, helping CUNY institutions collaborate with international entrepreneurs to further their institutional missions and goals, while enabling entrepreneurs to qualify for cap-exempt H-1B visas. Selected entrepreneurs will use their expertise to contribute to school communities and programs, while building their businesses in campus incubators.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF IN2NYC?

- Create quality, 21st-century jobs for New Yorkers
- Support the CUNY system by attracting international talent and fostering entrepreneurship among its student population
- Address the challenges international entrepreneurs face when attempting to acquire work visas and locate their businesses in New York City
- Facilitate the growth of new entrepreneurship hubs across New York City's five boroughs

HOW DOES IN2NYC HELP ENTREPRENEURS?

At present, international entrepreneurs looking to base their businesses in New York City face a number of obstacles when attempting to obtain appropriate immigration status.

- H-1B visas are a common vehicle by which individuals gain authorization to work in the United States, but an individual's visa application must be sponsored by an employer, so entrepreneurs are unable to apply unless they have a board of directors that can submit applications on their behalf.
- Only 65,000 H-1B visas are awarded each year through a lottery system, despite the fact that the number of applications received is 3–4 times that number.
- The H-1B lottery occurs only once a year over the course of one week in April, forcing many entrepreneurs to wait 11 months before they can apply or re-apply.

IN2NYC helps entrepreneurs meet some of the requirements necessary to qualify for cap-exempt H-1B visas.

- **University partnerships:** IN2NYC facilitates collaborative partnerships between CUNY institutions and entrepreneurs that help CUNY institutions further their missions and goals, while enabling entrepreneurs to qualify for cap-exempt H-1B visas. Entrepreneurs selected to participate in the program will enter into collaborative agreements with their partner schools that clearly describe how they will further the mission and goals of their partner school (such as by hiring or mentoring students, teaching a class, contributing to academic research, developing curricula, etc., depending on school needs). IN2NYC entrepreneurs will lease work space in their partner school's incubator and receive access to office amenities, support services, and technical equipment.
- **Establishment of employer-employee relationships:** IN2NYC provides entrepreneurs with the connections and resources to establish suitable independent boards of directors for their companies, which can then petition U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on behalf of the company for H-1B status for the entrepreneur.

HOW DOES IN2NYC HELP NEW YORKERS?

IN2NYC brings entrepreneurs and potential new services, revenue streams, and employment opportunities to neighborhoods across New York City's five boroughs. According to academic research, each tech sector job creates approximately four to seven additional jobs in the surrounding metropolitan area. This program thus has the potential to create hundreds of new jobs across New York City, without replacing any existing ones.

Additionally, while building their businesses, entrepreneurs are required to serve local university communities, such as by contributing to academic research, developing curricula, and/or serving as mentors and employers for CUNY students.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN IN2NYC?

To be eligible to participate in IN2NYC, entrepreneurs must have an existing business—operating either abroad or in the United States—and must be able to qualify for a standard H-1B visa. Entrepreneurs must also be proficient in English.

Examples of individuals who may be eligible to participate in IN2NYC include:

- International entrepreneurs who have started a business overseas and would like to expand or relocate to the United States
- International students graduating from a U.S. university who have started businesses in the United States
- International graduates of U.S. universities who have started businesses and are finishing their Optional Practical Training (OPT) in the United States

Applicants' businesses must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Offer a product/service in their current market
- Offer a product/service suitable for the NYC market
- Offer a product/service that can align with a partner CUNY school's mission and incubator
- Possess sufficient funding to support a NYC presence
- Possess a board of directors (if not, applicant must be willing to establish a board of directors if admitted to the program)
- Be incorporated in the United States (if not, applicant must be willing to incorporate business in the United States if admitted to the program)

HOW DOES THE IN2NYC APPLICATION PROCESS WORK?

Entrepreneurs may submit applications online at www.in2.nyc beginning in spring 2016 for placement at up to three partner CUNY schools of their choice. Entrepreneurs who progress to the final round of consideration will be asked to participate in a phone or video interview. Those ultimately selected to participate in the program will be notified of acceptances, contingent upon execution of collaboration agreements with their partner schools and fulfillment of specific corporate requirements, such as formation of a board of directors.

Once those requirements have been satisfied, entrepreneurs' companies will submit applications for cap-exempt H-1B visas directly to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Entrepreneurs' companies will be responsible for covering the cost of visa applications. Neither NYCEDC nor CUNY will be in any way responsible for, undertake, certify, or guarantee any aspect of the H-1B visa application process or outcome.

HOW MANY PARTICIPANTS WILL BE SELECTED FOR THE PROGRAM?

Up to 80 entrepreneurs will be selected for the program within its first two years. Program participants will be selected on an ongoing basis as schools are ready to receive applications.

WHAT IS THE DURATION OF THE PROGRAM?

Schools are expected to host participating entrepreneurs for a minimum of 18-24 months, but may agree to host participating entrepreneurs for a longer period of time.

HOW WILL ENTREPRENEURS BE SELECTED FOR THE PROGRAM?

Entrepreneurs will be selected for participation in the program based on three primary criteria:

- 1. Company Profile & Performance**
- 2. Fit for NYC Market**
- 3. Fit for Program**

1. COMPANY PROFILE & PERFORMANCE

Applicants will be selected for participation in the program based on the quality and performance of their companies, as assessed by the following metrics, among others:

- Proven value of offered product/service in current market
- Number of employees (current and projected)
- Amount of funding raised to date
- Amount of revenue generated to date
- Business plan/vision for next 24 months
- Additional milestones & achievements (e.g., product validation, partnerships, press mentions, etc.)

2. FIT FOR NYC MARKET

Applicants will be evaluated on their companies' fit for the NYC market, including assessment of:

- Suitability of offered product/services for NYC market
- Feasibility of expansion/relocation to NYC
- Ability to further NYC economic development objectives (e.g., contribute to growth in priority sectors, neighborhoods, etc.)

3. FIT FOR PROGRAM

Applicants will also be evaluated on their fit for the program, including applicants':

- Understanding of program structure & participant responsibilities
- Alignment with mission of partner CUNY institutions
- Ability to further goals of partner CUNY institutions

WHICH SCHOOLS ARE PARTICIPATING IN IN2NYC?

- City College of New York (Zahn Innovation Center)
- Baruch College (Lawrence N. Field Center for Entrepreneurship)
- LaGuardia Community College (NYDesigns)
- Lehman College (Information Technology Innovation Lab)
- Medgar Evers College (Entrepreneurship & Experiential Learning Training Lab)
- Queens College (Tech Incubator Center)
- College of Staten Island (Entrepreneurial Incubator & Educational Center)

WHY CUNY AND WHY THESE PARTICULAR SCHOOLS?

CUNY is a vibrant network of top-tier public schools that educate and serve New Yorkers in all five boroughs. Partnering entrepreneurs with CUNY will strengthen university programs and ensure that New York students have the opportunity to acquire the entrepreneurial and technological skills that will enable them to successfully compete in today's global economy. The seven partner CUNY schools have all prioritized development of entrepreneurship programs and many already have successful co-working spaces on their campuses that will host IN2NYC entrepreneurs.

DOES THE PROGRAM DIFFER FROM SCHOOL TO SCHOOL?

Yes, the program will be tailored to meet the needs and preferences of each individual school. For example, the number of spaces available per school will vary, as will the profile of entrepreneurs/businesses that each school is interested in partnering with to ensure that there is alignment with the mission of each partner CUNY institution. Some schools will be sector-agnostic, while others will focus on a specific industry or type of technology.

WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES WILL SCHOOLS REQUIRE ENTREPRENEURS TO PERFORM?

Examples of activities that schools may be interested in having entrepreneurs perform include, but are not limited to:

- Teaching an appropriate educational course in the entrepreneur's area of expertise
- Developing curricula for students in the entrepreneur's area of expertise
- Providing mentorship and coaching to student entrepreneurs
- Hiring students as employees or paid interns for their company
- Working with students and faculty on research relevant to the entrepreneur's area of expertise
- Providing training on use of emerging technologies (e.g., 3-D printing, etc.)
- Participating in observational research studies focused on understanding how global businesses form and grow in NYC
- Participating in outreach efforts to the NYC start-up community, campus clubs, and industry (e.g. participating on panels, demo days, etc.)

Each entrepreneur and their partner school will agree on the activities that the entrepreneur will commit to perform throughout their participation in the program.

WILL SCHOOLS PAY ENTREPRENEURS TO PERFORM THE AGREED-UPON ACTIVITIES?

No. Entrepreneurs' companies – as the employers and petitioners for entrepreneurs' H-1B visas – will compensate entrepreneurs.

The activities that IN2NYC entrepreneurs will perform within their partner school's community will reflect the alignment between the entrepreneur's business activities and their partner school's mission. Thus, the activities performed by entrepreneurs will not only benefit the school, but will also benefit the entrepreneur's business (e.g. acquiring staff, conducting relevant research, etc.). This alignment between the entrepreneur's business and partner school's mission is necessary for entrepreneurs to be able to qualify for cap-exempt H-1B visas.

WHERE WILL ENTREPRENEURS WORK AND WHO WILL PAY FOR THEIR OFFICE SPACE?

Each entrepreneur will be based in a co-working space on the campus of their designated partner school. Entrepreneurs' companies will be responsible for paying monthly rent for the space, similar to any other tenant in the co-working space.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DOES IN2NYC CREATE FOR STUDENTS?

IN2NYC creates opportunities for students to acquire hands-on experience in international entrepreneurship and emerging technologies through access to entrepreneurs and their businesses. Entrepreneurs participating in IN2NYC will provide opportunities for students at their partner school in these areas, by conducting activities such as teaching entrepreneurship programs, mentoring students, and/or providing students with internship and employment opportunities.

IN2NYC also provides international students who have been educated in the United States and started their own businesses with the opportunity to remain in New York City to continue to grow their businesses.

WHEN WILL APPLICATIONS BECOME AVAILABLE?

Applications will become available online at www.in2.nyc in the spring of 2016. Sign up for the program mailing list to receive notifications as applications become available.