

ESPRE Announces the First Call for applications to receive a micro-credit loan in support of Entrepreneurs with a Refugee Background

June 5th, 2012 – The Entrepreneurship Support Program for Refugee Empowerment (ESPRE) today announced that it would open call for micro-credit loans to entrepreneurs with a refugee background. The program is designed to provide loans of a maximum of one million yen (maximum), alongside technical assistance to support the entrepreneurs and help them succeed in their business endeavor.

1. Purpose and Goal of ESPRE

ESPRE seeks to support entrepreneurs with a refugee background and invest in them as a means of empowerment for the entrepreneurs and community development for the larger Japanese community. By supporting the entrepreneurs with financial loans and technical assistance, ESPRE aims to change the general image of refugees from “burden” to “human capitals” capable of revitalizing Japanese society.

2. Application Date and Briefing Session

Open call for application: Tuesday June 5th of 2012
Application Deadline: Monday June 18th of 2012

3. Program Eligibility

Detail: please see Annex or <http://espre.org/apply/>

Candidates sought: Refugee in Japan who has a strong will and commitment to her/his business

Number of supports available: 2 to 3

5. About the Press Release

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Organization Summary

The Entrepreneur Support Program for Refugee Empowerment (ESPRES) is a Non Profit Organization, originally proposed and established by an NPO, the Japan Association for Refugees (JAR), which provides comprehensive support to refugees in Japan. On March 1st, ESPRES was approved by the Japanese government to engage in microfinance operation for refugees.

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ESPRE – Call for applications to receive a micro credit loan and technical assistance from ESPRE in support of entrepreneurs with a refugee background

Introduction

The Entrepreneurship Support Program for Refugee Empowerment (ESPRE) is please to announce an open call for micro credit loan applications to entrepreneurs with a refugee background on 5th of June 2012. ESPRE wants to bridge the gap that the entrepreneurs have limited or no access to financial and marketing resources in Japan. The role of ESPRE is to provide access to funds, manage risk, and deliver customized solutions to the entrepreneurs' significant issues, and help them challenge in their business endeavors. ESPRE is Japan's first government-authorized micro financial institution supporting entrepreneurs with a refugee background, and is launched in partnership with Japan Association for Refugees (JAR). This is the first call for applications for a micro credit loan in support of entrepreneurs with a refugee background. If you would like to apply, please refer to the following details. Your application will be expected to send to ESPRE by 18th of June, 2012 and will carefully be selected 2 or 3 entrepreneurs at this time.

Service provided to selected entrepreneurs from ESPRE

1. Loan

- Up to 1,000,000 yen
- Interest rate: 7.5% max (simple interest)
- Repayment methods period: normally, monthly repayment, up to 5 years,
- Collateral warranty: no (in case of that if the security or collateral is set, the preferential interest rate will be considered)

* The above is the standard conditions; Specific loan terms/conditions are decided based on the review and the consultations.

2. Technical assistance

- Specific type of assistance will depend on the selected entrepreneur's situation.
- Technical assistance may be provided for the shortlisted applicants in advance of a loan decision.

Eligibility

An applicant must:

1. Be a business owner or acting-business owner with a refugee background
 - Applicants (or the owner of applicant corporations) who are with recognized refugee status by the government of Japan, or have applied for refugee status and have a valid work permit; ESPRE may interview an applicant to determine whether they may meet international standard regarding refugee.
 - For a corporation, no restrictions for the corporation form.
 - Please contact ESPRE if you are not a registered business owner due to residential status, but are an acting-owner
2. Have a business plan or currently be managing a business within 3 years after getting started,
3. Use the micro credit loan for a new or on-going business purpose only.

Applicant will be ineligible if the applicant:

1. Belongs to any anti-social organization, such as Mafia or gangsters)
2. Has filed or conducted any accounting fraud and/or submitted a false declaration to ESPRE or other financial institutions.
3. Is determined ineligible by ESPRE for other reasons.

How to apply

Please get an application form from our website, please visit <http://espre.org/apply/>, and fill out the form either Japanese or English and send it to one of the following address.

By mail

ESPRE (Entrepreneurship Support Program for Refugee Empowerment)
Daisan Shikakura Bldg. 6F
1-7-10 Yotsuya, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0004

By fax: 03-5379-6002

By e-mail: apply@espre.org

Deadline is on Monday 18th of June, 2012

After submitting your application, you may be asked to provide additional information.

* Information gathered through the application form, interviews, site visits, etc. will be strictly managed and not disclosed to third parties without prior approval from applicants.

Selection procedures

During the selected process, ESPRE is committed to respecting fundamental principles, such as: equal treatment, non-discrimination, confidentiality, and transparency. Applicants that are compliant with the eligibility criteria will go through the ESPRE selection process in the following manner;

1. Interview
 - ESPRE will interview you regarding your business plan, management policy, and use of money.
 - ESPRE will visit the applicant's business site and determine how ESPRE can provide support.
2. Shortlisting: ESPRE will support to develop a business and financial plan for detail in order to refine a loan application.
3. Create a loan application
 - After going through the process above, a loan application will be submitted to the ESPRE loan committee while ESPRE may provide technical assistance.
 - At the final stage, if decides to accept the application, we will determine how much financial and technical assistance will be provided.

* Your application will be rejected in the process of reviewing your form or interview.

* Your application form will not be returned to you.

Application Schedule

- Application is available on Tuesday, June 5th, 2012

- Application deadline is on Monday, June 18th, 2012 (no later than 18th, 2012)
- ESPRE will inform the schedule to each applicant for an interview
- Site visit and later activity will be arranged for each applicant.

Contact information

ESPRE (Entrepreneurship Support Program for Refugee Empowerment)

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or

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