

## Two International Entrepreneurs Start under New York's International Innovators Visa Program

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Understanding the scarcity of H-1B visas, early in 2016, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), in partnership with the City University of New York (CUNY), launched the International Innovators Initiative (IN2NYC) to build a pathway to help international entrepreneurs grow companies and create jobs in the United States, specifically in New York City. The program is now bearing fruit as its first two entrepreneurs are setting up their businesses within the CUNY incubator. Gabor Tankovics, a native of Hungary, will base his company, Dartboard, at LaGuardia Community College and Namisha Bahl from India will begin mentoring students at the City College of New York's Zahn Innovation Center. Dartboard has created a web application to help individuals manage their student loans. Ms. Bahl is the Director of Integrated Management for Mogul, an international website and hub for women around the world that enables them to connect and share knowledge.

Institutions of higher education are not subject to the limit on H-1B visas as long as the beneficiaries of those visa petitions are contributing to a central mission of the school. Applicants for the IN2NYC program are selected through a competitive process. If selected, they are matched with the appropriate CUNY institution. The entrepreneurs will work on developing their companies while contributing to the schools' missions by conducting academic research, helping to develop entrepreneurship programs, teaching courses, mentoring students, hiring students as interns or employees in their companies, and participating in community outreach efforts, among other things. The entrepreneurs will partner with the schools' incubator programs, set up their offices at the institutions and have access to the schools' support services. To be eligible for the program, and cap-exempt H-1B visas, the foreign entrepreneurs must demonstrate that they have either started a company overseas and want to relocate or expand in the U.S. or that they have been students in the U.S. and have started companies that they wish to grow in the U.S.

At the federal level, the USCIS has proposed the International Entrepreneurship Rule. If enacted, the rule would allow foreign entrepreneurs to enter the U.S. for an initial two-year period if they can demonstrate their startup entities' potential for rapid growth and job creation. For more on the proposal, see [Administration Welcomes Foreign Entrepreneurs with Proposed Rule](#). The International Entrepreneurship Rule was established on the basis of President Barack Obama's Executive Order and does not require Congressional action. Observers have said that, due to the bipartisan appeal of supporting entrepreneurship, President-elect Donald Trump may not move to bar the rule.

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