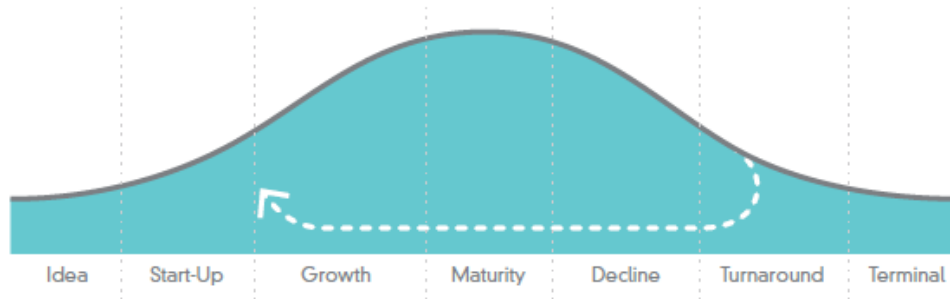


# RESIDENT INCUBATOR CLASS OF 2019

## APPLICATION NARRATIVE



### ORGANIZATION LIFE STAGE GUIDE

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the life stage descriptions for each of the sections below. In the narrative portion of the application portal select the appropriate current life stage for the organization in the drop down menu at the top of each section. You may find it helpful to print this guide and have it out as you complete the narrative portion of the application. It is acceptable for the organization to be in different life stages in different sections (i.e. “Maturity” for Programs and “Growth” for Management).

SECTION I: PROGRAMS	
<b>IDEA</b>	Programs are not defined, only an intense, personal mandate to fill an artistic gap in Houston.
<b>START-UP</b>	Programs are simple, experimental, and generally have more breath than depth.
<b>GROWTH</b>	Organization begins to understand and define the distinctive methods and approach that separate its programming from others.
<b>MATURITY</b>	Programs are well-organized; results focused; and in touch with community needs.
<b>DECLINE</b>	Programs are losing audiences to others whose approach is more accessible, and possibly less expensive.
<b>TURNAROUND</b>	Programs are reassessed and modified in light of current market needs and financial viability.
<b>TERMINAL</b>	Programs are unreliable, unsteady, and seriously under-funded.
SECTION II: BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND GOVERNANCE	
<b>IDEA</b>	No board exists at this stage, only supporters with a personal connection to mission.
<b>START-UP</b>	Members almost always have a personal connection to mission or founder, yet roles & responsibilities are undefined.
<b>GROWTH</b>	Board structure begins to appear, especially in meetings, reporting, and committees.
<b>MATURITY</b>	Board sets direction, is policy oriented and leaves management to the executive director.
<b>DECLINE</b>	Board is unaware there is something wrong; they think things are running smoothly and often don't take action until money starts running out.
<b>TURNAROUND</b>	A core of committed board members is ready to do what it takes to restore organizational integrity.
<b>TERMINAL</b>	Board has lost its collective drive to continue and may exist in name only.
SECTION III: FINANCIAL RESOURCES	
<b>IDEA</b>	Sweat equity is the usual self-funding device, unless originators have deep pockets or an outside “angel” backs the project.
<b>START-UP</b>	Usually a low-budget, boot strap operation unless seeded initially by a major start-up grant.
<b>GROWTH</b>	More sources of income create greater accounting and compliance complexities.
<b>MATURITY</b>	Organization has multiple sources of income and is not dependent on one source of funding.
<b>DECLINE</b>	Budgets are fixed-cost and expense heavy, with income projections reflecting past experience rather than reality.
<b>TURNAROUND</b>	Willingness to cut expenses to reflect realistic income and cash flow.
<b>TERMINAL</b>	The organization is most likely out of money and may have accumulated deficits.

SECTION IV: MANAGEMENT	
<b>IDEA</b>	Founders are believable, action-oriented people with commitment to proposed purpose.
<b>START-UP</b>	Leader is a “spark-plug” and the group’s most experienced staff person (who is mostly unpaid).
<b>GROWTH</b>	Organization is led by part-time staff/board who see infinite potential for programming.
<b>MATURITY</b>	Executive leadership is formed & compensated; often second or third generation from the originators.
<b>DECLINE</b>	Organizational slippage is either unseen, denied, or blamed for external sources.
<b>TURNAROUND</b>	Turnaround leader is a gutsy, strong-willed person with clear sense of direction and ability to inspire confidence in others.
<b>TERMINAL</b>	Staff and management have dwindled to a handful and possibly may be working without pay.
SECTION V: ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS	
<b>IDEA</b>	Although generally lacking in systems, in-kind services, equipment and other goods may exist.
<b>START-UP</b>	Financial and administrative functions and systems are generally weak and may be out-sourced to others.
<b>GROWTH</b>	Current systems, never good to begin with, must now be substantially improved to meet the demand of continual program expansion and rising compliance.
<b>MATURITY</b>	Organization operates from an outlined course of actions/policies/procedures for routine client, board, and personnel matters.
<b>DECLINE</b>	Systems, although developed, are often antiquated, and physical space may be deteriorating
<b>TURNAROUND</b>	Existing policies and procedures may be too complex, expensive, and “mature” for the turnaround organization.
<b>TERMINAL</b>	Systems have been abandoned. Organizational decisions and general workflow happen on an ad hoc basis.
SECTION VI: GENERAL	
<b>IDEA</b>	The stage in which there is no formal organization, only an idea and a personal mandate to fill a societal, programmatic or cultural gap in the community.
<b>START-UP</b>	The beginning stage of organizational operations in which unbridled mission energy and passion reign supreme, but, generally, without corresponding governance, management, resources, or systems.
<b>GROWTH</b>	The stage in which nonprofit mission and programs have taken hold in the marketplace, but where service demand exceeds current structural and resource capabilities.
<b>MATURITY</b>	The stage of operation in which the organization is well-established, operating smoothly, and has a community reputation for providing consistently relevant and high quality services.
<b>DECLINE</b>	The stage in which the organization’s services are no longer relevant to the marketplace, self-indulgent, status-quo decisions are made, and declining program census creates insufficient operating income to cover expenses
<b>TURNAROUND</b>	The stage in which an organization, having faced critical juncture, due to lost market share and revenues, takes decisive action to reverse prior actions in a self-aware, determined manner.
<b>TERMINAL</b>	The stage when an organization has neither the will, purpose, nor energy to continue to exist.

Figure: Susan Kenny Stevens. [Nonprofit Lifecycle: Stage-based Wisdom for Nonprofit Capacity](#). Stagewise Enterprises, Inc. 2008.