



LegalZoom and Defy Ventures Partner to Give Aspiring Entrepreneurs with Justice-Involved Histories a Second Chance

August 26, 2021

Alliance will help address barriers of inequity and make the path to entrepreneurship more accessible, while curbing recidivism

GLENDAL, Calif., Aug. 26, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [LegalZoom.com, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: LZ), a leading online platform for legal and compliance solutions, has partnered with [Defy Ventures](#), a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping end recidivism by training formerly incarcerated people to become entrepreneurs. Through a philanthropic donation and the sharing of the company's unique resources, LegalZoom will support Defy Ventures' efforts to equip its clients with new skills, connections and consulting support so they can start a new life and achieve economic independence.

The United States has the [highest incarceration rate](#) of any country. [Studies](#) have found that more than 7 million people are released from jail and more than 600,000 people are released from prison each year. This trend [disproportionately impacts minority communities](#). [According to the U.S. Department of Justice](#), the imprisonment rate of black males is 5.7 times the rate of white males and the imprisonment rate of black females is 1.7 times the rate of white females. The imprisonment rate of Hispanic females is 1.3 times the rate of white females.

Nearly [75% of formerly incarcerated people remain unemployed](#) a year after their release, which dramatically increases their risk of recidivism. Comparatively, graduates of Defy Ventures' programs have an [80% employment rate](#). Defy Ventures graduates also have a less than 10% one-year recidivism rate, significantly lower than [studies](#) that show two out of three people are rearrested and more than 50% are incarcerated again within three years of their release from jail or prison.

"At LegalZoom, we recognize the systemic inequities in our society and the particular struggles current and formerly incarcerated individuals endure," said Daniel Wernikoff, CEO of LegalZoom. "Our partnership with Defy Ventures enables us to do our part to level the playing field and address the tremendous need to help one of America's largest overlooked communities. By increasing access to high-quality legal and compliance solutions, education and other resources, we're aiming to help those who aspire to become entrepreneurs to defy the odds and achieve economic independence."

LegalZoom is taking action to help attack and solve the challenges that justice-involved individuals, especially women and minorities, often face pre- and post-release. By partnering with Defy Ventures, which aims to shift mindsets to give people with criminal histories their best shot at a second chance, the company intends to make the path to business ownership more equitable and accessible.

As part of the partnership, LegalZoom will fund the first women's prison cohort at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, Calif., providing resources so these women can pursue the path to entrepreneurship. The company will separately provide general funding for the non-profit's Entrepreneurs in Training program, which makes grants available to graduates to help start and grow their own businesses. Additionally, LegalZoom will provide access to its products at no cost to help graduates of Defy's Entrepreneurship Pathway program form businesses and get access to the legal and compliance resources they need.

"Our collaboration with LegalZoom will help more aspiring entrepreneurs become CEOs of their new lives and successfully transition back into their communities," said Andrew Glazier, president and CEO at Defy Ventures. "Many people with justice-involved histories share desirable personality traits with successful entrepreneurs--relentless drive, resilience, resourcefulness, charisma, and grit. They just need the right resources and opportunities to become a positive force in their communities."

This collaboration follows LegalZoom's recently announced [partnership with Accion Opportunity Fund](#) and the University of Southern California (USC) Marshall School of Business and further advances the company's mission to democratize law so everyone, regardless of their affluence or background, can protect themselves, their families, their businesses and their ideas to the fullest extent.

For individuals interested in enrolling in the Entrepreneurship programming in one of Defy's locations in California, Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Washington, or Wisconsin contact info@defyventures.org.

About LegalZoom

LegalZoom (NASDAQ: LZ) is a leading online platform for legal and compliance solutions in the United States that is on a mission to democratize law. LegalZoom operates across all 50 states and over 3,000 counties in the United States and has more than 20 years of experience navigating complex regulations and simplifying the legal and compliance process for its customers. Driven by its core value that every business deserves the full protection of the legal system and a simple way to stay compliant with it, LegalZoom helps its customers form and protect their businesses, their ideas and families. In 2020, 10% of all new LLCs and 5% of all new corporations in the United States were formed through LegalZoom, enabling small business owners to apply their energy and passion to their businesses instead of the legal and regulatory complexity required to operate them. In addition to business formations, LegalZoom offers ongoing compliance and tax advice, trademark and copyright filings and estate planning documents to protect small businesses and the families that create them.

Media Contacts

Bryan Curran
LegalZoom
bcurran@legalzoom.com

Allison+Partners
Alexandra Gardell Kreuter
press@legalzoom.com

