



Emerging Technology Ventures Inc., Arrowhead Center at New Mexico State University, and WESST are proud to partner as local hosts for:

2017 InnovateHER: Innovating for Women Business Challenge

About the Challenge

The Office of Women's Business Ownership is excited to share that today we have launched the 2017 InnovateHER Challenge. Additional details on the 2017 InnovateHER Challenge can be found on the online competition platform <https://www.challenge.gov>.

Women are in the workforce now more than ever, a number that is close to surpassing that of men. Gender equality is not simply about getting a woman a spot at the metaphorical table. Women have made great strides in education, the workforce, and their role in the economy, but there are still not enough women in leadership positions.

SBA recognizes that over the past two decades, women entrepreneurs have been critical to growing businesses and creating jobs, whether it's in cutting-edge fields like precision medicine or cybersecurity or through advances in agriculture or manufacturing. Consider this: the number of women venture capital partners has dropped to 6 percent in 2014, down from 10 percent in 1999. This directly correlated with women's access to capital; only about 7 percent of venture capital funding in the United States goes to women. A Harvard Business School study asked potential investors to rate a series of pitches, some of which were narrated by women and some by men. Even when the scripts were exactly the same, only 32 percent of people said they'd fund the woman, compared to 68 percent who said they would fund the man.

The InnovateHER Challenge

The *InnovateHER Challenge* celebrated its inaugural year in 2015. The *InnovateHER Challenge* 2016 included a local pitch competition component. From August 2015 through December 2015, universities, accelerators, SBA Resource Partners, Microsoft stores and other organizations hosted local competitions. Each host submitted one local winner to the SBA, who then identified 10 Finalists. These finalists were invited to travel to the Washington D.C. metro area on March 17, 2016 for a live pitch competition and compete for up to \$70,000 in prize money.

InnovateHER provides an opportunity for entrepreneurs throughout the U.S. to showcase products and services that have a measurable impact on the lives of women and families (30%), have the potential for commercialization (40%), and fill a need in the marketplace (30%).

Over the course of the 2016 *InnovateHER Challenge*, over 248 organizations registered to host local competitions. Businesses in 49 of 50 states, plus Puerto Rico and American Samoa were represented. There were 194 local competitions held in which winning business plans were submitted to SBA for evaluation. Over the course of four months, over 3,000 entrepreneurs were engaged in local competitions.

InnovateHER: SBA is searching for innovative products and services that help impact and empower the lives of women and families.

InnovateHER is a cross-cutting prize competition to unearth innovative products and services that help impact and empower the lives of women and families. Through the competition, the U.S. Small Business Association (SBA) is seeking to amplify products or services that fill a need in the marketplace and have the potential for commercialization.

As the competition unfolds, local competitions will be hosted by universities, accelerators, clusters, scale-up communities, SBA resource partners, and other economic development organizations. Entrepreneurs selected as winners in local competitions will advance to the semi-final round. From the pool of semifinalists, SBA will select up to 10 finalists who will be invited to the National InnovateHER: Innovating for Women Business Challenge to be held in mid-2017. The finalists will pitch their products and ideas to a panel of expert judges and compete for the top three awards and a total of \$70,000 in prizes.

Judging Criteria

- **Potential for commercialization**
- **Impact on the lives of women and families**
- **Fills a need in the marketplace**

How to Enter

Registration Process for Participants: The Challenge launches on December 29, 2016. The initial round of the Challenge will take the form of local competitions that will be run across the country beginning no earlier than December 29, 2016 and ending no later than June 3, 2017 by host organizations such as universities, accelerators, clusters, scale-up communities, and SBA Resource Partners. For more information regarding these local competitions as it becomes available, please visit sba.gov/InnovateHER. SBA will continue to update the list of local competitions as details are confirmed. While these local competitions will be identified as part of the InnovateHER Challenge and will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with these Challenge Rules, they will be administered solely by the local host organizations and will be judged by individuals selected by each host in their sole discretion. At a minimum, however, each application must contain a business plan covering the contestant's proposed product or service and must satisfy the Challenge criteria outlined in the Challenge description.

Each host organization is responsible for preparing the complete nomination package, including obtaining a copy of the relevant business plan from the winner and ensuring that the full package is submitted timely to the SBA via the "Submit Solution" tab on the left. (If you'd like to serve as an InnovateHER Host Organization, you must send a written request to the SBA via womenbusiness@sba.gov by no later than April 19, 2017 including the information outlined in the Challenge description.)

Following the completion of the local competitions, each host organization will identify one winner that will advance to the semi-final round of the Challenge. For a winning entry that has been submitted by a team of competitors, the host organization must list the team's self-identified project leader as the winner who will advance to the semi-final round. No later than June 23, 2017, each host organization will submit a nomination package to www.Challenge.gov containing the winning individual/team's business plan and other required information to SBA, which will administer the semi-final and final rounds of the Challenge. Selection as a semi-finalist following a local competition is the only means of registering for the Challenge. All nominations will be screened by SBA for eligibility. Contestants cannot submit entries directly to SBA.

Rules

1. **Eligibility Rules for Participating in the Challenge:** This Challenge is open only to: (1) citizens or permanent residents of the United States who are at least eighteen (18) years of age at the time of their submission of an entry (or teams of such individuals); and (2) private entities, such as corporations or other organizations, that are incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United

States. Individuals submitting on behalf of corporations, nonprofits, or groups of individuals (such as an academic class or other team) must meet the eligibility requirements for individual contestants. An individual may belong to more than one team submitting an entry in this Challenge. SBA employees are not eligible, nor are Federal entities or Federal employees acting within the scope of their employment. Individuals or organizations that are currently suspended or disbarred by the federal government are not eligible for this Challenge.

- 2. Registration Process for Participants:** The Challenge launches on December 29, 2016. The initial round of the Challenge will take the form of local competitions that will be run across the country beginning no earlier than December 29, 2016 and ending no later than June 3, 2017 by host organizations such as universities, accelerators, clusters, scale-up communities, and SBA Resource Partners. For more information regarding these local competitions as it becomes available, please visit sba.gov/InnovateHER. SBA will continue to update the list of local competitions as details are confirmed. While these local competitions will be identified as part of the InnovateHER Challenge and will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with these Challenge Rules, they will be administered solely by the local host organizations and will be judged by individuals selected by each host in their sole discretion. At a minimum, however, each application must contain a business plan covering the contestant's proposed product or service and must satisfy the Challenge criteria identified by SBA in the Challenge details.

Following the completion of the local competitions, each host organization will identify one winner that will advance to the semi-final round of the Challenge. For a winning entry that has been submitted by a team of competitors, the host organization must list the team's self-identified project leader as the winner who will advance to the semi-final round. No later than June 23, 2017, each host organization will submit a nomination package to www.Challenge.gov containing the winning individual/team's business plan and other required information to SBA, which will administer the semi-final and final rounds of the Challenge. Selection as a semi-finalist following a local competition is the only means of registering for the Challenge. All nominations will be screened by SBA for eligibility. Contestants cannot submit entries directly to SBA.

For winning entries submitted by teams of competitors, prize money will be awarded to the self-identified project leader for distribution to the rest of the team at their discretion and independently from SBA.

Process for Host Organizations: Each host organization will determine the type of local competition, conducted in a manner that is consistent with these Challenge Rules, that will best identify the most innovative and entrepreneurial business ideas, including the type of application that individuals need to prepare in order to compete. At a minimum, however, each application must contain a business plan covering the contestant's proposed product or service and must satisfy the Challenge criteria identified by SBA in Paragraph 1 above. The local competitions will be administered solely by the local host organizations and will be judged by individuals selected by each host in their sole discretion. **However, no individual acting as a judge at any stage of this Challenge may have personal or financial interests in, or be an employee, officer, director, or agent of any contestant or have a familial or financial relationship with a contestant.** Host organizations will also publicize the competition locally. Host organizations should notify SBA of the date and location of the local competitions for the purposes of publication at www.sba.gov/InnovateHER.

Selection of Winners:

- **Final Round** – Each finalist will be offered the opportunity to participate in the InnovateHER Final Challenge to be held in September **2017**, where they will make a live marketing pitch to a panel of expert judges drawn from the private sector. The panel of judges will select the three finalists whose pitches, in their sole judgment, best satisfy the Challenge criteria and present the greatest potential for success and rank them in descending order. **Finalists will be responsible for covering their own travel costs for the national competition.**

- **Semi-Final Round** – In the semi-final round of the Challenge, SBA will review the semi-finalist nomination packages submitted by the local competition host organizations and select up to 10 Finalists whose products or services, in SBA’s sole judgment, best satisfy the Challenge criteria identified in Paragraph 1 of these Rules and present the greatest potential for success. In addition, in order to achieve nationwide distribution of prizes for the purpose of stimulating the growth and development of new products and services across the entire United States and across a diverse range of project types, SBA may take into account nominees’ geographic locations when selecting winners, including support to geographic regions that traditionally have limited access to capital, as well as diversity in the types of products and services. **Finalists selected by SBA will be required to sign a form certifying that they meet the eligibility requirements identified in the Challenge description and have complied with these Challenge Rules.**

MATCHING COMPETITION CRITERIA AND LOCAL HOST RULES

InnovateHER is a cross-cutting women's business challenge to unearth innovative products and services that help impact and empower the lives of women and families. We know that our workforce looks very different from 50 years ago. Women now make up nearly half of the labor force and play a critical role in our nation's economic prosperity. Most children live in households where all parents work. And as our population ages, families are increasingly caring for aging parents while balancing the needs of work and home. As demands on women and families grow, the need for products and services that address unique challenges increases. This Challenge will provide that platform.

Challenge Criteria

InnovateHER provides an opportunity for entrepreneurs to showcase products or services that have a measurable impact on the lives of women and families (30%), have the potential for commercialization (40%), and fill a need in the marketplace (30%).

Along with the required business plan, please prepare a one to two page submission on why your innovation matches the three criteria of the competition listed above. To fully match the criteria each submission should cover all three points with their considered weights taken into account. This document will be used to prepare the pitch to the SBA on why the local winner most embodies the spirit of the InnovateHER competition.

Local Host Rules

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has laid down a good set of national rules for the InnovateHER 2017 Competition. However, each local host is responsible for administering the rules for selection and competition criteria through its Region. In that regard, Emerging Technology Ventures, the Arrowhead Center at New Mexico State University, and WESST have laid out these rules and timeline to govern the submission process for the local competition.

1. Each applicant will be responsible for developing a business plan that matches the sectioning and criteria from the attached template.
 - a. Though the developed plan must contain all the requirements, the business plan itself should not be an onerous undertaking.
 - b. There is no minimum nor maximum page requirement as long as each competitor covers the requirements with some amount of information.
 - c. Contestants should bear in mind though that the business plan is the first means of competition hurdle and act in accordance.

2. Each applicant must prepare a one to two page simple submission on why their idea or innovation best matches the contest criteria: have a measurable impact on the lives of women and families (30%), have the potential for commercialization (40%), and fill a need in the marketplace (30%)
3. These two documents must be submitted to the local host by midnight May 31st 2017. Any submission after this time period will unfortunately not be eligible to be considered for the InnovateHER 2017 Regional competition.
 - a. This is so that the local organizations can have ample time to go through the submissions and make sure all match the criteria before narrowing down the field.
 - b. The submission should be emailed to info@etvamerica.com.
4. The local host organizations will meet to discuss the submissions given to them by the contestants on June 1st and 2nd. During this time period the submissions will be narrowed down to a top 3 for contenders that both match the submission criteria and align with the spirit of the competition.
5. The local host organization will notify the top 3 contenders on June 2nd and schedule a “sales pitch” meeting to take place the 5th thru 7th of June according to availability of contender’s schedule.
 - a. The “sales pitch” meeting will be conducted via online and phone conferencing so that contenders will not have to travel to the host organizations.
 - b. The “sales pitch” meeting will be used to delve deeper into the contender’s submitted innovations or ideas and to query the submitters on particular points of the business plan and challenge criteria.
 - c. Each “sales pitch” meeting should be no longer than thirty minutes.
6. The local host organizations will then meet on the 9th to choose a regional winner for the InnovateHER 2017 competition. This regional winner’s business plan will be submitted to the SBA along with documentation on why the local host organizations chose this particular submission as the regional winner.
7. At this point, the local host rules give way to the National competition rules.

If there are any questions about these rules or any of the required documentation or submission process interested applicants can either send an email to info@etvamerica.com or call (575) 483-6002 to request more information or clarification.

THE BUSINESS PLAN

The Cover Sheet

- a) Include company/individual name, company/individual address, company/individual phone number, logo (if any), names and titles of owners or corporate officers if a launched initiative.

I. The Narrative

- Executive Summary (this is the last step to be written)
- Description of Business
 - Products & Services
- Market Analysis
 - Target Market
 - Market Size & Trends
 - Competition
- Commercialization Plan
 - Commercialization Opportunities
 - Marketing Message
 - Advertising & Promotion
 - Pricing
 - Distribution

Executive Summary

This is considered to be the most important part of your plan and is the last to be written. It represents your vision for your business and must convince the reader (a would-be investor, banker, or key manager) that the business has the potential to succeed.

In no more than one page, you should *summarize* the rest of the business plan. Hit all the points of the plan but in highlight.

Description of Business

Describe the nature of the business idea and state what it is you are going to do and how you are going to do it.

- What is your mission statement? Ex: NIKE's Corporate Mission Statement "TO BRING INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION TO EVERY ATHLETE* IN THE WORLD." This is your businesses core purpose, it should be short but focused and stress your uniqueness
- What are you planning to do? What product/services will be offered? What is the name of the business?
- How does this product or service have a measurable impact on the lives of women and family?
 - What measurement data can be produced to verify this?

- **Products and Services**
 - What is the product/service offering?
 - What are its features? What makes it unique?
 - What benefits does it produce?
 - How is it used? Where will it be used?
 - What features give you an advantage over the competition? Price? Performance? Quality?
- What are the business's intermediate and long-term goals?
- How will the seed funds help you grow your initiative?
 - How much money is needed from other sources?
 - What other sources of funds can be/will be sought?

Market Analysis

This is the second most important part of the business (next to the Executive Summary). It is imperative that you understand the market for your product/service so look into your industry and determine if there is a need for your product/service. Use the following resources for reference:

Resources –

- U.S. Census – www.census.gov
- SBDC Information Clearing House– <http://sbdnet.org/>
- Competitor Analysis – State Business Directory, Yellow Pages, Web searches
- UNM Parish Library – they have several resources and databases to assist with your market research, for example U.S. Industry & Trade Outlook and S & P Industry Survey

Target Market

It is important to understand who you are going to market your product/services to. The more specific you are the better you can meet their needs and keep them coming back to you.

- *Consumer Market:* Age, sex, education level, occupation, income, geographic location, interests, frequency of need for your product/service
- *Business Market:* Business type, size, geographic location, possible uses of your product/service, frequency of need for your product/service
- How does your proposed product/service meet the marketplace need?
- How will consumers purchase your product/service – store, via phone, catalog, and internet?

Market Size & Trends

- What is the size of the total market (all potential customers in your targeted area)?
- Estimate the number of potential customers who will purchase your product/service.
- Will this be a one-time purchase good or service or will there be a rolling purchase?
- Analyze your market nationally, statewide, and locally

Market Analysis cont...

Competition

EVERYONE has competition! Competition is healthy to the economic environment. Once again be specific because you can learn from your competitor's strengths and weaknesses.

- Who are your nearest competitors?
- How is their business similar or dissimilar to yours in terms of:
 - Image? Location? Store layout? Atmosphere? Products/Services? Pricing? Advertising?
- Who do they market to? How do they market to them? What promotional tools do they use?

Commercialization Plan

Your marketing plan will be one of the most important piece of your plan. Because customers are your key to sales, you have to be able to reach them and get them to buy from you. Your marketing plan has two pieces: the marketing message (what you want them to know about you) and the advertising (the how are you going to get that message to them).

Commerce message

- Can your product/service be commercialized? How easy would this process be? Why should customers buy from you?

Advertising & Promotion

- How will you promote your product/service? What medium will be used?
- What costs are needed for advertising?

Pricing Policies

- What prices will be charged for your products/services?
- What costs are associated with these products/services?
- Will these products/services be profitable and competitively priced?
- Calculate the break-even price for your business:

$$\text{BEP} = (\text{FC}/\text{Q}) + \text{VC}$$

- BEP = Price you need to charge for a single service or transaction to break even
- FC = Fixed costs for one year
- VC = Direct or variable costs related to each transaction
- Q = Number of transactions necessary to break even (such as cars washed or hours worked)

Distribution

- What methods will be used to make sales and distribute the product/service to your market segment?