

PitchNOLA 2015: Community Solutions

Hosted by Propeller: A Force for Social Innovation and Tulane Center for Engaged Learning & Teaching

Community Solutions Driven by You

We believe community involvement is essential in driving social progress. PitchNOLA: Community Solutions is celebrating its sixth year. Brought to you by Propeller and Tulane University, this competition encourages community-driven solutions to local challenges.

We encourage pitches that support workforce development, children and families, social justice, and the environment.

Selected semi-finalists will pitch their ideas in front of a voting audience and panel of judges on January 28, 2015 at Tulane University for the chance at \$5,000 in cash prizes.

Past PitchNOLA winners have gone on to scale their ideas to create tremendous community impact. PitchNOLA has received notable attention from the Times Picayune, The Advocate, Silicon Bayou News, New Orleans City Business, WWLTV, Invade NOLA, Tulane New Wave, and local business blogs.

“PitchNOLA was a phenomenal platform for JAC to present the expungement issue to the public. The \$5,000 1st place prize will increase our capacity to service more clients, thereby helping to break the cycle of recidivism and contribute to a thriving and healthy New Orleans.”

- Ameca Reali, Co-Founder, JAC

Entry Requirements

Eligibility

- PitchNOLA is a contest open to anyone residing in, or relocating to, the Greater New Orleans Area. This includes individuals or teams, for profit or nonprofit ideas, with or without an incorporated business.

- No need for 20-page business plans. We're looking for projects in the start-up phase.
- We are particularly interested in social ventures that target workforce development, children and families, social justice, and the environment.
- All organizations that have generated less than \$50,000 (including sales, grant funding, capital, earned revenue, etc.) in the previous calendar year (January 2013 – December 2013) are eligible to apply.
- If your organization has generated more than \$50,000 (including sales, grant funding, capital, earned revenue, etc.) in the previous calendar year (January 2013 – December 2013), you are eligible to apply for a new program or idea if the program or idea has generated less than \$50,000 total in committed revenues and/or funding.
- If you are selected as a semi-finalist, you must be present at the Pitch Workshop on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 and the Community Solutions competition on Wednesday, January 28, 2015.

Application Instructions

Please submit an online written application by **December 19, 11:59pm CST** at <http://gopropeller.org/pitchnola/pitchnola-2015-community-solutions/apply/>. Although PitchNOLA 2015 is not a business plan contest, entrants will need to put concrete planning and research into submissions.

Application: We recommend that you draft your responses to the questions offline before submitting online. *(Note: If you surpass the word limit for each section, your application may be cut off at the word limit.)*

1. (30 words) **Summary of the Idea: Clearly identify the social and/or environmental mission or idea in one sentence.** Applicants who make it to the final round will have this summary included in the competition press release and posted on www.GoPropeller.org and www.tulane.edu.
2. (300 words) **Problem Statement:** What specific problem in New Orleans are you trying to solve? Describe the scope of the problem with relevant statistics.
3. (400 words) **Product or Service Description:** What specifically will be your products or services to solve the identified problem?
4. (300 words) **Measuring Impact:** What difference will you make in people's lives and/or the environment within the next 12 months? How will you measure this?
5. (600 words) **Market Demand:** For your product/service, please identify: 1) potential paid users and/or 2) beneficiaries. Please describe who they are.

- *Required:* Interview or survey at least 5 potential paid users and/or beneficiaries to gauge their interest in using or paying for your product/service. Please share your findings, survey results or customer research data with us.
6. (300 words) **Similar Products/Services:** What have you learned regarding organizations providing similar products/services in your field? Research what is already out there and tell us why your product is a viable fit.
 7. (400 words) **Viability:** Convince us that you and your teammates have what it takes to make your social venture a reality. You may include information on your credentials, your commitment, or any pilot successes or milestones that have been achieved up to this point. Two resume submissions are optional with your application.
 8. (400 words) **Challenges:** What are the three biggest challenges your organization will face in the next 12 months? What do you need to successfully overcome these challenges?
 9. (300 words) **Sustainability:** Describe what you hope to achieve one year after the competition. How long will it take you to implement your project overall?
 10. (600 words) **Financials:** Please indicate your current thinking around the financial cost of running your business and sources of revenue.. **Not required: If you have prepared an operation budget (revenues and operating expense), please include.*

Judging Criteria

Throughout all rounds of the competition, judges will assess ideas according to these criteria:

- Clearly measurable, verifiable, and potentially significant social impacts.
- Knowledge about the needs of your target markets, both your users/beneficiaries and your buyers.
- Clear explanation for how your product or service will address these needs.
- Market research that demonstrates interest from your target markets in using and/or buying your product or service.
- Clear understanding of what it takes to successfully implement your idea (team credibility & financial understanding).

The Process

The competition will take place in two rounds:

Round I: The first round of the competition will be based on a written proposal, which must be submitted via online application by December 19th at

<http://gopropeller.org/pitchnola/pitchnola-2015-community-solutions/apply/>.

Selected semi-finalists will be notified by January 6, 2015. Semi-finalists are required to attend the Pitch Workshop (see below).

Pitch Workshop:

- Required for semi-finalists, an opportunity to provide feedback and practice your pitch.
- January 13, 2015 @ Tulane University, Freeman Auditorium, 6-8pm
- Slides submitted by January 11, 2015 to ghanusik@GoPropeller.org
- If you cannot attend, let us know as soon as possible.

Round II: PitchNOLA 2015: Community Solutions! The second round of the competition will take place at Tulane Freeman School of Business. Semi-finalists will have three minutes to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges and audience members. Following the presentations, the panel of judges will ask finalists questions. Judges will select the First Place winner in front of the live audience and audience members will select an “Audience Favorite.”

Awards

The “First Place Winner” will receive a \$5,000 cash prize, pro bono technical assistance, and consulting through Propeller. The “Audience Favorite” will receive the sum of audience donations.

Note: Winners are expected to use the award money and consulting hours in order to advance their winning ideas. Semi-finalists are also encouraged to develop their ideas further and apply for the Propeller 2015 Social Venture Accelerator, if eligible.

Audience Participation

Interested in joining our audience? Visit <http://pitchnola2015-communitysolutions.eventbrite.com> to register. The competition will be held on Wednesday, January 28, 2015 from 6:00pm-8:00pm, Freeman Auditorium.

More Information

Contact Ginny Hanusik with questions: ghanusik@gopropeller.org or (504) -

Key Dates

- December 19, 2014, 11:59pm CST: Deadline for online applications
- January 6, 2015: PitchNOLA semi-finalists announced
- January 11, 2015: First draft of PowerPoint slides due to Propeller at ghanusik@gopropeller.org
- January 13, 2015: Pitch workshop for semi-finalists at Tulane University, Woldenberg Art Center, Freeman Auditorium
- January 28, 2015: PitchNOLA 2015: Community Solutions final competition event

Hosted By:

