



Water Challenge Peer Mentorship Program

\$10,000 seed funding for solutions to critical Louisiana water challenges

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The Water Challenge Peer Mentorship Program is a collaborative initiative between Propeller: A Force for Social Innovation, the Greater New Orleans Foundation and The Idea Village to build the pipeline of sustainable businesses that are solving critical Louisiana water challenges in urban water retention, urban and coastal water quality, and coastal restoration.

Entrepreneurs are invited to apply for the Water Challenge Peer Mentorship Program, which will culminate in a pitch competition for select finalists on Monday, March 23, 2014 during the 7th annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW). Finalists will present their ideas before an audience and a panel of industry experts for \$10,000 in seed capital.

The Lead Mentor for the Water Challenge will be Mike Eckert, Former CEO of The Weather Channel. All selected participants can expect one-on-one project scoping, weekly office hours with Mr. Eckert, and peer learning sessions during the 12-week program.

To Apply:

The deadline to participate in the Water Challenge is Friday, October 31st, 2014 at 11:59pm CT. All entrepreneurs interested must apply online at <https://gopropeller.wufoo.com/forms/msanpqao7dh5l5>.

Applicants will receive an email confirmation of the submitted application. Applicants will not be able to review or edit the application once it has been submitted, so please be thoughtful in your responses. We recommend that applicants write answers in a word processing program and then cut and paste answers into the appropriate fields on the application. The online form does not allow you to save your application to finish later. The application has suggested word limits, but we will not penalize your application if you exceed the word limit.

Informational Q&A Sessions

Come learn about the program and get your questions answered!

- Thursday, 8/21/14, 4:30-5:30pm
- Tuesday, 9/23/14, 4:30-5:30pm

Programmatic Elements:

Qualified applicants will be notified to participate in the Water Challenge Peer Mentorship Program by Wednesday, October 22nd, 2014. The Program will include the following components:



- 12 weeks of weekly one-on-one business scoping, consulting, and support from Water Challenge Lead Mentor Mike Eckert.
- Weekly office hours: Office hours will take place Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings. Participants are required to meet with Mr. Eckert during office hours once a week during the program. Office hours will be held during the following weeks:
 - Week of 11/10/14
 - Week of 11/17/14
 - Week of 12/1/14
 - Week of 12/8/14
 - Week of 1/5/15
 - Week of 1/12/15
 - Week of 1/19/15
 - Week of 1/26/15
 - Week of 2/2/15
 - Week of 2/10/15
 - Week of 2/23/15
 - Week of 3/2/15
- Water Challenge Peer Mentorship Meetings: Five two-hour cohort meetings from November 2014-March 2015. All meetings will be on Tuesday, 4pm-6pm at Propeller, 4035 Washington Avenue. These sessions will be led by Mr. Eckert and will be an opportunity for peer learning. All sessions will be free of charge and hosted at the Propeller Incubator at 4035 Washington Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70125. The dates for these sessions are as follows:
 - Tuesday, 11/18/14
 - Tuesday, 12/9/14
 - Tuesday, 1/6/15
 - Tuesday, 1/27/15
 - Tuesday, 2/24/15
- Participants must commit to 4 out of 5 cohort meetings and 10 out of 12 weekly one-on-one mentoring sessions to be eligible for the Water Challenge Day Pitch competition and seed funding.
- Following the 12-week educational workshop series, participants of the program will be invited in March 2015 to submit for-profit, scalable business ideas for consideration by Propeller to participate as Semi-Finalists to pitch during the Water Challenge Day Pitch.
- If selected, finalists will receive support in March 2015 to hone their business pitches.
- On Monday, March 23, 2015, during Water Challenge Day, the finalists will pitch before an audience and a panel of industry experts who will determine the winner. The winner will be eligible for \$10,000 of seed capital disbursed by The Idea Village, courtesy of GNOF.

Eligibility Criteria

- To participate, the business or individual must be located in one of the following ten parishes: Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, St. John, St. Charles, Lafourche, Terrebonne, Tangipahoa.
- Entrepreneur is committed to participating in the peer learning and mentorship program requirements.
- The Water Challenge is open to applicants with both business ideas and existing ventures; non-profits and for-profits. However, in order to be eligible for consideration as a finalist for the Water Challenge Day Pitch, including the opportunity to pitch for the \$10,000 in seed capital, ventures must be organized as a for-profit business with annual revenues under \$1 million.



Selection Criteria

In addition to the location and revenue qualifications, the following criteria will be used in selecting participants for the educational programming:

- **Financial Sustainability:** Early thoughts on pricing, customer acquisition, revenue, and operating costs are encouraged. We will give priority to products and/or services that can be commercialized and are scalable.
- **Environmental Impact:** Entrepreneur has an idea or business to solve a Louisiana water challenge at scale and has a plan to measure environmental impact.
- **Entrepreneurial Leadership:** Entrepreneur has shown commitment to the idea and shows credibility in the field and in entrepreneurship.

What will the winner of the Water Challenge Day Pitch receive?

The winning business or idea will be selected by a panel of industry experts at a public pitch competition on Monday, March 23, 2015 during the 7th annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW) and will receive \$10,000 in seed capital, disbursed by The Idea Village, courtesy of GNOF, upon budget review by Propeller and The Idea Village team.

What if I'm a non-profit or I think my idea works best in a non-profit structure?

The Water Challenge is accepting a broad range of ideas and applicants whose concepts have commercial potential. This includes non-profits. Because applicants are eligible for the educational sessions, ideas that might have been conceived in a non-profit environment may discover the potential for commercial development. It is possible that ideas generated within a non-profit framework could be revenue-generating, create jobs, and strengthen the economy of Southeast Louisiana.

Following the Peer Mentorship Program sessions, in order to be eligible for consideration as a finalist for the Water Challenge Day Pitch, the opportunity to pitch for the \$10,000 in seed capital, ventures must be organized as a for-profit business.

For more information on critical water challenges and opportunities, please see the following:

Integrated Water Management (IWM): A simple definition of Integrated Water Management (IWM) is the coordination of the built environment to harmonize with natural water systems in ways that are ecologically, economically, and culturally productive. For more information on IWM, please visit the following resources:

- **Integrated Urban Water Resources Management:**
<http://www.gdrc.org/uem/water/iwrm/index.html>
- **International Decade for Action 'WATER FOR LIFE' 2005-2015:**
<http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/iwrm.shtml>
- **Global Water Partnership:**
http://www.gwptoolbox.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8&Itemid



Water Crisis in Louisiana

The many issues affecting Southeast Louisiana are common in deltaic communities around the world. Storms, floods and impaired watersheds are affecting hundreds of millions of people globally. The solutions to housing, agriculture, urban development and water use are universal and connected by the principles of Integrated Water Management. Thus, solutions developed here have enormous economic, ecological and cultural potential on an international scale.

Globally, we are living with a serious and increasingly threatening crisis as limited water supplies conflict with growing population. Yet Southeast Louisiana is “water rich,” with an abundance of water and of industries that are dependent upon and interact with it. Our region is particularly well suited to be a provider of solutions for many water issues, including (but not limited to): disaster response, drainage, restoration, treatment, efficiency and re-use, distribution, transportation and more.

For more information, please email Andrea at water@gopropeller.org.

About Propeller: A Force for Social Innovation

Our mission is to drive systemic change and economic impact in New Orleans by incubating early-stage ventures that have the potential to solve our city’s most pressing issues. At the heart of Propeller’s mission and impact lies the Social Venture Accelerator, a 10-month business accelerator that connects change-makers with the resources needed to make change happen faster. We operate out of our 10,000 sq. ft. facility in the Broadmoor neighborhood where 80 startups call us home. Since June 2011, we have incubated 35 new ventures, including a healthy school meals initiative that reaches 50% of all public schools, urban farms, a regional food hub, a wetlands kayaking tour company, and a maternal health collective.

About The Idea Village

In 2000, The Idea Village was formed by a group of New Orleans citizens who believed entrepreneurship is a catalyst for positive change. The Idea Village formalized in 2002 as an independent 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to identify, support, and retain entrepreneurial talent in New Orleans by providing direct service to high impact entrepreneurs, educating the broader community, and supporting initiatives that strengthen our entrepreneurial infrastructure. From 2009-2014, The Idea Village has provided direct support to over 3,411 New Orleans entrepreneurs by engaging over 2,600 professionals to allocate 68,543 consulting hours and \$2.5 million in seed capital. In addition, The Idea Village hosts New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, a business festival that has become the platform for the New Orleans entrepreneurial ecosystem. For more information visit www.ideavillage.org.

About the Greater New Orleans Foundation

The Greater New Orleans Foundation is one of the oldest and largest philanthropic organizations in the region. Every day, the Foundation joins other foundations, non-profit organizations, community leaders, and government officials to address the needs of the community and build consensus for solutions. Together with its family of



donors, the Foundation has invested over \$100 million in our region since it opened its doors over 25 years ago to respond to community needs. For more information visit www.gnof.org.

The Coastal 5+1 Initiative

The Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF) is the main sponsor of the Water Challenge as a component of their Coastal 5+1 initiative, which “seeks to connect emerging leaders with immediate, concrete solutions to long-term problems created by marginalized economies, poor planning, and environmental degradation.” The C5+1 initiative is a 5-year commitment by GNOF and its partners to address profound issues in the region and to nurture economic development solutions that are beneficial to people and the environment. For more information visit <http://www.gnof.org/receive/coastal-issues/>.

History of the Water Challenge

In 2010 The Idea Village and the Greater New Orleans Foundation developed a plan to establish New Orleans as a hub of innovation in water management – and the inaugural Water Challenge was launched and executed in 2011 with a goal of identifying and supporting entrepreneurial solutions that apply unique approaches to how we live with water. Since then the program has evolved into a well-established component of the city’s annual entrepreneurship cycle, engaging a global network to support innovative water ideas and elevate the industry as a critical part of New Orleans’ entrepreneurial renaissance. In addition, the Water Challenge has become a core element of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW), the nationally recognized annual festival produced by The Idea Village that elevates the New Orleans entrepreneurial ecosystem. Given their commitment to support social innovation in New Orleans, Propeller is assuming management of the program in 2014-2015.

