

PROPELLER

Water Challenge 2018

\$15,000 total prizes for nonprofits, businesses, and ideas to improve how we live with water.

Overview

The Water Challenge is an annual pitch competition that awards \$15,000 in total start-up funding to businesses, nonprofits, and ideas improving urban water, coastal environment, or local water economy.

In Louisiana, water is our greatest asset and our greatest threat. In urban, coastal, and economic contexts, water poses the biggest challenge to creating a sustainable future in our state. As our coast erodes, the ripple effects impact local communities, fisheries, and our safety in the face of future storms. In urban environments, we experience subsidence, nuisance flooding, and water quality concerns. Salinity and sediment load impact our maritime industries as well as our ability to implement large-scale restoration projects.

In New Orleans, people of color own 36% of all firms, but those firms only receive 2% of the region's sales receipts. Inequities exist for employees, as well - the water management industry's highly-skilled, high wage occupations, such as landscape architects, comprise up to six times as many white people as people of color.¹

The Water Challenge and Propeller's Water Accelerator have been featured in *Politico*, *Fast Company*, *USA Today*, *The Times-Picayune*, *The Advocate*, *New Orleans City Business*, and *WWLTV*.

Priority Application Deadline: January 12, 2018

Final Application Deadline: February 2, 2018

Water Challenge 2018: March 21, 2018

Eligibility

Water Challenge 2018 seeks solutions big and small that can make a difference in how we live with water, especially businesses or ideas that can generate revenue beyond this pitch competition. We will prioritize applicants working in the following areas:

- **Urban Water:** businesses or nonprofits that design, install, and maintain water management infrastructure in our region, especially in neighborhoods without access to this infrastructure, with the long-term goal of slowing subsidence and reducing nuisance flooding
- **Coastal Environments:** businesses or nonprofits that offer products, services, or financing mechanisms that preserve coastal wetland, mitigate current wetland loss, accelerate or enhance our understanding of the science of coastal restoration, or complement planned coastal preservation and restoration projects
- **Water Industry Disparities:** small businesses² or businesses owned by women or people of color that bring to market innovative products, services, or workforce development initiatives within the water transportation and shipping, fisheries and seafood production, and vessel construction and repair subsectors

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be considered eligible to pitch:

¹ Occupational data courtesy of GNO, Inc. as sourced by EMSI.

² Propeller uses the Small Business Administration 504 and 7(a) Program definition of a small business: less than \$15 million in tangible net worth, and less than \$5 million average two-year net income after federal taxes.

1. **Organization Structure:** For-profit businesses, nonprofit companies and organizations, and individuals are welcome to apply.
2. **Early-Stage or New Idea:** We accept pitches at multiple stages: idea stage, early stage (seeking first customer), early revenue (not yet profitable), and mature (profitable). Mature companies must have less than \$1 million in annual revenue.
3. **For Mature Companies:** If you are a past Water Challenge participant or a mature company with over \$1M in annual revenue, you must be pitching a new idea or business line (early stage or early revenue).
4. **Local Impact:** You should be planning to implement your product, process, or service in South Louisiana and impact our state's most pressing environmental challenges.
5. **For Out-of-State Applicants:** Although we encourage ideas from across the country, we will give preference to companies headquartered in Southeast Louisiana – the Greater New Orleans, North Shore, Baton Rouge, and Houma regions.¹ Out-of-state applicants are responsible for their own travel arrangements.

Dates & Deadlines

Thursday, January 4, 2018 (12:00pm – 1:00pm)	Virtual Q&A
Wednesday, January 10, 2018 (12:00pm – 1:00pm)	Q&A at Propeller, 4035 Washington Ave.
Thursday, January 11, 2017 (5:30pm – 7:00pm)	Green Drinks Q&A with Propeller and LifeCity at Broad St. Cider and Ale
Tuesday, January 23, 2018 (4:30pm – 5:30pm)	Q&A at Propeller, 4035 Washington Ave.
Friday, January 12, 2018 (11:59pm CST)	Deadline to receive feedback on initial application
Friday, February 2, 2018 (11:59pm CST)	Application Deadline
Tuesday, March 6, 2018 (6:00pm-8:00pm)	Practice Pitch Workshop (required for Semi-Finalists)
Wednesday, March 21, 2017 (6:30pm-8:30pm)	Water Challenge at Propeller

Contact

Questions? Contact Allison DeJong at adejong@GoPropeller.org or 504-475-4388.

About the Water Challenge

The 2018 Water Challenge is an initiative presented by Propeller focused on solving our region's most pressing water issues through entrepreneurship. Originally seeded by the Greater New Orleans Foundation and The Idea Village, the Water Challenge is funded by the Greater New Orleans Foundation, sponsored by JPMorgan Chase & Co. and the U.S. Economic Development Administration, and supported by Entergy Corporation.

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