

Welcome to the **Whitewater WindUp (WWUP) Business Plan Competition** in the vibrant City of Whitewater! To ensure a fair and competitive environment, participants must meet the following eligibility criteria, categorized by *New Businesses* and *Established Businesses*:

General Eligibility Criteria for All Participants

1. **Age Requirement:**
 - All participants must be at least 18 years of age.
2. **Participation in WindUp Workshops:**
 - All participants must complete the WindUp Workshops. Virtual workshop options will be available for flexibility. Workshops are designed to provide insights and skills to enhance the development of your business plan.
3. **Business Location:**
 - All participants must be willing to locate their business within the city limits of Whitewater, Wisconsin.
4. **Ethical and Legal Compliance:**
 - WWUP ensures that all participants adhere to ethical business practices and comply with relevant laws to maintain the competition's integrity.

Category 1: *New Businesses* (Businesses in operation for 3 years or less)

1. **Product or Service Development:**
 - Participants must have a business idea, product, or service that is either live or in beta form. This ensures they have progressed beyond the conceptual stage.
 1. *beta form* refers to a version that is beyond the initial concept or prototype stage and is ready for testing by a limited audience. It is typically functional, but not yet in its final version, allowing the business to collect feedback from real users or customers before a broader market launch. This phase is crucial for identifying bugs, gathering user feedback, and making improvements to ensure that the product or service is refined and ready for the official release.
2. **Eligible Reimbursements:**
 - **Rent or Down Payment Support:** Reimbursement is available for initial down payment or rent payments for up to the first year.
 - **Equipment Acquisition:** Grants and low-interest loans will assist with purchasing essential equipment.
 - **Building Renovation:** Financial support for necessary building renovations through grants, low-interest loans, or partnerships with local firms.
 - **Workspace Solutions:** Free or subsidized access to co-working spaces at the University Whitewater Innovation Center.

3. Local Economic Impact:

- Priority may be given to businesses that demonstrate a positive impact on the local economy, such as job creation, relationships with local suppliers, and contributions to economic development.

4. Diversity, Inclusivity, and Community Representation:

- Preference may be given to businesses that serve diverse demographics, including women-owned, veteran-owned, and minority-owned businesses.

5. Financial Viability:

- New businesses should provide a basic financial plan, including revenue projections and a path to profitability.

6. Innovation and Community Engagement:

- New businesses are encouraged to showcase innovative ideas or solutions and a commitment to engaging with the local community.

Category 2: *Established Businesses* (Businesses in operation for more than 3 years)

1. Operational Status:

- Participants must have a business that has been in operation for at least three years with an established customer base or market presence.

2. Eligible Reimbursements:

- **Equipment Upgrades:** Grants and low-interest loans for upgrading or replacing essential equipment.
- **Expansion Support:** Assistance for expanding business operations within the City of Whitewater, including facility expansions or renovations.
- **Workforce Development:** Financial support for training programs aimed at enhancing the skills of existing staff or new hires.
- **Workspace Solutions:** Established businesses can access co-working or expansion space at the University Whitewater Innovation Center.

3. Local Economic Impact:

- Established businesses are evaluated on their contributions to local employment, economic growth, and investment in the Whitewater community.

4. Diversity, Inclusivity, and Community Representation:

- Businesses that promote diversity, hire from underrepresented groups, and serve the community will be prioritized.

5. Financial Stability:

- Established businesses must provide evidence of financial stability, such as current financial statements and a history of revenue growth.

6. Scalability and Growth Potential:

- WWUP encourages businesses with clear plans for scaling up operations and expanding their market reach.

7. Innovation and Market Differentiation:

- Established businesses should highlight their innovative practices, unique market positioning, and contributions to the broader industry.

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