

Park County Start-Up Challenge Information

IMPACT 307 is a University of Wyoming business incubator program designed to develop and enhance Wyoming's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The program, through funding from UW, the Wyoming Business Council, a U.S. Economic Development Administration CARES Act grant, and the Wyoming Innovation Partnership, provides entrepreneur advisory and support services statewide. Physical incubator facilities are located in Casper, Cheyenne, Laramie, and Sheridan. IMPACT staff members can provide support to innovative, growth-oriented entrepreneurs in all 23 Wyoming counties through a hybrid model of in-person and on-line counseling. Startup and early-stage businesses receive advising and coaching from experienced staff with backgrounds in varied fields including engineering, marketing, finance, human resources, law, and sales.

IMPACT 307 is a member of the Business Resource Network and reports through the University of Wyoming Office of Research and Economic Development. The BRN includes other statewide support organizations such as the Small Business Development Center, Manufacturing Works, and the Technology Transfer Office.

The Challenge is designed to build on the rich traditions of Park County's entrepreneurial culture. The Challenge seeks to stimulate the creation of new Wyoming growth businesses, provides the opportunity to pitch business ideas to a panel of business and community leaders, and provides the opportunity for winners to receive seed funding to move their venture from idea or early-revenue stage to full-fledged launch and growth of a successful business.

2023 Park County Start-Up Challenge Seed Capital Fund

This year's Seed Capital Fund is targeted to be \$50,000! Three winners will be selected from the Pitch Night finalists.

The Park County Start-Up Challenge is intended for new, independent businesses having an innovative idea that, if properly executed, have the potential for growth. Launched businesses should be able to sell a product or service outside the Park County area.

Eligibility Details

The Challenge is open to residents of Park, Bighorn, Washakie and Hot Springs County.

Applicants with a business idea or business must fall into one of the three following categories:

1. Pre-Venture Stage – have an idea or business concept and want to pursue feasibility and market validation.

2. Startup/Pre-Revenue Stage – have a product or service and want to begin customer acquisition and revenue generation.
3. Early Operation Stage – Have a revenue stream (\leq \$150,000 of revenue in the last 12 months) but want to pursue ideas that would significantly accelerate sales and rapidly grow the company (at least 4-5X within three years).

Not-for-profit ventures are welcome to apply if they offer a unique idea, have the ability to scale up operations, provide services beyond Park County, generate operating revenues, and create jobs.

Submissions may be entered by individuals or teams (up to five members). Only one application per individual/team is permitted.

Final approval of eligibility is reserved for the judging panel.

Generally excluded from consideration are the following: real estate syndications, franchises, and brick and mortar retail.

ENTRY FEE

The Park County Start-Up Challenge has no entry fee.

APPLICATION

The application period for the 2023 Park County Start-Up Challenge will commence January 30, 2023.

All submissions to the Park County Start-Up Challenge shall be received online using the standard application found on our application tool called Start Up Tree: uwo.startuptree.co. No other supporting documentation outside of the requested application content is required, nor shall it be considered in the initial judging of submitted business ideas.

BUSINESS ADVISORY SUPPORT AVAILABLE DURING THE APPLICATION PERIOD

IMPACT Park County staff are available to meet with potential applicants and address questions about the application requirements during the application period. Please contact the business office at (307) 272-0085 to set up an appointment or get questions answered over the phone.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The deadline to submit an application is **February 24, 2023, by 11:59PM**. Unless the deadline is extended by IMPACT 307, late applications cannot be accepted.

SEMIFINAL ROUND

After the application period closes, the Challenge judge panel reviews all applicant submissions and selects the top ten based on the merits of the idea, the degree of innovation involved in solving a problem or addressing an unmet need, and the projected ability to both launch and grow a business in the Park County area. Each semifinalist will be invited to make a brief presentation at the IMPACT 307 office where the business model and idea can be explained in more detail. This provides the Challenge judging panel with the opportunity to ask questions and gain clarification if needed on application elements. Specific content to be included in the presentation will be provided upon notification of the semifinals.

IMPACT Park County staff are available to meet with semifinalists and can advise on semifinal round presentation content. Appointments can be made by calling the business incubator office at (307) 272-0085.

FINAL ROUND

The Challenge judging panel will convene after all semifinalists have made their presentations and make their selections for the Finalists that will present at Pitch Night. IMPACT Park County staff will notify all Finalists once the selections have been made.

The Finalists will have approximately one month to create their final pitch for the opportunity to be selected as a winner and receive seed funding. Working closely with IMPACT Park County staff will help strengthen the business model and increase the chances of a successful pitch. Professional presentation support from an outside vendor marketing specialist will be provided.

PITCH NIGHT 2023

The 2023 Park County Start-Up Challenge Pitch Night is scheduled for April 6, 2023 and will be held at the Wynona Thompson Auditorium in Cody. Each Finalist will have approximately 30 minutes to make their presentation and address questions from the judge panel. A live public audience will be in attendance, and the event may be streamed live or recorded for future promotions.

There will be a dress rehearsal of Pitch Night done on the afternoon of April 5th, it is recommended that all Finalists attend this meeting.

Winners of the 2023 Challenge will be announced once judge decisions are made on the evening of April 6th. Judges, at their discretion, may grant small initial cash awards on Pitch Night, but the majority of the seed funds will be distributed between May and December 2023 as business goals and milestones are met.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For any questions that come up about the Park County Start-Up Challenge process, or to schedule a meeting to discuss business ideas and models, please contact the IMPACT Park County business office.

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