

Business Plan Competition & Big Idea Competition 2026 Guidelines

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Overview

Business Plan Competition and Best Idea Competition

This year, 2026, the competition has two paths: The Business Plan Competition and the Big Idea Competition. Two Paths to Win. You can submit a Business Plan to unlock your entrepreneurial potential, or if you are not ready for a business plan, join the Big Idea Competition.

The CBPP Business Plan Competition inspires and encourages entrepreneurship and economic development. High School students from the community present their startup ideas and meet and receive feedback from experienced investors, executives, and seasoned entrepreneurs who have successfully started and grown businesses.

Finalists in both categories will be invited to attend a session focusing on elements they should incorporate into their presentations for the culminating Perfect Pitch event.

Stages of the Competition

Stage 1

WRITTEN BUSINESS PLAN:

The required business plan format and components are detailed starting on page 4 of this guidebook. Five (5) finalists will be selected from the submitted business plans and each will receive a Finalist Certificate, \$500 finalist reward, and will be invited to the next stage of the competition.

BIG IDEA COMPETITION: The required components are detailed starting on page 8.

Stage 2

BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION - PERFECT PITCH TRADE SHOW & INVESTOR PITCH:

Overall, winners will be selected based on a trade show display and a live investor pitch presented before a panel of judges and an audience at the final Perfect Pitch event held at UAA on March 27, 2026. To compete at Perfect Pitch, finalists must be present in person and deliver a live pitch followed by a Q&A session with the judging panel. Final scores are based on the trade show display (10%) and the live pitch/Q&A (90%).

BIG IDEA COMPETITION:

Winners will be selected based on their live pitch, followed by a Q&A session with the judging panel held at UAA on March 27, 2026.

AWARDS:

We will be awarding over \$10,000* in prizes in the following categories:

BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION:

Grand Prize - \$5,000*

Second Prize - \$2,500*

Third Prize - \$1,000*

Honorable Mentions (2 available) - \$500*

BIG IDEA COMPETITION:

Grand Prize - \$2,000*

Second Prize - \$1,000*

Third Prize - \$750*

**All five (5) business plan competition finalists will receive a \$500 finalist award. This amount is included in the final prize-winning amounts and will be distributed*

Prize Structure:

- *Grand Prize: \$5,000 total (\$500 finalist award + \$4,500 additional prize)*
- *Second Prize: \$2,500 total (\$500 finalist award + \$2,000 additional prize)*
- *Third Prize: \$1,000 total (\$500 finalist award + \$500 additional prize)*
- *Honorable Mentions: \$500 finalist award and a certificate of recognition*

Timeline

January 1, 2026

Business Plans and Big Idea proposals are now accepted.

January 30, 2026

Business Plan and Big Idea proposals **due by 11:59 PM Alaska Time** to:

Jstevens8@alaska.edu with a copy to uaa_cbpp_bpc@alaska.edu.

February 27, 2026

Finalists announced.

Week of March 9, 2026

Investor Pitch Info Session to help finalists prepare for the Perfect Pitch presentation and Q&A.

March 27, 2026

Perfect Pitch. Finalists will attend this culminating event in person to showcase their businesses during a mini-Trade Show followed by live investor pitches in front of a panel of judges and a live audience.

Eligibility requirements

2026 CBPP Business Plan Competition & Big Idea Competition is open to:

- High School Students from across the Anchorage area
- Team size should not exceed five members.
- Multi-disciplinary, cross-pollinated teams are encouraged.
- We will accept business plans for new ventures, products, innovative projects, and non-profit ideas as well as plans for existing businesses in the early-stage who need resources to grow.
- The objective of the business plan competition is to promote marketable business and social enterprise ideas that have the potential to attract funding, launch, and prosper. Each person on the team should be involved from the concept through the development of the business plan. Ideally, each team member will take an active ownership role in the startup.
- All plans, pitches, and presentations must be accurate and truthfully represent the venture. Misrepresentation will result in disqualification.

Evaluation Criteria

There are two stages of the Business Plan Competition. In Stage 1, competitors are evaluated based on a written business plan. Based on the strength of the written plan, finalists will be selected to compete in Stage 2: The Perfect Pitch. During Perfect Pitch, finalists are evaluated on a trade show presentation and a live investor pitch/Q&A. Criteria for all Business Plan components (written plan, trade show and investor pitch) are detailed below. Numbers in parentheses indicate the value of the criterion.

Business Plan Competition - Criteria (100 points possible)

- *Necessary components* – The business plan contains all the required sections (5)
- *Viability* – The venture is implementable, realistic, and viable (20)
- *Market opportunity* – Show the market potential of the proposed venture exists and your method for taking advantage of it (15)

Competitive advantage – the business has a unique, novel, or distinct approach, which gives it an advantage (15)

- *Management capability* – Contestants can effectively develop the venture and handle the tasks necessary for its success (15)
- *Innovation* – Contestants have developed an innovative solution to an existing or emerging problem (15)
- *Financial understanding* – Contestants have a good understanding of the financial requirements of the venture (15)

Perfect Pitch finalists will be evaluated on two components

1. Trade Show Presentation – The trade show is held before the Investor Pitch. Finalists prepare a display/presentation in the trade show room. Judges and guests visit and chat casually with finalists to learn about their businesses. The trade show presentation is worth 20% of the final judging and will be evaluated on the following criteria: (100 points possible)

- Professionalism of the presentation of the materials (20)
- Professionalism of the team (10)
- Creativity and information value of the materials (25)
- Extent to which materials convey what the product or service is (25)
- Consistency between information provided at the Trade Show and the Business Plan (20)

Investor Pitch – A five-minute presentation followed by a 15-minute question/answer session. One member of the team will do the presentation, but all should be present on the stage. Pitches will be worth 80% of the final judging. Investor pitches will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Clear explanation of the product/service and persuasiveness of the oral presentation/pitch (10)
- Quality of the responses to questions from the judges (10)
- Venture viability (10)
- A clear statement of the problem/opportunity (customer pain) and solution (includes value proposition and customer pain you are eliminating) (20)
- Features & benefits of goods or services that the venture proposes and business model (20)
- Market potential – the size of the opportunity, competitive analysis & competitive advantage (20)
- Forecast and Financial summary and need for investment (10)

Big Idea Competition - Criteria (100 points possible)

- *Innovation and Originality* - The idea should be novel and original, demonstrating a unique approach (20)
- *Impact and Relevance* - The idea should address a genuine need or problem, offering significant benefits or improvements over current practices. or a new solution to a problem (25)
- *Feasibility and implementable* - should be realistically achievable and practical to implement within a reasonable timeframe and budget (20)
- *Sustainable and Scalable* - should be sustainable over the long term and have the potential for growth, and be scalable (15)
- *Market Potential and Economic Viability*: should have a clear target market and the potential for economic viability, including a sound business model or monetization strategy (20)

Business Plan Competition Format & Components

File format

A printable PDF file.

Length

Limit your plan to seven (7) pages, including a two-page executive summary. The page limit does not include the cover page and single table of contents page. The written plan may include an Appendix with up to four additional pages.

Page format

Single-spacing with one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman font. This line spacing and font requirement apply to the document's textual content, not to titles and descriptions accompanying pictures, graphs, tables, or worksheets. All pages must be numbered, excluding the cover page.

Cover page

Must include the logo, the venture name, the team members, and contact information for each team member. The contact information should consist of an e-mail address and a phone number.

Financial data

Financial data should be summarized and highlighted in the written plan, supporting details, and spreadsheet information in the Appendix. Startup costs and how the investment will be used, along with income and cash flow statements, are appropriate.

Tip - Developing your business plan

To be competitive, your plan needs to differentiate your business from other competitors. The clarity and descriptiveness of your proposal will make a difference and enhance your chances of becoming a finalist. In the business world, you would need to do the same thing to inspire stakeholders to support your new venture.

When developing your plan, you may consult any sources you deem appropriate, including websites on how to prepare a business plan. For example: [The U.S. Small Business Administration's Write your business plan.](#)

Business Plan Competition Format & Components

Components

Cover Page

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

- Business description concept
- The Problem that you are solving
- Solution to the Problem
- Value Proposition
- Product or service description
- Target market and size
- Financial summary –just a few bullet points that include breakeven point, and over a 3-year period revenue trend, and gross margin.
- Key management team.
- A statement of resources needed, increments of capital accepted.
- Exit strategy

Business Description

- Company description
- Value proposition
- Mission
- Product and/or services description
- Business model
- Current Status
- Current or committed funding and all funding sources

Competitive Analysis and Advantages

- Comparison between your company and your competitors (you can use a chart to compare).

Market Opportunity & Analysis

- Customers
- What customer problem are you going to solve?
- How are you going to solve it?
- Market segment
- Size of market

Organization & Management Team

- Founders and key management personnel
- Form of ownership
- Partnerships
- Board of Advisors
- Board of Directors

Operational Plan

- Description of operations
- Exit strategy

Financial Analysis

- An analysis of your financials, including a breakeven point, and a spreadsheet that covers a three-year period.
- Gross margins over a three-year period
- Revenue over three years
- Cash flow over three years

- Profit
- Income statement
- Balance sheet

Funding

- Explain how you will use the funding to support/start this business venture and sustain it beyond the initial funding

Big Idea Competition Format & Components

Submit a cover page with the title of the Big Idea concept and the names of the team, followed by 3 pages that address the Big Idea Competition criteria.

Submission

The Business Plan and Big Idea proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format to the Competition Organizer, Mr. Jason Stevens, at jstevens8@alaska.edu, with a **copy** to uaa_cbpp_bpc@alaska.edu, **by 11:59 PM on January 30, 2026**.

After Business Plans are submitted:

- Business plans will be forwarded to a panel of judges for review prior to the competition. The list of judges is in the final section of this document.
- Finalists will be selected and announced on February 27, 2026.
- Finalists will prepare a five -minute pitch for the Perfect Pitch event, to be presented in front of the judges and a live audience.
- An info session to help finalists prepare for the Investor Pitch will be held the week of March 9, 2026. The forum will be via Zoom. Additional information regarding the time, date, and Zoom link will be e-mailed to each finalist.
- The Perfect Pitch final competition will be on March 27, 2026. Details, including a schedule of events, will be posted on the College of Business and Public Policy website at <https://business.uaa.alaska.edu/>

Perfect Pitch Activities

Perfect Pitch is an exciting culmination of our Business Plan Competition. It is held in person in Anchorage at UAA, with the following components:

Trade Show Presentation

- Each individual or team contestant finalist will be provided with a table to display prototypes, artifacts, information materials, and flyers relating to the product/service they are proposing in their new ventures.
- Each finalist can do a one-on-one presentation to each of the judges, using their Tradeshow display as a prop. The trade show is a marketing opportunity and a chance to impress the judges further.
- Finalists will also get a chance to interact with other Perfect Pitch attendees, which can be an important part of the People's Choice selection.
- During the Trade Show portion of Perfect Pitch, finalists must be present at their designated tables to describe their displays and answer questions. All contestants should be versed in the venture and be able to explain it succinctly.
- The Trade Show presentation is worth 20% of the final Perfect Pitch score. Thus, products or services should be presented in a professional, attractive, and informative way.

Investor Pitch

Each team or individual contestant will make a 5-minute presentation to the judges, using props or electronic media, as necessary. The judges will then have 15 minutes to pose questions to the contestants. The Investor Pitch accounts for 80% of the final Perfect Pitch score.

Award Ceremony

The evening will culminate with the announcement of winners in all categories of the Business Plan Competition and the Big Idea Competition.