

Business Pitch Competition Guidelines and Rules 2026

BizWorks is hosting the BizWorks Power Pitch: Rise to the Top on April 30, 2026, at the SpringHill Suites, Chester, VA. This is a premier showcase of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial drive. Designed to highlight the boldest ideas and brightest business minds in Central Virginia, this competition allows entrepreneurs to pitch their ventures to a panel of judges and community leaders. Finalists will share their vision, strategy, and potential for impact in a dynamic live event where only the most compelling ideas rise to the top. Beyond the competition, this high-energy evening fosters connections, inspires collaboration, and celebrates the resilience of small business owners who are shaping the future of our community.

The participants will have the opportunity to compete for \$5000 First Place Winner, chosen by the judges, and \$2500 Crowd Choice Winner, which is chosen during the event LIVE.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Founder(s) of the company must retain some portion of ownership.
- The semifinal round will be held in person on April 23, 2026, with location & times provided upon notification that you will be competing.
- The final round will take place LIVE during the celebration on April 30, 2026, and must be presented by the owner or an officer of the company. Winners will include both the Judges' Choice and Crowd Choice Winner.
- The company must have been in business for at least two years, with verification required (EIN and State Corporation Commission documents showing current standing).

By enrolling in the pitch competition, the company attests that it fulfills the above-mentioned requirements. If these documents are not valid, we will kindly request them one additional time, and after the second time, there will be no refunds issued.

Application Process

Step 1: Upon completion of submission, select the Pitch Competition tab. **Submit the required go-second video and email your Executive Summary to info@bizworkcenter.org.** The deadline for both to be submitted is 4:00 pm EST **Tuesday, March 31, 2026**, or once the first 50 submissions are received, whichever may come first.

Video & Executive Summary Submissions – no later than 4:00 pm EST on Tuesday, March 31, 2026.

Each participant will provide an Executive Summary about their business and a go-second video for review. **The go-second video must answer the following:**

1. Name and legal entity (Sole Proprietorship, LLC, etc.)
2. What are the products and/or services your business provides?

3. Brief description of the business and the problem your business solves. How does it work. What do you do?
4. What makes our product/service special?
5. Who are your targets customers and how do you reach them? What social media and marketing do you use?
6. How do you make money? Sales, subscriptions, credit/cash, other?
7. Do you currently have customers/clients?
8. What are your plans to grow your business and increase your sales?
9. How do you know when your business will be successful?
10. What is your exit strategy? How will you end your business? Retire?

Each participant will provide an Executive Summary about their business for review. The Executive Summary must be 1-2 pages max and include the following:

1. **Business Overview**

- Name of business and founder(s)
- Mission or purpose statement
- Brief description of product/service

2. **Problem & Solution**

- The challenge, gap, or need in the market
- How your business solves this problem

3. **Business Model & Revenue Streams**

- How the business makes money
- Key pricing, sales channels, or partnerships

4. **Competitive Advantage**

- Competitor comparison if relevant

5. **Traction & Achievements** *(if applicable)*

- Current progress: sales, customers, partnerships, or milestones reached

6. **Financial Snapshot**

- Basic projections in 2 years (revenue, sales, costs, profit potential)
- Funding needed and how it will be used

- Have you received any funding for your business?

7. Vision & Growth Potential

- Long-term goals for growth and impact
- How your business will scale in the future

Upon payment of your entry, you will receive an email to choose which free session with an expert to learn how to write your Executive Summary on **January 12th or February 9, 2026**, you will be attending.

General presentation evaluation criteria: Professional appearance, clear and concise communication of information, NO SLIDES, and staying within a 90-second time limit. Props are allowed.

You will need to purchase your ticket for \$75 for entry into the Power Pitch Competition at this time to qualify. The pricing includes your entry ticket to the Pitch Competition on April 30th, and one of the sessions to "How to write an Executive Summary" with an expert.

Based on the video and Executive Summary submissions received, a maximum of 6 finalists will be chosen to participate in the semi-finals to pitch to the judges on **April 23, 2026**. You will pitch to the judges in advance before April 30th. You will be notified by **April 6th, 2026**, if you will be advancing to pitch to the judges LIVE. If not, you will be attending the event on April 30th to cheer and vote for the Crowd Choice Winner of the three finalists chosen by the judges.

Step 2: Videos & Executive Summary will be reviewed, and the six participants will be notified via email by April 6th. There will be NO multimedia available during the pitch. Props are allowed, and use must be identical to what is portrayed in the video submission. The notification will include presentation time for **Thursday, April 23, 2026**, and the location. The judges will engage the participants during this time.

Each participant will have exactly 90 seconds to pitch their business, using the same format as their original video submission. Based on the judges' choices, 3 finalists will be selected to advance to the Final round to pitch LIVE and have a chance to be the Crowd Choice Winner. The 1st place winner will be announced as well. You will be notified by email on **April 24, 2026, by Noon if you will be advancing to the Finals on April 30, 2026**.

The final round will be held on Friday, April 30, 2026, at 6:30 pm. The first-place winner will be selected by our judging panel based on the same criteria as listed for the video & Executive Summary submission on April 23, 2026. The Crowd Choice Award will be done LIVE at the event on **April 30, 2026**.

Winners will be announced at the Networking reception.

Prizes

1st Place: \$5,000 + 12 months of BizWorks Virtual Mentoring

Crowd Choice Award - \$2500 + 6 months of BizWorks Virtual Mentoring

Should you have any questions about this application, please contact Iris Woodson at iris.woodson@bizworkscenter.org .