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To learn more, visit: www.govsbizplancontest.com

Wisconsin student entries welcome by Jan. 31 for 2019 Governor's Business Plan Contest

MADISON, Wis. – Looking for a self-directed project this semester that can lead to prizes, mentoring and live connections to the business world? The 16th annual Wisconsin Governor's Business Plan Contest will accept entries online for the 2019 competition until 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31.

The contest is designed to encourage entrepreneurs in the startup stage of tech-enabled businesses in Wisconsin. It links up-and-coming entrepreneurs with a statewide network of community resources, expert advice, management talent and possible sources of capital.

It also leads to valuable public and media exposure for the top business plans and helps spur economic growth in the state. Plans submitted by students or recent graduates in the past have included UConnect, which is known today as EatStreet; Hyde Sportswear; NovoMoto; Pyran; NanoRed and many more.

Finalists will share in more than \$150,000 in cash and service prizes. There is no cost to enter.

For their initial entries, contestants will submit a 250-word (or 2,000-character) idea abstract online at www.govsbizplancontest.com. That's where contestants will also find business plan templates and other information, such as the Entrepreneurs' Toolkit. The [toolkit](#) provides business startup information and assistance, networking contacts and technical resources.

Contestants who advance to subsequent contest rounds will expand their plan in stages. About 80 judges drawn from the finance, sales, marketing, research and technology sectors across Wisconsin will score the entries and provide feedback on submissions.

To get started, contestants will need to create a simple account at www.govsbizplancontest.com. All entries are submitted through the website. Contestants use their account to gain access to mentors throughout the process, as well as review the judges' comments and feedback.

Since its inception in 2004, more than 3,700 entries have been received and about \$2.2 million in cash and services (such as legal, accounting, office space and marketing) have been awarded.

Contest categories are Advanced Manufacturing, Business Services, Information Technology and Life Sciences.

Wisconsin residents 18 years old and older are eligible, as are teams from Wisconsin-based businesses and organizations. Businesses or teams from outside the state are also eligible to compete if they demonstrate intent to base their business in Wisconsin. Entrepreneurs may also enter multiple ideas, though each idea must be separate and distinct.

Companies or individuals that have raised less than \$25,000 in private equity for their plans in a current form are eligible to enter. Generally, private equity refers to angel and venture capital.

As with past contests, the 2019 competition will take place in stages:

- In Phase 1, which is open until 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31, 2019, the contest will accept idea abstracts on the website. Entries should be roughly 250 words (or no more than 2,000 characters, including spaces) and will be graded by the pool of BPC judges. The top 50 idea abstracts will advance to Phase 2.
- In Phase 2, which runs from Feb. 18 to 5 p.m. March 11, 2019, the top 50 idea abstracts will submit an executive summary. The top 20 executive summaries will advance to Phase 3. A mentored “boot camp” for contestants will be held in early March.
- In Phase 3, which runs from April 1 to 5 p.m. April 22, 2019, the top 20 executive summaries will prepare full business plans. Judges will review the plans and pick three finalists from each of the four categories to advance to the final presentation round. Mentored practice sessions will be offered to the top 12 in late May.
- The top 12, or “Diligent Dozen,” will square off with oral presentations during the Wisconsin Entrepreneurs’ Conference on June 4 at Venue 42 in Milwaukee.

Past finalists have launched companies that have raised more than \$200 million in angel, venture, grants and venture debt over time – all while creating jobs and economic value for Wisconsin. The contest’s major sponsors include the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp.

The 2018 grand prize winner was NovoMoto, a Madison company led by UW-Madison students. The model is being implemented in the western provinces of the Congo, where the opportunity for cheaper, reliable power will improve lives and provide a profitable business platform over time. Category winners in 2018 were Shockray Self Defense (Advanced Manufacturing), NovoMoto (Business Services), DataChat (Information Technology), and AmebaGone (Life Sciences).

Produced by the **Wisconsin Technology Council**, the contest’s major sponsor is the **Wisconsin Economic Development Corp.** To enter, become a judge or learn about sponsorship opportunities, visit www.govsbizplancontest.com.

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