



SPRINGBOARD

2018-19 COMPETITION PACKET

\$300,000
IN AVAILABLE FUNDING



ABILENE CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY



GRIGGS CENTER
FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP & PHILANTHROPY

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COMPETITION OVERVIEW

Background

Springboard began more than a decade ago as a competition to encourage and support entrepreneurship at Abilene Christian University, in the city of Abilene, and across the Big Country. Since its launch, Springboard has awarded more than \$750,000 to aspiring entrepreneurs across the region and served as a platform to connect, train, encourage and highlight our region's startups. ACU's Springboard is organized by the Griggs Center for Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy and made possible each year by a number of local organizations and businesses that sponsor the program.

2018-19 Competition Overview

The 2018-19 Springboard competition will award up to \$300,000 in funding across five different competition tracks:

- **BE in Abilene** (\$250,000) – An opportunity provided by the Development Corporation of Abilene that allows young companies with attractive growth potential to secure significant funding towards launching and/or growing their company in Abilene.
- **New Ideas** (\$20,000) – Similar to the original Springboard competition, this track promotes and rewards aspiring entrepreneurs with an early stage concept that demonstrates high potential.
- **Small Business** (\$10,000) – An opportunity for businesses focused on serving their local community here in the Big Country.
- **ACU Campus** (\$17,500) – Undergraduate students at ACU compete for seed funding while taking a class focused on searching for and developing a business model for their startup.
- **High School** (\$2,500) – Juniors and seniors in high school from across the region compete for funds by delivering an elevator pitch to a panel of local entrepreneurs and investors.

Each of these tracks targets different types of startups and has different eligibility criteria, deadlines, etc. This information packet includes details to help aspiring entrepreneurs select the track most appropriate for their venture and understand the applicable requirements.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about this year's Springboard competition, including the information in this packet, please contact us at springboard@acu.edu.

WHICH COMMUNITY TRACK IS RIGHT FOR YOUR TEAM?

Entrepreneurs in the Big Country have a choice of three different tracks. The following chart summarizes the differences between each track to help teams understand which one is the best fit for their company. More detailed information about each track is included after this summary. Teams should review all of the information provided about any track in which they are considering.

	BE IN ABILENE	NEW IDEAS	SMALL BUSINESS
Total Available Funding	\$250,000	\$20,000	\$10,000
Number of Winning Teams	Up to 5	3	1
Individual Team Awards	\$25,000-\$100,000	\$15,000 (1st) \$5,000 (2nd)	\$10,000 (1st)
Location of Company	Anywhere in U.S. (must relocate to Abilene for funding)	Big Country	Big Country
Age of Company	5 years or less	1 year or less	3 years or less
Geographic Focus	Projected that more than 51% of revenue comes from outside of Abilene within 3 years	Projected that concept will scale beyond Big Country	Business focused on local community in Big Country
NAICS Codes	Only certain types of NAICS codes allowed	N/A	N/A
Phase 1 Requirement(s)	Online application and elevator pitch video	Live elevator pitch to judging panel	Online application and optional elevator pitch video
Phase 1 Schedule	Dec. 1 – Application opens Jan. 31 – Application due	Various events in January 2018	Dec. 1 – Application opens March 1 – Application due
Phase 2 Requirement(s)	Business plan, site visit and live presentation to judges	Live presentation to judges	Live presentation to judges
Phase 2 Schedule	April 12 – Business plan due April 30 – Presentation	April 9 – Presentation	April 16 – Presentation

BE IN ABILENE

TRACK NO. 1



About

The **BE in Abilene** track is a collaborative effort among local partners, led and funded by the Development Corporation of Abilene, to invest in the local entrepreneurship ecosystem as part of the city's economic development strategic plan. The track is targeting young, entrepreneurial companies who will be based in Abilene and have the potential to positively impact the local economy.

Funding

Teams will compete for a total of up to \$250,000 in seed funding. As many as five teams may receive funding ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000, depending upon the needs and attractiveness of each opportunity.

Eligibility

Teams must meet the following criteria in order to compete in the **BE in Abilene** track. Teams that do not meet all of the criteria are encouraged to consider the other two competition tracks available to community entrepreneurs – **New Ideas** and **Small Business**.

HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

Teams must not have been operating their company prior to Jan. 31, 2014 (i.e., five years from the deadline for the initial application).

LOCATION

Teams from anywhere in the U.S. are welcome to apply, as long as the company's headquarters and primary operations are relocated to Abilene, Texas, if they win the competition.

PROJECTED REVENUE / GEOGRAPHIC MARKETS

Teams must have a company and growth plan that project 51% of revenue will be generated from outside the city of Abilene within three years.

PRIOR SPRINGBOARD PARTICIPATION

Business concepts awarded funding in the **BE in Abilene** track of previous Springboard competitions may not be resubmitted. However, teams that have competed in the **BE in Abilene** track of prior Springboard competitions but did not win funding are welcome to participate again. In addition, teams that participated in the **New Ideas** track of previous Springboard competitions may compete in the **BE in Abilene** track, regardless if they received funding, assuming they meet the other eligibility criteria.

TYPE OF COMPANY / NAICS CODES

Teams must have a company that qualifies as one of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes below. A typical qualifying business includes manufacturing and IT ventures. If you are unsure which NAICS code is appropriate for your business, you can find guidance at naics.com.

- 111 – Agriculture: Crop Production
- 112 – Agriculture: Animal Production
- 113 – Agriculture: Forestry and Logging
- 11411 – Agriculture: Commercial Fishing
- 115 – Agriculture: Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry
- 211-213 – Mining
- 221 – Utilities
- 311-339 – Manufacturing
- 42 – Wholesale Trade
- 48, 49 – Transportation and Warehousing
- 51 – Information (excluding 51213 and 512132 - movie theaters and drive-in theaters)
- 523-525 – Securities, Commodity Contracts, and Other Financial Investments and Related Activities; Insurance Carriers and Related Activities; Funds, Trusts and Other Financial Vehicles
- 5413, 5415, 5416, 5417, 5419 – Scientific Research and Development Services
- 551 – Management of Companies and Enterprises
- 56142 – Telephone Call Centers
- 922140 – Correctional Institutions; or a job that is included in the NAICS sector number
- 928110 – National Security, for corresponding index entries for Armed Forces, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and military base

Schedule

PHASE 1

APPLICATION AVAILABLE DECEMBER 1 • APPLICATION DUE JANUARY 31

Teams can enter the competition by completing an online application no later than 11:59 p.m. on Jan. 31, 2019. The online application can be found at acuspringboard.com. The application asks teams to provide information about their company's background, team and business model. The questions are similar to what would be included in an executive summary or abbreviated business plan prepared for investors.

Teams are also required to submit a brief video elevator pitch. The content of the pitch is left to the discretion of the teams. Teams will need to upload their videos to YouTube or Vimeo and then submit a website URL in the online application. Teams should review the privacy settings in the video service they select to ensure the judges are able to view the video and any of the team's privacy concerns are also addressed. Questions related to the video pitch can be sent to springboard@acu.edu.

Teams will be informed in early February whether they advanced to the next round of the competition.

PHASE 2

ORIENTATION MEETING FEBRUARY 19 • FINAL PRESENTATIONS APRIL 30

Teams that advance to the second phase of the competition will be required to participate in a more thorough review by the judging panel. This will include the following:

- Providing information in response to a diligence request
- Meeting with the local SBDC office for individualized training
- Answering questions in an initial face-to-face meeting with the judging panel
- Submitting a business plan to the judges by April 1
- Hosting the judges for a company site visit and/or product demonstration in early April
- Making a final presentation, including a specific request of funds, to the entire judging panel on April 30

Teams who advance will be required to attend an orientation meeting in mid-February that will provide more details about these requirements and deliverables. At that meeting, teams will also receive mandatory training and free assistance in preparing their business plans.

Judging

A panel of independent judges will review all submissions during Phase I of the competition. The judging process for Phase 2 of the competition will be discussed at the orientation meeting for all teams that advance.

The judging panel's decisions are based on their collective business judgment, but they will provide a numeric score and comments for certain criteria to provide feedback to all teams that enter the competition. **The scores will not be used as a formula to determine which teams advance or win the competition**, although they may influence and/or be consistent with the judges' decisions in selecting a winner. The criteria and some related questions that will be used for feedback purposes are as follows:

- **Quality of Concept**
 - Is there a clear customer need or problem satisfied by this concept?
 - Does the concept present an innovative or original solution?
 - Is there a strong value proposition for customers?
 - Is the concept technically viable?
- **Attractiveness of Business Model**
 - How do you make money? What is your revenue model?
 - What is the cost structure?
 - How scalable is the business model?

- **Market Opportunity**
 - How large is the market and how fast is it growing?
 - Is there a clear market entry strategy?
 - How is your team’s concept positioned against competition in the market?
- **Team**
 - What roles will the current team play?
 - Does the team have the necessary expertise or skills to successfully launch and/or grow the concept?
 - How will gaps in the management team be filled?
- **Impact on Local Economy / Jobs**
 - How much revenue could this concept potentially generate outside of our local area?
 - Does this concept have potential to create local jobs?
- **Investor Interest Level**
 - What level of capital investment is needed?
 - What are the projected financial returns?
 - Are the projected financial returns appropriate given the level of risk involved?
 - How likely would an angel investor be to invest funds in this opportunity?

Distribution of Funding

Funding for the **BE in Abilene** track will be awarded to winning teams through the Development Corporation of Abilene (DCOA). This funding will require winning teams to complete additional paperwork and certify they meet the residency requirement before any funds will be distributed. Teams also will be required to participate in scheduled meetings with the America’s SBDC Texas Tech Abilene, or other partners designated by the DCOA, for up to four years following the distribution of the funds.

NEW IDEAS

TRACK NO. 2

About

The **New Ideas** track is targeting aspiring entrepreneurs across the Big Country who are still in the proof of concept stage. This means you may have only recently launched the idea, only have an early prototype, or simply have an idea that you think will work.

Funding

Teams will compete for \$20,000 in seed funding, with the winning team receiving \$15,000 and the second place team receiving \$5,000.

Eligibility

Teams must meet the following criteria in order to compete in the **New Ideas** track.

HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

Teams must not have been operating their company prior to Jan. 15, 2018 (i.e., one year before the initial elevator pitch events).

LOCATION

Teams from the following 19 counties in the Big Country are eligible to participate in this track of the Springboard competition:

- Brownwood
- Callahan
- Coleman
- Comanche
- Eastland
- Fisher
- Haskell
- Jones
- Kent
- Knox
- Mitchell
- Nolan
- Runnels
- Scurry
- Shackelford
- Stephens
- Stonewall
- Taylor
- Throckmorton

TYPE OF COMPANY

All types of ideas are welcome to participate in the **New Ideas** track, but it is designed for ideas that are scalable and have the potential to generate larger returns and business outside of the Big Country. Concepts focused solely on serving our local economy may want to consider if their concept is a better fit for the **Small Business** track of the Springboard competition.

PRIOR SPRINGBOARD PARTICIPATION

Business concepts awarded funding in previous Springboard competitions may not be resubmitted. However, teams that have competed in prior Springboard competitions but did not win funding are welcome to participate in the **New Ideas** track, as long as they meet all other criteria.

Individuals who were part of a team that won a previous Springboard competition are not eligible to participate in the **New Ideas** track.

Schedule

PHASE 1

ELEVATOR PITCH EVENTS IN JANUARY 2018

Teams can enter the competition by attending one of the elevator pitch events hosted throughout the Big Country. Teams simply need to pitch their concept in two minutes or less and be prepared to answer questions from a live panel of judges. The questions from the judges can include anything related to the business, but generally include questions focused on the market demand for the proposed concept, the financial model of the concept, and the team's plans and ability to take the concept to market.

The tentative dates, times and locations for the Big Country elevator pitch events are as follows:

- **Coleman**
Tuesday, January 29, 2019, at 5:30 p.m.
Bill Franklin Center – 13152 State Hwy. 206, Coleman, Early, Texas 76834
- **Abilene**
Monday, January 28, 2019, at 5:30 p.m.
Abilene Chamber of Commerce – 174 Cypress St., Suite 200, Abilene, Texas 79601
- **Haskell**
Tuesday, January 22, 2019, at 5:30 p.m.
Development Corporation of Haskell – 24 Ave. D, Haskell, Texas 79521
- **Brownwood / Early**
Tuesday, January 29, 2019, at 7 p.m.
Early Chamber of Commerce – 104 E. Industrial Drive, Early, Texas 76802
- **Snyder**
Tuesday, January 15, 2019, at 5:30 p.m.
Snyder Chamber of Commerce – 2302 Ave. R, Snyder, Texas 79549

You can register for the elevator pitch events by visiting acuspringboard.com.

PHASE 2

TESTING THE CONCEPT AND FINAL PRESENTATIONS ON APRIL 30

Teams that advance to the final phase of the competition are expected to test their concept during the spring through interaction with real customers. This process is intended to help teams incorporate the feedback from customers and improve their concept and business model. Training will be provided to the teams to assist them through this phase of the competition. After completing this process, teams will be required to present their concept again to a live panel of judges. This will include a five-minute presentation and a Q&A session with the judges.

Judging

A panel of independent judges will review all elevator pitches during Phase 1 of the competition, and select no more than 15 teams to move forward. At least one team will move forward from each of the pitch events.

The judging panel's decisions are based on their collective business judgment, but they will provide a numeric score and comments for certain criteria to provide feedback to all teams that enter the competition. **The scores will not be used as a formula to determine which teams advance or win the competition**, although they may influence and/or be consistent with the judges' decisions. The criteria and some related questions that will be used for feedback purposes are as follows:

- **Quality of Concept**
 - Is there a clear customer need or problem satisfied by this concept?
 - Does the concept present an innovative or original solution?
 - Is there a strong value proposition for customers?
 - Is the concept technically viable?
- **Attractiveness of Business Model**
 - How do you make money? What is your revenue model?
 - What is the cost structure?
 - How scalable is the business model?
- **Market Opportunity**
 - How large is the market and how fast is it growing?
 - Is there a clear market entry strategy?
 - How is your team's concept positioned against competition in the market?
- **Team**
 - What roles will the current team play?
 - Does the team have the necessary expertise or skills to successfully launch and/or grow the concept?
 - How will gaps in the management team be filled?
- **Investor Interest Level**
 - What level of capital investment is needed?
 - What are the projected financial returns?
 - Are the projected financial returns appropriate given the level of risk involved?
 - How likely would an angel investor be to invest funds in this opportunity?

Distribution of Funding

Funding for the **New Ideas** track will be awarded and paid to the legal entity where one exists. If no entity exists then the funding will be awarded to individual team members in proportion to the equity percentages listed in the team's registration form submitted during Phase 1 of the competition.

Funding may be subject to taxation and is the sole responsibility of the entity or person to whom the awards are distributed. Each entity or individual will be required to provide a W-9 before receiving any funding. All non-entity payments will be reported on a Form 1099-MISC.

SMALL BUSINESS

TRACK NO. 3

About

The **Small Business** track is targeting aspiring entrepreneurs across the Big Country whose business may not have significant growth potential but still can be a successful business serving the local community. These businesses can range from simply an idea to an early stage company that is already operating.

Funding

The winning team in this competition track will receive \$10,000 in seed funding.

Eligibility

Teams must meet the following criteria in order to compete in the **Small Business** track.

HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

Teams must not have been operating their company prior to March 1, 2016 (i.e., three years before the application deadline).

LOCATION

Teams from the following 19 counties in the Big Country are eligible to participate in this track of the Springboard competition:

- Brownwood
- Callahan
- Coleman
- Comanche
- Eastland
- Fisher
- Haskell
- Jones
- Kent
- Knox
- Mitchell
- Nolan
- Runnels
- Scurry
- Shackelford
- Stephens
- Stonewall
- Taylor
- Throckmorton

TYPE OF COMPANY

The **Small Business** track is designed for businesses focused on serving our local communities and don't meet the criteria for the **BE in Abilene** and **New Ideas** tracks.

PRIOR SPRINGBOARD PARTICIPATION

Business concepts that have been awarded funding in previous Springboard competitions may not be resubmitted. However, teams that have competed in prior Springboard competitions but did not win funding are welcome to participate in the **Small Business** track, as long as they meet all other criteria.

Individuals who were part of a team that won a previous Springboard competition are not eligible to participate in the **Small Business** track.

Schedule

PHASE 1

ONLINE APPLICATION AND OPTIONAL VIDEO ELEVATOR PITCH

Teams can enter the competition by completing an online application no later than 11:59 p.m. on March 1, 2019. The application asks teams to provide information about their company's product or service, team and business model. The questions are similar to what would be included in an executive summary or abbreviated business plan prepared for investors. While not required, teams also are allowed to submit a brief video elevator pitch about their business. The online application can be found at acuspringboard.com.

PHASE 2**FINAL PRESENTATIONS ON APRIL 30**

A group of teams will be selected from the initial applications to present their concept to a live panel of judges. The teams will also be subject to a Q&A session with the judges.

Judging

A panel of independent judges will review all applications from Phase 1 of the competition, and select teams to move forward. The judging panel will then select the winner after the final presentations.

The judging panel's decisions are based on their collective business judgment, but they will provide a numeric score and comments for certain criteria to provide feedback to all teams that enter the competition. **The scores will not be used as a formula to determine which teams advance or win the competition**, although they may influence and/or be consistent with the judges' decisions. The criteria and some related questions that will be used for feedback purposes are as follows:

- **Quality of Concept**
 - Is there a clear customer need or problem satisfied by this concept?
 - Is there a strong value proposition for customers?
- **Attractiveness of Business Model**
 - How do you make money? What is your revenue model?
 - What is the cost structure?
- **Market Opportunity**
 - How many target customers are there in the local market?
 - Is there a clear market entry strategy?
 - How is your team's concept positioned against competition in the market?
- **Team**
 - What roles will the current team play?
 - Does the team have the necessary expertise or skills to successfully launch and/or manage the concept?
 - How will gaps in the team be filled?
- **Investor Interest Level**
 - What level of capital investment is needed?
 - What are the projected financial returns?
 - Are the projected financial returns appropriate given the level of risk involved?

Distribution of Funding

Funding for the **Small Business** track will be awarded and paid to the legal entity where one exists. If no entity exists, then the funding will be awarded to individual team members in proportion to the equity percentages listed in the team's registration form submitted during Phase 1 of the competition.

Funding may be subject to taxation and is the sole responsibility of the entity or person to whom the awards are distributed. Each entity or individual will be required to provide a W-9 before receiving any funding. All non-entity payments will be reported on a Form 1099-MISC.

ACU CAMPUS

TRACK NO. 4

The ACU Campus track is for aspiring entrepreneurs who are undergraduate students at ACU. Students participate in a program throughout the school year in an attempt to find an attractive business model for their concept. Teams participate in an elevator pitch competition in the fall semester and compete for seed funding through a 3-credit course in the spring semester.

Students interested in competing in the ACU Campus track should contact springboard@acu.edu or visit the Griggs Center on ACU's campus for more information about eligibility, registration deadlines and the judging process.

HIGH SCHOOL

TRACK NO. 5

About

The high school track is for juniors and seniors in any of the high schools in the Big Country who have an idea for a business venture. This track will be hosted in the spring semester.

Funding

Teams will compete for \$2,500. These funds will be split equally among team members and may be used towards a scholarship to Abilene Christian University but is not a required condition of the funding.

Teams

All high schools in the Big Country will be invited to enter two to three teams depending upon enrollment and student demand. Each team should include one to three students. Each school will be allowed to set its own criteria for selecting individual students to participate but it is expected that each student has demonstrated a general interest in entrepreneurship and above average academic ability.

Team Sessions / Schedule

The Griggs Center team and student leaders from ACU CEO (an award-winning student group focused on entrepreneurship) will offer a one-time training session prior to the final pitch event. During the training session the Griggs Center team and ACU students will offer advice and guidance on crafting and delivering an elevator pitch.

Exact dates and times will be confirmed at a later date.

Judging

A panel of independent judges will review all applications from all of the high school teams. A scoring sheet that will be used by the judging panel to select the winning team will be shared with all teams during the training session.

The judging panel's decisions are based on their collective business judgement, but they will provide a numeric score and comments for certain criteria to provide feedback to all teams that enter the competition. **The scores will not be used as formula to determine which teams advance or win the competition**, although they may influence and/or be consistent with the judges' decisions.

The criteria and some related questions that will be used for feedback purposes are as follows:

- **Quality of Concept**
 - Is there a clear customer need or problem satisfied by this concept?
 - Is there a strong value proposition for customers?
- **Attractiveness of Business Model**
 - How do you make money? What is your revenue model?
 - What is the cost structure?
- **Market Opportunity**
 - How large is the market and how fast is it growing?
 - Is there a clear market entry strategy?
 - How is your team's concept positioned against competition in the market?

Distribution of Funding

Funding will be awarded and paid to the individual team members equally. Students may elect to put their portion of the award toward a scholarship to ACU.

Funding may be subject to taxation and is the sole responsibility of the entity or person to whom the awards are distributed. Each entity or individual will be required to provide a W-9 before receiving any funding. All non-entity payments will be reported on a Form 1099-MISC.

NOTICES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Selection of Judges

The judging panels for the three community tracks and high school track will consist of volunteers who are experienced entrepreneurs, investors and professionals from our local community. Judges are not allowed to have any vested interest, equity stake, or other financial stake in any of the teams in the competition track they will evaluate. Any judge who stands to gain financially or otherwise from the success of any team is strictly prohibited. Any such associations will result in the disqualification of the team and/or removal of that individual from his or her role as a judge with the competition.

Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

All submitted information is deemed the property of the participating teams and licensors that it has. All of our judges are entrepreneurs, investors, and working professionals who routinely evaluate new business ideas and protect the property of others in the process. However, they do not sign any non-disclosure agreements to participate in this competition. Teams are strongly encouraged NOT to provide any specifics or details that are considered to be intellectual property or the key to intellectual property.

Determining Eligibility

Please note that the team managing each competition track has full and sole discretion in determining whether teams meet the eligibility requirements for the respective competition tracks described in this document, and reserves the right to exclude and/or disqualify any teams that violate these requirements and/or the spirit of the competition. Disqualified teams shall forfeit any and all funding awarded to them.

Excluded Businesses

Teams promoting illegal, illicit, unethical or other types of activities which may be considered unworthy of association with Abilene Christian University, sponsors and other partners in a respective competition track may be excluded and/or disqualified.

Waiver

By registering for one or more of the five tracks for the 2018-19 Springboard competition, all participating teams, including but not limited to a team's founders, investors, employees, agents and representatives, agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless Abilene Christian University, its Board of Trustees, employees, agents, and representatives, as well as all competition sponsors, partners and judges, from and against any and all liability, claims, demands, suits, costs and charges arising from or in any manner connected to their participation in the 2018-19 Springboard competition.



GRIGGS CENTER

FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP & PHILANTHROPY

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