

MICHIGAN CELEBRATES SMALL BUSINESS

PITCH COMPETITION FAQ

ABOUT THE COMPETITION

What is the MCSB Pitch Competition?

The MCSB Pitch Competition ("Michigan's Next Big Idea") spotlights innovative Michigan based small businesses and gives them a platform to pitch their ideas to a panel of expert judges and a live audience for funding, exposure, and support.

Who organizes the competition?

This competition is supported by MCSB partners, SBAM staff, and past MCSB awardees, who will participate in reviewing applications.

ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION

Who is eligible to apply?

Michigan-based businesses with fewer than 500 employees offering a unique product, service, or solution and are prepared to scale.

When is the application window?

Applications will be accepted **until January 12, 2027.**

What materials are required to apply?

Applicants must upload the following:

- 2-minute video pitch
- One-page business summary and financial snapshot (Last 12 Months). Please provide a single PDF that includes:
  - One-page business summary
  - Revenue
  - Expenses
  - Profit/loss
  - Any notable financial milestones

What additional information is collected in the application form?

The application asks for information that helps us better understand your idea and its potential. This includes a short elevator pitch, your three-year vision, and an explanation of what makes your concept innovative and unique. We'll also ask about your target market and opportunity, your business model and financial readiness, plans for operations and scalability, expected community impact, and your overall pitch readiness. These questions are designed to give a well-rounded view of your venture and where you are in your journey.

SELECTION & JUDGING

How are applications reviewed?

An initial review panel of SBAM staff, MCSB Partners, and past MCSB awardees will evaluate applications using a 25-point scoring system.

What are the judging criteria?

Judges will evaluate applications and live pitches using the following categories:

- Innovation & Uniqueness
- Market Potential
- Business Model & Financial Viability
- Community Impact
- Presentation Quality

How many finalists are selected?

Five finalists will be selected to present a live pitch at the MCSB Summit on April 19, 2027.

LIVE PITCH EVENT

What is the pitch format at the Summit?

Each finalist will present a **5-minute pitch** followed by **2 minutes of Q&A** from the panel of judges.

Who serves on the judging panel?

The panel will include representatives from SBAM, MCSB Partners, venture capital partners, and past MCSB winners.

How is the winner determined?

The judges will score each finalist during the live competition, with prize recipients announced at the MCSB Summit on April 19, 2027. This year's prizes are: $15,000 for first place, $7,500 for second place and a $2,500 prize for the audience choice winner.

When/where does the pitch take place?

The finalists will present their live pitch on April 19, 2027 at the MCSB Summit to be held at the Kellogg Center (219 S. Harrison Road, East Lansing, MI 48824).