

New York  
Business  
Plan  
Competition  
Rulebook

2018

The official document outlining rules, requirements, and judging criteria for the 2018 New York Business Plan Competition. The Rulebook was created in collaboration with all ten participating regions in New York State.



new york  
business plan  
competition

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## About the Competition

The 2018 NY Business Plan Competition will feature regional competitions in New York's 10 Regional Economic Development Council zones – Capital Region, Central New York, North Country, Mohawk Valley, Finger Lakes, Western New York, Southern Tier, Mid-Hudson, New York City and Long Island. Regional partner colleges and universities will host semifinal competitions in their regions starting in late March and ending in mid-April. The top teams from each of the 10 regions will advance to the final round of the statewide competition, where they will go head-to-head for the grand prize at the finals in Albany, NY on April 27, 2018.

The NYBPC has grown from a small, regional competition into a statewide competition with some of the largest awards and prizes of any student business competition in the world. The NYBPC is the only leading collegiate business competition that is a regionally coordinated, collaborative statewide program representing over 75 colleges and universities, which sets it apart from all other competitions in the nation.

Since 2010, over 2,400 student teams from 60 of New York's colleges and universities have pitched their ideas and ventures at the NYBPC. The winners are selected each year by esteemed judges, including venture capitalists, angel investors, investment bankers, other sophisticated public and private investors, and seasoned entrepreneurs. At the end of the 2017 competition, more than \$2,800,000 in cash and in-kind prizes have been awarded to student entrepreneurs in New York.

*Since 2010, over 2,400 student teams from colleges and universities have pitched their ideas and ventures at the New York Business Plan Competition. More than \$2,800,000 in cash and in-kind prizes have been awarded to student entrepreneurs.*



## How to Enter

Interested students should apply to compete in the semi-final regional competition in the appropriate region. Please visit the [NYBPC website](http://nybpc.org) or contact us at [nybpc@upstatecapital.org](mailto:nybpc@upstatecapital.org) if you have questions about which region to apply to participate in. The winning teams of each of the regional competitions will advance to the statewide final competition on Friday, April 27, 2018 in Albany, NY.

The NYBPC application can be downloaded and submitted virtually at the . Please see the *Application* section of this Rulebook for a sample application.



## Regional Competitions

The 2018 New York Business Competition will feature regional competitions in New York's 10 Regional Economic Development Council zones – Capital Region, Central New York, North Country, Mohawk Valley, Finger Lakes, Western New York, Southern Tier, Mid-Hudson, New York City, and Long Island. Regional partner colleges and universities will host semifinal competitions in their regions in late March and early April.



1. Regional Economic Development Council zones in New York State.

The top teams from each of the 10 regions advanced to the final round of the statewide competition, where they will compete head-to-head for the grand prize in Albany, NY on April 27, 2018. All interested teams should complete the application and submit it as directed on the [Regional Competitions](#) page.

More information about each regional semifinal competition, including application deadlines and links to the competition websites, is below.

### Capital Region

Hosts: University at Albany's School of Business  
Application Deadline: Friday, March 30, 2018  
Competition Date: Thursday, April 5, 2018  
Location: University at Albany, Massry Center for Business  
Website: [Capital Region Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Suraj Commuri](#), Associate Dean, University at Albany School of Business  
[Susan Gushlaw](#), Associate Director of Alumni Relations & Career Services, University at Albany School of Business

## Central New York

Hosts: Syracuse University  
Application Deadline: Friday, March 9, 2018  
Competition Date: Friday, March 23, 2018  
Location: Syracuse University  
Website: [Central NY Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Braden Croy](#), Program Manager at Blackstone Launchpad, Syracuse University  
[John Liddy](#), Director at Syracuse Student Sandbox, Syracuse University

## Finger Lakes

Hosts: University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology and SUNY Geneseo  
Application Deadline: Sunday, March 11, 2018  
Competition Date: Wednesday, April 11, 2018  
Location: St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY  
Website: [Finger Lakes Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Matthew Spielmann](#), Program Manager, Ain Center for Entrepreneurship, University of Rochester

## Long Island

Host: Stony Brook University, Farmingdale State College and Hofstra University  
Application Deadline: TBD  
Competition Date: Thursday, April 12, 2018  
Location: Farmingdale State College Campus Center  
Website: [Long Island Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Richard Vogel](#), Dean, School of Business, Farmingdale State College  
[Natalie Walsh](#), Assistant to the Dean of the School of Business, Farmingdale State College  
[AnnMarie Schedit](#), Director of Economic Development and Adjunct Assistant Professor, Stony Brook University

## Mid-Hudson

Host: Marist College  
Application Deadline: Friday, March 23, 2018  
Competition Date: Friday, April 13, 2018  
Location: Marist College, Student Center, 3rd Floor  
Website: [Mid-Hudson Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Susan Scanlon](#), Assistant Dean, School of Computer Science and Mathematics, School of Computer Science and Mathematics, Marist College

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## Mohawk Valley

Host: Utica College  
Application Deadline: Wednesday, March 28, 2018  
Competition Date: Friday, April 6, 2018  
Location: Clark City Center, Utica, NY  
Website: [Mohawk Valley Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Brett Orzechowski](#), Assistant Professor of Management and Media, School of Business and Justice Studies, Utica College

## New York City

Host: The Shift Group  
Application Deadline: Sunday, April 1, 2018  
Competition Date: Sunday, April 15, 2018  
Location: Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus, 1 University Plaza, Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Website: [New York City Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Stefan Doering](#), Managing Director, The Shift Group

## North Country

Hosts: Clarkson University  
Application Deadline: Thursday, March 29, 2018  
Competition Date: Friday, April 6, 2018  
Location: Clarkson University  
Website: [North Country Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Caity McGregor](#), Program Coordinator;  
[Erin Draper](#), Director of Operations, Reh Center for Entrepreneurship, Clarkson University  
[Ashley Sweeney](#), Assistant Director, Reh Center for Entrepreneurship, Clarkson University

## Southern Tier

Hosts: Binghamton University, Cornell University, Ithaca College  
Application Deadline: Wednesday, April 11, 2018  
Competition Date: Saturday, April 21, 2018  
Location: Binghamton University, Innovative Technologies Complex, 85 Murray Hill Road, Vestal NY 13850  
Website: [Southern Tier Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Laura Holmes](#), Program Associate, Binghamton University  
[Ken McLeod](#), Entrepreneur in Residence, Binghamton University  
[Felix Litvinsky](#), Managing Director, Blackstone LaunchPad, Cornell University

## Western New York

Hosts: WNY Consortium of Higher Education and the University at Buffalo  
Application Deadline: Saturday, April, 7, 2018  
Competition Date: Friday, April 20, 2018  
Location: Hilbert College  
Website: [Western New York Regional Competition](#)  
Contact: [Steven Harvey](#), Executive Director, WNY Consortium of Higher Education





## Important Dates

Regional competitions will take place from March 23 – April 21, 2018. A chart of the regional competition dates and application deadlines is below.

Regional coordinators must email a list of winners and team contact information to [nybpc@upstatecapital.org](mailto:nybpc@upstatecapital.org) within 48 hours of the completion of their competition.

Teams competing in the statewide finals must submit their final presentations no later than Monday, April 23, 2018 to be eligible to compete in the finals. **The only file formats accepted are PPT and PDF.**

Information on how to submit team presentations may be found on [www.nybplan.com](http://www.nybplan.com). The date of the final competition is Friday, April 27, 2018.

Region	Application Deadline	Competition Date	More Information
Capital Region	3/30/2018	4/5/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>
Central NY	3/9/2018	3/23/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>
Finger Lakes	3/11/2018	4/11/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>
Long Island	TBD	4/12/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>
Mid-Hudson	3/23/2018	4/13/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>
Mohawk Valley	3/28/2018	4/6/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>
NYC	4/1/2018	4/15/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>
North Country	3/29/2018	4/6/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>
Southern Tier	4/11/2018	4/21/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>
Western NY	4/7/2018	4/20/2018	<a href="#">Website</a>

## Team Eligibility/Requirements

In order to be eligible to apply for and participate in the NYBPC, all teams must meet the following criteria:

- Teams must consist entirely of graduate, undergraduate, and/or community college students enrolled in an accredited New York colleges and universities during the 2017-2018 academic year. Students who graduated during the Fall 2017 semester are still eligible to complete in the 2018 competition.
- A faculty or staff member is required to be listed as an advisor for the team; offering guidance, support and technical expertise.
- Teams must indicate whether they consist of community college, undergraduate, or graduate students, or a team with mixed student status.
- Students may not participate on more than one team each year of the competition.
- Cumulative public and private capital raised may not exceed \$100,000. This does not include research funding that may have supported the development of the technology in an academic laboratory.
- Student ownership of the venture must be 100%.
- Student(s) must be the presenter(s).

The New York Business Plan Competition reserves the right to withhold prize money from winning teams who do not comply with the eligibility requirements.

## Category/Track Definitions

Teams that meet the eligibility requirements are invited to submit applications for their idea or venture under one of the following six categories. Selection of an inappropriate category could be considered grounds for disqualification by the judges. The application includes a one sentence explanation for your selection of category. Categories may be combined when needed based on number of competitors, and companies may be re-assigned to different categories at organizer's discretion.

### Information Technology/Software

- Any idea, technology, product, and/or service that relates to apps, informational technology, software, and/or internet applications in for profit enterprises. If the value that your idea or technology provided lies in the creation of or is delivered through an app, choose this category.
- Examples: An app that helps pairs potential roommates, a website/app that uses social media to collect payments from friends, a web service designed to tailor resumes for specific jobs, a file sharing service, an app or website that aggregates data and reviews about solar panel installers.

### Social Entrepreneurship/Non-Profit

- Any idea, product, and/or service that addresses a social need, for which profit is not the primary motivation, or provides a product/service for nonprofits. If formed, the venture would be either a Benefit corporation or be eligible for 501(c) status.
- Examples: Selling a good or service that raises awareness and donates significant portion of the revenues to a cause, organization that provides financial literacy training, cooperative non-profit coffee shop, bike trail, a website to connect community members with volunteer opportunities.

### Clean Technology

- Any idea, technology, process, product, and/or service that relates to energy, clean energy, renewable energy, energy efficiency, environmental, and/or sustainability applications.
- Examples: Recycling technology, LED manufacturing technology, lithium ion batteries, clean energy crowdfunding service, composting subscription service.

### Advanced Technology

- Any idea, technology, product, and/or service that relates to materials science, life science, advanced hardware, semiconductors, optics, and/or electronics applications that are not applicable to Clean technology. These products and processes have been likely developed after years of laboratory research and have patent protection.
- Examples: High-performance skis coated with nanomaterial, vibration detector, new method for testing pharmaceuticals, physical therapy massager.

### Products

- Any physical, tangible goods offered for sale.
- Examples: Custom designer eyewear, vending machine, protein shakes, craft beer or alcoholic beverages, innovative water bottle, locally sourced tea, camera backpack.

### Services

- A value add process for delivering products of fulfilling customer needs.
- Examples: Lice removal company, meal delivery, custom clothing design, custom song writing.

## Category/Track FAQs

### *We use a website to sell our product or service. Does that make us IT/Software?*

Websites and apps are part of many marketing strategies. If the value added created by your product **requires** an app, website, or software program, then the idea should be classified under IT/Software. If the app/website is being used as a marketing tool or one of the channels to market, another category may be more appropriate.

For example, consider two solar technologies. One is an app/website that aggregates reviews, contact information and reviews of all installers in a 200-mile radius. The value added by the idea is the collection and delivery of information through the app. It should be classified in IT/Software.

The other company is a solar installation company that has a website with a cost calculator and a tool that estimates solar power potential based on their address. The value added by this company is in the installation of the panels themselves and the web tools are used for marketing. This company should be classified in Clean Technology.

### *Our product fits into multiple categories. Which one should we choose?*

The categories are listed in order of decreasing specificity. You should pick the first (most specific) category you feel applies to your product.

### *We have pivoted and now feel like we should be placed in a different track. Can we change?*

This policy is region-specific. In the Capital Region, a team may change their track up until they submit their final presentation for the regional event. Inform the organizer and you will be re-categorized. At the finals, teams must compete in the track they advanced in at the regional competition unless otherwise communicated by the finals organizer.

## Prize Information

Teams have the opportunity to win first, second, and third place cash prizes in each of the tracks. Audience participants use our NYBPC app to select a People's Choice award in each category. Judges will also be asked to select an MWBE Award winner from any of the tracks.

The prize breakdown at the final competition is:

- \$20,000 cash– 1 Grand Prize team
- \$10,000 cash – First Place teams (1 team per track, not including grand prize winner)
- \$2,500 cash – Second Place teams (1 team per track)
- \$1,000 cash – Third Place teams (1 team per track)
- \$500 cash – People's Choice Awards (1 team per track)
- \$500 cash – MWBE Awards (1 team per track)

Teams will receive the first half of their cash prizes once they have submitted the required tax forms to [nybpc@upstatecapital.org](mailto:nybpc@upstatecapital.org). All NYBPC cash prizes are considered grant awards to be granted to established businesses, and proof of company establishment is required to receive funds.

Any teams with questions or concerns throughout this process are encouraged to contact us at [nybpc@upstatecapital.org](mailto:nybpc@upstatecapital.org).



## Application

The complete application is available on the website, <http://apply.nybplan.com>. Below is a truncated version of the application, which does not include category/track definitions. Applications cannot exceed three pages and must be submitted online.

### Team/Company:

#### Category:

#### ***Business and Business Model***

1. **Structure:** What is the structure of your company?
2. **Value Proposition:** What is your company's key value proposition (e.g. lowest cost, highest reliability, best performance, etc.)?
3. **General Description:** What is your business model? Describe how your business makes money and how it will assure great and long term profits for the future.

#### ***Product/Service***

1. **Product/Service:** What is your product/service offering?
2. **Function and Benefit:** How does your product/service work? Define and quantify key benefits (e.g. cost, performance, technical, etc.) for customers.
3. **Development Stage:** Where is the product/service in its evolution (e.g. idea/conception, proof of concept, fully tested prototype, etc.)?

#### ***Competitive Position***

1. **Competitors:** Who is your competition?
2. **Edge over Competition:** What makes you better than other companies currently in the market?
3. **Sustainability:** Is this competitive position sustainable?
4. **IP Protection:** How will you protect your proprietary information?

#### ***Markets***

1. **Target Market:** What markets and market segments are you targeting? How big are these markets and how can you sustainably capture them?
2. **Barriers to Entry:** What are the key market barriers and how will they lend to your success?

#### ***Customers***

Who are the specific customers that you are pursuing or will pursue? Do you have any letters of interest and/or intent to purchase?

Please make sure to review the track categories before making a selection, and provide a brief justification of how your team qualifies to compete in your selected category:

#### **Team/Company Name:**

#### **Academic Institution:**

#### **Team/Company Presenter:**

#### **Academic Advisor:**

Please indicate the academic makeup of your team (graduate, undergraduate, and/or community college students):

#### **Address, City, State, Zip:**

#### **Phone:**

#### **Email:**

#### **Team Makeup:**

#### **Veteran Status:**

#### **Minority and/or Women Owned eligibility:**

## Submission and Presentation Guidelines

### Presentation Format

The presentation format for the regional semifinal and statewide final competitions may vary slightly based on the number of teams participating in each region. For the statewide final competition, each team will have up to 10 minutes to pitch, followed by 5 minutes of Q&A with the panel of investor judges. Judges are advised to act as they would in a closed-door investment presentation during the Q&A session.






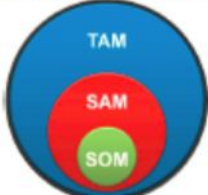
### Presentation Submission

Teams competing in the statewide finals must submit their final presentations no later than Monday, April 23, 2018 to be eligible to compete in the finals. **The only file formats accepted are PPT and PDF.** Information on how to submit team presentations may be found on the [NYBPC website](http://apply.nybplan.com).



## Sample Presentation

A sample presentation template is available on the [NYBPC website](http://apply.nybplan.com). Below are snapshots of the content provided there.

<p>Sample Format and Contents for: 2017 New York Business Plan Competition</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"><p>Allotted presentation time – 10 minutes* 5 minutes for Q/A* <b>Nonproprietary information only</b></p><p><small>*The exact timing is subject to change based on the number of teams that participate</small></p></div> <p>Note: This template is intended to provide guidance and assistance in preparing your presentation for the event. It is not meant to be prescriptive – this is your story!</p> 	<h3>Recommendations</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No more than 10 slides. Most speakers do 1 slide a minute</li><li>• Limit technical slides to 2. Remember this is a business plan competition, not an invention competition.</li><li>• Back your claims up with data. Don't say it is a high growth market; say it is growing at an annual rate of 15%.</li></ul> 
<h3>Company Name</h3> <p>Value Proposition: Why your customers need your product in 15 words or less.</p> 	<h3>Problem</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the challenge facing a consumer.</li><li>• Use metrics to quantify its impact.</li><li>• Hint: Investors love numbers. (Believable ones)</li></ul> 
<h3>Our Solution</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe your product</li><li>• Explain how it solves the problem in a way that is disruptive.</li><li>• Technology company note:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Know the difference between a technology, invention, and a product<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your technology is the science that will make a product valuable.</li><li>• Invention is the mechanism that uses the science (often what is patented).</li><li>• Your product is what your customers will ultimately buy.</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul> 	<h3>Market</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Size of markets and growth rate (Be specific)</li><li>– How to reach these markets (go-to-market strategy and distribution)</li><li>– Other trends likely to influence market</li></ul> 



## Business Model

- Business concept – How will business generate sustainable profits?
- Who are key customers? (names, demographic profile etc.)
  - Who is your target customer?
  - How will you reach them?
- Customer discovery – Show that you have talked to customers and they are excited about your product. (Letters of intent, etc. are a huge bonus)



## Competitive Landscape

- **Industry**
  - Key competitors
  - How to deal with competition in the market
  - What is your competitive advantage?



## Work Plan

- **Gantt Chart**

**Include**

- Achievements to date
- Technical milestones
- Commercial milestones
- 3 year horizon
- Financial needs



Include your ask. How much do you need and what will you do with it?

**Rule of Three:** It will take 3Xs more money and time than you could ever imagine.



## Company Name

- **People**

- Management team and relevant experience
  - Focus on education
  - Include industrial and entrepreneurial experience
- Other key people and advisors
- Any organizations, incubators, etc offering you assistance.

Include professional headshots



## Backup slides

- Detailed technical slides
- Financials



## Judges

The New York Business Plan Competition prides itself on innovation and technical merit. Both of these values are hallmarks of the organizing institutions, and we strive to integrate them into every aspect of the competition. To do so, we have established a transparent judging process with no conflicts of interest between our judges and the teams that they are evaluating.

All of our judging panels are composed of a mix of investors and industry experts, including venture capitalists, angel investors, investment bankers, other sophisticated public and private investors, and seasoned entrepreneurs. Moreover, we ensure to have technical subject matter experts – each of them with expertise in one of the categories – to evaluate the technical feasibility and scalability of the plans in their category.

If you are interested in participating as a judge for the 2018 NYBPC, or know an investor who would be a good fit to judge the competition, please contact us at [nybpc@upstatecapital.org](mailto:nybpc@upstatecapital.org).



## Judging Criteria

Below is a sample form that may be provided to judges to evaluate companies competing in the New York Business Plan Competition.

Presentation description/notes:

Please evaluate the team from a scale of 1-5 in each of the following categories:

	1 - Poor	2 - Adequate	3 - Good	4 – Very Good	5 - Excellent
<b>Market Opportunity</b> (Clear market need and a plan to take advantage of the need.)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Competitive Advantage</b> (The product or service is something unique that has a protectable competitive advantage in the proposed market.)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Management Capability</b> (The team has the skills and experience to develop this company and address the risks associated with the venture.)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Financial Understanding</b> (The team has a solid understanding of the financial requirements of the business.)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Venture Maturity</b> (This team has incorporated as a business and is in contact with potential customers.)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Presentation</b> (The pitch presented the venture in a clear, compelling manner, and answered questions well.)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Investment Potential</b> (The business is a real investment opportunity in which you would consider investing.)	1	2	3	4	5