



Business Plan Competition Guidelines

1.0 INTRODUCTION

“StartUP Bristol” is a business plan competition to encourage small business owners and entrepreneurs to locate in Bristol. For purposes of this project, a business startup is defined as a company that is in the initial stages of operation (under three [3] years of operation following legal formation) with the intent of growing in the near future. Ideally, the company is developing a product or service for which there is demand. Startups interested in applying for this competition may (A) be currently operating in Bristol or (B) be operating outside of Bristol but willing to relocate to Bristol following award, or (C) be in the concept stage with no formal operations, but must commit to locating in Bristol following award and legal business formation (see Section 4.0).

2.0 STARTUP BRISTOL TASK FORCE

The StartUP Bristol Task Force consists of experienced entrepreneurs and others involved with supporting economic development in the region. The Task Force is responsible for evaluating submissions, selecting grant winners, and for providing guidance and support to applicants when appropriate. City of Bristol staff are responsible for coordinating the program and serving in an advisory fashion, but will not sit as members of the Task Force and/or render decisions on awards.

3.0 GRANT FUNDING

3.1 The total value of all grant awards will not exceed \$100,000. Individual award amounts will be determined on a case-by-case basis, with no award less than \$20,000 and no award greater than \$50,000. ***There is no commitment by the City of Bristol to make any awards, to make a specific number of awards, or to be responsible for any monies expended by the company prior to an award.***

Award decisions will be based, in part, on the scoring criteria below (Section 6.0). Applicants will be grouped within one of the following categories, with no minimum or maximum number of awards within any single category:

- Retail/Wholesale Business
- Service Business
- High-Tech, Life Sciences and Biomedical
- Internet-Based Business
- Traditional Manufacturing Business

Eligible uses of grant funds include (but are not limited to):

- Rent/lease payments
- Purchase of property for the business
- Working capital or operating funds
- Purchase of equipment, commercial use vehicles, or machinery
- Improvements to owner-occupied property
- Leasehold improvements
- Other uses considered according to business plan

Grantees will be required to document approved grant expenses and to provide proof of payment for said expenses.

- 3.2 Grant funds will be distributed according to a time schedule agreed upon by the awardee, the City of Bristol, and the Committee as outlined in the grant contract. Awardees may choose to receive the award as a lump sum payment or as installments.
- 3.3 Grant winners are expected to remain in operation in the City of Bristol for 36 months following the award of grant funds. In the event the business terminates operation within the 36-month period – whether the business moves outside City limits or ceases to exist – repayment of the entire grant award will be enforced by the City of Bristol, as stipulated in the grant contract. At the discretion of the City of Bristol, grant repayment may be accomplished in installments over the course of up to 24 months in length.
- 3.4 Applicants selected for award will be required to accept the grant award via execution of a grant contract within sixty (60) days of award notification. No grant funds will be paid out, and no obligations stipulated in said contract may be enforced, until awardee establishes operation(s) in the City of Bristol.
- 3.5 Businesses must establish a location in Bristol within six (6) months following grant award execution. This is defined as physically occupying an appropriate workspace and conducting activities directly related to the business. If the business is not located in Bristol within six months of grant award execution, the grant contract may be terminated, as stipulated in the grant contract. A one-time extension may be granted at the discretion of the City of Bristol, with no extension longer than 12 months from grant award execution.

4.0 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- 4.1 Submissions are limited to startup businesses (see definition in Section 1.0) which are operating or intend to operate in Bristol.
- 4.2 “At-Home” businesses and mobile businesses are eligible to apply, but businesses occupying/intending to permanently occupy a commercial space in Bristol will receive higher consideration.
- 4.3 Businesses must be legally formed and registered with the State of Connecticut Secretary of State’s Office prior to award of grant funds.

- 4.4 Companies invited to complete Stage 2 of the application process (see Section 5.0) will be required to provide documents relating to business financial history, personal credit reports, and/or similar documentation. 36-month projections for the business will also be required.
- 4.5 If applicable, City taxes for any business or individual requesting grant funds cannot be delinquent at the time of grant award execution and must be kept current for 36 months following grant award or grant funds must be repaid (see section 3.3).

5.0 APPLICATION PROCESS AND SELECTION

The application process is completed in three stages:

- Round 1 Applicants complete the “Executive Summary.” This is a short, fillable form in which applicants provide a summary of their projects. Applicants are also asked to summarize their backgrounds and the experience/personal qualities they feel prepare them to launch/operate a new business.
- Round 2 Based on the “Executive Summary” submission, a select number of applicants will be invited to submit a “Detailed Business Plan” in addition to a fund allocation budget and description. In addition, applicants will also submit personal and/or business documentation to ensure the applicant meets business and/or credit eligibility guidelines (see Section 4.4).
- Round 3 Based on “Detailed Business Plan” submissions, a small number of applicants may be invited to provide live business plan presentations to the Task Force. Decisions and announcements of grant awardees will be made shortly following these presentations.

6.0 SCORING

- 6.1 Scoring criteria for Round 1 (see Section 5.0) of the application process include but are not limited to:
- Originality of the business concept
 - Potential for success based on anticipated market demand, competitive landscape, marketing strategy, business sector, and other factors
 - Number of full-time or part-time positions anticipated within three (3) years
 - How the backgrounds of the applicant, applicant’s team, and any advisors translate to starting/operating a successful business
- 6.2 Scoring criteria for Round 2 and Round 3 (see Section 5.0) of the application process include, but are not limited to:
- **Sustainable Cash Flow** – Evidence that the business venture will bring in more revenue than expenditures at the end of an accounting period.
 - **Overall Impact of Grant Funding** – In general, how will a grant award impact both the growth of the company and effect on Bristol’s economic landscape.

- **Business Location** – Applicants committing to locating within the downtown or West End business zones (see “**Downtown/West End Map**” at **StartUP Bristol website**) will receive special consideration. Business operations not currently allowed in the downtown or West End business zones according to the City of Bristol Zoning Regulations will not be negatively impacted.
- **Armed Services Veterans and Minority/Woman-Owned** – These applicants are encouraged to apply.
- **Credit History** – Applicant/s should demonstrate the responsible use of credit either as individuals or for their business ventures. Applicant/s should not have any active liens or judgments on their credit (documentation required).
- **Employees** – The number of full or part-time employees that the proposed business intends to hire.
- **Equity/Funding Obtained** – Level of equity brought by applicant/s to the project. Equity may include cash, real estate, equipment inventory, or other collateral. The level of funding obtained through traditional credit institutions and/or venture capital will be given special consideration (documentation of funding commitment required).
- **Experience** - Applicant’s level of experience with the specific business type as well as other general employment, educational, and management experience.
- **Growth Potential** – The Task Force will analyze the business’s potential for expanding in the future.

7.0 Miscellaneous

- It is the intention of the City of Bristol to publicize/promote the “StartUp Bristol” business plan competition prior to, during, and following the application period. By submitting a formal application to this program, the applicant agrees to allow the City of Bristol, if appropriate, to utilize the identity of the applicant/business as part of such promotion. The applicant will be notified prior to inclusion in any marketing materials produced on behalf of the City.
- It is the responsibility of applicants to protect any and all intellectual property included as part of their submission. The City of Bristol advises applicants to seek counsel or advice concerning intellectual property and any effect, if any, applying for this competition may have on protecting said intellectual property.
- The StartUP Bristol Task Force and all individuals with knowledge of applicant information associated with the StartUP Bristol competition will hold applicant information in strict confidence.