



2024-2025 Student Application Guide

Preparing the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

The next generation of entrepreneurs may come from the most unexpected places. This competition invites students to see their passions, ideas and creativity take shape. Finalists will have an opportunity to pitch their ideas in front of a live audience and panel of expert judges from the community. **It will be an unforgettable experience!!**

The Competition

The Sumter County School District is pleased to invite **high school** students (grades 9-12) of South Sumter High, Wildwood Middle High and The Villages High School to submit their best startup business ideas online. The **two top finalists from each school** will be invited to pitch their ideas at the live finale in front of judges and compete for cash prizes. **3rd - 5th place competitors** from each school will receive a cash prize after displaying their business plan poster at the competition.

Eligibility

- The competition is open to high school students currently enrolled in **grades 9-12** at South Sumter High, Wildwood Middle High, and The Villages High School.
- Students **may not** participate in the competition without permission of a parent/guardian.
- Individuals and teams may apply. Team composition may not exceed three students and must remain a team to participate in the live judging event. If the team is disbanded before the live event and was selected as one of the six finalists, the team project will be eliminated from the final competition phase.
- Students/Teams may submit more than one project.
- **Students/Teams who have earned the status of 1st place Live Finalist in previous competitions may not participate in the contest again.**
- To be considered for judging, an application must be COMPLETE and SUBMITTED. All parts must be entered into the web application by the deadline. Incomplete applications will be rejected.
- Applications deemed to have inappropriate content for a high school student will be rejected.
- This competition is a skill-based competition. Winners will be determined on the basis of objective judging criteria.
- **Business submissions must be for a new business start-up. Applications cannot be for an already established business.**
- Final determination of eligibility will be made by Sumter County School District contest administration.

**For more information contact:
casey.ferguson@sumter.k12.fl.us**

If you have questions about eligibility, contact your school's entrepreneurial coach.

Application Guide & Scoring Rubric

Getting Started:

You will create one account on the contest website. You may submit a solo application, multiple solo applications or a team application. The individual/team leader will submit answers online to the application questions listed below. Go to <http://sumtercountyschools.submittable.com/submit> and click COMPETE to create your account and answer the application questions. You may continue to edit by SAVING AS DRAFT until the application deadline. Then you will need to submit. Once you submit, you will not be able to edit the application. An incomplete application will be rejected. WARNING - When working in the online application as a team, only one login should be created for that team. Multiple logins will cause issues with overwriting of application components.

Learn more about Entrepreneurship! – See your school contact or teacher about taking the Venture-Entrepreneurial Expedition course in EverFi. This will help you through the entire process! You'll even have your elevator pitch ready to go for the finalist competition.

Remember this is a competition for a new product, service or business startup. Your idea should generate a profit/ revenue. Not for profit organizations or ideas that will not generate income are not to be submitted.

Be sure to contact your school's Entrepreneurship coach for more information:

South Sumter High School	Ms. Jennifer Clayton	Jennifer.Clayton@sumter.k12.fl.us
The Villages Charter High	Ms. Marietta Kotch	Marietta.kotch@tvcs.org
Wildwood Middle High	Mr. Travis Childs	Travis.Childs@sumter.k12.fl.us

Personal Information you will need to provide:

- Use your school email
- First Name
- Last Name
- Are you applying as a solo entrepreneur or a team?
- Did a parent or guardian give you permission to participate in this competition?

Business Idea Overview:

In this section, please share a brief overview of your business.

- Company Name
- Summarize your startup business in one complete sentence.
- Upload your business plan. Answer all the questions in detail!
- Logo (*optional*)
- Pitch Video (*optional*)
- Company URL (*optional*). *If you have created a website for your business, share the link here.*
- Letter of Recommendation (*optional*) Enter the email address of the person providing the supporting document.

Business Details

Be sure your business plan or idea answers the questions below. For help, please refer to the Resources provided within the competition website.

How did you come up with this business idea?

Why do you think this business is necessary?

What is your “revenue model?”

How will your business operate and make money?

How much will you charge for your product or service?

What challenges can you anticipate to your pricing model?

Who is your “target market?”

Who will your customers be and why did you choose that audience?

How do you plan to acquire new customers?

What is your “marketing plan?”

Who is your competition?

Try to list three potential competitors. These can be businesses, which provide a similar or related product or service.

What is your “competitive advantage?”

How will your business be different from and better than your competitors? Why will customers come to you instead of the others?

What resources would you need to start your business?

Money, time, expertise, technology? If your business will take significant investment to start, how will you obtain that investment?

What is the biggest challenge you face in starting this business and how will you overcome that?

Scoring Rubric

#1 Creativity/Innovation (1-10)

#2 Product/Service Clarity (1-10) – Is this product or service being offered presented in a compelling and clear manner?

#3 Market Potential (1-10) – Does the startup business idea have real market potential?

#4 Competitive Analysis (1-10) – Does the startup business idea have a competitive advantage over others providing the same service or product?

#5 Business Model (1-10) – Is the startup business concept supported by a sustainable business model?

**This is not the official application. It is only a guide to help you prepare your answers before completing the application online.*

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS
is midnight December 2, 2024.

- November 22 Registration Deadline (forms survey)
- September 16 - December 2 ONLINE submissions
- December 9 - December 19 ONLINE scoring
- December 20 Announce Finalists
- January Mentor workshop
- **Tuesday, February 25 Live Event Wildwood Community Center**

Helpful Hints for Contestants

Finding your business idea

Every successful business finds a **profitable** way to provide a **solution** for a **want or need**.

You can come up with ideas in many different ways. Four common approaches are:

1. Start by identifying a need or a want.
2. Start with an idea for a product or service.
3. Start with your own interests and abilities.
4. Start with an existing solution, and make it your own.

Start by identifying a need or a want.

- Have I heard friends or family express a want or a need that does not currently have a solution?
- Are there wants or needs I have that do not currently have a solution?
- Have I noticed a problem that does not have a good solution?

***For example:* Maddie is sixteen. She's heard her fellow students complaining about not being able to write in their textbooks. They want to be able to make notes and highlight in their books.

Start with an idea for a product or service.

- What is the want or need that this idea provides a solution for? (For some incredibly innovative products/services, you may have to use masterful marketing to show consumers that they want/need your solution. You are essentially creating a want/need that didn't exist!)
- Will people pay for this?
- What is the business model I should use to make this solution profitable?

**** Maddie is thinking about some type of temporary ink that might fade after a specific period of time.

Start with your own interests and abilities.

- What am I good at?
- What do I enjoy doing?
- Is there a want or need that I can meet with my interests and abilities?
- How can I leverage my own interests and abilities for a profit?

***For example:* Maddie is enrolled in multiple honors classes as well as college courses. She understands the need to use all resources wisely and the importance of notes.

Start with an existing solution, and make it your own.

- Are there any solutions to wants or needs that I can improve upon?
- Are there any solutions to wants or needs in other communities that I could bring in to my community?

***For example:* Maddie is looking at companies like Sanford Sharpie and erasable inks.

Related Links:


[Business USA, "Start a Business"](#)

[Dollars and Sense Show, "Brainstorming Micro Business Ideas"](#)

[U.S. Small Business Association, "Ideas for your Business"](#)

[Micro Business for Teens, "Starting a Micro Business"](#)

Sample Sumter Future Entrepreneurs Proposal

<p>Company Name Segway Training for Everyone (STE) [Enter your Company Name]</p>	
<p>Logo</p> 	<p>Youth or not; tall or not; mobility sustains. [Insert your company or product logo and slogan]</p>
<p>Summary Our mission is to provide future Segway users the knowledge and background to successfully use one of the most versatile and maneuverable vehicles. [Insert your company summary, mission statement and purpose here]</p>	
<p>Added Details Segway of Central Florida; 430 N Alexander Street; Mt Dora, FL 32757; is the leading retailers of Segway vehicles in our area. We choose to support the sales and transition of Segways to new and existing customers within the local area defined as: Mount Dora to Ocala, including The Villages. New Segway purchasers need introductory training to avoid early injury and property damage. The manufacturer has a 15 minute publicly available video with basic information about using the vehicle. STE provides the link from purchase to meaningful use of the vehicle. [Insert your proposed company name; street and mailing addresses, and a re-wording of your mission statement]</p>	
<p>Revenue Model Initial training for new Segway customers is priced at \$200. The vehicle purchased by the customer will be used for the training. One-on-one advice and demonstration will be done, at the customer's preference, either at the sales location or the customer's home area. Costs will be limited, because the customer's new vehicle will be used and electric necessary to operate the vehicle will be provided either by the vendor or by the customer (if at a home). Guided group rides will be available for existing Segway owners. These will run either two, four, or eight hours. The individual fees to participate will be \$60, \$110, and \$200, respectively. Group rides have been successful within The Villages community, so there is reasonable likelihood there will be a future market for these group rides. The group rides will be offered in The Villages' weekly announcement of recreation activities. There is no fee for submissions of informative materials along this line. [Insert your Revenue Model here]</p>	

Target Market

Florida continues to be one of the states with continued long-term population growth. A substantial percentage of the immigrants to Florida include early retirees. This is apparent with the expansion and use of fitness facilities near The Villages. The current MVP Athletic Clubs in Spanish Springs and Brownwood are active. This suggests physical activities, like the use of a Segway, will be of interest to a growing number of residents.

The Villages offers multi-modal paths for use primarily by golf cars and users on bicycles. Pedestrians are afforded access to these paths, but they must deal with faster-moving traffic. A Segway would offer mobility on those paths at improved speeds and maneuverability.

[Define your [target customer](#) market]

New Customers

The local Segway dealers have an interest in their customers enjoying their new equipment, while avoiding physical injuries. A close relationship will be maintained with the new Segway sales personnel.

Social media and no-cost advertising will be used to inform the local population Segway training and continued experiences are available at a modest cost. The intent being to show users how a Segway can be beneficial for more than a fun ride. A Segway can be a part of her or his daily life.

Since the Segway is powered entirely by electric, the vehicle leaves a low carbon footprint and is responsive to efforts to reverse global warming.

[Describe how you will get new customers]

Competition

Currently, competition is very limited. Dealers provide preliminary instruction, but there is no continuing follow-up with customers of a new Segway. STE offers that follow-up interaction with the Segway owner.

[Define who is in [competition](#) with your company]

Competitive Advantage

The costs to provide Segway training for new purchasers and continued support through group activities are very low. Dealers are not likely to wish to expand their depth by offering such training, in favor or outplacing this training to STE. The retailer wants additional sales of new vehicles and STE desires a steady stream of interested or persuadable customers.

[Define your company's [competitive advantage](#) over your competition]

Initial Requirements

It would be helpful to have a large-screened iPhone or similar media player to show a customer the publicly available video produced by the Segway manufacturer.

Personal transportation would be necessary to gain access to a customer's home area for training or to the Segway dealers' facilities to perform the training at their site.

[Define your business startup needs to launch]

Biggest Challenges

- Total Segway sales might not be sufficient to financially support this adjunct function.
- Dealer relationships might soon be strained.
- There will be a staffing balance needed between training of new Segway purchasers and staffing the group riding events.

[List your expected challenges to your business]

SAMPLE

Sample Budget

Segway Training for Everyone (STE)

Start-up Costs (one-time expenses required before your first day in business)

Description	Estimated Cost
Large screen iPhone or media player	\$950
Business Cards	\$50
Furniture	\$1200
Total Funds Required	\$2,200

Operating Costs (monthly expenses required to stay in business)

Description	Estimated Cost
Advertising	\$25
Liability Insurance	\$150
Payroll	\$600
Personal Transportation (to and from customer's home)	\$100
Rent	\$2300
Total Funds Required	\$3,175

Budget template provided by:
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Florida SBDC at the University of Central Florida