



**WE
BELIEVE
IN THE
FEMALE
FOUNDER**



FAST PITCH APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Applications will be accepted April 1 – May 31, 2024

Women Founders Network (WFN) hosts an annual Fast Pitch Competition exclusively for women entrepreneurs. We invite all qualified applicants to participate by completing the online application with the requested supporting documentation. This guide provides an overview of the application requirements, process, tips and judging criteria.

There are two tracks with separate applications – you may only apply for one track.

1

Tech/Tech-enabled

This category is for a B2B or B2C company that relies on significant development of technology to deliver the product or service.

-OR-

2

Consumer/CPG/Other Non-Tech

Includes any products that are sold to consumers as physical units (e.g., food and beverage, apparel) as well as consumer focused media/content, e-commerce sites, or services provided to consumers.

Consumer products or services that are predominantly tech / software (such as Nest or Oura Ring) should apply in the Tech category. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at info@womenfoundersnetwork.org. WFN reserves the right to determine which track is most appropriate for your company and may ask you to reapply if you apply to the wrong track:

CRITERIA FOR APPLYING

Founder/Co-Founder/CEO must be a woman or business must be majority-owned by a woman

Business must be based in the United States

Must be able to participate in person at the annual Fast Pitch Event on October 29th*

Must have raised no more than \$750K in outside funding, including personal cash funds**

Pre-revenue plans are welcome (*but need to show some proof of concept, such as customer sign-ups, surveys, LOI's, etc.*)

We cannot accept applications from Life Sciences, nonprofit, or cannabis/CBD companies

*Live event takes place in Los Angeles, CA and **travel expenses are the responsibility of the founder.**

**Research grants or other non-recourse, non-dilutive grants, and PPP loans do not count towards the \$750K maximum.

APPLICATION

You will be able to edit/update your application through the May 31st deadline. **IMPORTANT:** See submission form instructions and questions on page 4 of this guide.

There is a \$50 fee to apply.

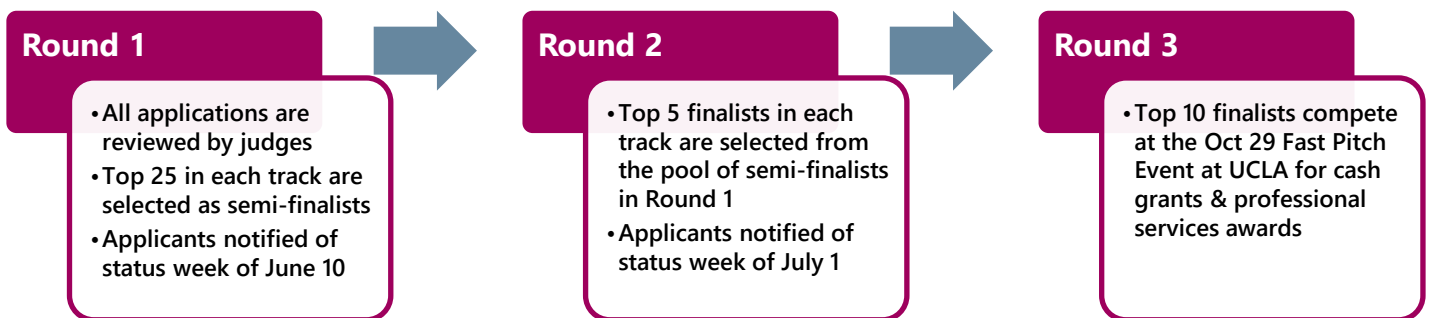
FAST PITCH CASH PRIZES

\$55,000 in cash grants: \$25k to the first-place winner in each track + \$5K to one Junior VC winner

TOP 10 FINALIST BENEFITS

- Friendly feedback pitch event to assess your needs and help hone your presentation skills
- One-on-one pitch coaching to prepare for the Fast Pitch Event
- Matched with a Financial Mentor to get your financials in order
- Participate in VIP Private Pitch Event to get even more great feedback and opportunities to connect with high-value contacts
- Free professional services based on your needs (such as legal, marketing, etc.), worth thousands of dollars
- Discounted services through the Spark Collective Perks program
- Become part of our Fast Pitch Alumni community

VOTING ROUNDS



MUST-HAVE CRITERIA

The criteria below are must-haves. If you cannot answer 'yes' to all of these, it will be difficult to succeed.

- Solving a **real market need** – there is a problem that customers will pay to have solved. It is a must-have, not just a nice-to-have.
- Addresses a **sizeable market opportunity**. Of course, sizeable is relative, but generally an addressable market of hundreds of millions or billions of dollars.
- Business has a potential **sustainable source of differentiation / competitive advantage**.
- Business has a clear path to making money (viable **business model**).



HIGH-LEVEL JUDGING GUIDELINES

1. **Problem / Solution** – Problem and solution are clearly defined and there is a unique value proposition for customers
2. **Business Model** – Revenue model and associated costs are clearly articulated and can generate future profits
3. **Competitive Advantage** – Company's solution is better than anything offered by competitors and is defensible
4. **Team Members** – Existing or planned team can credibly implement the business plan
5. **Marketing & Sales** – Marketing and sales approaches and costs are appropriate for acquiring customers and supporting revenue targets
6. **Financial Plan** – Financial plan based on reasonable assumptions with supporting documents

Judges include the WFN Board Directors, Angel investors/VCs, and qualified professionals by invitation.

Our [Junior Venture Capitalists](#) (Jr. VCs) program for young women in grades 9-12 includes education over the summer on entrepreneurship and investing, and a pre-pitch workshop with an investor to review and discuss the Top 10 companies. The girls participate in the Fast Pitch event as “venture capitalists for a day” and select their winning company, which they present with a \$5,000 sponsored cash grant.

WFN also runs a [Due Diligence Analyst](#) program for college and university women, providing real-world experience in performing due diligence on startups. The students will connect with the finalists after the friendly feedback pitch event for Q&A and work with mentors to research their assigned finalist company. They present their final reports in October to the Fast Pitch judges and Jr. VCs.



IMPORTANT DATES

- **May 31** – Application deadline date (midnight Pacific Time)
- **Week of June 10** – Applicants notified of status from Round 1 Judging. Semi-finalists in each track advance to Round 2 and answer follow-up questions from judges.
- **Week of July 1** – Semi-finalists notified of status from Round 2 Judging. Top 10 companies (5 in each track) are our Fast Pitch finalists.
- **Week of July 15** – Finalists will attend virtual onboarding meeting
- **August 8** – Finalists participate in private friendly feedback virtual event > **REQUIRED**
- **August** – Finalists are matched with pitch coaches and financial mentors
- **Late September TBD** – VIP Private Pitch Event in Culver City, CA with WFN judges, board members, sponsors, and investors > **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND**
- **October 29** – WFN 12th Annual Fast Pitch Event at UCLA, Los Angeles > **REQUIRED**

CONFIDENTIALITY

WFN is committed to keeping all application data strictly confidential. Only our internal staff and Fast Pitch judges will have access to your data in our application form. Your application data will not be shared by WFN outside this group without your permission.

We are hosting our application on the Spark xyz platform this year. You will have the option of making your Venture Profile **PUBLIC OR PRIVATE**. If you choose **PUBLIC**, the profile will be visible to other programs that you choose to apply to within the Spark platform. You can also provide the link to others who are outside the platform (such as potential investors). Alternatively, you can opt to keep your profile **PRIVATE** —but you **must select that option**. Note that some items within your profile can be made **PRIVATE**, even if you choose to make the profile **PUBLIC**.

Questions? Please contact kim@womenfoundersnetwork.org for assistance.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Please note:

- Required questions in the Venture Profile appear in **red text** - you may skip or select NA for the others.
- After you complete the profile questions, you will be asked to complete a few additional questions from WFN.
- You may save and edit/complete your application through the May 31st deadline.

Venture Profile Questions:

1. Categories: Define your venture category!
2. What is your elevator pitch?
3. Problem: What need is your venture solving? What pain is your customer feeling? Define it now
4. About Us: How are you solving that problem? Tell us a bit more about your solution here
5. Competitive Advantage: What makes you special? Why would someone want to invest or work for you? Tell us!
6. Venture Highlights: What have you accomplished so far? Brag here!
7. Business Model: Walk the audience through how you make money
8. Metrics: Time for the numbers! What is your Customer Acquisition Cost, Lifetime value of that customer, and how long are they staying with you?
9. Go to Market: How are you getting your product to market? What have you seen to be successful? Add it here
10. Team: Who else is on your team? Add them here
11. Competitive Analysis: Who are your biggest competitors? Not someone like FB or Amazon
12. Raising: How much have you raised or are you raising?
13. Revenue: The most important piece! Add your numbers here
14. Users: Tell us about your user base!
15. TAM SAM SOM: How big is your market? Let us know!
16. Stage: Where are you currently?
17. Upload your pitch deck [**FILE UPLOAD**]
18. DEI: please disclose DEI information. We ask for Gender Identity, first gen college students, Veteran status, and Racial/Ethnic Identities.

WFN Additional Questions (will NOT be part of your stored profile):

19. How did you hear about the WFN Fast Pitch?
20. Please provide your mailing address.
21. In what year was your company founded?
22. What percentage of your company do you own personally and what percentage is women-owned (including you)?
23. Why are you applying to WFN? If you win, what do you hope to get from participating and what will you do with the money?
24. I understand there is 1 virtual event and 1 live event in Los Angeles with required attendance and can commit to attending (Aug 8 virtual event and Oct 29 live event). [Yes/No]
25. I can commit to participating in the September Private VIP Pitch event (week of 9/23 TBD), either virtually or in person [Yes/No]
26. I understand that any travel expenses incurred for attending live events are solely my responsibility. [Yes/No]
27. Upload your financial model. It should include Historic and Projected numbers (5 years), including Revenue, COGS, major expense categories, staffing, and key metrics. [**FILE UPLOAD – template provided**]
28. Upload anything else that you think is important to understanding your product or service (i.e., video, diagrams, images, etc.)
29. ***A \$50 fee is required to finalize your application before it will be submitted to judges for review.***