

2021 Rules



(Organizers reserve the right to amend/add rules in advance of the competition. Any changes will be communicated with registered competitors as well as judges in advance of pitch day.)

Start-ups only – Business or business idea must be less than three years old. Established businesses that have been in operation longer than three years are not eligible to compete.

Pitches - Competitors will present their business ideas both online and in-person, dependent on the pitching round.

Qualifying Round - All pitches will be pre-recorded and submitted via video submission

Final - Pitches will take place in real-time and streamed via webcam on pitch day.

Pitch Day - Saturday, October 9, 2021 at Peoples State Bank, 9370 E. US HWY 24 Manhattan, KS. We are hopeful this event will be open to the public. Additional details TBD.

Pitch and transition times – Pitches may be a maximum of four (4) minutes. Judges will then have three (3) minutes to ask clarifying questions. Time will be closely monitored and cut-off at the specified time markers.

Who may pitch?

Judge category winners from the previous competitions are NOT eligible to compete again. Previous non-winning competitors who meet the under three years in business requirement ARE eligible to compete again.

One person or team, one entry, one pitch – The same person or team cannot pitch for multiple businesses or ideas.

Online registration required – Contestants must register online at <https://www.startupmhk.com/sign-up> Registration is now open and must be completed by 11:59 pm on Tuesday, September 28.

Video submissions for the qualifying round are due by 11:59pm on September 29, 2021. Finalists will be notified of their qualifying status on October 4.

FINAL Competition Day – 5-8 finalists will be selected and have the opportunity to pitch to the judges for the prize money.

Competition Categories - There will be two judged competition categories: technical and non-technical. During registration, you must select the category in which your business belongs. A third category of “People’s Choice” will also be awarded. This category winner is chosen by the public viewing the event, and is also awarded a cash prize.

Judging Criteria – Judges use a 7-point Likert scale to grade 6 questions. Judges’ decisions are final.

Winners - Winners of the technical and non-technical categories will be determined by the judging panel. Checks of equal prize amounts will be presented to each of these categories. Winners of technical and non-technical categories are eligible to win People’s Choice.

Media Release – Contestants understand that they are publicly pitching their business or idea and in agreeing to do so, they agree to their name, image, likeness, and idea appearing in promotional materials (print, video, photography, etc.) for this, and future events.

Removal from the competition – If for any reason you need to remove yourself from the competition, we ask to be notified as soon as possible.