

The Pitch

EBRC Business Plan Competition

Your opportunity to build local business together!

OFFICIAL RULES & FAQ



ELGIN

BUSINESS RESOURCE CENTRE

A Community Futures Development Corporation

For more information, contact Jennifer Grigg
519-633-7597 x323 or jgrigg@elgincfdc.ca

The Pitch RULES

The Pitch is an annual Dragons' Den-Style business plan competition and exciting event in which 5 local St. Thomas and Elgin County businesses or aspiring entrepreneurs compete for a chance to win a grand prize package of cash and in-kind prizes to support their venture.

To enter The Pitch, all applicants must have their business plans submitted by 4:00pm November 2, 2026.

The business plan applications are read and evaluated by the entire Elgin Business Resource Centre staff to determine the top 5 business plan finalists, who will then go on to the grand finale.

The grand finale consists of a public speaking presentation element, where the 5 finalists will 'Pitch' their business idea to a panel of judges and a live audience. The judges are made up of non-biased professionals and/or sponsors who then deliberate and vote for a grand prize winner.

As a not-for-profit organization, the Elgin Business Resource Centre has organized The Pitch in Elgin County as an economic development project with the help of community-driven sponsors since 2015. Each year we aspire to grow the cash and in-kind prize package to surpass the previous year and fuel the passion for entrepreneurship in Elgin County. Together, with the dedicated team at the Elgin Business Resource Centre, we believe we can make a difference in the community that we serve.

Our sponsorship levels consist of 5 tiers of support to accommodate your goals:
Title Sponsor, Advocate, Partner, Supporter, and Friend.

If you, as an individual, or your company is interested in being a Pitch sponsor, please reach out to us for more information. Contact Felicia Brice, fbrice@elgincfdc.ca 519-633-7597 ext. 324.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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HOW CAN I BE A SPONSOR?

Our sponsorship levels consist of 5 tiers of support to accommodate your goals: Title Sponsor, Advocate, Partner, Supporter, and Friend. If you, as an individual, or your company is interested in being a 'Pitch' sponsor, please reach out to us for more information. Contact Felicia Brice, fbrice@elgincfdc.ca 519-633-7597 ext 324.

WHAT IS THE PITCH?

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WHEN IS THE PITCH?

The Pitch will be in-person and presented live February 3, 2027.

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WHO CAN ENTER THE PITCH?

Existing businesses or aspiring entrepreneurs of any age in Elgin County, including St. Thomas, can submit their application form. If you submitted a business plan before but were not a past winner or finalists, you may resubmit an updated application form.

WHO CANNOT ENTER THE PITCH?

EBRC staff and Board of Directors including immediate family members, businesses outside of Elgin County and past winners are not eligible to enter The Pitch. If you have been a finalist in the past, you must wait one (1) consecutive year from date of participation to be eligible to enter The Pitch again. Anyone who doesn't have true intention to execute their business plan are not eligible to enter.

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HOW DO BUSINESS OWNERS ENTER?

To enter, businesses or aspiring entrepreneurs will be required to submit their business plan application form by 4:00pm November 2, 2026.

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE TO ENTER?

Business plans will need to be submitted by 4:00pm November 2, 2026.

Other important dates to remember:

November 24, 2026 - Finalists selected

November 24, 2026 - Finalists will be notified and provided presentation tips

February 3, 2027 - The Pitch Finale - Live & In-Person

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WHAT IS THE COST TO ENTER THE PITCH?

It's free to enter.



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WHAT PRIZES ARE AVAILABLE?

Cash and in-kind prizes, of which 100% goes towards the winner. The entire prize package is announced at the finale along with the sponsors who made the contribution.

HOW ARE THE FINALISTS SELECTED?

The business plan applications are read and evaluated by the entire Elgin Business Resource Centre staff to determine the top 5 business finalists, who will then go on to the grande finale.

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IS HELP AVAILABLE WHEN SUBMITTING BUSINESS PLAN APPLICATIONS?

Yes, please contact our business advisors, Tanya Wilson, twilson@elgincfdc.ca 519-633-7597 ext 335 or Jennifer Grigg, jgrigg@elgincfdc.ca 519-633-7597 ext 323 to arrange a meeting with one of our business advisors.

The advisors can assist in reviewing the application form and make suggestions you can implement before submitting your final application plan. Please note, we assist clients on a first come, first served basis and cannot provide constructive advice on the business plan deadline date. A workshop is provided with tips on writing a business plan for the The Pitch September 15, 2026.

AS A FINALIST, IF I CANNOT ATTEND, CAN SOMEONE GO IN MY PLACE?

No. If you are not able to present at The Pitch, please contact Jennifer Grigg, jgrigg@elgincfdc.ca 519-633-7597 ext 323, as soon as possible, so we can let another business present their business plan at the finale.

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WHO ATTENDS THE PITCH?

Everyone is welcome to attend the in-person, live presentation of the grand finale. The audience consists of EBRC staff, Board of Directors, local businesses, the general public, media, family, and friends of the finalists.



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WHAT DO FINALISTS NEED TO DO AT THE PITCH?

The grand finale consists of a public speaking presentation element live and in front of an audience. Finalists will be given additional information prior to the event and advice and support on how to enhance their presentation, and create a one page executive summary for the judges.

CAN FINALISTS BRING FAMILY & FRIENDS TO THE PITCH?

Yes, finalists can bring family and friends with them to The Pitch Finale. Limited tickets are available due to the capacity of the venue. Tickets are free through Eventbrite. Everyone is invited to attend.

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HOW MANY FINALISTS WILL BE PRESENTING AT THE PITCH?

5 finalists are selected.

HOW IS THE WINNER SELECTED?

The 5 finalists will present their business plan at The Pitch in front of a live audience February 3, 2027. A panel of judges will each ask finalists questions based on their presentation. The judges will then deliberate and vote for the winner.

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WHO ARE THE JUDGES?

The panel of judges are made up of non-biased professionals and/or sponsors.



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