

# NYBPC Rulebook



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The official document  
outlining rules, requirements,  
and judging criteria for the  
New York Business Plan  
Competition.

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Since 2010, over **3,000 student teams** from colleges and universities from across New York State have **pitched their ideas and ventures** at the NYBPC.

### **About the Competition**

The 2022 New York Business Plan Competition will feature regional competitions in New York's ten Regional Economic Development Council zones – Capital Region, Central New York, North Country, Mohawk Valley, Finger Lakes, Western New York, Southern Tier, Mid-Hudson, New York City and Long Island - followed by a final, statewide competition. The regional semifinals are hosted by local partner colleges and universities generally in March. The top teams from each of the ten regions advance to the final round of the statewide competition. The winners will be selected by esteemed judges, including venture capitalists, angel investors, investment bankers, experienced entrepreneurs and leaders from the business community.

### **Philosophy**

- Entrepreneurship is vital to support a thriving economy.
- Entrepreneurial skills are invaluable - including problem solving, communication, economics, creativity, resilience and accountability, regardless of students' career paths.
- The intercollegiate competition platform is an important experiential anchor for students from all backgrounds and for ventures of all types.

### **Mission**

The NYBPC's mission is to provide a robust, fair competition for students across New York State to promote entrepreneurship and to start new ventures.

## Annual Calendar

Specific dates are available at NYBPC.org. We also communicate dates through emails and during conference calls.

### **Mid-January:**

- Student and judge applications open

### **Beginning of March:**

- Final track definitions and special prizes announced

### **March - April:**

- Regional competitions take place

### **Beginning of April:**

- Regional winners shared with state finals organizers
- Final prizes and prize money awards announced

### **Mid April:**

- Round One for NYBPC Finals held online. Refer to NYBPC.org for specific submission deadlines
- Track winners announced

### **Late April:**

- Grand Prize Finals held in-person
- Grand prize awarded to top track winner

## Competition Structure

The NYBPC consists of two levels of competition. Regional competitions are generally held in March/April in all ten regions across New York. The winners of these competitions move on to the statewide finals. All regional competitions follow this rulebook and scoring rubric, but format and timing of the regional competitions vary.

Students are assigned to one regional competition based on the location of their school. If the team has members in different regions, the first student listed is considered primary and the team will compete in the associated region.



All students fill out the NYBPC central application to begin. The application opens in mid-January and can be found through the website, NYBPC.org. Check the website for the deadlines specific to each regional competition.

The teams finishing in first and second places within each track at regional competitions are invited to compete in the statewide final competition, provided the regional judges deem the teams prepared for statewide competition. All student competitors are invited to attend the finals to build their networks and knowledge of entrepreneurship. Finalists submit their pitch videos and slide decks approximately two weeks prior to the first round of the finals competition.

The NYBPC Final Competition has three parts:

1. First Round
2. Track Winners
3. Grand Prize

The first round of finals is held online in mid-April. Up to twenty teams in each of six tracks are judged asynchronously online over the course of several days, by business and industry professionals. The top three teams advance to the next round.

For the second round, the top three teams in each track are invited to pitch live online to a panel of judges, with live Q&A. The track winners are announced the same day.

First place track winners are invited to compete for the NYBPC Grand Prize, live and in-person at the end of April, as part of Upstate Capital's Venture NY event. Timing and location details will be published on NYBPC.org.

All students are invited to the NYBPC Finals event to cheer for their teammates, meet mentors, attend workshops and gain exposure to entrepreneurial resources from across New York. The in-person NYBPC Grand Prize pitch will be limited in attendance, but will be streamed online.

Each region is invited to send two teams per track. No alternate teams are invited to compete.

Regional coordinators must email a list of winners and team contact information to [info@nybpc.org](mailto:info@nybpc.org) within 48 hours of the completion of their competition.

Once those lists are received, eligible teams will receive instructions for submitting their final presentations.

## Team/Student Eligibility

In order to be eligible to apply for and participate in the NYBPC, all teams must meet the following criteria:

- "Students" are any graduate, undergraduate, and/or community college students enrolled part- or full-time in accredited New York colleges and universities during the current academic year. Students who graduate during the Fall semester are eligible to compete in the competition during the Spring semester. Exchange students are also eligible.
- Presenters must be eligible students in all stages of the competition.
- Teams may compete in only one region per year.
- Students may not participate on more than one team per year.
- Grand prize winners from previous NYBPC competitions are not eligible to participate in the competition. (They are encouraged to participate as speakers, mentors, volunteers, and judges!) Individual members of winning teams may return with new teams in subsequent years.
- Cumulative public and private capital raised may not exceed \$100,000. This does not include research funding that may have supported the development of the technology in an academic laboratory.

- The business venture must be at least 80% owned by eligible students.

Teams do not need to have incorporated legal entities to compete. The NYBPC reserves the right to withhold prizes from winning teams who do not comply with the eligibility requirements.

## Track & Tags

The competition is divided into categories, called tracks, at all levels of competition. Students are assigned tracks by the NYBPC organizers based on their self-identification for their venture and their team. Self-identification is done by selecting multiple tags, or words that accurately relate to the nature of the venture and/or the team. Tracks are determined and defined by clusters of tags that are related.

To keep pace with our rapidly changing world and to provide a balanced competition, track definitions are finalized after reviewing incoming applications in early March. Students do not select tracks on their applications, but do select one or more category tags. These tags may also align with special prizes. They could relate to the type of business, attributes of the team, the type of product or service, or target markets or customers. Tracks are defined by industry, innovation and technology themes that emerge based on category tags.

The list of tags will not be finalized until the student application opens in January. Here is a sampling of tags that have been included historically: agtech, athletics, clothing, college students, education, entertainment, environmental impact, fintech, food, government, medtech, mental health, military, mwbe, software, travel, utility, veteran-owned and social impact.

The NYBPC organizers assign tracks to teams. Student teams will be informed of their track assignments prior to the regional competitions. Teams in each of the tracks may represent for-profit or non-profit ventures. All tracks are judged according to the same criteria and rubric.

## Presentation Guidelines

The presentation format for the regional semifinal and statewide final competitions may vary. Please reach out to the organizers of your regional competition to ensure that you understand the requirements.

### Presentation Format & Submission Requirements

For the statewide final competition, each team will be given the opportunity to submit a link to a pitch video, a slide deck and brief written remarks to be shared with the judges. Final submissions must be submitted by the deadline posted on the website. No new presentations or updated versions will be accepted after that date and time.

Video pitches should be no more than seven (7) minutes long. Judges are asked to ignore anything past the seven (7) minute mark. Videos should only include the slide deck and presenter – no demos or footage of the product/service in use in the field, including software demos. Screenshots and photos are welcome and encouraged. Videos that do not match submitted slide decks will risk disqualification. To

best align with judge expectations and the judging rubric, students should focus on creating a simple and clear presentation rather than a fancy video production.

Slide decks must be in PDF or PPTX format. No specific version of Powerpoint or Adobe software is guaranteed, so students should plan accordingly, focusing on simplicity and content to guarantee universal accessibility.

Additional remarks are limited to 200 words and will be shared with the judges along with the pitch video and slides.

## Presentation Content

It is recommended that you seek to address the following questions in your presentation:

### ***Business Model and Team***

1. **General Description:** What problem are you solving? What is your business model? Describe how your venture makes money and how it will assure long-term sustainability.
2. **Value Proposition:** What are your company's key, differentiated value propositions (e.g. lowest cost, highest reliability, best performance, etc.)? What is your venture's right to win versus the competition?
3. **Structure:** What is the structure of your organization? Do you have the team members that you need to start and grow? How will the structure change with growth?

### ***Product/Service***

1. **Product/Service:** What is your product/service offering?
2. **Function and Benefit:** How does your product/service work? Define and quantify key benefits (e.g. cost, performance, technical, etc.) for customers.
3. **Development Stage:** Where is the product/service in its evolution (e.g. idea/conception, proof of concept, fully tested prototype, etc.)?

### ***Competitive Position***

1. **Competitors:** Who is your competition?
2. **Edge over Competition:** What makes you better than other companies currently in the market?
3. **Sustainability:** Is this competitive position sustainable?
4. **IP Protection:** How will you protect your proprietary information?

### ***Markets***

1. **Target Market:** What markets and market segments are you targeting? How big are these markets and how can you sustainably capture them?
2. **Barriers to Entry:** What are the key market barriers and how will they lend to your success?

### ***Customers***

1. **Customers:** Who are the specific customers that you are pursuing or will pursue? Do you have any letters of interest and/or intent to purchase? Do you have sales?
2. **Discovery:** What kind of customer discovery have you conducted to find out about people who want what you are offering?

## Judging Criteria

Judges are asked to evaluate companies according to the following criteria:

- **Market Opportunity:** Clear market need and a plan to take advantage of the need.



- **Competitive Advantage:** The product or service is something unique that has a protectable competitive advantage in the proposed market.
- **Management Capability:** The team has the skills and experience to develop this venture and address the associated risks.
- **Financial Understanding:** The team has a solid understanding of the financial requirements of the venture.
- **Roadmap/Growth Strategy:** The team has engaged in short- and long-term planning and has considered strategies for growth.
- **Sustainable Business Model:** The team understands and can communicate their core business model. They are likely to develop a sustainable venture.

Judges focus their deliberations on the long-term viability and sustainable competitive advantage of each venture.

## Prize Information

Prizes and cash awards will be announced by the end of March. First, second, and third place prizes will be awarded for each of the six tracks. A Grand Prize winner will be selected from among the first place teams from each track. Winners will be selected by judging panels.

Special prizes may be awarded singly or across the tracks, including Concept Stage and MWBE awards. Criteria and amounts will be announced by the end of March. Winners may be selected by their respective prize sponsors in conjunction with NYBPC judges.

Evidence of incorporation is required for dispersal of prizes over \$2,500, and incorporation may be done using prize money funds. Incorporation may take any form related to a business entity including a local DBA or state-level corporate structure such as an LLC, C-corporation, etc. Reach out to us at [info@nybpc.org](mailto:info@nybpc.org) if you need help navigating this process. W9 forms are required for all cash prizes.

All winning teams will meet with a mentor to establish milestones prior to receiving prize money. Prizes of \$5,000 and higher will be dispersed in multiple milestone-based phases. The first payment will be made based on milestones established in a post-event mentorship meeting. Additional payment(s) will be made based on achieving agreed-upon milestones or at the discretion of the NYBPC organizers based on mentor feedback.

Prize money awards are viewed as investments for student-led ventures to move forward, although they are not expected to be repaid as debt, nor are they equity investments. The maximum cash award for teams who are not planning to move forward with an entrepreneurial venture in the near-term is \$500, regardless of their placing.

All prizes must be claimed within twelve (12) months of the date of the competition or they will be forfeited. Cash prizes are taxable according to state and federal tax law.

## Judges

Judging panels are composed of a mix of investors and industry experts, including venture capitalists, angel investors, investment bankers, experienced entrepreneurs and leaders from the business community. At the statewide finals, proctors will be assigned to each track to facilitate the judging process.

- Judges who have mentored or otherwise engaged with any competing teams are not eligible to participate on any level of the competition.
- Judges will fill out one application for both regionals and state finals, which will be available by early January.
- Judges may serve as either regional judges OR finals judges, but not both.
- Judges should avoid interaction with all competitors until the event is completed.

If you are interested in participating as a judge for the NYBPC, or know someone who would be a good fit, please contact us at [info@nybpc.org](mailto:info@nybpc.org).

## **Ethics Questions & Rule Enforcement**

An ethics committee consisting of a cross-section of participants from across the state handles rule infractions, challenges and questions at all stages of the competition. Their rulings on these and any unforeseen scenarios will be final. Please [contact us](#) if you are interested in participating on the ethics committee.

Thank you for your contributions to New York's entrepreneurial ecosystem and the NYBPC!