

# FLETCHER D-PRIZE COMPETITION

**First Round Application Packet**  
**2023-24 Academic Year**



This is an application packet for the Fletcher D-Prize competition. It explains the competition and offers instructions on how to draft and submit your application. Applications are due **Tuesday, November 14th, 2023** at midnight (EST).

Questions? Email Ariane Theis at [Ariane.Theis@tufts.edu](mailto:Ariane.Theis@tufts.edu). *Good luck!*

# Competition Rules

## **Who Should Apply?**

You should be an aspiring entrepreneur ready to pilot a new social venture this summer.

Students not yet graduating can still apply. You should plan to pilot, refine your model in school, and do a full launch upon graduation.

We are exclusively interested in ventures that will *distribute an already proven poverty solution* in the developing world. We are not interested in prototyping a promising new solution.

## **Eligibility to Compete**

This competition is for current students or graduates of the Fletcher School and undergraduates at Tufts University. Individuals or teams may participate. At least one person on your team must be a current student or a graduate of the Fletcher School. Contact Marilyn Davison, Entrepreneur Coach, if you need matching assistance <https://sites.tufts.edu/dprize/coaching/>. You can choose to launch in any developing country, and may decide to operate a for-profit or a non-profit.

It is also open to any business model (for profit, nonprofit, and everything in between). Any winner will be awarded up to \$20,000 in the form of a convertible grant and in-kind support.

Individuals or their immediate family who serve on the judging panel may not apply.

## **Submission Policies**

- Applications must be submitted following the instructions in this packet.
- Extra material outside of the application will not be considered.
- Revisions to applications after submission will also not be considered.
- Only one application per person or partnership will be considered.
- Applications must be written in English.

## Prize Process & Important Dates

### **First Round**

First Round Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until midnight on the night of **Tuesday, November 14th, 2023**.

Feedback and advancement decisions will be sent by **Friday, December 8th, 2023**.

### **Second Round**

Entrepreneurs invited to participate in the Second Round will be asked to draft and submit a full plan of their social venture, roughly 10 pages in length plus any desired appendices. The plan will include a more detailed description of the venture's operations, a three month budget, and other items. Second Round applicants will receive an application packet similar to this one, with full instructions.

Those invited to the Second Round will be required to submit a plan by **Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024**.

### **Final Round**

Entrepreneurs invited to the Final Round will interview with judges on the phone. Depending on the promise and cost-effectiveness of a proposal, judges may award up to \$20,000 in funding. The average Fletcher D-Prize award size is \$10,000. Seed capital awards may be given to more than one winner.

Winning ventures will be notified by approximately **Friday, March 1st, 2024**.

### **After You Win: Starting Your Pilot**

We fund ideas we believe can succeed, and we are invested in making that happen. Besides funding, the D-Prize organization may offer mentorship from already-proven social entrepreneurs, and can assist in helping your venture attract future funding if the pilot proves successful. We will also provide you access to the D-Prize network of past winners, and will do our absolute best to help you in any other way we can.

# First Round Judging Criteria

## Judging Process

All applications will receive an initial screen from at least two judges. The judging panel is composed of members from the D-Prize community with professional experience in developing world entrepreneurship.

Those serving as judges are not personally involved in the ideas being judged, nor do they have any immediate family involved.

## Judging Criteria

Contestants are evaluated based on:

- Potential for leadership success, as evident by academic and professional background, relevant skills, and demonstrated passion.
- Focus on distribution. Proposals must focus on distributing a proven poverty solution that needs greater access in the developing world.
- Potential for scalable success of their venture, based on the concept note of the application.

## Application Tips

- *Be succinct.* Successful candidates are objective, focused, and clear. These attributes should come across in your writing. Orient your application towards an educated judge who is relatively knowledgeable with the key issues.
- *Scale, impact, cost-effectiveness.* Successful applicants will build a plausible case that their intervention is highly scalable, impactful, and cost-effective
- *Keep within scope.* The most successful startups are explicit about their focus, and avoid spending resources on too wide or too many areas. A well-focused, tightly scoped idea will perform best in this competition.
- *(More tips and examples of good proposals are available at: <https://sites.tufts.edu/dprize/timeline/>)*

# First Round Application

First Round Applications consist of a concept note and a resume.

## Concept Note

Please prepare a concept note which responds to the following prompts. Concept notes are limited to two pages. We do not read anything submitted that is longer than two pages.

*Our team is already familiar with D-Prize challenge topics at a macro level, so there is no need to provide a broad explanation of why this is an important problem to solve. For instance, including large statistics, such as the potential global market size, are not necessary.*

How does your new organization or venture idea improve distribution of your selected intervention? We recommend writing:

- **2-3 sentences** summarizing the main activities of your new organization. For example, you could walk us through step-by-step how you connect a proven intervention to people in need.
- **Bullet points to further explain:**
  - What are the main barriers that currently prevent people from accessing your proven intervention, specific to your pilot region? For example, one common barrier to accessing a product might be a high upfront cost.
  - How does your distribution model specifically overcome these barriers?
  - What is the most fundamental part of your new organization that you need to prove will work during this pilot program? (We think the purpose of a pilot is to test the fundamentals of your business / the basis of your value proposition on a small scale, and we want to know which part of your model you will focus on).

Does your new organization's model work within current health and economic constraints?

- Launching a startup in this year's competition means figuring out how to operate in the time of Covid-19. We recommend you thoroughly consider what health safety measures are necessary for your work. For example, if you are fielding a team that distributes in-person, you should consider what personal protective equipment, training, and monitoring is needed to keep your team and your beneficiaries safe. Alternatively, you may consider relying on models that leverage digital and virtual tools, which remove in-person risks.

How will you manage this venture as a leadership team, in the time of covid19?

- We believe that in the long-term, having a leadership team based in the region of operation is critical to early success. We also understand that many applying entrepreneurs may not have that option available at this moment (due to health concerns, travel restrictions, etc). We recommend you thoroughly consider how you can launch and manage your venture in the short term, within the constraints of covid19.
  - For instance, if you are able to be located in your operating region, what protective measures must you take to ensure your health is not at risk?

- If you plan to manage your venture from afar, how will this work? You may consider finding an in-country team to partner with, or you may have to build an in-country team yourself. In these instances, how will you form these critical relationships? What process will you use to monitor and manage the in-country team?

What is the expected impact of your work? We recommend writing:

- **1-2 sentences** summarizing your marginal impact (ie, the impact you will make compared to the status quo) at a high level, and at an individual or household level. For example, your work might reduce the rates of HIV infections by X% countrywide; and for an individual, could save 7 DALYs (disability adjusted life years, which is a way to measure the cost effectiveness of a poverty intervention).
- **Outcome table:** Over the next 3 months, 1 year, and 2 years, how many proven interventions do you plan to distribute? And how many people will you directly help? We recommend sharing this as a simple table.
- **2-3 sentences** summarizing a rough draft of how much money you need for your pilot program, and what the 3-5 major expenses are expected to be?
- **1 sentence** summarizing your long-term vision for the new organization you will launch.

Who is your team? We recommend:

- **A Table** that lists:
  - All of the people on your team
  - Their job title responsibilities
  - Their location during the pilot
  - Any other professional commitments they have during the pilot
  - If not local to your operating region, please note any developing country experience and specifically, any time you've spent in the pilot region.

### **Resumes / CVs**

Please include a resume for each person on your team, limited to one page per person. Resumes should highlight the most relevant past leadership roles and accomplishments.

### **Additional Information**

Custom Challenge: are you submitting to a Custom Challenge category? If so:

- When submitting, we will ask you to provide a URL link us to one website with credible evidence that supports your intervention.
- We also recommend you include 1 additional page elaborating on your intervention, and citing evidence that it is *proven* and *in need of greater distribution*.

Existing organizations: has your organization already launched? If so, we will ask you to include a summary of your activities since launching, and your current budget / income statement in the submission webform.

## Ready to Apply?

### **Application Instructions**

- Prepare your concept note and resume, and clearly name your files. Documents must be saved as a PDF and are limited to 4MB each.
- Input your contact details and upload your documents to: [www.d-prize.org/Fletcher](http://www.d-prize.org/Fletcher).

### **Questions?**

Email Ariane Theis at [Ariane.Theis@tufts.edu](mailto:Ariane.Theis@tufts.edu).