What is the Create Here Business Plan competition?

Create Here is a competition sponsored by the Downtown Fresno Foundation, organized to increase economic development within the city’s central business district. One competition winner will receive all of the tools necessary for opening a business including a $10,000 cash prize, one year free rent at a downtown storefront located in Civic Center Square, $10,000 build-out of the storefront space, free garbage collection for a year and a suite of professional services and support including a laptop, IT services, business coaching, marketing and branding services, website and social media design and much more.

All semi-finalists and finalists will receive benefits including working with a skilled mentor who will provide business coaching.

Why now?

The Downtown Fresno renaissance we’ve been waiting for is finally underway! Downtown properties are being purchased and renovated every day, new businesses have opened and existing businesses are expanding.

The city just broke ground on the nation’s first High Speed Rail station which will be located in downtown Fresno. Fresno’s new Bus Rapid Transit system will further connect residents and visitors to downtown. Construction to restore two-way vehicular traffic to Fulton Pedestrian Mall begins this year, creating a more vibrant main street in the heart of the city.

Downtown Fresno has never been better positioned for investment. This is the most exciting time in this city’s recent history and we want you to be part of the fun as we rethink, rebuild and revive downtown Fresno!

Who can participate?

We are looking for creators, innovators, visionaries, self-starters, hard workers, believers. In short: entrepreneurs. If you love to create and have a plan to start a new retail or restaurant business or to relocate an existing retail or restaurant business, we want to see you in downtown Fresno.
Why should I apply?
Starting a business is tough work and can be overwhelming. You could do it alone, or you could do it with a cash prize for startup expenses, free rent, personalized guidance from an array of business experts, and the patronage of an energized community that supported you throughout the process. Your call.

Prize package includes:

- **1 year free rent** in a selected storefront space (Civic Center Square)*
- **$10,000 cash prize** to help with startup costs (Downtown Fresno Partnership)
- Laptop and **1 year IT support** (Central Valley IT Solutions)
- 1 year **trash collection** services (Mid Valley Disposal)
- Free **business bank account** with online banking, starter checks, business debit card, 1 day business financial and leadership training workshop, and more (Central Valley Community Bank)
- **Mentorship** with a SCORE mentor (Central Valley SCORE)
- 1 year **membership** to the Fresno Chamber of Commerce (Fresno Chamber of Commerce)
- **$24,000 television media package** including production and airing of TV commercial and appearances on Central Valley Today (KSEE24)
- **Makeup services** for filming the TV commercial (The Loft Salon)
- Complete **marketing and branding** services including logo design, website design and 6 months maintenance with SEO, post card design, Social media set up and custom graphics with 3 months maintenance, 2 hours of social media training, menu design (if winner is a restaurant), and business card design (Luxe Creative Strategies)
- **Advertising** after the Grand Opening (The Business Journal)
- Professional **coaching** on how to conduct media appearances (Collins PR)
- **$10,000 custom build-out** of the storefront space (Viking Construction)
- **Flooring** options for retails space (Innovation Commercial Flooring)

*Civic Center Square has offered 6 amazing locations for the winner to choose from. See last page for location details.

What if I don’t win?
Ten (10) competition semi-finalists will work with a mentor who will provide invaluable business coaching and will be available to you even if you’re not selected as the winner. Five (5) finalists will be eligible to win additional prize packages for runners up as well as a People’s Choice cash award. We will be offering this competition annually and contestants will be welcome to apply again.

Judging Criteria
Projects will be judged by a panel of community stakeholders and business experts. Before the application deadline, we’ll be holding gatherings and sharing useful information on our website to help you understand the criteria and present the best application possible.
The following criteria will be applied to determine the winning Creator:

- Improvement to downtown retail mix
- Applicant’s experience + investment
- Ability to engage the public
- Site selection
- Job creation
- 60 second pitch video
- Create Here Business Plan

See Selection Criteria page for details.

2015 Timeline

March 26th  Create Here Business Plan Competition is launched at State of Downtown
April – June Recruitment of applicants
July 1st Applications open
August 14th Applications due
August 31st Semi-finalists announced
Sept. 14th Revised business plan due
Sept. 28th Finalists announced
Oct. 9th People’s Choice winner announced
Oct. 19th Create Here Winner announced
Nov – Dec Design and improvement of storefront
Jan 2016 Open for business!

See Important Dates page for details.

For more information about the Create Here Business Plan Competition, contact us at randrade@downtownfresno.org.

The Downtown Fresno Foundation conducts projects, programs and activities that support economic development, revitalization and community engagement within downtown Fresno’s central business district. These projects, programs and activities are undertaken with the goal of strengthening the image, appearance and economic vitality of the city’s urban core and they are meant to enhance, enrich and extend the impact of the work being done by the Downtown Fresno Partnership.

Our mission is to enhance our community by providing resources and support for downtown Fresno stakeholders.

Visit www.downtownfresno.org/foundation for more information, program updates, and a complete list of our sponsoring organizations.
APPLICATION

Applicant Information

Name: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________

Email: ____________________________

Cell Phone: ____________________________

LinkedIn Profile: ____________________________

Are you 18 years or older?

☐ Yes (Must be 18 years or older to participate)

Proposed Business Information

Business Name: ____________________________

Business Type:

☐ Sole Proprietor   ☐ Partnership

☐ LLC   ☐ Other:

Business Idea Summary:

What steps have you taken to develop your business idea? Be specific. Attach details if needed.

Checklist – Application deadline, Friday, August 14th at 5pm.

The following items must be submitted via mail to Downtown Fresno Foundation, Attn: Create Here
845 Fulton Mall, Fresno, CA 93721

☐ Application + non-refundable registration fee: $50 check payable to Downtown Fresno Foundation

☐ Signed Rules & Regulations

☐ Signed Participation Release

The following items must be submitted via Dropbox (randrade@downtownfresno.org):

☐ Create Here Business Plan

☐ 60 second pitch video

☐ Applicant’s personal resume

845 Fulton Mall, Fresno, CA 93721 | 559.490.9966 | downtownfresno.org/foundation
1. By submitting an application, applicant agrees to abide by the Rule & Regulations of the Create Here Business Plan Competition.
2. The Downtown Fresno Foundation reserves the right to accept or reject any submission.
3. Applicant understands that review, evaluation and selection of submitted business plans are made at the discretion of the Downtown Fresno Foundation. All decisions are final.
4. Applicants submitting Create Here Business Plan must be 18 years of age or older.
5. Applicant understands that proprietary information will be kept confidential.
6. Business plan must be the original work of the applicant.
7. Business plan should show that this business will contribute to the overall success of downtown Fresno.
8. The Downtown Fresno Foundation reserves the right utilize applicants’ names and likeness during the competition period.
9. All semi-finalists and finalists must agree to work closely with an assigned SCORE mentor.
10. All semi-finalists and finalists grant the Downtown Fresno Foundation permission to conduct a credit and background check.
11. Applicant agrees that all risk and expenses incurred by applicant are solely the responsibility of the applicant.
12. Applicant understands that timeline and prize packages are subject to change.
13. Downtown Fresno Foundation reserves the right to modify Rules and Regulations at any time during the competition.

Printed name ____________________________________________

Signature ___________________________ Date ________________
This agreement is made between the Downtown Fresno Foundation ("Foundation"), a 501 (c) 3 Corporation, in conjunction with the Downtown Fresno Partnership ("Partnership"), a 501 (c) 6 Corporation, and _______________________________________, herein after referred to as Participant.

Participant, which for and in consideration of participating in the Create Here Business Plan Competition, agrees to the policies and regulations governing said competition and covenants, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, and hereby agrees to hold harmless, indemnify and defend FOUNDATION and PARTNERSHIP, their officers, officials, employees, agents, vendors, contractors and volunteers from any and all loss, liability, fines, penalties, forfeitures, costs, and damages (whether in contact, tort or strict liability, including but not limited to personal injury, death at any time and property damage) incurred by FOUNDATION or PARTNERSHIP, Participant or any other person, and from any and all claims, demands and actions in law or equity (including attorney’s fees and litigation expenses), arising or alleged to have arisen out of or in connection with Participant’s involvement in the event and related activities.

Participant’s obligations under the preceding sentence shall apply regardless of whether FOUNDATION, PARTNERSHIP, or any of their officers, officials, employees, agents, vendors, contractors, or authorized volunteers are negligent, and shall not apply to any loss, liability, fines, penalties, forfeitures, costs or damages caused solely by the gross negligence, or caused by the willful misconduct, of FOUNDATION or PARTNERSHIP or any of their officers, officials, employees, agents or authorized volunteers.

Participant shall conduct all defenses at his/her/its sole cost. The duty to defend hereunder is wholly independent of and separate from the duty to indemnify and such duty to defend exists regardless of any ultimate liability of Participant. Such defense obligation shall arise immediately upon presentation of a Claim by any party and written notice of such Claim being provided to Participant. Policy limits do not act as a limitation upon the amount of defense and/or indemnification to be provided by Participant. Approval or purchase of any insurance contracts or policies shall in no way relieve from liability nor limit the liability of Participant, its officials, officers, employees, agents, vendors, contractors, volunteers or invitees.

FOUNDATION shall be reimbursed for all costs and attorney’s fees incurred by FOUNDATION in enforcing this Agreement. PARTNERSHIP shall be reimbursed for all costs and attorney’s fees incurred by PARTNERSHIP in enforcing this Agreement.

This Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement shall survive the event.

The undersigned acknowledges that he/she (i) has read and fully understands the content of this indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement; (ii) is aware that this is a contract between the FOUNDATION in conjunction with PARTNERSHIP and Participant; (iii) has had the opportunity to consult with his/her attorney, in his/her discretion; (iv) is fully aware of the legal consequences of signing this document; and (v) is the Participant or his/her authorized signatory.

DATED:____________       ____________________________________________________

Participant’s Signature

___________________________________  __________  __________
Address                                                Telephone Number

DATED:____________      _____________________________  ________________

Downtown Fresno Foundation Representative Signature
Business plans will be judged by a panel of community stakeholders and business experts. The following criteria will be applied to determine a winner:

**□ Improvement to downtown retail mix**
Will your business idea be adding a unique product/service and experience to customers? How will your business impact and improve the downtown Fresno business community?

**□ Applicants experience & investment**
How prepared are you to execute your Create Here business plan? What is your level of financial investment?

**□ Ability to engage the public**
Are you community driven? How well can you engage and communicate your proposed business idea to others? Are you able to manage different communication channels (TV, radio, print and social media)? How will you be an advocate for downtown Fresno?

**□ Site selection**
For your chosen location, how will your business add to the existing retail/restaurant mix?

**□ Job creation**
How many jobs are you creating?

**□ 60 second pitch video**
First impressions matter. Show us what you’ve got!

**□ Create Here Business Plan**
The following components must be addressed in your Create Here Business Plan:
- Executive Summary – *Fundamental of proposed business*
- General Company Description – *Describe your business. How will your business make a difference in downtown Fresno?*
- Products and Services – *What products/services will you offer?*
- Marketing Plan – *Include market research, product information, customer data, competitor identification, niche placement, strategies, and sales forecasts*
- Operational Plan – *What is the daily operation of your business?*
- Management and Organization – *Who will manage the business? Who makes your business?*
- Personal Financial Statement
- Startup Expenses and Capitalization
- Financial Plan – *What is your 12-month profit and loss projection? Include a 3yr-5yr forecast*

*For sample business plans visit* [www.downtownfresno.org/foundation](http://www.downtownfresno.org/foundation)*
**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**March 26th**  
In partnership with the Downtown Fresno Partnership, the Downtown Fresno Foundation officially launches the Create Here Business Plan Competition.

**April /May / June**  
Visit downtownfresno.org/foundation to learn how you can start preparing your business plan. Resources and workshop dates from Central Valley SCORE will be available.

**July 1st**  
Applications open  
Visit downtownfresno.org/foundation

**August 14th**  
Applications due  
Remember to review business plan competition requirements and submit all materials.

**August 31st**  
Semi-finalists announced  
Up to 10 applicants will be selected

**September 1st – 13th**  
Semi-finalists work with assigned SCORE mentors to improve business plans.

**September 14th**  
Revised business plan due

**September 28th**  
Finalists are announced  
5 applicants will be selected

**October 9th**  
People’s Choice Winner announced

**October 12th**  
Finalists present their final pitch to Create Here judges.

**October 19th**  
Create Here Winner is announced

**October 26th**  
Create Here Grand Prize winner press conference and media event

**November – December**  
Design and improvement of storefront

**January 2016**  
Grand Opening  
Welcome to Downtown Fresno!
Create Here Business Plan Competition:
Available storefront spaces
Free rent for 1 year courtesy of our friends at Civic Center Square

- 2405 Capitol St., Ste 108 & 109 (in Galleria)
- 915 N. Street
- 2343 Kern St
- 2414 Tulare St
- 2414, 2420, 2424 Tulare St
- 2424 Tulare St