

MISSION:

Startup Tucson is working to transform the Southern Arizona economy by increasing the quantity, quality, and diversity of entrepreneurs and startups in Tucson and by changing the narrative of our region as one that is seen as a supportive place to launch and grow a business.

WE ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION BY:



Build the startup community through events and networking opportunities



Providing education to early-stage startups



Connecting entrepreneurs to each other and resources through the Startup Tucson Network Membership



On going coaching, accountability, referrals, and mentorship through monthly Connection Services

OLD PUEBLO. NEW IDEAS.

Tucson's story, people and business are different so the approach to assisting startups here must be too. While Tucson has some great later stage launch and growth resources, support for early ideas was lacking. To fill this gap, Startup Tucson's accelerator model is non-traditional and has been completely tailored to meet the needs of these early-stage founders.

THE HUB OF THE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM:

A NON-TRADITIONAL Model FOR A NON-TRADITIONAL ECOSYSTEM

- ✔ **ENTREPRENEURS FIRST:** Our model was developed based on hundreds of customer interviews and was designed to solve the current problems of our "customers."
- ✔ **ALIGNED WITH NEW RESEARCH ON BUILDING ECOSYSTEMS IN SMALLER CITIES:** We're proud to say its also in alignment with the newest best practices released as part of the Kauffman Foundation's Ecosystem Playbook.
- ✔ **FOCUSED ON EARLY-STAGE:** Most accelerators won't even let someone in the door if they haven't proven they are at a certain stage of development. That wasn't working here in Tucson. We are an earlier ecosystem so we need earlier support. Our services are available for companies in ALL stages, with a focus on cultivating early ideas
- ✔ **SUBSIDIZED AND ACCESSIBLE:** As a non-profit, we work with public and private partners and seek out grant funding to ensure our programs remain low cost and accessible for these early founders

Our Approach: Part 1 Ecosystem Building

THE HUB OF THE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM:

A NON-TRADITIONAL Model FOR A NON-TRADITIONAL ECOSYSTEM

Using data and best practices, we built an approach that focuses on filling gaps in services and providing customized, ongoing, support. As the central hub of innovation in Tucson, we leverage partners to connect services across the ecosystem and reduce duplication. We are the “front door” to the startup world here in Tucson and many entrepreneurs find us first.



Discovery Events

Startup Tucson increases the diversity and number of entrepreneurs in the ecosystem by offering regular networking and learning events, open to the whole community.

Weekly and monthly events provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to network with each other, mentors and investors including Startup Drinks and Startup Coffee.

Yearly TENWEST Impact Festival featuring Entrepreneurship and IdeaFunding day devoted entirely to startups. IdeaFunding includes a multi-round, level and prize pitch competition open to Arizona entrepreneurs. All judges are active investors and mentors and all participating companies receive pitch training.

✔ Regular networking opportunities offered to startups.

✔ Opportunities to pitch ideas and startups to investors along with other capital formation avenues to startups.



Startup Network

The Startup Network is a free membership hub for active Southern Arizona Entrepreneurs.

Resources : After joining, members can connect with each other through the digital portal, find and share resources and a redeem special opportunities for startups from our partners in the ecosystem.

Eligibility: To join the Network, startups must have attended a Startup Lab and completed a growth tracker. To stay in the Network, startups must remain actively working on their ideas and businesses.

✔ Selective process to choose participating startups.

✔ Resource sharing and co-working arrangements for startups.

✔ Shared working environments focused on building a strong startup community.



Connections Services

Network Members are eligible for free monthly coaching & referrals called “Connections Services”. Our team helps founders with the right people at the right time.

Partner Referrals : We connect entrepreneurs with resources offered by our partners in the community, preventing duplication while promoting cooperation and collaboration within the ecosystem

Accountability: We provide tailored advice as well as accountability to growth goals set during each monthly Connection Service coaching session.

Mentorship: Our pool of mentors includes designated, qualified mentors specifically for high-growth and tech-driven companies.

Capital: While we do not directly help entrepreneurs raise capital, we do connect them to investors and mentors that can help them with this process. We also provide education on the types of capital available and what form might be the best fit for each founder.

✔ Introductions to customers, partners, suppliers, advisory boards and other players.

✔ High-growth and tech-driven startup mentorship and commercialization assistance.

Our Approach: Part 2 Education

A LA CARTE EDUCATION FROM INDUSTRY EXPERTS

Cohort models aren't always the right fit for early entrepreneurs. Our scaffolded pipeline and a la carte catalogue allows entrepreneurs to move through programs at their own pace.

Innovation Program Feature: Startup Tucson Course Catalogue

We've broken the cohort accelerator model apart and offer education instead as part of a comprehensive Course Catalogue. Benefits include:

-  Courses are offered in the best format for the material being taught instead of forcing them into a limited cohort structure
-  Partners and mentors can add their own courses, ensuring that the courses offered are being taught by the experts and cover a wide range of topics
-  Courses are only scheduled when there is enough demand so entrepreneurs dictate the what skills are most important to them

UNIVERSITY PARTNERS



COMMUNITY PARTNERS



PRIVATE PARTNERS



Startup Labs

The first step for developing an idea into an actionable, lean business plan.

Discovery Events

Start the journey with weekly Startup Coffee or monthly Startup Drinks and TENWEST Impact Festival

Startup Skills Clinic

Mentors & industry experts work with entrepreneurs to build a self-assessment & a customized growth plan.

Connections Services

Monthly coaching, accountability, and referrals every step of the way.

Startup Course Catalogue

A la carte entrepreneurial education allowing entrepreneurs to pick and choose what skills they want to build when. Everything you need, nothing you don't.

STORYTELLING:

We shine a light on innovation in the region through intentional storytelling in print, video, blog, social, and newsletter. We reach over 2 million engagements on our platforms each year.

IdeaFunding Pitch Competition & TENWEST Festival

Annual event featuring 15k attendees that includes education, a robust pitch competition, and countless networking opportunities. Over 100k given in prize money to entrepreneurs.

The Plan

Through customer interviews, discovery and research, Startup Tucson has designed a plan for this award to address the particular problems identified by women in tech in our community and that face women in tech at large. Tucson needs more women tech founders and Startup Tucson's location at the front door to the ecosystem is the perfect place to welcome them in.



From my own personal experience as well as that of the women inventors I support, a strong female mentor on the startup advisory team is critical - someone who can provide insight and guidance on things like life/work balance, culture navigation, and leadership skills

Joann MacMaster, Investor and Mentor

THE PROBLEM

Our interviews show that women founders in Tucson need a different place to connect with their female peers and discuss how to overcome the unique challenges they face. They need mentors that are knowledgeable in guiding them through these unique challenges as well as consistent early-stage education on these issues. They also need to know that founding a tech company as a woman is possible.

THE SOLUTION

Building on our existing model, Startup Tucson will seek to address these gaps by creating opportunities for early-stage female tech founders to network with each other and mentors, and receive tailored education and guidance through their early development. Startup Tucson will also seek to elevate the story around women founders in Tucson to showcase that tech is possible for women in our community. SBA Funding will support:



Focused **marketing campaigns** highlighting women tech entrepreneurs in Tucson and bring more entrepreneurs into the ecosystem (\$10,000)



Female specific **networking opportunities and events** that connect founders and mentors (\$10,000)



Addition of **Educational courses** and opportunities to our existing pipeline that focus on the challenges identified by Tucson's female tech founders and aim to fill some of the gaps in resources that currently exist in our community (\$15,000)



Creation of stipends for female **tech mentors** to assist in the early-stage support of female tech founders in all challenges faced (\$15,000)



Within this model and our scaffolded program approach, SBIR/STTR programs can be introduced to this group earlier in their lifecycle and mentors can help these entrepreneurs understand how to approach the existing SBIR/STTR resources in Tucson so that when they do attend these trainings, events, etc., they can take full advantage of what is being offered.

SBIR/STTR Programs

CONNECTIONS TO SBIR/STTR PROGRAMS:

Uniquely positioned as a nonprofit that serves as the hub of the Tucson innovation ecosystem and the organizer of the TENWEST Impact Festival, Startup Tucson has a broad array of connections and provides various unique services to science-focused entrepreneurs.



Networking and Storytelling - since 2012, Startup Tucson has worked with a variety of early-stage science focused entrepreneurs. Many of these entrepreneurs continue to engage in monthly discovery events as both attendees and speakers.



Pitch Training and Prize Investment - Within TENWEST and IdeaFunding, Startup Tucson facilitates the largest pitch competition for startups in Southern Arizona and awards over \$70,000 in prizes each October. Science-based entrepreneurs receive pitch training to compete and winners of the past three years have all been science-based startups, with 106 and 2017 prizes going to female founders.



Connection Services: Positioned outside of the University, Startup Tucson has the ability to connect with a broad array of both public and private partners within the ecosystem. It also has the ability to recruit a wide variety of mentors -- some specialized in assisting with SBIR/STTR education and proposal services.

PAST WINNERS:

A number of our IdeaFunding pitch competition winners have gone on to apply for and win SBIR/STTR grants. They continue to be dedicated Startup Tucson Network members, using Connection Services, serving as peer mentors, and Advisory Board Members.



Working with Women Entrepreneurs

Global Challenges

DIFFICULTY CONNECTING:

Female founders are sometimes less likely to come out to events and have expressed that they have a harder time connecting to peers at events

RISK AND INHERENT BIAS:

Female tech founders don't trust that they can navigate the inherent biases that exist against them and take the next step/risk

Local Challenges

SMALLER COMMUNITY:

Tucson is a younger startup ecosystem and overall has less entrepreneurs than larger cities

PROMOTION AND ACCESS:

Difficulty in ensuring services reach the women who actually want to launch STEM-focused companies

OPPORTUNITIES:

Startup Tucson has a proven track record of engaging women in entrepreneurship. 65% of the entrepreneurs we serve are women (almost double the national average). With this grant, we will be able to specifically encourage and expand the STEM-related female entrepreneurs progressing in their businesses. Our unique qualifications include:

- ✓ Expressed Community Need: Identified a gap in our ecosystem based on customer interviews and discovery
- ✓ Role as a Hub for the Ecosystem allows up to leverage other local resources and expand the impact
- ✓ IdeaFunding and TENWEST provides a platform for visibility and attracting funding
- ✓ Positioned as "the front door" to the ecosystem allows broad reach to encourage more early-stage women to take a chance
- ✓ Adaptive Program Model lends well to adding a variety of education to see what works best
- ✓ Stipening SME Mentors will provide higher quality experiences for female founders
- ✓ Entrepreneur-Centered Approach
- ✓ Award Winning Services & Strong Community

My first experience with the programs Startup Tucson provides was Startup Coffee and I immediately knew I was in the right place to connect to the people and resources that would fast track the launch, development, and growth of my company! The value this organization aggregates and delivers is unmatched and operating at the level of high-ticket coaching programs I've previously experienced. Thank you Startup Tucson!!!

Nicole Johnson, Tech Founder



Timeline

PHASE 1

Design a marketing and storytelling campaign that highlights women in tech in Tucson including founders, mentors, resources, etc. Use blogs, articles, mini-docuseries, social media, etc.

Survey existing networking opportunities for women tech founders and determine what gaps exist

Talk with more women founders to determine ideal schedule, venue, etc for networking events

Continue to recruit and connect with female tech mentors to structure stipends for continued mentor support for tech founders

Design new curriculum and add courses to the Course Catalogue to address the gaps in existing education opportunities for early-stage founders. To include early intro to SBIR/STTR funding, getting started in tech, combating biases and to be developed by and taught by female mentors

PHASE 2

Launch and run storytelling campaign

Add newly developed courses to the catalogue

Announce the addition of special SBA program for early-stage women founders to work one-on-one with new mentors

Host monthly networking events specifically for women founders

PHASE 3

Continue to evaluate courses and events and modify to fit new emerging needs and continue to provide value

Provide pitch training to women ready to compete for prize funding within TENWEST 2020

Track entrepreneur progress through the Network and mentors



Our Team

The Startup Tucson team is exceptionally well positioned to execute on a female-focused collective-impact project.

- ✓ **Expressed Community Need:** Our team has demonstrated success with large-scale collective-impact models that break the mold.
- ✓ **Huge Platform:** We are experts in education, building inclusive programming, and measuring impact. The secret to our success is remaining laser-focused on continuous improvement and learning using qualitative and quantitative customer feedback.
- ✓ **Adaptive Program Model:** Collectively, our all-female-leadership team have directly overseen and managed over 15 million dollars in federal, state, and private grants and contracts.
- ✓ **Hub Status:** We bring to the ecosystem a holistic lens from a variety of perspectives, with rich collective experience economic development, education, program evaluation, community organizing, technology, and arts.
- ✓ **Entrepreneur-Centered:** We are keen collaborators, excelling in fastidious reporting and continuous communication with granting organizations.
- ✓ **Front of the Funnel** Our board includes two amazing female founders, investors and mentors that have contributed to the design of these our current programs and this proposal.



I'm inspired everyday by the entrepreneurs we work with. They make me want to work harder and continue to build an organization that can help them solve our world's greatest problems and everyday pains. Its a privilege to get to help with even a little part of that process and be their biggest advocates along the way.

Liz Pocock, JD
CEO of Startup Tucson

As strong as our team is, the strongest part of our team is that we do not work in isolation. We intentionally built structures for continuous community input. In addition to a deeply engaged Advisory Committee of entrepreneurs and representative community leaders, we have built powerful coalitions across the state, bringing together major public and private players. The full weight of our personal and organizational strengths will be effectively leveraged to powerfully deliver on our vision for this project.

RISK FACTORS

Lack of availability to participate from female tech entrepreneurs
Scheduling challenges in finding critical mass for founders
Ensuring the mentors engaged are the correct fit for the goals of the programs
New needs emerge through additional engagement that cannot be implemented under the timeline and funding available from the award
Change in overall Tucson economy and support of Startup Tucson from sponsors

- ✓ Amount of capital raised for entrepreneurs last year: \$70,000 in prize funding
- ✓ Estimated number of clients/entrepreneurs we anticipate assisting:
300 women through events
30 early stage women tech founders
- ✓ Estimated number of training hours to be provided to clients: 300
- ✓ Estimated number of business/technical assistance hours to be provided: 100
- ✓ Additional key metrics:
Number of women tech mentors 20
1-5 Receiving stipends
- ✓ Number of new women tech clients/entrepreneurs 50%
- ✓ We will gather additional qualitative data around mindset shift, biggest challenges and needs, and behavioral changes. All insights will be shared with SBA.
- ✓ We will report out on marketing metrics as related to successful storytelling through digital and traditional media efforts.

2019 Q1 by the numbers



STARTUP TUCSON RUNS A 15K FESTIVAL FOR INNOVATORS

This event will serve as a catalyst to activate female STEM entrepreneurs through education, pitching, and entrepreneurship. The SBA grant will help us to leverage this event to ensure growth throughout the year.

2019 HIGHLIGHTS

VentureLab:

Filled with more than 25 micro-workshops, resources, and one-to-one advisors -- entrepreneurs and startups can connect with the information and mentorship needed to advance their company.

Innovation Ecosystem Commercialization Un-conference:

High-level discussion on building a commercialization ecosystem in Arizona.

IdeaFunding Pitch Competition:

Keynote Speaker: Allie Burns, CEO of Village Capital. Mainstage Pitch Competition pits five up and come companies in a fast-paced shark tank style competition for a grand prize of \$25,000 presented by UA Venture Capital. Featured Judges from Rocky Mountain

Panels & Speakers

Rich discussion & education on the most pressing topics for entrepreneurs from nationally recognized speakers and companies.

Pitch Rooms:

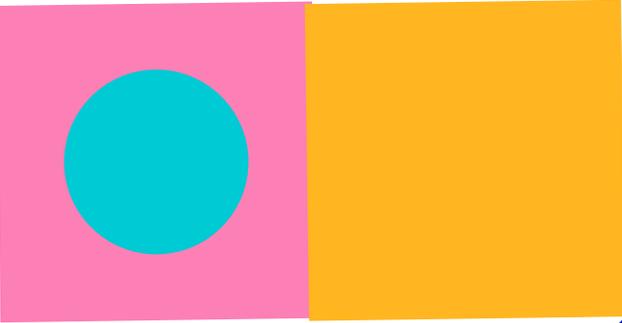
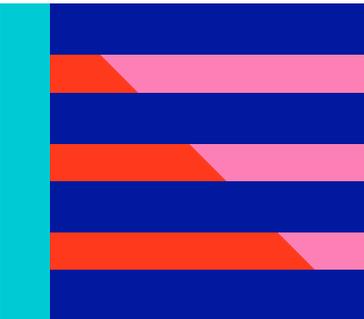
SaaS, Biotech, Consumer Products, Food, Retail

Founders Panel & Awards

Features three founders from successful national brands telling their stories of triumph, failure, and startup life. Pitch awards given

BY THE NUMBERS

15K ATTENDEES	\$100K IN PRIZE DOLLARS	25 PITCH TEAMS
22YRS IN THE MAKING	100HRS OF MENTORING	



IDEAFUNDING

