

WE POWER FOOD PITCH COMPETITION

APPLICATION TERMS & CONDITIONS

(Official Rules & Requirements)

By submitting an application to the WE Power Food Pitch Competition, the applicant ("Participant") agrees to the following Terms & Conditions:

1. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to participate in the competition, applicants must:

- Be a **woman-owned business**
- Be a **member** of WE Power Food in good standing
- Be a **legally registered and operating food or beverage business**
- Operate within the **food system**, including but not limited to:
 - Food & beverage products
 - Catering companies & food trucks
 - Restaurants, bakeries & cafés
 - Specialty food manufacturing
 - Agricultural food production
 - Non-alcoholic beverage brands
- Be seeking funding for **business growth, expansion, or value-added product development**, including:
 - New product launches
 - Value-added agricultural products
 - Production scaling
 - Packaging, branding, or distribution expansion
- Be able to fully participate in:
 - Required training sessions
 - Pitch preparation
 - Live pitch rounds
 - Public presentations

 **Businesses that are not legally operating at the time of application are not eligible.**

2. COUNTY ELIGIBILITY

Tier 1 & Tier 2 County Eligibility

Businesses physically located in a **North Carolina Tier 1 or Tier 2 county** are eligible to compete for the **Tier 1 & Tier 2 Cash Awards totaling \$25,000**.

Open County Eligibility

Businesses located **outside of Tier 1 & Tier 2 counties** may still:

- Apply
- Participate in training and pitch rounds
- Compete for the **Open County Cash Award of \$5,000**

They are **not eligible** for Tier 1 & Tier 2 restricted awards.

3. CASH AWARDS & USE OF FUNDS

Total funding awarded across the competition is **\$30,000 in cash awards**.

Cash awards **must be used for legitimate business purposes related to growth, expansion, or value-added production**, including but not limited to:

- Equipment & tools
- Commercial kitchen access or upgrades
- Product development
- Value-added agricultural production
- Inventory & ingredients
- Packaging, labeling & compliance
- Marketing, branding & website development
- Licensing, permits & inspections

Prohibited Uses of Funds

Cash awards **may NOT be used for**:

- Personal expenses unrelated to business operations
- Passive investment vehicles
- Real estate purchases
- Debt not directly tied to business operations
- Previously held business debts

WE Power Food reserves the right to request a **brief 6–12 month impact update** from award recipients.

4. PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

By applying, participants agree to:

- Attend all required training sessions (unless otherwise approved)
- Submit required deliverables by stated deadlines
- Present at live pitch rounds if selected
- Engage respectfully with judges, mentors, and fellow founders

Failure to meet participation requirements may result in **disqualification at any stage**.

5. JUDGING & SELECTION PROCESS

- Judges score participants using standardized evaluation rubrics
 - All judging decisions are **final**
 - WE Power Food reserves the right to:
 - Adjust the number of finalists
 - Withhold awards if minimum scoring thresholds are not met
 - Reassign awards if eligibility is later found to be misrepresented
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6. PUBLICITY & MEDIA RELEASE

By participating, applicants grant WE Power Food permission to:

- Use their name, business name, logo, pitch video, photos, and event recordings
- Share content on websites, social media, press releases, and sponsor materials

This permission is granted **without additional compensation** beyond any awarded prize.

7. ACCURACY OF INFORMATION

Applicants certify that:

- All information submitted is **true and accurate**
 - Any misrepresentation may result in **immediate disqualification**
 - Eligibility documentation may be requested for verification
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8. TAX RESPONSIBILITY

- All cash awards are considered **taxable income**
 - Award recipients are solely responsible for:
 - All federal, state, and local tax obligations
 - WE Power Food does not provide tax guidance or withholdings
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9. FUNDING AGREEMENT

All award recipients may be required to:

- Sign a **Cash Award Acceptance & Use Agreement**
 - Acknowledge understanding of use restrictions and reporting expectations
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10. RIGHT TO MODIFY OR CANCEL

WE Power Food reserves the right to:

- Modify timelines, structure, or prize distribution
 - Cancel the competition due to unforeseen circumstances
 - Make final eligibility determinations in all cases
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11. NON-DISCRIMINATION

WE Power Food does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, or marital status.