

# 2022 Best in the West Application

PLEASE READ THIS SECTION FULLY BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION:

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2022 Best in the West Timeline and Process

FEBRUARY 23rd: Applications due by 5:00pm AKST

Applications may be either submitted via Google Forms, or received at the Cultural Center in Bethel via mail (PO Box 368 Bethel, AK 99559), fax ((907) 543-4527), or email ([mrwhalen@alaska.edu](mailto:mrwhalen@alaska.edu)). Please note that applications must be RECEIVED by the due date.

FEBRUARY 25th: Finalists notified.

MARCH 2nd: Deadline for finalists to accept or decline participation in 2022 Best in the West program.

MONTHS OF MARCH AND APRIL: Approximately 8 workshops held via audio/video conference for finalists. Finalists must attend at least 4 workshops to remain eligible.

MAY 2nd: Full and final business plans are due.

BEGINNING OF MAY: Statewide panel of business and community leaders evaluate business plans and choose winners and award amounts.

MID-MAY: Winners announced!

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Cama-i! Welcome to the Best in the West, an annual business plan competition that provides training and financial awards to selected entrepreneurs ready to move their business ideas forward in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region of Western Alaska.

The purpose of this application is to share basic information about your business or business idea. If you are accepted into the competition, you'll participate in workshops to help you refine this idea and build your business plan over the months of March and April. In May, you will submit a business plan for the chance to win financial support to help make your business plan a reality!

The Best in the West business plan competition is managed by the UAF Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center and is supported this year by the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development, Alaska Growth Capital, and Bethel Community Services Foundation.

Historically, the average award amount of the Best in the West business plan competition has been \$3,000 - \$4,000 per chosen winner. However, this amount depends on available funding and varies each year. This money can only be used toward business expenses and documentation will be required to prove how funds were used.

In this application we want to hear about your business idea, as well as why YOU are uniquely qualified to start this type of business in this moment. This application will be judged by the Best in the West organizing committee on:

- The viability of your business idea in the region
- Your personal experience to carry out this business
- Positive impact in the region
- Your ability to commit to the 2022 Best in the West program

Selected finalists will move forward in the Best in the West program, as well as receive virtual training and support to build their business plans for final judging and potential awards.

Questions? Please contact Bethy Whalen at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center in Bethel at (907) 543-4538 or [mrwhalen@alaska.edu](mailto:mrwhalen@alaska.edu).

#### Eligibility Guidelines

- To participate in Best in the West, applicants must live full-time in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region and the proposed business must also be located in the region.
- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older by the application deadline (February 23, 2022).
- Eligible types of businesses are new or very recently started businesses or existing businesses that are expanding into a new product or service.
- Network Marketing/Referral Marketing businesses (also known as multi-level marketing businesses) are not eligible to apply (e.g. Posh or Young Living)
- All existing businesses that apply must be in good standing with applicable federal, state, and local regulations and taxes.
- Applicants can apply alongside one business partner or co-founder if they choose. However, that person must also be listed on the (future) business license and both persons must attend workshops.
- There is a maximum of two wins for any one person and/or business and there must be a gap year between any two wins/applications. A small honorarium may be awarded to all participants. This honorarium is not considered a “win” and will not disqualify the applicant from applying in the following year.
- Applicants may only submit one application per year.
- Applications that are incomplete or supply false information will be disqualified.

Thank you for your interest in Best in the West. We look forward to learning more about you and your business idea!

\* Required

1. Email \*

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2. Proposed Business Name \*

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3. Description of Business \*

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4. Town where the business will be located \*

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5. Your Full Name \*

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6. Mailing Address \*

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7. City/Town, State, and Zip Code \*

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8. Physical Address (If different from mailing)

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9. Phone Number \*

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10. Is the above number a \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Cell phone

Landline phone

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Your current employer (if none, write n/a) \*

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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12. Your current job position (if none, write n/a) \*

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Length of time in current position (if none, write n/a) \*

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Tribal affiliation (if any)

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Are you applying with a co-founder/business partner? If so, they must also be a legal owner of the business and commit to attending all Best in the West trainings. \*

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

16. If yes, please write their full name, mailing address, and physical address (if different from mailing address) here:

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17. Co-founder/business partner's phone number:

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18. Co-founder/business partner's email address:

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19. Co-founder/business partner's current employer, job position, and length of time in that position:

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20. Co-founder/business partner's tribal affiliation (if any):

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21. This business will be located in the Y-K Delta region: \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

22. Is this a new or recently started business or an expansion of an existing business into a new product or service? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

New or recently started business

Expansion into new product or service by an existing business

23. Will you be at least 18 years old by February 18, 2022? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

24. Have you ever won Best in the West in the past? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

25. If yes, what year did you win?

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26. Are you a first-time business owner? \*

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

27. If no, provide legal name of previously owned business(es) and location(s):

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28. How did you hear about the Best in the West business plan competition? \*

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29. BUSINESS IDEA: Please describe the product or service you hope to offer with this business. What problem does it solve in your community? Who will buy your products? What will you sell? What will be some of your expenses? What unique advantages will your product or service have that similar businesses in the region don't have? Who are your competitors? \*

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30. YOUR EXPERIENCE: Why do you want to start a business? Do you have any experience managing or operating the type of business explained above? Have you ever owned a business before? Who are experts in your network who will help you get there? \*

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31. SUSTAINABILITY/PROFITABILITY: The Best in the West competition awards small amounts of funding to select winners; you'll need to show how your business can operate and benefit the community without further grant funding. Tell us about your expected general expenses for the first year of operation, pricing expectations, willingness of local customers to pay for this product/service, and other resources. What funding do you already have secured? \*

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32. Please describe your accessibility to a computer: \*

*Check all that apply.*

- Own my own computer
- Use shared computer in community
- Access to a computer at work
- Access to a family member or friend's computer
- No access to a computer

Other:  \_\_\_\_\_



33. Describe your access to the internet (at work, at home, what speed, what provider - GCI, etc?) \*

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34. What is your average cost of internet per month? \*

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35. Do you have a smartphone? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No



38. Anything else you'd like to tell us about your availability and ability to participate in the virtual trainings in March and April?

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39. By checking the boxes below, I am attesting that: \*

*Check all that apply.*

- All information provided in this application is true, correct, and complete as of today.
- I am able to attend and actively participate in 4 to 8 Best in the West virtual trainings.
- I will be able to write my business plan by May 2, submitting it in typed form via email.
- I have no plans to move out of the Y-K region in the next year.
- I am excited about this business idea!

40. Please type your name below as your signature \*

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41. Co-founder/business partner's name as their signature (if applicable)

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