

TEDC 2024 CEDA APPLICATION



All Applications Must Be Received by August 16, 2024

The 2024 CEDA nominations will be judged in each of the five categories that have made the most significant contribution to economic development in their community and the State of Texas.

AWARD CATEGORIES

The CEDA will be awarded to one community from each of the following five population categories: (as currently marketed). Mark the population category for which you are applying. In addition to CEDA by population, applicants will be considered for five criteria awards such as: Innovativeness, Transferability, Community Commitment & Leverage, Measured Objectives and Secondary Benefits.

- Population less than 10,000
- Population 10,001 to 20,000
- Population 20,001 to 50,000
- Population 50,001 to 100,000
- **Population 100,001 to 250,000**
- Population 250,001 and above

NOMINATION:

Name of Community: Round Rock, TX – Startup Day & Pitch Competition

TEDC Member Name: Jordan Robinson

Telephone #: 512-255-5805

Email Address: jrobinson@roundrockchamber.org

Community Population: 133,691

Community/Organization LinkedIn Profile: [Round Rock Chamber LinkedIn](#)

Application Submitted By: Kiersten Rathke

Email Address: krathke@roundrockchamber.org

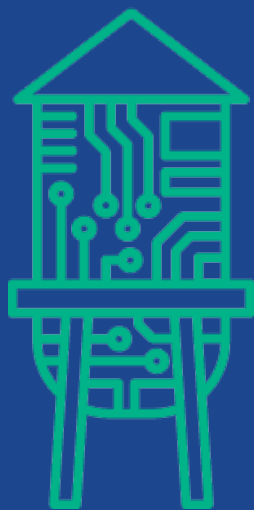
Media Contacts: [optional]

Organization: Round Rock Chamber **Contact Name:** Kiersten Rathke

Email Address: krathke@roundrockchamber.org



TEDC 2024 CEDA APPLICATION NARRATIVE PORTION



**ROUND
ROCK**
STARTUP DAY

**ROUND ROCK STARTUP DAY
& PITCH COMPETITION**

DESCRIPTION:

Home to the headquarters of Dell Technologies, the community of Round Rock, Texas, a suburb north of Austin, understands the economic value of supporting companies that scale in the community.

However, only in recent years, the Round Rock Chamber's economic developments strategy sought to strategically and intentionally provide support for entrepreneurs, understanding that innovation is a key driver of our economy. In seeking new opportunities to provide direct support to entrepreneurs, the inaugural "Round Rock Startup Day" was developed and designed to cater to entrepreneurs at all stages of their start-up journey.

The idea for Startup Day emerged from recognizing the need to support entrepreneurs outside of Downtown Austin. In 2022, in partnership with the Round Rock Public Library, the Chamber hosted the community's first Business Plan Competition, which evolved into launching the Round Rock Chamber's 1st Annual Startup Pitch Competition in 2023. The success from those initiatives fueled the need for an entire day, and less than a year later, Rock Startup Day & Pitch Competition was officially launched on May 2, 2024.

The day began with a morning Buildership Workshop® led by Builders + Backers, a national accelerator and funding platform, for those curious about entrepreneurship. The day continued with insightful afternoon education sessions covering various topics, and concluded with the 2nd Annual Round Rock Pitch Competition, where the finalist was awarded a prize valued at \$10,000, further accelerating the community's interest in supporting additional innovation ecosystem development initiatives.

The 2024 Round Rock Startup Day, an initiative spearheaded by the Round Rock Chamber's Entrepreneurship Council, showcased an exemplary collaboration of individuals and organizations dedicated to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. The council, comprised of local founders, small business owners and other volunteers with the Round Rock Chamber, played a pivotal role in identifying the right partners for the workshop and curating engaging topics for the afternoon sessions.

Integral to the event's success were the many contributors who brought diverse perspectives and expertise to the table. Thought leaders from the Austin startup ecosystem – including leaders of angel networks, incubators, accelerators and established mentors – joined forces to provide invaluable guidance on various aspects of the day. Their involvement ensured that participants received top-tier insights and support. In addition, Texas State University significantly contributed by graciously hosting the event at their Round Rock Campus. This partnership not only provided a conducive environment for the day's activities, but also highlighted the university's commitment to supporting entrepreneurial endeavors.

The collaborative effort of all participants underscored the strength of our community and our shared vision for economic development and innovation. The 2024 Round Rock Startup Day stands as a testament to the power of partnership and collective effort in driving entrepreneurial success.

INNOVATIVENESS

The 2024 Round Rock Startup Day distinguished itself through a series of creative and innovative approaches that set it apart from traditional entrepreneurial events. One of the leading ways the event distinguished itself is by being one of the first major entrepreneur focused events in Central Texas outside of the Downtown Austin Area. Round Rock has realized the need for additional free entrepreneurship events and resources outside of Austin proper.

Unique elements that contributed to its success and impact on the local startup ecosystem included partnering with Builders & Backers for a highly interactive session where participants engaged directly with an industry expert through Q&A, live problem-solving and collaborative activities. The afternoon sessions were tailored to address some of the specific needs and challenges of the local startup community. Lastly, founders had the opportunity to pitch their ideas to a panel of investors and receive real-time feedback, allowing for immediate improvement and learning.

The 2024 Round Rock Startup Day exemplified innovation and creativity in its design and execution, making it a transformative event for the local entrepreneurial community. By leveraging unique formats and fostering diverse collaborations, the event set a new standard for entrepreneurial development initiatives.

TRANSFERABILITY

The success of the 2024 Round Rock Startup Day demonstrates its potential for adaptation in other communities seeking to grow their entrepreneurial ecosystems. Several key elements of the project make it versatile and easily replicable.

The collaborative approach of partnering with local organizations, educational institutions, and businesses can be tailored to any community. By leveraging existing networks and resources, other communities can similarly extend their reach and engage a broader audience.

The use of varied marketing channels such as partnerships with industry groups, social media outreach, paid advertising, and attending related events can be customized to suit different local contexts and audiences. This ensures effective promotion and participant engagement.

The format of interactive workshops, pitch competitions, and networking sessions can be adapted to meet the specific needs and interests of other communities. Ensuring that content is relevant and valuable will attract participants and encourage full-day attendance, even among those with full-time jobs.

Executing a dedicated day to supporting startups in your community, as well as ongoing support through regular meetups and workshops, provides sustained growth and development opportunities. This structured approach can be mirrored in other communities to maintain momentum post-event.

By adapting these core strategies and tailoring them to local conditions, other communities can replicate the success of the Round Rock Startup Day, fostering economic development and a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Round Rock Startup Day stands out as a pioneering initiative for a community the size of Round Rock that significantly contributed to the entrepreneurial spirit of the community. This day demonstrated the Chamber's commitment to supporting local entrepreneurship by turning words into action.

This event attracted nearly 200 participants, more than doubling attendance from the previous pitch competition, including investors and community members that had never before demonstrated an understanding of Round Rock's value proposition for entrepreneurs – indicating strong community interest in future engagement and support. The pitch competition also provided crucial funding and exposure for local startups, highlighting the event's impact and the Chamber's support of building a sustainable startup ecosystem.

Additionally, the Mayor of Round Rock proclaimed May 2, 2024, as "Round Rock Startup Day," demonstrating official recognition and support for the initiative at the city's highest level. A direct result of the success of Round Rock Startup Day, the City of Round Rock decided to fully fund an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Building Strategic Plan, further emphasizing the event's pivotal role in shaping the local economic development strategy.

Beyond the immediate success of the event, the Startup Day initiated ongoing support for local startups through regular meetups and workshops. This sustained effort ensures continuous growth and development within the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

For these reasons, the 2024 Round Rock Startup Day exemplifies excellence in community economic development and innovation. Its significant impact, strategic approach, strong support and replicable model collectively highlight its outstanding contributions to the Round Rock community.

MEASURED OBJECTIVES

Round Rock Startup Day has had a significant & measurable impact on our community. By bringing together key stakeholders, thought leaders, and aspiring entrepreneurs, the event fostered a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem that continues to yield substantial benefits.

Impact on Economic Development:

- We partnered with Builders & Backers to host a Buildership Workshop® where 30 local entrepreneurs applied to participate. This workshop was for early-stage entrepreneurs.
- Over 180 participants attended the Startup Day event, including entrepreneurs, investors and community members, showcasing widespread interest & engagement in the local startup scene.
- Having received more than 20 applications, 6 finalists were selected to compete in the pitch competition, vying for a grand prize valued at \$10,000+. This competition not only provided critical funding to the winning startup, but also gave all participants valuable exposure to potential investors.

Furthering Economic Development:

- Due to the success of the Round Rock Startup Day, the City of Round Rock has embraced entrepreneurship as a core pillar of its economic development strategy. This includes funding an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Building Strategic Plan, which will provide a structured approach to nurturing and sustaining the local startup ecosystem.
- Following the event, the Round Rock Chamber has continued regular entrepreneurial meetups & workshops to ensure ongoing support of development opportunities for local startups.

Round Rock Startup Day has been a resounding success, catalyzing economic development and building momentum to foster a dynamic entrepreneurial environment in Round Rock.

SECONDARY BENEFITS

The Round Rock Startup Day truly showcased why the City of Round Rock is an ideal place for entrepreneurs and innovation to not only thrive but drive forward the city's economy.

Throughout the day and during the pitch competition, the Round Rock Chamber was also able to highlight the diverse industries of startups in the area, ranging from consumer product goods to robotics to artificial intelligence to national defense-focused startups. Notably, one of the companies had even pitched on Shark Tank, emphasizing the high caliber of participants. The finalists are able to further connect with industry leaders and mentors for continued support.

We also engaged the community by including a Crowd Favorite award at the end of the pitch competition, allowing attendees to feel involved and invested in the event's outcome. This interactive element fostered a sense of community and support for local entrepreneurs.

Whether an individual is looking to get an idea off the ground or a start-up that is ready to scale and potentially move into a brick-and-mortar location, the success of the inaugural Round Rock Startup Day further solidifies Round Rock as a best-in-class, alternative location to Downtown Austin for entrepreneurs seeking the many resources available to founders looking to start and scale in Central Texas.