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Library ‘Pitch Competition’ to Invest in Local Entrepreneurs

Library and Kauffman Foundation to Award Cash Prizes, Showcase Local Business Talent

Kansas City, MO – Starting this week, Mid-Continent Public Library’s Square One Small Business Center is [accepting applications](#) from local entrepreneurs who are in search of funding to support their unique and innovative business ideas. Out of the applicant pool, a group of six finalists will be selected to make their final pitch at a live Small Business Showcase on September 25 at the Auditorium at Woodneath Library Center (8900 NE Flintlock Road, Kansas City, Mo.). The top three winners, chosen by the audience and a panel of judges, will walk away with a cash prize.

“Our hope for the 2025 Pitch Competition and Small Business Showcase is not only to provide funding to a select few entrepreneurs, but also to inspire the local business community as a whole to think creatively about new ventures, products, and services they’d like to pursue,” said Ashley Muffitt, Square One Director. “Similar to the TV show ‘Shark Tank,’ competitors will have a chance to pitch these ideas to a panel of judges, get real-time feedback, and potentially walk away with the cash to bring their ideas to life!”

Funded by the Kauffman Foundation, first- and second-place winners will be selected by the panel of judges and will receive \$5,000 and \$3,000, respectively. The panel will be made up of business and entrepreneurial leaders. The third-place winner will be chosen as a crowd favorite and will be awarded \$1,000.

In order to qualify for the Pitch Competition, applicants must make less than \$100,000 a year, be able to attend the Showcase on September 25, and reside in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Intended for both established and aspiring business owners alike, competitors do not have to be a legal business entity to apply. **The application process will be open until August 1**, and the applicants will be evaluated by a selection committee. [All applications must be submitted on the Square One website.](#)

During the Showcase, competitors and other business owners who have worked with Square One, or attended a program in the past, can set up a booth about their services for fellow attendees to explore. Booth applications will open August 18–August 29. In preparation for the Showcase, Pitch Competition finalists will have the opportunity to attend a series of Square One programs to enhance their pitches, including Perfect

Your Pitch, Practice Your Pitch, and How to Rock Your Business Booth. These are not required for finalists to attend, but are provided to assist throughout and are open to the public.

Learn more about the 2025 Pitch Competition and Small Business Showcase, including how to submit your business idea, at mymcpl.org/Square-One.

This initiative was made possible by a generous grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.

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Founded in 1965, [Mid-Continent Public Library](#) is the largest library system in the Kansas City metropolitan area, operating 34 branches and two Library-To-Go locations and serving nearly 850,000 people in Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties. MCPL is an award-winning library system that strives to enrich citizens and communities through expanding access to innovation, information, ideas, and inspiration. Connect with the Library on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).