



STARTINGBLOCK
MADISON'S STARTUP HUB

Proposal for StartingBlock Madison Certificate of Entrepreneurship

Executive Summary

The following training proposal is for a StartingBlock Madison Certificate of Entrepreneurship Pilot Program (Leap Year) offered by StartingBlock Madison, located in Madison, WI. This course is designed to provide entrepreneurial skills training for Adults, Youth, Veterans and Dislocated Workers, so they may create new businesses to help grow the regional economy.

StartingBlock Madison Certificate comprises more than 120 hours for students over 36 weeks. The training course is composed of 12 weeks of hands-on training and 24 weeks of one-on-one mentoring at:

StartingBlock Madison
821 E Washington Ave, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53703

This training course includes formal instruction, one-on-one mentoring, and 9 months of wrap-around support from StartingBlock Madison. In addition, the coursework provides experiential learning assignments and support in developing and growing an actual business, with measurable local economic impact.

As part of the application, the student/entrepreneur should complete a minimum of 4 prerequisite contact hours. These pre-courses are designed to help a possible student/entrepreneur determine if they are ready to create a business or if they simply want to pursue their idea as a hobby.

The program is primarily targeted at young adults aged 18 - 26. Students outside of the primary target group can participate in the program.

In successfully completing the StartingBlock Madison Certificate of Entrepreneurship, participants will learn and demonstrate the skills necessary to build and grow a business through formal lessons, Socratic learning, and practical application in their own business. Skills growth and business progress will be measured and documented regularly throughout the course. Program Capital Partners will provide access to affordable financing and investment to help graduates grow their businesses with the expectation that 80% of graduates will create or find meaningful employment and contribute to the economic vitality of the region.



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Industry Recognized Credentialing

Successful businesses are the foundation from which economic opportunity and the socioeconomic health of a community are built. Research from University of Wisconsin Institute for Public Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, identifies socioeconomic factors as the greatest contributing factor in the health of communities.⁽¹⁾ Additionally, research shows that virtually all net new job creation is from businesses less than 5 years old.⁽²⁾ On average 80% of new businesses survive their first year and create an average of 5 new jobs in their local community.⁽³⁾ However most communities lack a sustainable training model to develop the necessary entrepreneurial skills for new business owners to access capital to effectively grow their business and create jobs.⁽⁴⁾

StartingBlock Madison works with Make Startups, commercial capital and financial service providers to form a national industry advisory council to ensure that entrepreneurs have access to research-backed high quality training programs which help them build the skills necessary to succeed. This council works with local entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs) to align entrepreneurial skills training programs with industry standards to help entrepreneurs build skills and avoid common pitfalls to start, grow, and manage a business, create jobs, and impact local economies. Successful completion results in a StartingBlock Madison Certificate of Entrepreneurship, which is recognized by capital partners when seeking financing and investment.

ESO's participating in accredited certificate programs must demonstrate active commitment from the local community to help entrepreneurs succeed. This industry recognized credentialing process makes it easier for entrepreneurs/startups in the community to access financing, investment capital, with support from local economic developers and business leaders as they create jobs for themselves and others.

Local and Regional Support & Recognition:

Letters of support were obtained from a variety of partners and are evidence of local and regional support for this course development and supporting students and graduates. Each week, guest lecturers including entrepreneurs, partner agencies, and business leaders will focus on how to create businesses and what services are available locally to solve business problems and create value. Letters of support indicate that the local businesses will participate in the academy in various ways as shown in the chart below.



Confirmed Local Commitments

	Winnow Fund	Summit Credit Union	UW L&E Clinic	WEDC
Assist identifying and pre screening applicants		x		x
Serve in advisory capacity for ongoing course development			x	x
Provide rep for guest lectures/ project reviews	x		x	
Participate in Investor Demo Day	x	x		
Enhanced funding consideration for graduates		x		
Give consideration to becoming first customer for graduates		x		

Reference Links

- **Richelle Martin**, Managing Director at the Winnow Fund, an early stage investment venture for Wisconsin based companies.
- **Vincent Rice**, Vice President of Community and Business Impact at Summit Credit Union
- **Emily Buchholz**, Director at UW Law and Entrepreneurship Clinic
- **Shayna Hetzel**, Vice President of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

Additional public and private sector support

- Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin
- Merlin Mentors
- Associated Bank
- Capital Entrepreneurs



Entrepreneurial Workforce Training Program

The Leap Year Training Course

The Leap Year Training Course will focus on business planning, technology, financing, and law. The below list, while representative, is not meant to be an all-inclusive list. The provider may add or remove topics based on the participants' needs.

Course Topics

1. **Business Planning**
 - a. Business Market/Sector Analysis
 - b. Business models
 - c. Customer discovery
 - d. Revenue models
 - e. Partner and resource identification and management
 - f. Business pitching
 - g. Business leadership
2. **Business Technology**
 - a. Determining what is needed to physically run the business
 - b. What technology is needed/required to start and run the business
 - c. How will technology play a role in the business
 - d. Data privacy
3. **Business Financing**
 - a. Bookkeeping and Accounting Software
 - b. Budgets and Financial forecasting
 - c. Business banking
 - d. Business financing
 - i. Traditional / debt-based
 - ii. Non-Traditional / equity-based
 - e. Payroll
 - f. Business taxes
4. **Business Law**
 - a. Determining your legal structure
 - b. Employees vs. Independent contractors
 - c. Discrimination laws; EEO, ADA, etc..
 - d. Licensing and insurance
 - e. Intellectual property and protections
 - f. Contracts



As a result of the training, the student/entrepreneur will be prepared to start their business and should have the following in place at the completion of the course:

1. Business Model and Business Plan in place
2. Business Licensing and legal structure completed
3. Have a financial plan in place and be prepared to seek financial assistance
4. Have or be seeking any needed Patents, Copyrights, Trademarks, or Trade Secrets

Mentoring

Mentoring should take place every week for a minimum of 1 hour and can be completed during the lab/research time. Each student/entrepreneur will have a mentor who can help them develop their business and think through problems. A student/entrepreneur may have 1 mentor or multiple mentors during the 12 week training course and will continue to meet with their mentor for 24 weeks after completion of the training course.

Training Schedule

Training will be held during the week as shown below. Following completion of the 12 week Course Period, there will be a Mentor Period lasting 24 weeks. The Lab Period is required for the duration of the entire program.

Course Period

In addition to their assigned Lab Period, students will be in direct contact 3 hours per week, including 2 instructional hours and 1 mentor hour per week.

Mentor Period

Varies - 1 hour per week one-on-one meeting and business review with assigned mentor

Lab Period

Students are expected to allot an additional 20 hours each week to complete content-review before class, course-work assignments, and the array of research and outreach required to fulfill the assignments.



Instructional Approach

The course will place an emphasis on business creation and development with an incremental increase in student readiness to start their business.

Each topic requires students to solve challenges related to their specific business and present to each other as well as partners and mentors for feedback. These presentations are meant to help each entrepreneur develop confidence and strong business skills, while working toward being proficient at presenting their business to gain funding and/or customers.

Applicant Assessment

As part of the application process, the student/entrepreneur should complete a minimum of 4 prerequisite contact hours. These pre-courses are designed to help student-entrepreneurs determine if entrepreneurship is a suitable path for them through exercises including:

- Business Opportunity Analysis
- Household Financial Planning

All possible applicants will be subject to other requirements by the provider requirements such as criminal background checks, personal credit checks and interviews with instructors, entrepreneurs, or mentors about their goals for their business.

Successful Completion

To demonstrate successful completion and receive a certificate, student meet the following criteria, which is detailed more fully in the [Measurable Skills Gains and Grading](#) section below:

- Demonstrate minimum proficiency in Entrepreneurial Skills Assessments
- Successfully complete business setup activities



Wraparound Services

All participants of the StartingBlock Madison Certificate of Entrepreneurship will receive a 9 month membership at [StartingBlock Madison](#) and benefit from the community of fellow entrepreneurship and startups. This membership includes access to free and discounted business consulting, business incubation, and shared services. These include:

- Culture Consulting
- Brand Strategy
- Go-To-Market Strategy
- Marketing & Advertising
- Business Mentorship & Scaling
- Product & Service Development
- Business Architecture
- Financial Planning
- Wealth & Legacy Strategies
- Business Plan Development
- Brand Strategy
- Coworking Facilities
- Human Capital Strategies & Resources
- Benefits Administration
- IT & Infrastructure
- General Accounting
- Payroll Management
- Technology Enablement
- Infrastructure Setup & Maintenance
- Employee Onboarding
- Benefits Setup & Maintenance
- Facilities

Training Outcomes

Measurable Skills Gains & Grading

Before, or upon commencement of the course, student skills will be measured in several areas. Additional measurements will be taken upon completion of each section of the course to establish measurable gains. Students failing to meet minimum performance standards will be required to retake each skills measurement assessment and meet minimum requirements to receive a certificate. These skills measures may include, but are not limited to:

1. Business Models and Plans
2. Business Technologies
3. Bookkeeping and Finance
4. Business Laws

Additional specific items required related to each entrepreneur's business must be completed for successful completion of the certificate. These may include, but are not limited to:

1. Business Plan
2. Business Model Canvas
3. Business incorporation, licensing, & tax identification
4. Business bank account
5. Accounting software setup
6. Business financials



7. Growth plan
8. Mentor check-ins

Employment and Career Pathway

As described below, students will earn a StartingBlock Madison Certificate of Entrepreneurship. In addition to entrepreneurial skills training, this course will help students identify specific product market fit, sales, distribution, and fulfillment channels specific to their own business, and identify capital needs for bringing their business to market and providing themselves a salary.

A "community and investor" demo day will be held at the conclusion of the course allowing capital partners, investors, and local businesses to network with and informally interview graduates. Successful graduates will also discuss and/or demonstrate their business at this event.

In addition to pursuing the growth of their own businesses, the skills learned in this course will help graduates pursue business development, managerial, and leadership roles in existing businesses.

Certification Schedule

Provisional Certification

Upon successful completion of the 12-week training course period, students will be granted a Provisional StartingBlock Madison Certificate of Entrepreneurship. This provisional certificate is recognized by commercial capital providers as a demonstration of core competencies and qualifies them for enhanced funding consideration for their business. The provisional certificate is valid for 6 months, during which time the provisional certificate holder is required to participate in weekly one-on-one mentoring and business review meetings with an assigned mentor, and complete ongoing tasks related to the development of their business. During this period, the provisional certificate holder must also provide ongoing financial and economic impact reporting data to ensure proper management of resources.

Certification

Upon successful completion of the 6-month provisional certification period, students provisional status will be lifted and they will be conferred a StartingBlock Madison Certificate of Entrepreneurship. This conference further demonstrates the competencies of entrepreneurship and experience in managing a business to qualify the certificate holder for additional enhanced funding consideration for their business.



Post Completion Performance Tracking

Prior to training program completion, students will enroll in an online business financial reporting system to assist in qualifying for affordable financing and investment capital. This system will gather regular economic impact and payroll data to assist in verifying employment in the second and fourth quarter after program exit.

All data will be securely stored with any reporting disclosed to and permitted by program participants.

Course Cost per Student/Entrepreneur

\$10,000 course cost includes tuition, software, materials and supplies. The pre-requisite class fees, if applicable, should be paid for by each student/entrepreneur and should be completed prior to acceptance into this course.

Marketing and Recruitment

The program is primarily targeted at young adults aged 18 - 26. Most young people are presented with only 2 choices post high school graduation: 1) school or 2) work for someone else. While many young people have good business ideas and would like to work for themselves, very few have the necessary skills. The Leap Year course will give students the skills to evaluate business ideas and launch their own businesses.

Marketing, Outreach and Recruitment

Because the target market for the Leap Year Program is young adults, social media will play a large role in the outreach for the program. Other forms of outreach include connecting with:

- High School Guidance Counselors
- High School business and DECA teachers
- Madison College career coaches
- Madison College entrepreneurship instructors
- The Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin
- McKenzie Regional Workforce Center

WISCONSIN

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Michele Carter
201 E. Washington Ave
P.O. Box 7946
Madison, WI 53707

January 3, 2025

Dear Division Administrator Carter:

I am writing to express support for the StartingBlock pilot to establish an industry-recognized Certification Program for Entrepreneurs in Wisconsin. This initiative is a critical step forward in advancing entrepreneurship as a driving force for economic growth, workforce innovation, and an integral part of the State's ongoing economic recovery strategy.

A pilot program like this holds the potential to position Wisconsin as a leader in cultivating an entrepreneurial workforce, along with leading states of Georgia, California, Florida, and South Carolina. By leveraging this opportunity, Wisconsin can demonstrate its commitment to being at the forefront of national efforts to bolster economic development through entrepreneurship.

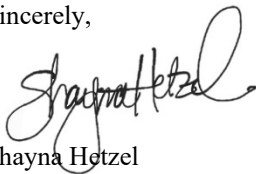
Notably, the program's focus on inclusivity to expand access to entrepreneurial training for socially and economically disadvantaged populations while aligning with the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that authorizes funding for entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. This ensures that the program is not only innovative, but also equitable, providing meaningful opportunities for underrepresented communities to engage in entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

This program will directly support at least 10 entrepreneurs and new businesses annually, leading to the creation of at least 28 new jobs in Wisconsin's urban and rural markets. StartingBlock and its partner Make Startups will develop a core certification program enabling ongoing economic development and wealth creation in Wisconsin communities served through this program.

Our understanding is that StartingBlock will work with DWD, the South Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, capital partners, and community leaders throughout the region to assist in strategic planning for startup economic development. Partnerships also include collaborations with other government agencies at the local, regional, and state levels to develop and disseminate data and outcomes that validate ongoing support of these endeavors.

StartingBlock takes full responsibility to lead the accreditation process and we look forward to working to increase the innovation in economic sustainability and job creation through entrepreneurship and financial independence. Overall, we support this initiative which will increase access to entrepreneurial education, ecosystem building, and venture creation.

Sincerely,



Shayna Hetzel
Vice President of Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

LOOK FORWARD ➤



PO Box 8046 | Madison WI 53708 | 608-243-5000 | 800-236-5560 | SummitCreditUnion.com

Vincent Rice
Summit Credit Union
Vice President Community and Business Impact

December 10, 2024

Scott Mosley
StartingBlock Madison
821 East Washington Ave, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mr. Mosley,

Please accept this letter as a measure of support from Summit Credit Union for StartingBlock's Certificate of Entrepreneurship Program with the Department of Workforce Development. As an organization dedicated to fostering growth and innovation in Madison's entrepreneurial community, we are proud to support the **Certificate of Entrepreneurship Program**, a transformative initiative designed to empower local entrepreneurs and strengthen our workforce.

We've worked closely with StartingBlock Madison in the past and can attest to their commitment to excellence and their ability to deliver impactful programs. We believe the Certificate of Entrepreneurship is a critical next step in equipping the next generation of entrepreneurs while creating ripple effects that benefit businesses across Madison. By building skills that benefit not only individual entrepreneurs but also the broader Madison business ecosystem, this program will have a lasting impact on our local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to support entrepreneurs in Wisconsin, and best of luck with your new program.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vincent A. Rice', is positioned below the 'Best regards,' text.

Vincent A. Rice,
Vice President Community and Business Impact



Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic

University of Wisconsin Law School

December 6, 2024

Scott Mosley
StartingBlock Madison
821 East Washington Ave, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Support for StartingBlocks Certificate of Entrepreneurship Program

Dear Mr. Mosley,

Please accept this letter as a measure of support from the Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic for StartingBlock's Certificate of Entrepreneurship Program with the Department of Workforce Development. As an organization dedicated to fostering growth and innovation in Madison's entrepreneurial community, we are proud to support the Certificate of Entrepreneurship Program, a transformative initiative designed to empower local entrepreneurs and strengthen our workforce.

We've worked closely with StartingBlock Madison in the past and can attest to their commitment to excellence and their ability to deliver impactful programs. We believe the Certificate of Entrepreneurship is a critical next step in equipping the next generation of entrepreneurs while creating ripple effects that benefit businesses across Madison. By building skills that benefit not only individual entrepreneurs but also the broader Madison business ecosystem, this program will have a lasting impact on our local economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to support entrepreneurs in Wisconsin, and best of luck with your new program.

Best regards,

Emily Buchholz

Emily Buchholz
Director, Law and Entrepreneurship Clinic
University of Wisconsin Law School



Richelle Martin
Managing Director, Winnow Fund

December 19, 2024

Scott Mosley
StartingBlock Madison
821 East Washington Ave, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mr. Mosley,

Please accept this letter as a measure of support from Winnow Fund for StartingBlock's Certificate of Entrepreneurship Program with the Department of Workforce Development. As an organization dedicated to fostering growth and innovation in Madison's entrepreneurial community, we are proud to support the **Certificate of Entrepreneurship Program**, a transformative initiative designed to empower local entrepreneurs and strengthen our workforce.

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Thank you for the opportunity to support entrepreneurs in Wisconsin, and best of luck with your new program.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richelle Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richelle Martin,
Managing Director at Winnow Fund