



Applicant FAQ



WHAT COUNTS AS “CLEAN ENERGY”?

We take a very broad view as to what counts as clean energy. We include a variety of sectors like renewables, energy efficiency products and software, advanced materials, advanced battery technologies, biofuels, waste to energy, and water conservation and efficiency.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF BECOMING A FINALIST?

If your company is selected as a finalist, you will have access to Clean Energy Trust's unique network of advisors, mentors, industry executives and startup experts. Just participating in the program provides tremendous value outside of winning funding. Of course funding is tasty icing on the cake, and this year we're poised to make our largest investments yet.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE FOR WINNERS?

For the second year in a row, up to \$1M will be available for investment. This amount represent the total pot, that will be broken up into individual prizes. The full prize list will be made public in January 2016.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE TO APPLY?

The application process is very simple and straightforward, and designed to be easily completed with existing materials. This year we're using a software application called YouNoodle and you'll have to create an account when you first visit the application page (<http://cleanenergytrust.org/challenge>). You'll also need to provide a link to a pitch video no longer than 3 minutes, upload a pitch deck, and answer some basic questions about your business. It shouldn't take longer than 1 hour to complete.

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE TO APPLY?

The deadline is January 6, 2016.

HOW DO I DETERMINE WHICH CATEGORY TO APPLY FOR?

We have 2 tracks for the Clean Energy Challenge competition this year: Student and Early Stage. Application criteria is included below:

- Student
 - o Working on promising research in the lab? Developing an innovative business plan for an MBA? Apply to the Challenge and take it to the next level. University-affiliated students at undergrad, graduate or PHD levels should apply here.
 - o Angel investors/venture capital funding up to \$500k, business idea should be at prototype phase, no limit on grant funding amounts received.

- Early Stage
 - o The Early Stage category includes most non-student startups – companies in the beginning stages of raising funds and generating revenue. Apply to the Challenge and gain credibility and market traction.
 - o Angel investors/venture capital funding between \$500k to \$2M, some revenue/product in market but not yet fully scaled, no limit on grant funding amounts received.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT IF SELECTED AS A FINALIST?

If selected as a finalist, you will be expected to participate in 6-8 education webinars on topics like fundraising, PR, energy policy, and more. You will also be expected to develop a close relationship with the mentors you are matched with and take advantage of their time and expertise to help your business succeed. Lastly, in the weeks leading up to April 14, you will participate in a series of run-through pitches with the Clean Energy Trust team for feedback and final polish.

HOW ARE CHALLENGE FINALISTS AND WINNERS SELECTED?

The finalists are selected by an evaluation body comprised of investors, mentors, and industry experts specifically recruited for their knowledge and judgment in this space. The evaluations will be done through the application and judging platform, YouNoodle.

The winners will be determined at the Challenge event on April 14 by a panel of 20-25 judges. Past judges have included Jennifer Garson - U.S. Department of Energy, Karen Kerr - GE Ventures, and Chuck Templeton – Founder Impact Engine and OpenTable.com.

MY QUESTION IS NOT ANSWERED HERE OR ON THE WEBSITE...

We want to help! Contact Emily Achler at emily@cleanenergytrust.org.