Official Contest Rules

Failure to meet the rules below will result in disqualification from the contest:
1. At least one member of each team must be a matriculated student at an eligible UC campus to enter the contest.
2. Big Ideas projects must be student initiated and student led. Faculty, staff, and external partners may play an advisory role for student teams.
3. Student teams may submit an application to only one category. If an application is submitted to more than one category, only the first submission received will be reviewed. One student may participate in more than one project team as long as each team submits a unique pre-proposal application.
4. Student teams cannot seek funding from Big Ideas for projects that have previously won a Big Ideas award, unless they are submitting a proposal in the “Scaling Up Big Ideas” category. Teams that have won a Scaling Up award in the past are not eligible to reapply.

Please note that each contest category has specific rules and eligibility requirements. For more information, applicants should carefully review the description for the contest to which they are applying.

Prizes will only be awarded for high quality submissions. Decisions of the judges are final and not subject to appeal.

How Big Ideas Works.

The Big Ideas contest is split into two rounds: a pre-proposal round in the fall and a full proposal round in the spring.

Round 1: Pre-proposal
Eligible students are invited to submit a 5-page pre-proposal by Tuesday, November 5, 2013 at 5PM (PST) via the bigideas.berkeley.edu website. Judges will select 3 to 6 teams in each category to continue on to the full proposal round of the contest in the spring. All pre-proposal teams will receive detailed feedback from the judges, regardless of whether or not they are selected as finalists. Pre-proposal entrants will be notified mid-December 2013 if they have been selected as a finalist.

Round 2: Full Proposal
Finalist teams will have the opportunity to develop and refine their pre-proposals into 10-page “full proposals” by expanding on the ideas presented in their pre-proposals, editing their proposals based on judges’ feedback, and refining their project ideas through collaboration with a Big Ideas mentor (an industry professionals matched to finalists based on mentors’ content knowledge and areas of strength). From the finalist pool, judges will select between 2 and 5 award winners in each category.

Pitch Day & People’s Choice Awards
Finalist teams can earn additional prize money via two additional avenues:

People’s Choice Video Contest: All finalist teams will be invited in the spring to submit a 2-minute video about their project to the People’s Choice Contest. Voting for this contest is open to the public, and 1 winner will receive an additional $5,000 award.

Grand Prize Pitch Day: Select finalists teams will be invited to attend the Big Ideas Pitch Day in May, where teams will pitch their project ideas to a panel of judges. Judges will then select Grand Prize winners to receive an additional award.

2013-14 Contest Categories

Please visit bigideas.berkeley.edu to see official category descriptions and eligibility requirements.

Creative Expression for Social Justice
Clean & Sustainable Energy Alternatives*
Financial Capability
Global Poverty Alleviation*
Improving Student Life
Information Technology for Society*
Open Data*
Promoting Human Rights*
Scaling Up Big Ideas*

*Indicates contest category is open to multiple UC campuses and universities within USAID's Higher Education Solutions Network.

2013-2014 Contest Pre-proposal Guidelines and Application Requirements
Pre-proposal Application Requirements

Pre-proposals must be submitted via the Big Ideas website. Submission materials received by email will not be reviewed.

Applicants will be asked to submit the following information:

- The names and email addresses of all team members
- Departments/majors of all student team members
- A project title (no longer than 10 words)
- A 50-word (or less) “elevator pitch” of your idea and a 300 (or less) summary of your project idea.

Please note that all the information in the web form may be publicly disseminated on the Big Ideas website or in promotional materials. However, applicants may indicate on the web form that they prefer to keep the attached version of their proposal confidential.

- A proposal totaling no more than 5 pages (but references are not included in this 5-page limit.) We require that this document be attached as a PDF, and we prefer that the written text and budget document be merged together as a single document. If this is not possible, you may submit 2 documents.

Your PDF document(s) must be prepared using Times New Roman size 12 font, single-spaced, with one-inch margins. Failure to follow these instructions may result in disqualification.

Your five-page pre-proposal PDF must contain the following:

- A description of the social problem or campus need your project will address that communicates your understanding of relevant research/statistics on the problem. If other interventions or products have been designed or implemented to solve this problem, discuss the possible limitations of these solutions. (About 1-2 pages in length.)

- A summary of your innovative project (e.g., service, good, or innovation), how it works, and its intended impact. Please focus on how your project will look in its first year of implementation. If you expect to encounter implementation challenges, please briefly explain how you will address those challenges. If you plan to significantly scale up or expand in future years, please note this (but do not focus on your plans to scale up) in this section. Note that judges are instructed to consider, above all else, how innovative and creative your project idea is. (About 1-2 pages in length.)

- A project timeline that highlights key next steps during the first year of your project, recognizing that awards will be disbursed in June 2014. (About ½ page in length.)

- A list of key project team members with brief biographies that explain the capability of your team to accomplish your idea. (About ½ page in length.)

- A preliminary budget for your project using the Excel template available at bigideas.berkeley.edu. While you are not required to submit a formal budget narrative, please use the “cost details” columns in the template to provide as much information as possible on how you calculated these costs. The budget should include both expected costs and revenue for the first year of your project. Please note that the average Big Ideas grant is about $5,000 and successful proposals typically do not request more than $10,000 from Big Ideas. (About 1-2 pages in length.) Examples of past winning pre-proposals are available on our website!

Resources

Big Ideas® Berkeley’s fall events support students interested in submitting pre-proposal applications. Please join us at one of the following events:

**Speaker Series, Info Session & Networking Events**
Come join us for an inspiring talk by past Big Ideas winners and learn more about the Big Ideas contest! For information about scheduled speakers, visit our website.

- Wednesday, Sept. 4th at 6PM (B100 Blum Hall)
- Wednesday, Sept. 18th at 6PM (B100 Blum Hall)
- Thursday, Oct. 3rd at 6:30PM (B100 Blum Hall)
- Thursday, Oct. 7th at 5PM (B100 Blum Hall)

**Pre-proposal Writing and Budgeting Workshop**
Learn more about how to effectively craft a pre-proposal at a workshop, and let us guide you through the process of drafting a pre-proposal.

- Thursday, Sept. 24th at 6PM (B100 Blum Hall)
- Wednesday, Oct. 16th at 6PM (B100 Blum Hall)

**Graduate Student Advisors Office Hours**
Our graduate student advisors love talking to students about their project ideas, answering questions about the contest, and helping students craft effective pre-proposals. Stop by during their drop-in hours, listed on the website, or email bigideas@berkeley.edu to schedule an appointment for another time.

**Big Ideas Editing Blitz**
Didn’t have a chance to come to office hours but want a past winner or graduate student advisor to read over your pre-proposal? Stop by B100 Blum Hall on Monday, November 4th from 5-8PM with a draft of your pre-proposal! We’ll give you last minute advice and help you fine-tune your writing!