



**MONTANA
CHAMBER
FOUNDATION**

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**THE MONTANA CHAMBER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2024 PROSPECTS AWARD WINNERS
Pitch Competition Recognizes Montana 6-12th Grade Students' Business Ideas**

May 2, 2024 (Helena, MT) – The Montana Chamber Foundation's [winners of The Prospects Awards](#) were announced in a virtual awards ceremony last week. The statewide youth entrepreneurship competition, now in its fourth year, offered \$40,000 in cash prizes and scholarships to Montana schools for high school and middle school students with new ideas and existing small businesses.

"Every year, The Prospects Awards showcase the incredible innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of Montana's youth," said Todd O'Hair, Executive Director of the Montana Chamber Foundation. "This year was no exception. The creativity and dedication displayed by our young entrepreneurs was truly inspiring. Montana consistently ranks as one of the top entrepreneurial states in the nation and the Montana Chamber Foundation is proud to be building the pipeline of next-generation entrepreneurs."

The competition drew more than 280 applications from thirty-two schools across the state. This year's categories were expanded and included a Hack My State: Childcare category. Every day, families across the state of Montana struggle to find available, affordable, and reliable childcare.

"The level of participation and the quality of ideas presented in this year's competition exceeded our expectations," remarked Angie Murdo, Chair of the Montana Chamber Foundation. "The addition of the Hack My State: Childcare category reflects the pressing needs of our communities, and we were thrilled to see the 20 innovative solutions proposed by our high school students."

The top five winners in the high school-only New and Existing Business categories as well as President's Hustle will compete for the title of Grand Champion and \$5,000 in awards. The competition will be held in person on May 20 at MSU Jake Jabs College of Business and Entrepreneurship in Bozeman, Montana.

Thanks to our Lead Sponsor, Stockman Bank and Foundational Sponsors, Empowered, Sibanye Stillwater, and Two Bear Capital. Additional support for the awards was provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana, Dawson Community College, Gallatin College at Montana State University, Miles Community College, Montana State University Billings College of Business, Montana State University-Northern, and University of Montana Western Foundation.

The Montana Chamber Foundation thanks all student contestants and recognizes the teachers who offered support. A special thanks to the volunteer judges and statewide partners who donated their time and expertise throughout the competition.

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About the Montana Chamber Foundation

The [Montana Chamber Foundation](http://www.montanachamber.com/montana-chamber-foundation/) is the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established by the Montana Chamber of Commerce to fund business education and encourage entrepreneurship among Montana K–12 and undergraduate students, participate in research projects, host events that promote economic development opportunities, and administer funds that support workforce readiness and entrepreneurship programs in the Treasure State.

The Foundation maintains direct relationships with members of the Montana University System, Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), individual teachers and public school districts, Career and Technical Student Organizations (CSTO), and other nonprofits supporting student education.

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