

**the  
pitch!**  
must charities

**Program Guide**

2025

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# About Must! Charities

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Must! Charities is a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the model of philanthropy. By uniting donors, pooling resources, and investing strategically in our region while empowering nonprofits and educating our community. At Must! Charities: 100% of community donations go directly into projects, thanks to our Executive Board and a few private donors covering all our operating costs.

## About The Pitch

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The Pitch uses an investment-minded approach to demonstrate the power of collective giving. Over the course of several months, we provide a collaborative space for like-minded organizations to stop, think and plan strategically. Our cohorts receive professional coaching to develop an organizational pitch, are provided visibility and connections, as well as capacity to sustain their growth.

The culmination of this work is a signature event where organizations tell their story, their “pitch”, while the audience has the ability to donate to organizations. Simultaneously, judges rate pitches and based on the rubric, monetary awards are presented to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners.

## How It Works

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- The Application: Non-profit organizations serving needs in San Luis Obispo County are invited to apply.
- The Cohort: From the applicants, 8-10 non-profit organizations will be chosen to participate.
- Finalists: Of these participants, 6-8 will be finalists who will present at The Pitch. Organizations that are not finalists will still be represented at the event and in event collateral.
- Coaches: Each Non-profit organization will be paired with 1-2 coaches.
- Training Sessions: From August through November, participating nonprofits will attend group training sessions. (see above Time Commitment)
- The Event: The Pitch is the culmination of months of preparation where finalists present a refined 3-minute pitch. Audience members are given the opportunity to donate directly to non-profit organizations while judges will create 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place awards.
- Must! Charities’ Awards: Must! Charities provides monetary awards for the top three places, determined by scores from a panel of judges. These judges are members of the San Luis Obispo community and are not affiliated with Must! Charities as staff, board, or committee members.
  - 1st Place: \$20,000
  - 2nd Place: \$15,000
  - 3rd Place: \$10,000

# Program Schedule

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<b>February</b>	Information meeting for interested coaches
<b>March</b>	Application launch for non-profit organizations
<b>April</b>	Information meeting for interested non-profit organizations
<b>May</b>	May 2 <sup>nd</sup> : Applications close
<b>June</b>	Remote interviews with top applicants Finalists selected and notified Coaches and non-profit organization assignments announced
<b>August</b>	August 20 <sup>th</sup> : Kick Off Party August 27 <sup>th</sup> : Session 1
<b>September</b>	September 17 <sup>th</sup> : Session 2 Tickets launch
<b>October</b>	October 1 <sup>st</sup> : Session 3 October 22 <sup>nd</sup> : Session 4 Presenting finalists selected
<b>November</b>	November 6 <sup>th</sup> : The Pitch Event

# Sessions Overview

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## **Session 1: August 27<sup>th</sup>**

5:00pm – 6:30pm

StoryLabs: 8965 El Camino Real, Atascadero

This session is primarily an opportunity for introductions, to review The Pitch program, and answer questions. This session serves as an introduction to The Pitch program. Participants will review program details, and have the opportunity to ask questions. Special attention will be given to the scoring rubric, and participants are encouraged to take notes on how to address each scoring area. These notes will be especially useful for Session 2.

## **Session 2: September 17<sup>th</sup>**

5:00pm – 6:30pm

StoryLabs: 8965 El Camino Real, Atascadero

This session provides training on the key elements of a great pitch and includes a breakdown of what makes a winning pitch.

## **Session 3: October 1<sup>st</sup>**

5:00pm – 6:30pm

StoryLabs: 8965 El Camino Real, Atascadero

Non-profit organizations will present their three-minute pitch for the first time. Each organization may use a 3x5 notecard with bullet points. Coaches will provide immediate verbal feedback and written scores. We recommend that coaches and non-profit organizations meet immediately after this session to review strengths and identify areas for improvement.

## **Session 4: October 22<sup>nd</sup>**

5:00pm – 6:30pm

StoryLabs: 8965 El Camino Real, Atascadero

Non-profit organizations will present their three-minute pitch without notes. All coaches will provide immediate verbal feedback and written scoring. The final presenting non-profit organizations will be selected from this session.

### **About Pitch Presentations Sessions 3 and 4**

- **Presentation**: Each participant delivers a three-minute pitch and receives verbal feedback from all coaches.
- **Order**: Participants are assigned to an order at random.
- **Video**: Team members of non-profit organizations are allowed to video the presenter.
- **Scoring**: Coaches will score each presentation using an individual score sheet and non-profit organizations will receive these at the end of each session.
- **Improvement**: Coaches and non-profit organizations are encouraged to meet between sessions to review scores and discuss areas of improvement.

## 2025 Coaches Score Sheet

Non-Profit: \_\_\_\_\_ Pitch Session Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Non-Profit to solve a particular problem or fulfill a particular need is clear.

### Innovation + Differentiation

The Non-Profit has a program, service or resource tool not previously available to the community or is approaching the need differently than other similar organizations.

### Social Impact

The Non-Profit is making a significant difference in people's lives, ideally supported with data/metrics or other indicators demonstrating positive outcomes in the community.

### Pitch Presentation

The pitch is clear and logical and connects the program's objectives with the support requested. It includes a concrete request and presents a straightforward breakdown of how the financial assistance will be utilized to achieve goals.

### Stage Ready

The Non-Profit conveys authenticity and confidence and appropriate tone and body mechanics that enhance rather than detract.

### 10-Point Grading Scale

Score each pitch component from 1-10 based on the descriptions above with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest.

1-2 Rating Poor	3 or 4 Rating Fair	5 or 6 Rating Good	7 or 8 Rating Very Good	9 or 10 Rating Excellent
Little to no evidence of considering this area in the pitch.	Some attempts to address the criteria, but insufficient content or development.	Reasonable inclusion of content and details that demonstrate fulfillment of the criteria.	Significant and substantial inclusion of the content and details that clearly shows fulfillment of the criteria.	Excellent coverage of key elements demonstrating relevance, capability, and success in fulfilling the criteria.

Please total the score for each area.

Statement of Purpose	Innovation + Differentiation	Social Impact	Pitch Presentation	Stage Ready	TOTAL

What did you like most about the presentation?

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Given the elements of the score sheet, what was missing from the presentation?

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What areas do you suggest for improvement?

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# Event Awards

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There are three ways monetary awards are generated at The Pitch:

- Must! Charities' Awards: Must! Charities provides monetary awards for the top three places, determined by scores from a panel of judges. These judges are members of the San Luis Obispo community and are not affiliated with Must! Charities as staff, board, or committee members.
  - 1st Place: \$20,000
  - 2nd Place: \$15,000
  - 3rd Place: \$10,000
- Live Audience Participation: Throughout The Pitch, audience members have the opportunity to pledge real-time donations through their phones. Donations are tracked and will be periodically displayed throughout the evening.
- Post Event Donations: Audience members may approach non-profit organizations immediately after the event and in some cases, this subsequently results in a donation at The Pitch or in the ensuing weeks.

# Non-Profit Expectations

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To ensure successful participation in Must! Charities' The Pitch program, we request that each nonprofit carefully consider and adhere to the following expectations:

- **Calendar Availability**
  - August 20<sup>th</sup> from 4:00pm – 6:00pm: Kick-Off Party
  - August 27<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 – 6:30pm: Session 1
  - September 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 – 6:30pm: Session 2
  - October 1<sup>st</sup> from 5:00 – 6:30pm: Session 3
  - October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 5:00 – 6:30pm: Session 4
  - November 6<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 – 7:00pm: The Pitch
- **Time Commitment**
  - Training Sessions: Attend four sessions lasting 1.5-2 hours each, plus a kickoff event.
  - Pitch Event: Participate in a 3-hour pitch event.
  - One-on-One Coaching: Schedule individual coaching sessions in between training sessions at your discretion.
  - Nonprofit Visit: We encourage coaches to visit the nonprofit organization to better understand their work.
- **Primary + Secondary Presenter**
  - Primary Presenter: The primary presenter for the non-profit organization should be the organization's CEO or Executive Director.
  - Secondary Presenter: In addition to the primary presenter, each nonprofit is required to designate a secondary presenter who will also attend all sessions.
  - Secondary Presenter's Roles: The secondary presenter's role is to actively engage in the process by studying the presentation, taking notes, and providing valuable feedback to the primary presenter.
  - Unforeseen Emergencies: If an unforeseen emergency prevents the primary presenter from attending a session, the designated secondary representative from the organization is expected to attend.
  - Nonrepresentation: Failure to have a representative at any session, without a valid emergency, may jeopardize the nonprofit's eligibility to participate in the final event.
- **Team Collaboration**
  - Team Makeup: Each team consists of 1-2 coaches and a pitch presenter from the nonprofit.
  - Scheduling Meetings: The nonprofit is responsible for scheduling team meetings with the coach(es) between sessions to review and refine pitch content.
  - Face-to-Face Meetings: We strongly recommend face-to-face meetings to practice pitch presentations in a standing position and to choreograph body and eye movements.
- **Continuous Improvement**
  - Incorporate Feedback: The presenter from the nonprofit carries the responsibility of actively incorporating feedback received during team meetings to create a new and improved pitch.
  - Ongoing Refinement: This ongoing development and refinement are crucial to your success in the program.
  - Strengths and Weaknesses: Coaching is meant to bring out the strengths of the nonprofit speaker and improve weaknesses that will increase the appeal of the pitch to a general audience in a large public arena.



- Be Coachable: Nonprofit speakers have been asked to be coachable. This means you are ready to do what it takes to change, transform, improve or excel.

If there are any issues with your coaching or any facet of The Pitch program, they should be communicated to the executive committee at [thepitch@mustcharities.org](mailto:thepitch@mustcharities.org) as soon as recognized.

# Coaching Expectations

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To ensure successful participation in Must! Charities' The Pitch program, we request that each coach carefully consider and adhere to the following expectations:

- **Calendar Availability**
  - August 20<sup>th</sup> from 4:00pm – 6:00 pm: Kick-Off Party
  - August 27<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm: Session 1
  - September 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm: Session 2
  - October 1<sup>st</sup> from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm: Session 3
  - October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm: Session 4
  - November 6<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm: The Pitch
- **Time Commitment**
  - Training Sessions: Attend four sessions lasting 2–3 hours each, plus a kickoff event.
  - Pitch Event: Participate in a 3-hour pitch event.
  - One-on-One Coaching: Schedule individual coaching sessions in between training sessions at your discretion.
  - Nonprofit Visit: We encourage coaches to visit the nonprofit organization to better understand their work.
- **Guiding Coaching Principles**
  - Purpose of Coaching: Coaching focuses on highlighting the nonprofit speaker's strengths and addressing weaknesses to make their pitch more compelling to a general audience in a large public setting.
  - Balancing Feedback: Speakers may receive conflicting feedback from the larger training group and their matched coaches. While it is the speaker's responsibility to decide which feedback to apply, coaches should help them evaluate what is most valuable
  - Addressing Concerns: Speakers should communicate with their coach if they find any feedback offensive, unsupportive, or misaligned with their mission and goals.
  - Being Coachable: Nonprofit speakers are expected to be open to change, growth, and improvement. While they are not required to agree with every suggestion, coaches can point out instances where speakers appear resistant to feedback. Speakers understand that they may be encouraged to step outside their comfort zone, as outlined in their memorandum of understanding.
  - Scope of Coaching: Coaching does not include rewriting the nonprofit's pitch but helping guide and redefine it.

If there are any issues with your coaching or any facet of The Pitch program, they should be communicated to the executive committee at [thepitch@mustcharities.org](mailto:thepitch@mustcharities.org) as soon as recognized.

# Event Promotion

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The Pitch is a unique and engaging experience that often inspires a greater desire to get involved in our local community.

We encourage coaches and non-profit organizations to actively promote The Pitch as an informative and inspiring evening. Here's how you can help us:

- Social Media Promotion: post-event information and ticket link.
- Share with Contacts: Spread the word to friends, family, board members, and colleagues via text, email and/or good old-fashioned in-person opportunities. Having supporters in the audience creates an exciting buzz in the air at The Pitch.
- Email Marketing: The Pitch is a unique and engaging experience that often inspires a greater desire to get involved in our local community.
- Donor Prospects: The Pitch offers a unique opportunity for you to engage donor prospects – a creative alternative to traditional “pitches.”

Your active participation in promoting The Pitch is vital to our shared goals to support the non-profit organizations serving our community. Together, we make a significant impact!

# Contact

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## **Event Contact:**

As a cohort participant, please report any issues with any aspect of The Pitch program to the executive committee at [thepitch@mustcharities.org](mailto:thepitch@mustcharities.org) as soon as they are identified.

## **Event Coordinator:**

Any communications about session and event details, clarification on program overview, and sponsorship should be directed to Kyle Flaherty at [kyle@mustcharities.org](mailto:kyle@mustcharities.org) or 805.286.1879.

## **Must! Charities Staff**

Becky Gray, Executive Director

Randy Gray, Director of Community Investments

Erika Martin, Community Projects and PURPOSE Concierge Manager

Megan Leishman, Executive Assistant

## **The Pitch Committee**

Jacob Allred, SCADA

Lori Bickel, Community Member

Morgan Dewar-Voss, JB Dewar

Courtney McKeever, Whitney, Thompson & Jeffcoach LLP

Kelly Pope, Community Advocate