Young Entrepreneur of the Year Competition
Application Form

Program Overview

Junior Achievement of Wisconsin is proud to present the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Competition (YE) — a statewide opportunity students who have successfully launched and operated their own business ventures.

This is a competitive program where four finalists will be selected to present their businesses in a taped television event in Milwaukee, WI, competing for scholarships and additional recognition.

The application is now open year-round, with finalist decisions will be made the first week of January.

Once event dates are confirmed, applicants will be notified and given the option to either continue with consideration for the current year or defer their application to the following cycle.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be between the ages of 16 and 22, a legal U.S. and Wisconsin resident, and currently enrolled in your junior or senior year of high school (public, parochial, private, virtual, or homeschool), or in an undergrad, apprenticeship, or trade program. Graduate students are not eligible
- Be the owner(s) or manager(s) of an active for-profit business started and operated by the applicant. Businesses may be seasonal but must have been in operation since at least January 2026.
- Maintain continuous ownership/management of the business throughout its existence.
- Previous YE winners are not eligible.

Finalists must be available to travel to Milwaukee, WI for the live, in-person competition. JA will provide one night of lodging. *Note: If you live in Northern Wisconsin see Northern Wisconsin Applicant section below.*

Award and Recognition

Four finalists will present their business to a panel of celebrity judges during a televised statewide competition, typically held in February or March in Milwaukee. The event will be live streamed and later broadcast on the local FOX affiliate.

- Grand Prize Winner: $5,000 scholarship + recognition on the WI Department of Public Instruction's Young Entrepreneur webpage.
- Runners-Up (3): $1,500 scholarship each.
- Viewer's Choice Award: $500 cash prize.

Selection Criteria

Finalists are selected based on:

- Business success (financial performance, marketing, innovation, and more)
- Strategic thinking and long-term vision
- Entrepreneurial leadership and professionalism

Application Process

Applications are accepted year-round, with final decisions made the first week of January each year. A completed application includes:

- Application form
- Signed media release and permission slip
- Headshot
- Business video

Once your online form is submitted, you will receive a confirmation email and a personal link to upload your video and headshot.

When event dates are finalized, you will be notified and asked to confirm your availability or opt to defer your application to the following year.

For more information, please contact Eli Rocke at erocke@jawis.org.

Northern Wisconsin Applicants

Students who live in Northern Wisconsin will use this same form to apply for the **Northern Wisconsin Live Competition**, held on **January 26th**. One winner from that competition will advance to the statewide event and receive preferential consideration. Prizes include a $2,000 award for the first-place winner, as well as an additional prize awarded based on public voting through social media.

Students eligible for the Northern Wisconsin competition will be notified after the application period has closed.

If Northern Wisconsin applicants are not selected for the regional event, their applications will automatically be considered for the statewide competition — giving them two chances to be selected.
For more information on the Northern Wisconsin event, please contact emayer@jawis.org.



Applicant Details

(Full Name – First, Middle Initial, last)	
(Address)	(City, State, Zip)
(Phone)	(E-mail Address)
(Date of Birth)	(Gender)
School or Program	Year in School or Program
Are you currently or have you ever participated in a Junior Achievement program?	
Which Program?	

Business Details:

(Business Name)
(Business Phone)
(Business web address)
(Business Address)
(Social Media Accounts: please share URL links to pages)
(Industry)
(A brief description of your business 2-3 sentences)
(Who helped you get your business started & what resources they offered?)

VIDEO GUIDELINES

Video Components: The following statements or questions must be addressed in the video clip; please script your video to include these questions/statements, **in the order listed below**:

- Please introduce yourself and your business:
- What is your name?
- What is the name of your business?
- Please tell us about your business. For example, what is the purpose or goal of your business? What products and/or services do you offer? What customers are you targeting? What unique benefits does your business offer your customers?
- Why did you start your business? What inspires you and how did you turn your vision into a reality?
- Please tell us more about yourself and how you make your business succeed. How have you demonstrated commitment, vision, and leadership through your business?
- What is your strategic vision for the business? What long term goals have you set (for example, future products/services, future markets/customer segments, employees, equipment, etc) and how are you going to achieve those goals?
- Please provide us with a financial picture of your company, including
    - How your business makes money
    - Major sources of revenue and expenses
    - Assess your current level of profitability: Are you currently profitable? If not, how far off are you and what will it take for you to become profitable?
- Please tell us anything else you think would be interesting that defines and differentiates your business. For example, are there any causes your business supports?
- Why do you think your business should be selected as a finalist and considered for the grand prize?

Video Format: Use the highest video quality setting there is on the camera in landscape mode. Preferred file format is: Mp4.

Sound Quality: Use a microphone, if available, to improve sound quality.

Length of Video: No more than 7 minutes for a creative video.

Appropriateness: All videos must be clean, professional and appropriate. No obscene or vulgar language and no sexual overtones will be accepted. If you are under 18, content must be reviewed by an adult prior to submission.

Media Permission Slip and Media Release: A signed media release must be submitted with your video. If you or anyone appearing in your video is under 18, a signed parent or guardian permission form is also required.

Deadline: All submissions (including video) must be received no later than midnight on Monday, January 4, 2027.

Video Submission: You'll receive an email confirmation we received your email and an invitation to upload your video file and headshot using a customized Google Folder link.

For questions or issues, please contact Eli Rocke at erocke@jawis.org.

Declaration:

I hereby certify that all details supplied by me in this entry are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I accept the rules and conditions of entry and agree to abide by the decisions of the judging panels on all matters relating to these awards. I also understand that in order to be eligible I must be lawfully in the United States.

By signing and submitting this form, should I be selected as a Young Entrepreneur of the Year competition finalist, I accept this recognition and will be available on Friday, March 22. I understand that business attire is required.

I also give Junior Achievement permission to use my name when promoting information about the Young Entrepreneur of the Year and I grant Junior Achievement the irrevocable right and permission to reproduce, use, re-use, publish, display, copyright, and distribute information that I have included in the application, for all other purposes, including commercial, in perpetuity.

Signature: _____ Date_____

By signing you are confirming that all the details you have provided are correct and accurate to the best of your knowledge. You are also agreeing to the award eligibility terms and conditions. This application along with any video submissions will be used for educational purposes only and will not be sold, transmitted or used for any for-profit gain.

If you are under 18, a parent or guardian must also sign below:

Parent or Guardian Signature: _____ Date_____

	Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction **MEDIA PERMISSION SLIP** PI-2431 (Rev. 09-12)	Date *Mo./Day/Yr.*

I, _____

give permission to the

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

to interview me (or my minor child, if the applicant is under 18), _____, or to make or use pictures, slides, digital images, or other reproductions of me, of my child, or of materials owned by me or my child, and to put the finished information, transcripts, pictures, slides, and/or images to use without compensation in broadcast productions, publications, on the Web, or in other printed or electronic materials related to the role and function of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Address *Street, City, State, ZIP*	
Signature Ø	Telephone *Area/No.*