To learn more
Visit the WARF UpStart program Web page at: warf.org/UpStart
The page contains online application forms and additional information.
Or contact the UpStart program at UpStart@warf.org, (608) 263-2500

WARF’s UpStart program connects the resources and expertise of the UW–Madison community with the energy and enthusiasm of aspiring entrepreneurs to help turn dreams into livelihoods.
WARF’s UpStart program is invested in your success

It takes more than a good idea to start a successful business. The WARF UpStart program, developed by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, delivers the training and tools needed to help transform ideas into enterprises.

The University of Wisconsin–Madison and its affiliated organizations serve as home to experts on businesses ranging from retail stores to real estate empires. Technology startups, budding landscape businesses, restaurants, law firms, tourism attractions and entertainment organizations represent just a few establishments with campus roots.

Yet too often, entrepreneurial success eludes minorities and women. WARF’s UpStart program helps aspiring entrepreneurs leverage the knowledge and resources of the campus community to identify the most promising opportunities. Best of all, it’s free to participants from a variety of educational backgrounds and all walks of life.

Give your talent some traction

WARF’s UpStart program addresses some of the key challenges facing minority and women entrepreneurs by offering a comprehensive, cohesive curriculum. Evening classes, credible instructors and the support of peers who share the journey from concept to conclusion provide added traction for participants with diverse talents. Step-by-step sessions on key business topics provide a realistic framework for participants and increase the likelihood of obtaining financial support.

The UpStart advantage

What sets the UpStart program apart from other entrepreneurship training opportunities?

- A welcoming environment that celebrates curiosity and instills confidence;
- A fresh curriculum presented by carefully selected instructors;
- A local focus that takes into account unique opportunities on campus and in the surrounding community;
- A several-week duration that helps refine ideas and build momentum; and
- A cohort of like-minded participants whose achievements and experiences expand your knowledge and extend your professional network.

Sample class schedule

Classes run for several weeks with sessions beginning in the winter and fall each year. The classes meet Tuesday evenings from 6 to 8:30 p.m. with instruction in the following topics:

- Ideation Session to Spur New Business Ideas and Meet Everyone
- The Business Model Canvas
- Market Research and Empathy Mapping
- Sales Planning
- Developing Your Strategy and Promotion Plan
- Using the Web for Your Business
- Customer Development and Interviews
- Business Planning for Nonprofits
- Insurance and Risk Management
- Operations and Management
- Accounting, Recordkeeping and Basic Tax Issues
- Financial Projections
- Financing Your Business
- Legal Issues for Small Business
- The Concept of a Business Plan