

SEP STRIVE

Round 1 | Spring 2026

Welcome to **SEP Strive!** SEP Strive consists of two qualifier rounds (written submissions and video pitches), with finalists automatically advancing to SEP Thrive—the statewide pitch showcase. Strive is designed to increase our comfort level building business models that can be used to test business ideas and markets.

Follow these steps to complete your application and ensure you and/or your team are ready to compete!

Submission Timeline for Round 1:

- Open: January 7, 2026
- Deadline: February 5, 2026
- Announced: February 9, 2026

Submission Steps:

1. Choose whether you will compete as an **individual** or as a **team** (2-4 students).
 - Only **one submission** should be completed per business idea.
 - Pro Tip: If competing as a team, complete the online submission together.
2. Complete a Lean Canvas
 - A Lean Canvas and Lean Canvas Guide are provided below for your reference. Use these to map out your ideas before completing the online submission to ensure your responses are organized and impactful.
 - Pro Tip: You can speed up your online submission by typing your Lean Canvas responses somewhere (e.g., MS Word, Google Docs). They can be copied and pasted directly into the Submission Form.
3. Complete the online Submission Form
 - When you're ready, launch the submission portal here:
[SEP Strive Round 1 Submission Form](#)

Other Helpful Resources:

- **Crash Course – Business Entrepreneurship:** [This is an 18-video series](#) designed to help you understand key concepts. For your convenience, hyperlinks to some of these videos are included throughout the Lean Canvas guide below.

Lean Canvas Guide:

The following descriptions will help walk you through the Lean Canvas components and Submission Form. The art is to have clear and concise responses without compromising the [clarity of your statements](#).

1. **Customer Segments** – Describe the [target customers](#).
 - a. Paint a clear picture of your "typical" customer by describing common traits (e.g., demographics, habits, beliefs) and goals. For example: "Busy high school students who need a simple way to stay organized while juggling classes and activities."
2. **Problem** – List the top three [customer problems](#) your product/service addresses.
 - a. Describe the most significant problems (e.g., specific pains/frustrations, specific challenges) that your "typical" customer experiences while working to attain their common goal (see Customer Segments).
 - b. What is the size of this problem? How scalable could the right solution be?
 - c. How are your customers currently dealing with the problem?
3. **Solution** – Outline [possible solutions](#) for each customer problem.
 - a. What are the top three features of your product/service? Focus on the usage of action verbs (e.g., reduces, increases, maximizes) rather than introducing a specific product or service. Identify specifically what a solution could do to directly counteract each identified problem.
4. **Unique Value Proposition**
 - a. What is the single, clear, compelling message that states why your product/service is different and worth buying ([value proposition](#))?
5. **Channels** – Describe the various points of contact ([channels](#)) with the customers.
 - a. How are your customers being reached now?
 - b. Which methods or media work best?
 - c. How are you integrating these interactions within customer routines?
6. **Revenue Streams** – Outline the [revenue](#) model.
 - a. What are some different ways that your solution can generate revenue?
 - b. How do customers currently pay for similar options (e.g., per unit, per hour)?
 - c. How much does each Revenue Stream contribute to overall revenues?
7. **Cost Structure** – Outline the anticipated costs.
 - a. What are your anticipated Fixed Costs (e.g., salaries, rents, utilities)?
 - b. What are your anticipated Variable Costs (e.g., materials, wages, commissions)?
8. **Key Metrics** – List the key numbers that tell you how your business is doing.
 - a. What are the [key activities](#) that must be measured?

- b. What are a few meaningful things (e.g., repeat customers) you can measure to tell if you're gaining momentum?

9. **Unfair Advantage**

- a. What about your product/service means that it cannot be easily copied or bought?
- b. How is an investment in your business protected (e.g., patent, team w/ unparalleled combined experience)?

Lean Canvas

Designed for:

Designed by:

Date:

Version:

Problem 	Solution 	Unique Value Proposition 	Unfair Advantage 	Customer Segments 
Key Metrics 		Channels 		
Cost Structure 		Revenue Streams 		

Original version: Leanstack.com

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