

# HEARTLAND challenge

April 3-5, 2025



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS

Sam M. Walton College of Business

## Ignite Vision. Empower Startups. Elevate Your Brand.

The Heartland Challenge Startup Competition is a prestigious event that simulates the venture capital fundraising process for high-growth ventures. Over three days, 12 elite graduate student teams compete for a prize pool of up to \$100,000, engaging with the vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in Northwest Arkansas. As a sponsor, you'll be instrumental in fostering innovation and connecting with the next generation of industry leaders.



## What We Do

**Assess & Identify Top Talent:** Evaluate startup applications from university teams in preparation for a virtual first round, and a face-to-face semifinal and final round in Northwest Arkansas.

**Facilitate Business Development:** While in NWA, startup founders receive constructive feedback and mentorship to make local connections and improve their chances of startup success.

**Foster Networking & Regional Connection:** Facilitate deep connections within our regional ecosystem to encourage continued engagement post-competition.

## Why Sponsor?



### Targeted Exposure & Networking

Position your brand alongside and connect with leading startups, investors, and entrepreneurs.



### Support Startups & Founders

62% of 60 teams remain active or have exited, reflecting our support for sustainable startups.



### Community Impact

Support the growth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, in Northwest Arkansas and the Heartland.



### Brand Visibility

Increase brand recognition with logo placements, branded swag, and digital promotion.

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## Sponsorship Opportunities

The title sponsor for the Heartland Challenge is the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation. Join us in matching their generosity! Contact Maddy Stricklen ([mstricklen@walton.uark.edu](mailto:mstricklen@walton.uark.edu)).

Tier Details	Presenting \$25,000+	Premier \$10,000+	Event \$5,000+	Ecosystem Builder <\$5,000
Seats at Keynote Reception	Table (8)	4	2	2
Seats at Awards Ceremony	Table (8)	4	2	2
Logo featured on website and in printed program	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logo placement on sponsorship banner (tiered)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newsletter, press release, & social media features	✓	✓		
Presence in swag bags	✓	✓		
Co-branded social media campaign	✓			
Participation as a panelist, moderator, or judge (if appropriate)	✓			
Main stage & livestream branding	✓			
Event-specific branding			✓	

\* Sponsorship contributions will be reduced by the fair market value of the associated benefits per IRS regulations.

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Level Details	Presenting \$25,000+	Premier \$10,000+	Ecosystem Builder \$5,000+	Startup Champion \$3,000+
Seats at Keynote Reception & Awards Ceremony	8	4	2	0
Seats at VIP Reception	4	2	0	0
Logo featured on website and in printed program	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logo placement on sponsorship banner (tiered)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social media feature	✓	✓	✓	
Newsletter and press release features	✓	✓		
Presence in swag bags	✓			
Participation as a judge, mentor, panelist, or moderator	✓			
Main stage branding	✓			
Support a team's cost to participate				✓

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### Date

April 3-5, 2025

### Contact

Maddy Stricklen  
mstricklen@walton.uark.edu

### Location

Bentonville, AR

### Website

[heartlandchallenge.uark.edu](http://heartlandchallenge.uark.edu)



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Social media feature	✓	✓		
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	Founder's Circle	Ecosystem Builder	Innovation Ally	Startup Champion
Seed Sponsorship		Angel	Venture	Seed
	Visionary Capital	Innovation Investment	Startup Support	Seed Sponsorship
Level Details	Presenting \$25,000	Premier \$10,000	Ecosystem Builder \$5,000	Startup Champion \$3,000
Logo placement at event	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seats at Opening Reception & Awards Ceremony	8	4	2	2
Logo feature in program	✓	✓	✓	✓
Website, social media, and newsletter feature	✓	✓	✓	✓
Participation as a judge, mentor, panelist, or moderator	✓			✓
Verbal acknowledgement at highest visibility events	✓			

**Incentive ideas from references:**

Logo placement at events  
On Stage speaking opportunities  
Presence in swag bags  
feature in program  
Main Stage branding  
Priority web, print, and venue branding  
Email features

**Other details to include:**

- **Point of Contact**
- **Date**
- **Audience**
- **Location(s)**

**Tier Ideas**

Specific meal sponsorship (Breakfasts, Lunches, Dinners, Coffee & drink bar, etc.)

Team sponsorship: pay for lodging, swag bags, meals, misc materials, etc. \$3,000 per (\$36,000 total)

Ambassador Program sponsor (\$X,000)

Welcome Reception (ambassador program)

Main Competition

Elevator Pitch Competition

Investor Roundtables

Final Round

Startup Expo