Resources & Support

You don't have to develop your business idea alone!

A-State students can access campus, state, and regional resources for business planning, market research, startup development, and entrepreneurship competitions.

Find the support that fits your needs:

- **Business planning or market research?** ASBTDC offers business advising, market research, and financial planning assistance.
- **Developing a technology-based business?** ARise Arkansas provides startup coaching, commercialization guidance, and industry connections.
- **Looking for mentoring or networking?** Epicenter and Startup Junkie offer entrepreneurship programs, business support, and connections.
- **Questions about inventions or intellectual property?** A-State Technology Transfer provides guidance on patents, licensing, and commercialization.
- **Preparing for a business plan competition?** Explore A-State Innovation & Entrepreneurship for competition information, preparation guides, and resources.

Explore the resources below to get started.

- Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center (ASBTDC)
- ARise Arkansas
- Epicenter Memphis & EpicenterU at A-State
- AState Technology Transfer, Licensing, & Commercialization

Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center (ASBTDC)

> **Business Planning | Market Research | Financial Planning | Startup Guidance**

The Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center (ASBTDC) helps aspiring entrepreneurs and existing small businesses plan, launch, and grow.

Through confidential, one-on-one business consulting, market research assistance, and educational resources, ASBTDC provides practical support for turning business ideas into viable ventures.

> **Business consulting and market research assistance are available at no cost to eligible Arkansas businesses and entrepreneurs.**

How ASBTDC Can Help

ASBTDC offers assistance across several areas of business development:

- **Business Planning:** Develop or refine your business plan, business model, and startup strategy.
- **Market Research:** Investigate industries, customer demographics, competitors, and potential market opportunities.
- **Financial Planning:** Estimate startup expenses, develop financial projections, and evaluate funding needs.
- **Business Startup Guidance:** Explore the practical requirements of launching and managing a business.
- **Marketing & Growth:** Develop strategies for reaching customers and growing a business.
- **Workshops & Training:** Access educational events, webinars, and startup resources.

Why Is ASBTDC Useful for Student Entrepreneurs?

If you're preparing for a business plan competition, ASBTDC can be particularly valuable when developing the research and financial components of your proposal.

Consider connecting with ASBTDC when you need help:

- Finding credible market and industry information.
- Understanding the size and characteristics of your target market.
- Researching competitors and existing alternatives.
- Estimating startup costs and operating expenses.
- Developing realistic financial projections.
- Reviewing and strengthening your business plan.

> **You don't need to have an established business to explore ASBTDC's resources.**
> The center also assists prospective entrepreneurs who are still developing their ideas.

A-State's Local ASBTDC Office

A-State hosts an ASBTDC office within the Neil Griffin College of Business.

Location:
Delta Center for Economic Development
319 University Loop West
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Phone: 870-972-3517
Email: asu@asbtdc.org

Office Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.
Consultations are by appointment.

Visit the A-State ASBTDC Office Page

Getting Started

ASBTDC provides several ways to begin exploring entrepreneurship.

1. Explore Business Startup Resources

Access startup guides, business planning tools, financial worksheets, and educational materials.

Explore ASBTDC's Free Startup Resources

2. Request Business Consulting

Connect with a business consultant for individualized guidance related to your business concept.

Learn About ASBTDC Consulting

3. Attend a Workshop or Webinar

ASBTDC offers educational programs covering business planning, marketing, financing, and other entrepreneurship topics.

Explore ASBTDC Events

Preparing for a Business Plan Competition?

Our recommendation: Begin by conducting customer discovery to understand the problem you're trying to solve. Then consider working with ASBTDC to strengthen your market research, financial assumptions, and business planning.

Customer discovery and market research complement each other:

- **Customer discovery** helps you understand individual customer experiences, problems, and needs.
- **Market research** helps you evaluate the broader industry, competitive environment, and commercial opportunity.

Together, they can help you develop a more credible, evidence-based business plan.

Related A-State Resource: Customer Discovery: A Practical Guide

ARise Arkansas

> **Technology Startups | Commercialization | Startup Coaching | Industry Connections**

ARise Arkansas is a statewide initiative supporting technology and technology-enabled startups. Supported by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), ARise connects entrepreneurs with experienced advisors, industry experts, and resources to help develop and grow innovative businesses.

Through no-cost coaching, consulting, and entrepreneurial programming, ARise helps Arkansas innovators move from early business concepts toward viable, scalable ventures.

How ARise Can Help

ARise provides specialized support for entrepreneurs developing technology-based businesses.

- **Startup Coaching & Consulting:** Receive individualized guidance on developing, validating, and growing a technology-based business.
- **Customer Discovery & Business Model Development:** Work with experienced advisors to investigate customer needs, test assumptions, and refine your business model.
- **Technology Commercialization:** Explore opportunities to translate innovative technologies into commercial products and services.
- **Capital Access & Funding Readiness:** Receive guidance on preparing for investment, identifying funding opportunities, and understanding available startup incentives.
- **Industry Connections:** Connect with potential customers, business partners, and industry professionals.
- **Specialized Mentoring:** Access subject matter experts in areas such as biotechnology, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and supply chain management.
- **Workshops & Events:** Participate in entrepreneurship programs, technical discussions, investor education, and networking opportunities.

Why Is ARise Useful for Student Entrepreneurs?

ARise may be particularly valuable for students developing innovative products, software, research-based technologies, or other scalable business concepts.

Consider exploring ARise if you are:

- Developing a technology-based business idea.
- Exploring the commercial potential of a research project or invention.
- Testing whether an innovative product addresses a meaningful customer need.
- Building a startup around software, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, or another emerging technology.
- Seeking specialized mentors or industry connections.
- Preparing to pitch a technology-based venture to competition judges or potential investors.

You don't necessarily need an established company or a finished product to begin exploring ARise. Its services include support for entrepreneurs at the concept-development stage.

Who Can Participate?

ARise is designed for Arkansas-based technology and technology-enabled ventures.

According to the program's application guidance, prospective participants should generally meet the following criteria:

- **Technology-Based:** The business uses technology as an important component of its product, service, or business model.
- **Arkansas Connection:** The entrepreneur operates or plans to establish the business in Arkansas.
- **Growth Potential:** The venture has the potential to scale beyond a small, localized market.

Students exploring an eligible startup concept may consider applying, even if their venture is still in development.

Getting Started

ARise offers several ways to explore its services and connect with startup advisors.

1. Explore Entrepreneur Services

Learn about available coaching, consulting, business development, and startup support.

Explore ARise Entrepreneur Services

2. Learn About Startup Coaching

ARise offers individualized consulting that can include customer discovery, Lean Canvas development, business model refinement, and venture assessments.

Explore Startup Coaching & Consulting

3. Apply to the ARise Program

Interested entrepreneurs can complete an online application to begin the process.

ARise uses an initial consultation and assessment to understand the venture and identify appropriate resources.

Apply to ARise

4. Connect with ARise

Website: ARise Arkansas

Email: info@arisearkansas.org

ARise serves entrepreneurs throughout Arkansas, with virtual and in-person support opportunities.

Preparing for a Business Plan Competition?

ARise can be especially relevant for students entering technology-focused business plan competitions.

As you develop your business concept, consider using ARise resources to:

- Evaluate whether your technology addresses a meaningful market need.
- Refine your value proposition and business model.
- Identify potential customers and industry applications.
- Explore commercialization and market-entry strategies.
- Strengthen your pitch and prepare for future funding opportunities.

Our recommendation: Begin with customer discovery to investigate the problem your business intends to solve. Then consider connecting with ARise for specialized guidance on developing and validating your technology-based venture.

> **Related A-State Resource:** Customer Discovery: A Practical Guide

Epicenter Memphis & EpicenterU at A-State

> **Entrepreneurship Education | Student Fellowships | Startup Development | Mentorship | Accelerators**

Epicenter Memphis is a nonprofit entrepreneurship organization supporting innovative businesses across Memphis and the Delta region. Through entrepreneurship programs, startup accelerators, mentorship, and connections to capital and industry partners, Epicenter helps entrepreneurs develop, launch, and grow their ventures.

Arkansas State University partners with Epicenter through **EpicenterU: Students to Startups**, an initiative supported by the Delta Regional Authority (DRA) that expands hands-on entrepreneurship education and startup development opportunities for A-State students.

EpicenterU: Students to Startups at A-State

Learn entrepreneurship. Develop ideas. Explore startup opportunities.

EpicenterU connects university students with entrepreneurship education, experienced mentors, industry professionals, and opportunities to develop new businesses.

A-State is a founding university partner in this regional initiative, which aims to help students develop the skills and connections needed to turn promising ideas into viable ventures.

The program includes:

- **Entrepreneurship Coursework:** Hands-on learning focused on identifying problems, understanding customers, and developing business concepts.
- **Industry Engagement:** Opportunities to connect with entrepreneurs, business leaders, and mentors.
- **Startup Development:** Practical experience evaluating business opportunities and testing potential solutions.
- **EpicenterU Fellowship:** A competitive fellowship pathway designed to support selected students pursuing startup development.

Learn More About EpicenterU

EpicenterU Entrepreneurship Course

Spring 2027 Enrollment

MGMT 34303: Entrepreneurship

The EpicenterU entrepreneurship course provides students with practical experience exploring business opportunities, identifying customer needs, and developing innovative solutions.

Rather than beginning with a finished business idea, students learn to investigate real-world problems and evaluate whether those problems represent meaningful business opportunities.

What Students Will Learn

- Entrepreneurship fundamentals and design thinking
- Customer discovery and interviewing
- Identifying unmet needs and market opportunities
- Developing and evaluating business concepts
- Business models and value propositions
- Prototyping and testing potential solutions
- Communicating and pitching business ideas

The course emphasizes hands-on learning, practical exercises, and engagement with the regional entrepreneurial community.

Students interested in participating can contact the EpicenterU program director for additional information.

Inaugural Course: Fall 2026

EpicenterU launched its inaugural entrepreneurship course at A-State in Fall 2026 through the Neil Griffin College of Business.

Students spent the semester investigating real problems, interviewing potential customers, developing business concepts, and testing proposed solutions.

*The course culminated in the **EpicenterU Innovation Showcase on November 19, 2026**, where selected students presented their ventures to entrepreneurs, investors, alumni, and regional business leaders.*

Read About the Inaugural EpicenterU Innovation Showcase

EpicenterU Fellowship: A Future Opportunity for Student Founders

> **Competitive Fellowship | Startup Development | Mentorship | Financial Support**

The EpicenterU Fellowship is a planned next stage of the program, designed to help selected students pursue startup development beyond the classroom.

According to A-State's May 2026 announcement, the multi-year initiative includes a fellowship phase in which selected participants will receive financial support, dedicated mentorship, and opportunities to develop and showcase their ventures.

What Has Been Announced?

The publicly announced fellowship model includes:

- **$40,000 annual stipends** for selected fellows.
- **Up to $7,500 in company development funds.**
- Dedicated mentorship and guidance from experienced entrepreneurs.
- Opportunities to present ventures at regional pitch and showcase events.
- Support for developing scalable businesses with connections to the Delta region.

These figures describe the announced program model. Individual eligibility, funding conditions, selection procedures, and participation requirements will be established through official fellowship materials.

Fellowship Applications

Application Details Coming Soon

The fellowship is intended to provide a pathway for students interested in taking their entrepreneurial ideas further.

Additional information about eligibility, application requirements, deadlines, and selection will be shared as the program develops.

In the meantime, interested students are encouraged to:

- Explore entrepreneurship coursework and educational resources.
- Begin identifying problems worth solving.
- Conduct customer discovery.
- Develop and refine business concepts.
- Connect with the EpicenterU program team.

Learn More:

- A-State's Official EpicenterU Announcement

- EpicenterU Program Website

Explore Epicenter Memphis

In addition to EpicenterU, Epicenter Memphis offers programs, events, and resources supporting entrepreneurs at different stages of business development.

Students interested in entrepreneurship can explore these opportunities to expand their knowledge, connect with founders, and learn more about the startup ecosystem.

Startup Accelerators & Business Development

Epicenter offers programs that help entrepreneurs develop business concepts, strengthen customer relationships, and prepare for growth.

Examples include:

- **Epicenter Launch:** Support for developing and launching new ventures.
- **Customer Readiness Accelerator:** Training focused on customer development and sales readiness.
- **Capital Readiness Accelerator:** Guidance on preparing businesses to pursue investment and other funding opportunities.
- **ZeroTo510:** Specialized accelerator programming for medical device startups.

Explore Epicenter's Programs

Entrepreneurship Challenges & Innovation Opportunities

Epicenter also supports industry-focused challenges that bring entrepreneurs together to address business and technology needs.

Examples include:

- **Medical Device Operations Challenge:** Innovation opportunities related to the medical device industry.
- **Logistics Industry Opportunity Challenge:** Opportunities to explore innovation in logistics and supply chains.

These programs may be particularly interesting to students developing technology-based or industry-focused business concepts.

Explore Available Programs and Challenges

DelTech Conference & Regional Networking

DelTech is Epicenter's regional innovation and entrepreneurship conference, bringing together founders, investors, industry leaders, and others involved in the Delta's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The conference includes discussions, workshops, startup pitches, and networking opportunities.

The 2026 conference took place October 14–16 in Memphis, Tennessee.

Learn About the DelTech Conference

Events, Workshops & Community Connections

Epicenter hosts entrepreneurship events, educational workshops, startup showcases, and networking opportunities throughout the year.

These activities provide opportunities to learn from experienced entrepreneurs and connect with the broader business community.

Explore Upcoming Epicenter Events

Why Is Epicenter Useful for A-State Students?

Epicenter and EpicenterU may be particularly valuable if you are:

- Interested in entrepreneurship but unsure where to begin.
- Exploring a business idea or potential startup.
- Looking for hands-on entrepreneurship education.
- Seeking connections with entrepreneurs, mentors, or industry professionals.
- Preparing for a student business plan competition.
- Interested in startup accelerators, innovation challenges, or regional entrepreneurship events.
- Considering entrepreneurship as a career pathway.

You don't need to have a finished business idea to begin learning about entrepreneurship. EpicenterU's educational approach emphasizes discovering problems and exploring opportunities before committing to a particular solution.

Preparing for a Business Plan Competition?

EpicenterU coursework and Epicenter's broader programming can complement preparation for competitions such as Arkansas Governor's Cup, Tulane Business Model Competition, and other student entrepreneurship opportunities.

Students can use these resources to:

1. Explore meaningful customer problems.
2. Conduct customer discovery and evaluate assumptions.
3. Develop and refine a business concept.
4. Connect with mentors and industry professionals.
5. Practice presenting business ideas and receiving feedback.

> **Related A-State Resource:** Customer Discovery: A Practical Guide

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Getting Started & Contact Information

EpicenterU at Arkansas State University

For questions about EpicenterU coursework, student participation, or upcoming fellowship opportunities:

Nicole Mansour
EpicenterU Program Director
Arkansas State University / EpicenterU

Epicenter Memphis

Website: Epicenter Memphis

Programs: Explore Epicenter Programs

Events: Upcoming Events

Email: info@epicentermemphis.org

AState Technology Transfer, Licensing, & Commercialization

> Link to Book: Technology Transfer, Licensing, & Commercialization

> **Intellectual Property | Inventions | Licensing | Research Commercialization**

Developing an innovative product, technology, or business idea? Understanding intellectual property (IP) and commercialization can be an important part of bringing your idea to market.

A-State's Technology Transfer office helps university innovators navigate intellectual property, invention disclosures, licensing, and opportunities to translate research and innovations into practical applications.

When Should You Reach Out?

Consider contacting A-State Technology Transfer if you are:

- **Developing a new invention or technology:** You have created something potentially novel and want to understand whether intellectual property protection may be appropriate.
- **Commercializing university research:** You are exploring business opportunities involving technology, software, or other innovations developed through A-State research.
- **Preparing for a business plan competition:** Your proposed business involves potentially patentable technology, unpublished research, or university-owned intellectual property.
- **Considering public disclosure:** You plan to publish, present, demonstrate, or pitch an invention and want to understand how disclosure could affect potential patent rights.
- **Exploring licensing opportunities:** You want to understand how university-developed technologies may be licensed for commercial use.
- **Unsure about intellectual property ownership:** You have questions about rights associated with inventions developed through university research, collaborations, or other activities.

You don't need to have a patent application or an established business to ask questions.

A Note for Student Entrepreneurs

If your business concept involves a potentially patentable invention or university-developed technology, **consider seeking guidance before publicly sharing detailed technical information.**

Business plan competitions, pitch events, publications, and demonstrations may involve public disclosures that could affect intellectual property protection.

This doesn't mean you should avoid participating. It means you should understand any relevant IP considerations before presenting sensitive information.

Explore A-State's Technology Transfer Resources

Our dedicated Technology Transfer Knowledge Base provides information about:

- Intellectual property and different forms of protection
- University intellectual property policies
- Invention disclosures and commercialization
- Licensing and technology transfer
- How to contact the Technology Transfer office

> Explore the Technology Transfer, Licensing, & Commercialization Knowledge Base

Schedule a Technology Transfer Consultation

Have questions about an invention, intellectual property, or commercialization? Schedule a consultation with A-State Technology Transfer to discuss your idea and explore appropriate next steps.

Schedule a Meeting with Luna Acosta

When scheduling, please include a brief description of what you'd like to discuss, such as:

- Intellectual property or patent questions
- A university-developed invention or technology
- Commercialization or licensing opportunities
- Intellectual property considerations before a business plan competition or public presentation

You don't need a completed invention disclosure or business plan to schedule a conversation.

Luna Acosta
Director of Technology Transfer
Arkansas State University

Students and university researchers are welcome to reach out with questions about intellectual property, invention disclosures, and commercialization opportunities.