



# News Release

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## **SBA Names the 2017 Finalists of InnovateHER Business Challenge for Innovations That Empower Women’s Lives**

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*10 Visionary Entrepreneurs Will Take Part in Pitch Competition  
Before an Expert Panel of Judges*

**WASHINGTON** – [Administrator Linda McMahon](#), the head of the U.S. Small Business Administration, today announced the 2017 finalists of the SBA’s InnovateHER Business Challenge, the nationwide competition highlighting innovative products, services or technology developed by visionary entrepreneurs that have a measurable impact on the lives of women and families, and in the marketplace.

“It is my great pleasure to announce the finalists of the SBA’s 2017 InnovateHER Business Challenge – entrepreneurs who demonstrate extraordinary innovation and talent,” McMahon said. “Small businesses are the engines of our economy and the SBA is proud to advocate on their behalf and ensure they have the tools they need to start, grow and succeed.”

The 10 finalists were selected through a rigorous nationwide competition held by host organizations, including universities, accelerators, and SBA Resource Partners that ran local area competitions through June 3, 2017. Next, an executive committee of SBA officials evaluated more than 120 semi-finalist nominations and chose 10 finalists to participate in the National Pitch Competition, whose products and services best meet the competition criteria and present the greatest potential for success.

The InnovateHER Business Challenge finalists are invited to conduct a marketing pitch before a team of expert judges at the National Pitch Competition held on October 26, 2017, in Washington, D.C., as they compete for the top three awards totaling \$70,000 in prize money, provided by the Sara Blakely Foundation.

For details on the competition, visit [www.sba.gov/innovateHER](http://www.sba.gov/innovateHER). This site will be updated as more information regarding the event is made available.

**Finalists:**

- Afreen Allam with SiNON Therapeutics, Raleigh, N.C. – SiNON Therapeutics is dedicated to improving the lives of women and families who suffer from neurological diseases by refining drug-localization of medicine to the brain.
- Alexa Jones with TheraB Medical, East Lansing, Mich. – TheraB Medical is a startup working to launch its first product, SnugLit a wearable, portable solution to infant jaundice that promotes maternal-infant bonding and breastfeeding while covering nearly twice the surface area of traditional methods.
- Crystal Harris with Brauxiliary, LLC, Charlotte, N.C. – The Brauxiliary Hands-Free Pumping Band is a bra attachment that turns any bra into a hands free pumping bra.
- Marna Pacheco and Susan Hickok with CapeAble Sensory Products, Fort Wayne, Ind. – CapeAble Sensory Products, LLC manufactures and sells weighted blankets, weighted wearables, and sensory enrichment tools.
- Bianca Cerqueira and Lauren Cornell with Novo Thelium, San Antonio, Texas – NovoThelium enables women to regenerate a nipple made from their own cells after a mastectomy.
- Zayira Jordan with GuardDV, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico – GuardDV seeks to help enforce court-issued restraining orders in favor of domestic violence survivors. The system integrates RFID and GPS technologies to track the aggressor and warn the potential victim and the corresponding law enforcement organizations about the physical proximity of the aggressor.
- Jenna Ryan with Uqora, LLC, San Diego, Calif. – Uqora™ gives women the defense they need against bacteria that causes urinary tract infections (UTIs), keeping them out of the doctor's office and off antibiotics.
- **Jamelah Tucker with EasyPeasie, LLC**, Jacksonville, Fla. – Easy Peasie, LLC is committed to providing families simple, natural, convenient, and fun ways to improve every meal with added vegetable nutrition.
- Jessica Dehn with Dino Drop In, Bozeman, Mont. – Dino Drop-In is childcare built to fit the lifestyle of busy families and ever-changing work schedules.
- Jamie Clark with The Willie Wags, Bangor, Maine – The Willie Wags is a quirky and fun subscription service that supports female entrepreneurs and women-owned small businesses.

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