FY24 UpLift Application Process FAQ

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

What is UpStart's UpLift program?

- UpLift by UpStart is a three-month sprint designed for entrepreneurs in the early stages of building their ventures. Participants who successfully finish the program will redefine the future of their early-stage venture and receive a badge of completion.

- Infused with Jewish wisdom, UpLift combines a virtual interactive atmosphere with self-paced learning modules. The curriculum fosters growth in a radically human-centered environment utilizing Learning Pods, Critical Colleagues feedback sessions, and live virtual gatherings.

What will the Venture leaders learn and do?

- You will identify the exact areas of venture development needed, understand and lean into what it means to be a social entrepreneur, and document and refine your business model (what you do, who you serve, how you fund it, and how you know it works); explore your ecosystem and learn best practices for building relationships; think through the early stages of impact measurement, and reinforce/practice the foundations needed for effective fundraising.

- You will work through 3 units on topics, including
    Unit 1/Month 1: Foundations of Social Entrepreneurship
    Unit 2/Month 2: People and Purpose
    Unit 3/Month 3: Funding Readiness & Storytelling

- You will have access to:
    - Tools include a social impact canvas, an ecosystem map, budget templates, an audience discovery workbook, a setting workbook, and an impact model worksheet.
    - Subject matter experts who can provide specific and tailored support on various business needs/topics via full-cohort office hours.
    - Your community of early-stage peers via the UpStart Platform.

What happens upon completion of the program?

FY24 UpLift Application Process FAQ

- Participants who successfully finish the program will redefine the future of their early-stage venture and earn a badge of completion.

- Participants who receive their badge of completion are eligible to apply for an early-stage grant package, which includes $3000 in funding, personalized coaching sessions to advance their venture, and admittance to the UpStarter Network.

- Please note:
    - Current UpStarter Network members who are early-stage are eligible to apply for UpLift but are not eligible for the early-stage grant package upon completion of the program.
    - Participants may complete UpLift as many times as they'd like but are only eligible for the early-stage grant package once.

PARTICIPATION DETAILS:

When does each cohort begin?

- Summer 2024 Cohort:
    - Thursday, June 27 - Asynchronous orientation materials released
    - Thursday, July 11 - Live virtual gathering #1

- Spring 2025 Cohort:
    - Wednesday, February 26 - Asynchronous orientation materials released
    - Wednesday, March 12 - Live virtual gathering #1

What is the time commitment? How and when will we meet?

- This is an entirely virtual program with both synchronous and asynchronous components.

- You will invest approximately 30 total hours of solo, cohort, and peer learning over the three months of the program (6-9 hours per month).

- Asynchronous learning:
    - You will spend an average of 4 - 6 hours each month working individually.

- We will provide guardrails for when asynchronous learning components need to be completed, but we encourage you to find a rhythm that suits you best, whether it's breaking learning down into smaller daily sessions, spreading it over a few days a week, or dedicating longer periods when it fits your schedule - plan for the rhythm that best fits your needs.

- Synchronous learning:
  - You will spend an average of 2 - 3 hours each month working synchronously with your cohort through full-cohort virtual gatherings, small group learning pods, and optional office hours.
  - Full-Cohort Calls:
    - There are three virtual full-cohort calls – at the start, middle, and end of the cohort (see chart below)
    - Please double-check your availability for these virtual meetings as they are MANDATORY for participation in this program. If you are unavailable for these dates, consider applying for a later cohort.
  - Learning Pods: These small groups are an opportunity to meet with peers engaging in the program alongside you to discuss the asynchronous content and unpack your learning together.
  - Office Hours:
    - A series of 9 optional office hours (1 - 1.5 hours each) will occur within and beyond the program.
      - Three calls will take place within the duration of the program.
      - Six calls will occur afterward (after full-cohort virtual gathering #3).

When are the program component touchpoints?

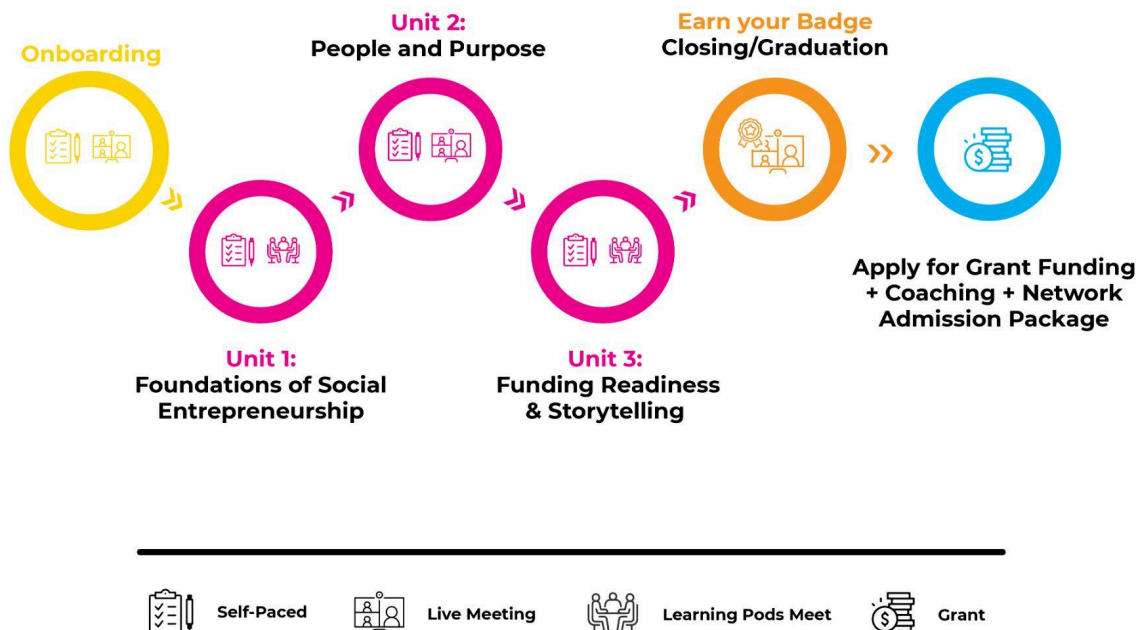| Program Touchpoint	Summer 2024 Cohort Dates	Spring 2025 Cohort Dates
Program Start: Orientation Period *(**Asynchronous - Materials become available)*	Thursday, June 27, 2024	Wednesday, February 26, 2025
Full-Cohort Live Virtual	Thursday, July 11, 2024	Wednesday, March 12,

FY24 UpLift Application Process FAQ

Gathering #1: Opening Orientation		2025
Learning Pods Meetings #1	Between July 12 - August 14, 2024	Between March 13 - April 15, 2025
Full-Cohort Live Virtual Gathering #2	Thursday, August 15, 2024	Wednesday, April 16, 2025
Learning Pods Meetings #2	Between August 16 - September 4, 2024	Between April 17 - May 13, 2025
Full-Cohort Live Virtual Gathering #3: Closing	Thursday, September 5, 2024	Wednesday, May 14, 2025
Asynchronous Learning	*At your pace (see below) between June 27 and September 5*	*At your pace (see below) between February 26 and May 14*

FY24 UpLift Application Process FAQ

UpLift: An Early Stage Sprint

Onboarding

Unit 2:
People and Purpose

Earn your Badge
Closing/Graduation

Apply for Grant Funding
+ Coaching + Network
Admission Package

Unit 1:
Foundations of Social
Entrepreneurship

Unit 3:
Funding Readiness
& Storytelling

Self-Paced   Live Meeting   Learning Pods Meet   Grant

What are the accessibility and technical requirements?

- The UpLift program is entirely virtual.

- Participants will need access to a computer or tablet with a camera and a reliable internet connection.

- Participants must be able to navigate the Google suite of tools (Google Docs, Slides, Spreadsheets, and Jamboard), Mural, and an online learning platform.

- UpStart can support accessibility needs and provide training on navigating the tools and learning platform to support participation in the program. Accommodation requests can be sent to **accessibility@upstartlab.org**.

FY24 UpLift Application Process FAQ

Who from each venture should participate? Can I bring a colleague?

- The content is structured for individual venture leaders to participate. If your venture has a co-leadership model, we welcome both parties to participate.

What if I want to apply now but participate in a future cohort?

- No problem! You will denote your preferred UpLift Cohort on your application.

What if I start the program but can't finish it on time?

- During the application process, you will be able to denote which cohort you'd like to be a part of. We encourage you to choose a period of time you think works with your schedule based on the estimated time commitment.

- If you begin the program content and cannot finish due to unexpected reasons, then you'll work with UpStart staff to determine the best next steps on a case-by-case basis.

What does the program cost?

- Each venture will be charged a $50 participation fee upon admission to a cohort.

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION:

When are applications due?

- Applications are open and will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Applicants will hear from UpStart within 2-3 weeks of submitting an application.
  - Monday, June 17, at 9 AM ET: Applications for the Summer 2024 Cohort close.
  - Monday, February 10, at 9 AM ET: Applications for the Spring 2025 Cohort close.

Updated: March 2024

FY24 UpLift Application Process FAQ

Who is eligible for the UpLift program?

- Social ventures with leadership that have a growth mindset, curiosity, passion, and determination are eligible.

- Venture leader displays professional readiness by having at least six months of experience with their current venture and at least once a year since the venture was founded.

- Ventures must meet UpStart's criteria for being an early-stage venture.

- Ventures must contribute to a Thriving Jewish Community.

How do I know if I'm an early-stage venture?

- Please take our What Stage Are You quiz.

What if I am interested in the program but am not an early-stage venture? Can I still participate?

- UpLift is specifically designed for early-stage ventures. UpStart program offerings also include:
  - **UpSpark: Idea Stage Generation**
    - Everything starts with the spark of imagination. That spark produces the ideas that become innovations. UpSpark ignites that process.
  - **UpSpring: Growth Stage Acceleration**
    - Like unleashing the potential energy in a tightened spring, UpSpring helps entrepreneurs accelerate the scaling of the venture's impact.

What if I applied to the UpSpring (formerly Venture Accelerator) cohort in the past? Should I apply for this program?

- If you were not advanced due to your venture stage, and your venture is currently early-stage, this may be a really good fit for you!

What if I'm already in the UpStarter Network?

FY24 UpLift Application Process FAQ

- If you're a member of the UpStarter Network because you've completed a growth stage program, then UpLift is not the right fit.

- Otherwise, if you are still an early-stage venture, you are eligible to apply!

- Please note that current UpStarter Network members are not eligible for the early-stage grant package upon completion of the program.

What if I participated in UpStart's early-stage work in the past (Sprints, asynchronous early-stage program, grant recipient)?

- UpLift is unique from other early-stage programming UpStart has offered in the past.

- If you feel like you're still early-stage and will benefit - apply to join us!

How many times can I do UpLift?

- You are welcome to participate in UpLift as many times as you'd like. However, you will only be eligible for the early-stage grant package once.

How does our venture fiscal status impact participation?

- We care more about the impact you seek to make in the world than your tax status. 501c3, LLC, B-corporation, fiscally sponsored...all are welcome.

- Our program has traditionally been geared towards nonprofit entities, but we have begun experimenting with opening it up to for-profit entities with a social impact.

- If your business model contributes to a thriving Jewish community or if you have a business model that will generate more revenue for Jewish life, you should consider applying. For example:
    - You are a company that manufactures Matzo. The product alone does not impact Jewish life. However, if something about how you produce it or your financial model specifically contributes to a thriving Jewish community, we welcome you to apply!
    - You are a publishing company focusing on publishing underrepresented voices, with a line focusing on BIPOC and LGBTQIA

authors. If you are interested in building out a line that focuses on Jewish authors, you are welcome to apply!

- If you meet the above criteria and decide to apply, please know that this program has never been offered to for-profit businesses, and as such, we will look to you to be our partners in refining our content to meet your needs.

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