



## 2020 - 2021 Founders Forum

NFTE is proud to offer the Founders Forum and Showcase (The Forum) this year October 2020 – March 2021 to support alumni with viable startups. The goal of this program is to provide an opportunity for NFTE entrepreneurs to continue to advance their business, prepare for investment and connect directly with potential investors.

This opportunity will be available to advanced alumni with operational businesses or soon to be operational businesses that are ready to engage in mentoring relationships with Advisors and prepare to receive startup capital. This program will build a community of investors and businesses interested in engaging with our aspiring young entrepreneurs and create an entrepreneurial support network available to our NFTE Alumni at various stages of their businesses.

### Timeline

**August 1:** Application opens – [www.nfte.com/apply](http://www.nfte.com/apply)

**September 15:** Application closes

**October:** Program Launches

- October 27, 2020: Group Session 1: VIRAL Investment Readiness Session
- October 29, 2020: Group Session 2 (with Advisors): Milestone Planning

**November 5 – February 18, 2021:** Weekly Advisor One-on-One Virtual Sessions

**February 25, 2021:** NFTE Gala Expo

**March 18, 2021:** Founders Forum Showcase

### Program Structure

#### Criteria for Participation

- NFTE alumnus/a founded or runs business
- Age 18 - 35 on October 1, 2020
- Availability to meet with coach weekly November – February
- Availability to participate in 2 virtual events: NFTE Gala Expo on February 25 and Founder Forum Showcase on March 18

#### Application Process

All participants must apply and be accepted to participate. Entrepreneurs will complete an online application that includes details about their business operations and revenue as well as their “NFTE story.” A panel of NFTE staff and stakeholders will select finalists for the Forum.

## Funding

Alumni businesses are incentivized to achieve their milestones with \$500 of funding awarded per milestone at the end of the program.

Additional funding may be available to businesses through event sponsorship or individual connections made through the event. There is no guarantee that a business will get investor funding though we ask all Advisors to be capable and open to the possibility.

## Session Descriptions

### Program Launch

1. VIRAL (Venture Investment-Readiness and Awareness Levels) Investment Readiness Session  
Entrepreneurs will be introduced to the concept of the VIRAL framework and examine how to advance their business and what investors look for in a potential investment. Then, entrepreneurs will benchmark their progress, assess their milestone gaps, and learn how to present a milestone to an investor.
2. Milestone Planning Session  
In conjunction with Advisors, each alumni business will **identify 3 milestones they want to advance in through the course of the program.**

### Weekly Advisor Sessions

One-on-one sessions between Advisors and alumni will provide businesses feedback on where are they today, the key milestones they need to achieve before fundraising money, and their strategy for achieving those milestones. These sessions will be scheduled for the group and take place virtually, allowing for individual coaching pairs to separate into breakout rooms during the sessions. The coaching pairs will evaluate the following topics (specific topics may change based on alumni feedback).

- Team
- Problem and Vision
- Value Proposition
- Product
- Market
- Business Model
- Scale
- Investor Exit

### Entrepreneurial Spirit Gala Expo – February 25, 2021

NFTE Founders Forum participant businesses will have the opportunity to showcase their event at NFTE's Entrepreneurial Spirit Gala Expo. This affords alumni the opportunity to network for their business and receive initial feedback from NFTE's stakeholders on their business's inevitability and how to improve in preparation for the Founders Forum Showcase.

## The Forum Showcase – March 18, 2021

The Forum will be focused on showcasing the progress alumni businesses have made throughout the program on their milestones. Alumni will pitch to an audience and share their investment briefs. NFTE will focus on connecting alumni mostly to “friends and family” level funding. Based on feedback from planning for the 2020 Investor Forum, we learned that there is a significant gap in access to resources for very early stage businesses. We will look for both individuals who can invest and advise to participate.

## Materials

**VIRAL Preparation:** As part of the event, Forum participants will be completing an Investment Readiness assessment and then discussing their results with an Investor/Advisor. We will ask each participant to complete a portion of the assessment prior to the event and share their results.

**Pitch Deck:** Forum Participants are free to utilize a business executive summary and pitch deck format that best fits their needs, however, NFTE will provide a template for guidance purposes. This template is a recommendation of what content to include and does not require strict adherence.

**Pitch Video:** Each Forum participant will submit a 3-minute pitch video by September 15 for evaluation for investment. The video is an un-edited business pitch. This is NOT a commercial but the opportunity to present your business and how investment in your business will move you forward.

### Investment Brief

Alumni will work with their Advisor throughout the duration of the program to identify opportunities for investment and to develop a brief that they can utilize as part of their presentation at The Forum event in March 2021.