

CREATE | Your Side Hustle

Recognize your value. Build your idea. Create what comes next.

Maybe people already come to you for what you know, make, fix, design, cook, create, organize, teach, or understand. Maybe you already have a side hustle—or an idea you keep saying you will build someday.

Your culture, creativity, lived experience, talents, family and community knowledge, and professional knowledge are innovation assets. This pathway gives you a place to turn what you already carry into something that creates value.

Innovation belongs to the people. You do not need a perfect business plan, a founder title, or a polished product to begin. Start with an idea worth exploring.

Innovation Insight

Your greatest side hustle idea may already exist within your creativity, your lived experiences, or your culture. Innovation happens when we recognize the value we already possess and transform it into opportunities that strengthen ourselves and our communities.

Essential Question

How can I transform my cultural value into opportunity for myself and my community?

The Challenge

Create a side hustle that adds value.

Design a side hustle that transforms your culture, creativity, talents, lived experiences, family or community knowledge, or professional knowledge into something that creates value for others. Respond to a real opportunity or need and show how your idea could create economic, cultural, social, or community impact.

Bring your cultural innovation. Build your idea.

STEP 1: EXPLORE

Your culture has value. Your ideas have power.

Guiding Questions

Develop your own guiding questions as you investigate your idea—or use the questions below to help you see the opportunity, challenge assumptions, and sharpen your thinking. You do not need to answer every question.

Discover Opportunities

- What businesses, organizations, creators, or innovators inspire you—and why?
- What unmet need or challenge do you notice in your campus, workplace, neighborhood, or community?
- Who would benefit if that need were addressed in a new way?

Recognize Your Assets

- What do you already know, do, make, understand, or have access to that you may not have recognized as valuable?
- What cultural traditions, talents, lived experiences, family or community knowledge, or professional knowledge could shape your side hustle?
- What opportunities do you see because of your culture or lived experience that someone else might overlook?

Create Value & Impact

- What makes your side hustle different or meaningful?
- How could technology help you build, share, strengthen or expand your idea?
- If you launch your side hustle, what changes for you, your family, your customers, or your community?

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE

Use technology to bring your ideas to life.

Guiding Activities

Choose the activities that best support your learning and move your idea forward. Follow the path that best fits your interests, your side hustle, and your creative process.

Learn from Others

- Complete the SUMA Wealth + CSUN Side Hustle Boot Camp or use selected modules to sharpen your idea. [Explore the Side Hustle Boot Camp →](#)
- Interview entrepreneurs, creators, nonprofit leaders, small-business owners, or community members about how they identified opportunities, transformed a passion, skill, or lived experience and created value.
- Research businesses and organizations—especially By Us, For Us models—that combine culture, innovation, and community impact.

Explore Your Community

- Observe your campus, workplace, neighborhood, or community for unmet needs and overlooked opportunities.
- Create a Community Asset Map of local talents, organizations, businesses, cultural resources, and community strengths.
- Document what you discover through journals, photos, interviews, audio, art, or digital storytelling.

Imagine New Possibilities

- Brainstorm more than one idea before choosing what to develop.
- Sketch, storyboard, prototype, or model your concept.
- Develop a simple description or value statement: who you serve, what opportunity or need you address, and why your idea matters, adds value.

Test Your Thinking

- Share your ideas with classmates, mentors, family members, potential users, or customers.
- Gather feedback through conversations, interviews, surveys, demonstrations, or pilot testing.
- Use what you learn to refine your idea.

Share Your Story

- Create a name, identity, or brand direction for your side hustle idea.
- Develop a short pitch that explains who you serve, the value you create, and your vision.
- Show how your culture, creativity, skills, or lived experience shaped your side hustle.

Guiding Resources

- Apple creative technologies and AI-powered research, design, and storytelling tools
- SUMA Wealth + **CSUN Side Hustle Boot Camp**
- SUMA Wealth financial tools and AI Money Mentor
- Entrepreneurs, mentors, creators, community leaders, and small-business support organizations
- Business planning, design thinking, prototyping, and customer-feedback tools

STEP 3: ACT

From Idea to Impact

Every innovation journey begins with an idea—but meaningful innovation happens when ideas become action. Use what you learned to create a side-hustle concept that is authentic, understandable, and rooted in a real opportunity.

There is no single right solution. Your side hustle may be a first version, a tested concept, or something already in motion. What matters is that you can show the value it creates and where it could go next.

Inspiration to Get You Started

What will you create? Your side hustle might become:

- A small business or social enterprise
- A product, service, or creative brand
- A digital platform, app, or technology-enabled venture
- A nonprofit or community venture
- A campaign, event, creative experience, or something entirely new

Possible Solutions

- **Community Impact Side Hustle:** Respond to a local opportunity or challenge such as tutoring, food access, cultural programming, digital access, transportation, or another issue that matters to your community.
- **Tech & Creative Side Hustle:** Develop a creative service, digital product, content platform, app, or technology-enabled venture that uses innovation to create value for others.
- **Heritage-Inspired Side Hustle:** Celebrate and uplift cultural identity through food, fashion, music, art, language, storytelling, craftsmanship, or other cultural knowledge while creating economic, social, or cultural value.
- **Sustainable Side Hustle:** Develop an upcycling, repair, circular-economy, green, or environmentally responsible venture that strengthens your campus or community.

Prepare Your Possible Solution

Your submission is the digital artifact that brings your side hustle to life. Choose the format that tells the story best.

- **Pitch or Presentation:** Create a pitch video or deck introducing the idea, audience, value proposition, possible business model, impact, and next steps.
- **Commercial or Promotional Campaign:** Produce a trailer, promo video, social campaign, or audience-facing content.
- **Product, Service, or Experience Demonstration:** Show a demo, tutorial, animation, model, or recorded walkthrough.
- **App or Digital Platform Prototype:** Develop screen mockups, a user journey, clickable prototype, or recorded walkthrough.
- **Brand or Concept Portfolio:** Create a name, logo, visual identity, key messages, sample materials, vision board, or customer experience.
- **Digital or Audio Story:** Use video, photography, illustration, writing, a digital zine, multimedia storytelling, an audio pitch, or a podcast to communicate the inspiration, development, and potential impact of your side hustle.
- **A Digital Format of Your Own:** Create another type of digital artifact or if it communicates the idea more powerfully.

STEP 4: REFLECT, INSPIRE & SHARE

Own what you build. Share what you learn. Strengthen your community.

Reflect on Your Journey

- What did you discover about yourself, your culture, your skills, or your community?
- How did your idea evolve throughout the Challenge-Based Learning process?
- What feedback made your idea stronger?
- What is the next step for bringing your idea to life?
- Who could help you continue developing your side hustle?

Prepare to Share Your Innovation

Use technology to communicate the idea clearly, creatively, and meaningfully. Apple tools such as Camera and Photos, Clips, iMovie, Keynote, Pages, Freeform, GarageBand, Numbers, and Swift Playgrounds may be used; equivalent creative and digital tools are also welcome.

Regardless of format, help your audience understand:

- the opportunity, need, or challenge you identified
- who the side hustle is designed to serve
- what you are creating or offering
- how culture, creativity, skills, lived experience, family/community knowledge, or professional knowledge shaped the idea
- what value the side hustle could create (i.e., economic, social, cultural, or community impact)
- what you would do next to test, launch, or grow it

What to Submit

1. **The Idea** — What opportunity, need, or challenge did you identify?
2. **The Approach** — How does your side hustle work, who is it for, and what makes it different? How did your culture, creativity, skills, or lived experience shaped the idea?
3. **The Impact** — How could your idea create economic, social, cultural, or community value?
4. **The Next Step** — What would you do next? If you had access to experts, mentors, technology, and seed funding (\$500-1,000), how would those resources help you move the idea forward?

Inspire Others

Challenge-Based Learning is about taking meaningful action. Whether your side hustle becomes a business, creative brand, community venture, or the first version of something bigger, your work can create opportunity and show others what is possible.

Ready to Share Your Innovation?

Complete the final step by visiting the Culture Is Currency Challenge Platform to sign up, submit your solution, and share what you created.

[SIGN UP & SUBMIT YOUR INNOVATION →](#)

Why Join

For your family, your community, your future.

Outstanding submissions may receive:

- National Culture Is Currency recognition
- Innovation Pathway badges
- Innovation microgrants or seed funding to help advance an idea
- Mentorship and access to industry professionals and experts
- Apple technology and creative-learning experiences
- Featured storytelling through the Global HSI Equity Innovation Hub and partners
- National showcase opportunities and Innovation Launch Award consideration

Who Can Participate?

The Challenge is designed for current college students, recent college graduates within the published eligibility window, and eligible adult learners participating through the HSI Innovation Hub ecosystem, including programs serving families and justice-impacted communities. Participants may enter individually or as part of a team.

No previous experience is required. Start where you are. Build from what you know. Create what matters.

Challenge Timeline

SEPTEMBER 2026	Challenge opens • workshops and build support begin
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FALL 2026	Side Hustle Boot Camp • mentorship • technology support • project development
January 31, 2027	Submission deadline
March - May 2027	Finalist recognition • national showcase • Innovation Launch Awards

Recognize value. Build from assets. Develop skills. Create opportunity. Connect generations.