

Barrier Breakers 2026

EVALUATION CRITERIA & JUDGING RUBRIC

Barrier Breakers uses two separate evaluations: one when you apply (to select Demo Day finalists) and one on event day (to determine winners). Like Y Combinator, we care about your potential and ability to execute—not just your idea.

Application Review Criteria

Criterion	What We're Looking For
Team & Execution Ability	Why is your team suited to tackle this barrier? What unique skills, experiences, or perspectives do you bring? Why should we believe you can actually build this?
Problem Clarity	How well do you understand the barrier you're addressing? Have you done research? Do you understand the root causes and who is most affected?
Solution Potential	Is your initial approach thoughtful and feasible? Does it address the actual problem, not just symptoms? Is it realistic to build?
Ambition & Impact	How big could this be if it works? Could it help hundreds, thousands, or millions of young adults? Are you thinking big enough?

Note: There is no limit on applications. All teams that apply will compete—either in Demo Day (top team per track) or the Innovation Gallery (everyone else). Both have cash prizes.