



NEWS RELEASE

Austin FC and Q2 Announce the 2026 Austin FC Dream Starter Competition

2026-03-25

The sixth annual venture funding competition will award \$100,000 to a Central Texas-based underrepresented entrepreneur

AUSTIN, Texas--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Austin FC and Q2 Holdings, Inc. announced today the launch of the 2026 Austin FC Dream Starter Competition, presented by Q2. The sixth annual business initiative invites Austin entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups to apply and compete for \$100,000 in "Dream Starter" funds to accelerate their entrepreneurial venture. The **online application** is now open to eligible entities and will close on Monday, April 13, at 11:59 pm. The winning venture will be announced on Thursday, May 28.

"We're proud to officially kickoff the Dream Starter competition for what will be the sixth consecutive year of a program that provides direct funding to an aspiring business within our community," said Austin FC President Andy Loughnane. "This initiative remains one of the most impactful outcomes of our partnership with Q2, and we're very grateful for their collaboration in making it a success each season."

"We are proud to partner with Austin FC again this year to support underrepresented local entrepreneurs through the annual Dream Starter Competition," said Q2 Chairman, President and CEO Matt Flake. "This commitment reflects Q2's mission to build strong and diverse communities, and we are excited to help this year's winning venture expand its vision and impact."

From the initial applicant group, five (5) finalists will be notified on Thursday, May 7, of their selection to participate in a Pitch Contest on Wednesday, May 27, at Q2 Stadium. Each finalist's presentation will be evaluated by a diverse group of representatives from Austin FC, Q2 Holdings, Inc., and other executives from the Austin entrepreneurial community. The Austin FC Dream Starter Competition winner will be honored with a check presentation during halftime at the Austin FC vs. Seattle Sounders FC match on Wednesday, July 22.

The Austin FC Dream Starter Competition combines Q2's mission with Austin FC's inclusivity through equity community pillar. The aim is to connect underrepresented entrepreneurs with the resources needed to build profitable, high-growth companies. The "Dream Starter" funds will aid a Central Texas entrepreneur in overcoming financial barriers to achieve success. **Click here** for a complete list of terms and conditions and to apply for the 2026 Austin FC Dream Starter Competition.

About Austin FC

Austin FC joined Major League Soccer (MLS) as the League's 27th club in January 2019. Austin FC officially began competing in MLS in April 2021, and in the 2025 season qualified for the MLS Cup Playoffs while also

reaching and hosting the final of the U.S. Open Cup. Austin FC plays its home matches at Q2 Stadium, a 100% privately financed, state-of-the-art stadium which earned certification as a zero-waste venue in 2024. Austin FC sold out all 88 MLS home matches it played at Q2 Stadium during its first five seasons in the league, including three home MLS Cup Playoff matches.

Austin FC also operates Austin FC II, a professional-level development team competing in MLS NEXT Pro which won the league title during its inaugural season in 2023. In addition, Austin FC operates the Austin FC Academy which is the fully funded developmental academy representing the highest level of competition for elite youth soccer players in Central Texas, while serving as the exclusive developmental pathway to MLS for the region's most talented young players. Combined, Austin FC II and Austin FC Academy teams complete the pro player pathway between elite youth soccer (MLS NEXT) all the way to MLS, and allow for players to develop, improve, and move up to Austin FC or Austin FC II.

About Q2 Holdings, Inc.

Q2 is a leading provider of digital transformation solutions for financial services, serving banks, credit unions, alternative finance companies, and fintechs in the U.S. and internationally. Q2 enables its financial institution and fintech customers to provide comprehensive, data-driven digital engagement solutions for consumers, small businesses and corporate clients. Headquartered in Austin, Texas, Q2 has offices worldwide and is publicly traded on the NYSE and NYSE Texas under the stock symbol QTWO. To learn more, please visit [Q2.com](https://www.q2.com). Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#) to stay up to date.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Gwen Hernandez, Sr. Communications Coordinator, Austin FC
C: 646.717.3196 / E: gghernandez@austinfc.com

Carly Baker, Sr. Marketing Communications Specialist, Q2
C: 210.391.1706 / E: carly.baker@q2.com

Source: Q2 Holdings, Inc.