

2026 Jax Chamber Overall Small Business Leader of the Year Application

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Page 3 - Application

Small Business Leader of the Year Digital Packet and Interview Application



Part I:

1. Name: Dawn Stewart Title: Owner

2. Company: Pestle and Potions, LLC

3. Business Phone: 904-654-0544 Email: pestleandpotions@gmail.com

4. Business Address: 3410 Kori Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32257

5. Are you a member of the JAX Chamber? Yes No

6. Your business is a Corporation Partnership Proprietorship

7. Year company established:

2022 Pestle and Potions opened in 2022. We were Simply Natural Herbs and Potions for almost 20 years.

8. Percentage of the business which you own: 100

9. Industry Type: Financial Manufacturing Real Estate Health Care Services
 Technology Retail Other (specify)

10. Give a brief description of your company's products and/or services.

Pestle and Potions is an herbalist-owned wellness space that brings multiple healing modalities together under one roof. Our offerings include massage therapy, assisted stretching, yoga, herbal classes, hypnotherapy, psychotherapy, multifunction cardiogram services, and a vibrant art gallery.

We also feature a retail shop with handcrafted herbal products and rent space to a variety of independent practitioners, creating a collaborative environment where wellness professionals can thrive and our community can access diverse, holistic care in one welcoming place.

11. Number of outlets or offices:

We have one location, however other practitioners carry some of our products for their patients in their locations.

12. Is the company headquartered in Jacksonville? Yes No

13. Gross annual revenue: less than \$1 million \$1-5 million

14. Number of employees: 1-25 26-50 51-100 more than 100

15. List Business/Trade/Professional and Civic/Service Associations and Positions held:

**Professional Women's Council Board Member since 2018
South Council Board Member for 2 years
Girls of Virtue Board Member
Jax Collaborative founding member and membership
BNI membership committee**

16. Honors/Awards Received:

I have been the recipient of Givers Gain in BNI twice.

Small Business Leader of the Year

I have reviewed this application and confirm that all information given is correct:

Signature: Dawn Stewart

Date: 12/5/25

Page 4 - History & Philosophy

Once Upon a Time, **Pestle and Potions, LLC**, a woman-owned small business, was founded by Clinical Herbalist and Licensed Massage Therapist (MA100866) Dawn Stewart in 2022. There had been a prior version of this business, under the name of Simply Natural Herbs and Potions that was a small, product-only version for about 18 years until Covid hit.

Pestle and Potions offers an integrated approach to whole-person health, education, and community enrichment that unites multiple modalities under one welcoming roof.

At the heart of our mission is the understanding that wellness takes many forms. Beyond our own offerings, Pestle and Potions provides rental space for aligned practitioners and entrepreneurs.

Pestle and Potions offers a well-rounded selection of services to support the diverse needs of our clients that include:

- Clinical Herbal consultations grounded in evidence-informed botanical medicine as well as lifestyle considerations
- Herbal education and hands-on classes that empower individuals to craft their own wellness



- A retail apothecary featuring handcrafted herbal formulas, teas, body care, and wellness products
- Massage therapy and assisted stretching for structural balance and pain relief
- Yoga and movement practices designed to restore strength, mobility, and presence
- Hypnotherapy and psychotherapy to support mental, emotional, and behavioral wellbeing
- Multifunction cardiogram testing offers insight into cardiovascular and autonomic function
- A rotating art gallery showcasing local talent and fostering creative expression, which can be soothing to the soul

This collaborative model cultivates a vibrant network of healers, educators, and makers from diverse backgrounds who share a commitment to conscious, holistic care.

More than a clinic, shop, or studio, Pestle and Potions is a living community where artistry and education intersect and where individuals are supported in reclaiming their health, agency, and understanding of natural options.

Page 5 - Management

Pestle and Potions is steadily growing into a well-organized, highly functional operation. Our space now hosts regular gallery events, a full suite of practitioners renting treatment rooms, and a steady rhythm of daily responsibilities that our team manages smoothly and collaboratively. As a leader, I focus on creating clear systems, open communication, and a supportive environment where everyone can do their best work.

We've seen tremendous interest from individuals wanting mentorship in herbalism and product creation, and we are

currently developing a formal **internship program for 2026**. My goal is to build structured pathways for education, hands-on training, and professional development so we can share our knowledge with the wider community.

Our team is strong, compassionate, and dedicated—not only to their own clients but also to one another. I prioritize cultivating a culture of collaboration, where programs and workshops grow naturally from shared strengths and aligned missions.

Our Community



- **Cheryl Herring**, owner of Cherring Health and Wellness, brings her expertise as a yoga instructor, stretch coach and personal trainer. Together, we've developed workshops and are launching a new program in 2026 designed to help our community improve mobility, strength, and overall wellness.



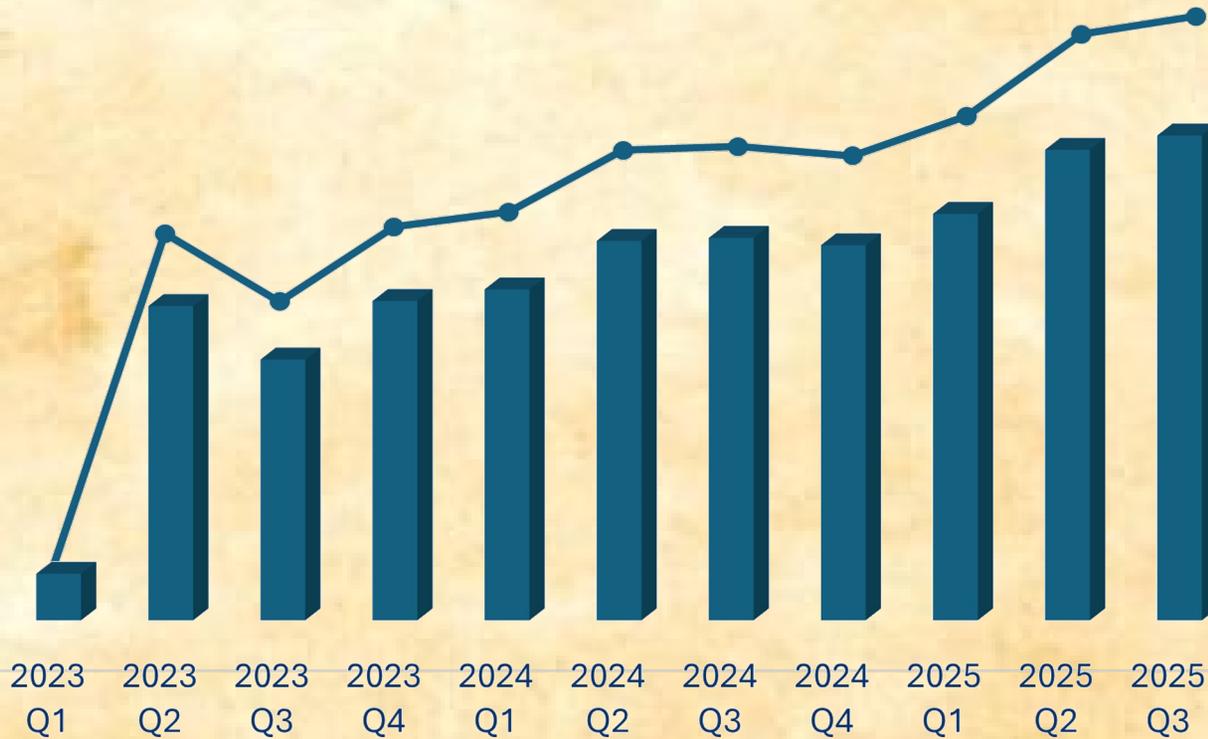
- **Jason Kropidowski**, founder of Jax Hypnosis, is an exceptional hypnotherapist. His work has supported me personally—helping me overcome a long-standing fear of public speaking—which has allowed me to step into leadership roles with greater confidence and presence.



- **Amy Spahic**, founder and CEO of CardioVision Care, is a valued partner. Amy has certified me in the use of the multifunction cardiogram, a unique and powerful tool that can enable early prevention of cardiac issues so that she can expand her reach in the professional community.
- We also collaborate with a dedicated group of therapists who help us host **Tea and Sympathy**, a free community grief support group that has become an essential source of comfort and connection for many.

Page 6 - Growth/Performance

2023-2025 Quarterly Performance



Our growth has been slow but steady over the last 11 quarters.

Our vision for 2026 includes a strategic makeover of our website that will allow us to sell many of our products online. Also on the table are plans to extend and deepen our collaborations, as well as developing an internship program.

Page 7 - Innovativeness & Response to Adversity

Overcoming has been the theme of my life. As an Army brat we moved a lot. I have moved more than a hundred times in my lifetime. Constant change shaped me. It taught me to adapt quickly, make friends easily, and let go graciously when needed. What could have been instability became resilience, flexibility, and an openness to new beginnings.

Life took me to the path of becoming a massage therapist. I married a wonderful chiropractor and together we built a successful practice in the Atlanta area where we welcomed two beautiful daughters, both born at home. When the girls were just one and four years old, my husband and I moved from Georgia to Rhode Island to help my mother care for my step-father and my brother-in-law, who unfortunately, were both stricken with debilitating illnesses. Six months later, my husband passed suddenly and unexpectedly. Overnight, I went from working part-time as a massage therapist to being the sole provider for my family.

For the past eighteen years, my focus has been twofold: show up for my daughters, Gianna and Francesca; and teach them—through my own actions—that dreams are worth pursuing even when the path is hard.

Ten years ago, I sold everything we owned, and the three of us spent a year backpacking across Europe. I wanted my daughters to see that the world was far bigger than the quaint but small town where we lived. When we returned, all we had were our backpacks, some very worn-out shoes, and a determination to start fresh. We moved to Florida to help my sister, Bridget Edkin-Farrar open her chiropractic practice in Jacksonville Beach.

My first shop in Jacksonville opened in 2020, and like many small businesses at that time, it didn't last long. I spent the next two years managing a medical practice while not so quietly planning my return. I talked about my dream to anyone who would listen. I sketched it out on napkins. I held onto it because I needed my daughters to see what it looks like to keep going, even after setbacks.

My dream was to create a space where herbalists could share their work, where the community could learn natural approaches to health, and where local practitioners could find a safe, affordable place to build their own practices. That dream became **Pestle and Potions**.

Since opening, we've faced our share of challenges. Earlier this year, I needed major emergency surgery and couldn't work for two months. I feared it would be the end of Pestle and Potions. But the community showed up! Jason Kropridlowski organized a fundraiser through a hypnosis show. Snowden McFall started a GoFundMe. Our landlord, Joe Perry of J.P. Perry Insurance, gave us grace on rent when it mattered most. Their generosity—and the support of so many others—helped carry us through.

With gratitude, perseverance, and a lot of hard work, **we are still here**.

Pestle and Potions isn't just a business. It is the dream I held for years. It is the place I created for my daughters and my community—a home for healing, learning, and the belief that we can overcome anything.

Page 8 - Leadership & Community Engagement

Over the past three years, Pestle and Potions has become a gathering place for creativity, learning, wellness, and connection. We are proud to share our space with a wide range of community partners, including:

- **First Coast Paint Slingers**, a collective of local painters whose artwork fills our gallery and brings vibrant energy to the space.
- **Kat Dance Studio**, whose youngest troupe of dancers light up the gallery each week with joy and movement.
- **Scottish Dancers** who bring culture, tradition, and lively rhythm to our Thursday evenings.
- **Ask the Herbalist**, a free weekly community group held every Tuesday to support those seeking natural wellness education.
- **Jax Collaborative**, a networking group founded at Pestle and Potions by Tangee Huger, Wendy Hughes, and Dawn Stewart to uplift local professionals and small businesses.

- **Tea & Sympathy**, free support group for those who are grieving, is hosted by Pestle and Potions, alongside a wonderful team of counselors who volunteer their time

Our space has also hosted **yoga classes, sound baths, tea parties, stretching workshops, massage education**, and countless other offerings that support community well-being.

One of our most meaningful annual events is our **Community Thanksgiving**. In 2024, we set a table for 70 and invited anyone who needed a place to belong. Guests brought dishes to share, and every leftover was packaged and delivered to individuals experiencing hunger. That year we fed 25 people; in 2025, we served 37. Our goal for 2026 is to reach 70 meals delivered—matching the number of seats we set at our table.

Pestle and Potions exists to bring people together, to share knowledge generously, and to support the community we love. Our partnerships and programs reflect those values every day.



Page 9 - Biography

An herbalist you say?

Dawn Stewart was raised in a family of chiropractors who were natural healers. There are over a dozen chiropractors in her family, and she married yet another one, Mike. Dawn herself started out in chiropractic school, however, with just a year remaining, she realized massage therapy held her heart, and she went on to get certified as a Massage Therapist. Nearly 30 years later, she still loves it!

When their first daughter, Gianna, was born, she couldn't imagine anything touching her perfect little being that wasn't as pure as she was. Dawn started making all her own baby balms, cleaning products, even baby wipes, which expanded into a greater, wider field of products. Dawn's formal herbal education started with her mentor, Susan Clements, one of the greatest herbalists in the Northeast. Dawn learned about foraging and making teas and tinctures. Since then Dawn has expanded her learning through available courses, and attending conferences in this very specialized field. Now, as a Clinical Herbalist, she's delighted to teach others how and why to make all kinds of things.

While Dawn started out as a chiropractic student, having her first child changed the way she viewed life. It positioned her to learn about herbs and health, and a less invasive way to view healing. As her knowledge grew so did her family as she and Mike welcomed their second daughter, Francesca. Unfortunately, tragedy struck. Mike passed suddenly just two years after Francesca was born. This unexpected heartbreak certainly influenced Dawn's decisions, but it never altered her vision for herbal, natural health options.

Three years ago Pestle and Potions opened its doors, a space where people with limited knowledge of herbs and natural healing could ask questions without embarrassment. The space is open to everyone to come and learn.

With the love and support of her two perfect daughters, Pestle and Potions was born.



Photo by Julie Ryan Photography



Page 10 - Statement of Merit

Creating this presentation book for the SBLY award has been an enlightening assignment. It has helped me see my business through a different lens, helping me to articulate a dream that has always been in my heart, making it more real with every word. I have also gained a new appreciation for my own agency as a small business owner and leader. This page in particular has been perhaps the most difficult for me since singing my own praises has never been a strong skill for me.

Being part of **Jax Bridges** Cohort 16 in 2022, was pivotal in helping Pestle and Potions become a viable, sustainable business. Jax Bridges taught all of us what it takes to open a business. We essentially took a college course in business with all the amazing takeaways but no expense. I opened Pestle and Potions later the same year with the confidence that I could make it happen.

For years, I dreamed of creating a space that could truly serve the community, but it was through Jax Bridges, and the support I found within the **Professional Women's Council**, that I gained the knowledge, tools, and confidence to bring that dream to life.

Serving on the **Professional Women's Council Board** since 2018 has shaped both my business and my personal growth. The overwhelming support and strong push from the amazing community I met through the Chamber, and especially PWC, were instrumental in the opening of Pestle and Potions.

When my sister, Bridget, and I joined PWC, she told me it would make a meaningful difference in my life. She was absolutely right!

I am deeply honored and grateful to be nominated as **Small Business Leader of the Year** for the Professional Women's Council for 2026. In pursuing this award, I am not seeking recognition for perfection, but for perseverance, heart, and the meaningful progress I have made. To be selected as the **Overall SBLY for the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce** would be an extraordinary opportunity—not just for me, but for the practitioners and community members I hope to support. I envision the doors it could open, helping others find the space, encouragement, and motivation to build their own community-centered practices.

Page 11 - Client Reviews

I am pleased to share some of the social media reviews I have received.

 **Michael Barnett**
Local Guide · 8 reviews

★★★★★ 3 weeks ago **NEW**

Dawn is a great source for natural cures for various ailments. I had a lingering cough, and the tea she prescribed stopped it. The anti-stress tea worked well also. Dawn is great to deal with, and an excellent source for your health potion needs.

 **Natalie Wells**
1 review

★★★★★ 3 months ago

I had the WORST bug bites from a camping trip in Canada over the summer. They were still there after two weeks! I used calamine, which was my go-to growing up, but it really wasn't working. A friend suggested "The Magic Stick" and the irritation around my bug bites cleared up LITERALLY overnight. I still see the red, but it is so much better! I really wish I had before, after pictures! It's almost worth getting bit up again just to prove it 😊

 **Zachary Collins**
Local Guide · 117 reviews · 14 photos

★★★★★ 2 months ago

If you are looking to feel better but do it naturally... this is the stop for you! Absolutely awesome! Dawn Stewart is the owner and she cares about making you feel your best!

 **Cait Davis**
6 reviews

★★★★★ 10 months ago

I can confidently say that Dawn is one of the best in the field. She is not only incredibly skilled at her craft but also one of the most genuine people you will ever meet. She takes the time to understand your individual needs, and will completely fix whatever is ailing you! This is not just a business to Dawn- this is truly her passion and calling. Her warm demeanor and attentive listening make it easy to open up about any specific concerns or areas of tension.

 **Natalie Smith**
9 reviews

★★★★★ 3 months ago

I attended their back to school health seminar... was so fun and engaging! Brought my 10 yr old son and he enjoyed the hands on activities as well.

 **Rosbelith F**
Local Guide · 39 reviews · 51 photos

★★★★★ 10 months ago

What a sweet place for the community! Lots of areas for workshops, chats, events, and one-on-one sessions. Dawn is a treat! So sweet and supportive.

 **Julie Farhat**
Local Guide · 13 reviews

★★★★★ 9 months ago

Pestle and Potions is a hidden gem with a shop, event space, and the amazing Dawn! Dawn Stewart, proprietor of Pestle & Potions, is authentic, knowledgeable, caring, and fun. The amount of research and experience she shares is remarkable. And if you haven't had a massage, her bodywork is amazing.

 **Phyllis Appleby**
Local Guide · 16 reviews

★★★★★ a year ago

Dawn is wonderful. She ya real interest in helping people. The magic stick worked great on a rash. I use one of the creams for the pain in my hands. My husband had a bad scrap on his arm and she gave us something to put on it. I really didn't think it would help but it was awesome. It is almost healed. A must to keep in your first aid kit. Lastly, she gives the best massage I have ever had. Can't say enough good about her.

 **Nicolas Garcia Pita**
3 reviews

★★★★★ 2 months ago

I have used their Magic Stick and was blown away on how well it works for many skin problems I had. Could not recommend enough

 **Lisa Bergin Bcfnp** recommends Pestle and Potions.
November 6, 2023 · 🌐

Dawns place is amazing. I have held two workshops there now and have sent many clients to experience herbs first hand. Dawn has a lovely place. Go check it out.

 **Michelle Parson** recommends Pestle and Potions.
September 3, 2023 · 🌐

I came to visit family I'm not from this area. I needed some specific things. After a Google search for an apothecary type of health food and supplement store, I came across their listing. I was greeted with a smile and a feeling of happiness by the owner. I wish I had a place like this local to me.

 **Gretchen A Kornutik** recommends Pestle and Potions.
June 21, 2022 · 🌐

Dawn is magical. I believe in all types of healing. Dawn makes amazing lotions and salves and teas etc that really help. Trying this first before chemicals. And prescriptions may surprise you I love it

Page 12 - Letters of Recommendation



To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in full support of Dawn Stewart, owner of Pestle & Potions, for the Small Business Leader of the Year award.

In every sense, she operates as a servant leader. She doesn't chase the spotlight, she builds it, and then invites others to step into it. Her space has become more than a business location; it's a hub where emerging entrepreneurs find room to grow, and where community education actually has a home. She has equipped countless others with what they need to start, scale, and contribute. That is leadership.

Her influence is undeniable. In Jacksonville's small-business community, she is an anchor, the connection point between people, ideas, and purpose. I often say she's like the "mayor" of our city's entrepreneurs. She knows everyone, and more importantly, everyone knows her as someone who shows up, follows through, and wants the people around her to win.

I can speak from direct experience. When I opened my chiropractic practice, she was one of the first to extend a hand. She opened doors to relationships that helped me take root in the community. Those introductions didn't just benefit my business, they brought health resources, education, and support to more families in our area. Her leadership creates ripple effects.

As the owner of Conquer Health Chiropractic, I work daily to serve this community. But I can do that at the level I do because she made space for me, just as she has done for so many others. That is what outstanding small business leadership looks like: lifting the community by lifting the people who serve it.

I believe she is an exemplary representation of what this award stands for, influence earned through service, growth fueled by generosity, and a vision that includes others.

She deserves this recognition.

Sincerely,

Dr. Craig Bryan, DC

Owner, Conquer Health Chiropractic

Page 13 - Letters of Recommendation



To: Jax Chamber SBLV Program Re: Dawn Stewart of Pestle and Potions 12/5/25

Dawn Stewart is an exemplary entrepreneur and Chamber leader in our community. She has been very active in both South Council and the Professional Women's Council and regular attends other councils. She has served on both boards of directors and given back for years. Her positive, welcoming attitude and willingness to pitch in and help with whatever needs to be done demonstrate the kind of leader she is: emotionally intelligent, smart and hard-working.

I've known Dawn for several years and was so excited for her when she opened Pestle and Potions. As you all know, resourcefulness is a key component of success in business. She has faced many challenges with her company, from landlord issues to health issues and she always finds a way to solve the problems and keep thriving. From an entrepreneurial perspective, she continually innovates new products and new services, educating prospective clients. She created tea parties using her herbal teas and regularly provides those as an additional service.

Dawn is deeply committed to building community. She hosts dances, art classes, yoga classes, and so much more in her function room.

Her products are top quality. I have used several myself, from various teas to her magic stick to her skincare line. I frequently get massages from Dawn and she is one of the best. Her commitment to excellence is one of the reasons she succeeds; she works hard to perfect whatever offering she brings to her clients.

But probably what most impresses me about Dawn is her generosity of spirit and philosophy of service. She hosts Thanksgiving feasts for those who have no family, then shares more food with the homeless, she comps people into her programs, she donates to silent auctions and she volunteers her time and talent so many places. She is a true servant leader and a great representative of a good community trustee.

I know Dawn to have great integrity and courage, and I highly recommend her as SBLV for the Chamber. As a two time SBLV myself, I fully understand what that means and Dawn is an excellent representative for the Chamber.

Snowden McFall, President



CREATIVE ADVENTURES IN DANCE

Thank you, Dawn
For giving my Friday dancers
a very special home!!

A landscape photograph featuring a vast field of purple flowers in the foreground, leading to a horizon line. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of blue, orange, and yellow, with a bright sun setting or rising in the center, creating a lens flare effect. The overall mood is serene and hopeful.

*And That Is Just
The Beginning*