

Massachusetts COVID-19 Health & Safety Challenge

Innovations to Slow the Spread

Request for Applications

We seek Massachusetts companies that are developing health and safety innovations to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and in support of the the Massachusetts economy.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, Massachusetts manufacturers have pivoted to produce millions of pieces of personal protective equipment. The ingenuity of our workforce has provided a direct response to the crisis, providing the critical materials needed by our citizens, small businesses, and front-line workers.

We are calling upon more 'Made in Massachusetts' companies to become a part of this historic activation, to bring their manufacturing, engineering, and technical know-how to develop next-level innovations that will help slow the spread of COVID-19.

This is your chance to win \$25,000 from the Massachusetts COVID-19 Intrapreneur Innovation Challenge to help further develop and advance your product.

- The Challenge is a five-week business accelerator to develop next-level innovations that support the health and safety of our businesses, communities, and people reliant upon the Massachusetts economy.
- The Challenge is working in accordance with the economy reopening directives found at [Mass.Gov](https://www.mass.gov).
- Types of innovations sought include, but are not limited to:
 - UV disinfecting technology;
 - Air purification & ventilation technology;
 - Sanitization tunnels/booths;
 - Touchless payment technology;
 - Touchless door openers, elevator panels, etc.;
 - Social distancing monitors; or
 - Any innovation that can help slow the spread of COVID-19.

For more innovation examples and inspiration, please visit <https://www.covidinnovations.com/>.

Program Overview

Companies will be selected for a five-week acceleration toward new or expanded capacity to produce goods and services that help slow the spread of COVID-19 in support of the Massachusetts economy.

Priority will be given to companies that have the potential to deliver solutions at-scale in a short period of time.

During the challenge program, intrapreneurs will develop prototype(s), business plans, market analysis and go-to-market strategies. On October 23rd, intrapreneurs will present their plans to a panel of experts. This panel will select one team to receive a \$25,000 COVID-19 Innovation Challenge grant award.

Although just one team will win the Challenge, all participating companies will benefit from the COVID-19 Innovation Challenge program. Participants will have access to manufacturing know-how, to various domain experts, to raw material providers, and to prospective purchasers.

Eligibility

To participate, companies must:

1. Be headquartered in Massachusetts;
2. Develop innovations that will preserve or create Massachusetts jobs;
3. Have been operating for at least two years;
4. Have 2019 annual revenue greater than \$250,000.

Timeline

Release RFA: Monday, August 17, 2020

Application deadline: Friday, September 18, 2020

Finalists selected: Friday, September 25, 2020

Kickoff meeting*: Wednesday, September 30, 2020

Workshop 1*: Friday, October 2, 2020

Workshop 2*: Friday, October 9, 2020

Workshop 3*: Friday, October 16, 2020

Pitch Practice: Thursday, October 29, 2020

Pitch Event*: Friday, October 30, 2020

**Intrapreneurs must attend each of these sessions. Kickoff meeting will take one hour. Workshops will take two hours.*

Award

\$25,000 will be awarded to the company that presents the most compelling plan to produce goods or services to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

Teams will be evaluated on:

- Product/market fit
- Ability for the team and company to execute
- Time to market
- Potential to support Massachusetts COVID-19 response
- Market opportunity outside Massachusetts

Award funding must be used to help bring COVID-19 response goods and services to market.

Benefits to Participants

De-risk pivoting – “look before you leap”

- Confidence in product-market fit
- Access to purchasers
- Knowledge of market opportunity
- Access to market research data

Accelerate time from R&D to production

- Rapid build-measure-learn cycles
- Cohort learning
- Staged, sequenced deliverables

Funding Access

- \$25,000 award
- Dossier for competitive grant proposals
- “Purchase order-ready”

Challenge Goals

1. Foster innovations that will help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Massachusetts
2. Help Massachusetts manufacturers accelerate their operations to produce goods and services that can be sold to public and private buyers in Massachusetts and beyond.
3. Build off of the success of the Massachusetts Manufacturing Emergency Response Team (MERT), which has assisted manufacturers to create critical PPE and other needed supplies.
4. Preserve and create jobs across Massachusetts.

For more information, contact us at COVIDChallengeInfo@leverinc.org

About Lever

Founded in 2014, Lever is an economic development non-profit focused on innovation-driven job creation. Lever supports entrepreneurs with startup expertise, an investment fund, research, mentors, and access to talent. Lever has helped launch dozens of companies that have attracted more than \$10M in equity investment and have created more than 200 jobs. Lever supports existing companies by helping their intrapreneurs “innovate from within” using proven entrepreneurial methods to generate top-line revenue growth and job creation.

About the Innovation Institute at the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative

The MassTech Collaborative is a quasi-public economic development agency that strengthens the competitiveness of the tech and innovation economy by driving strategic investments, partnerships, and insights that harness the talent of Massachusetts. The Innovation Institute is the division of MassTech that advances its core mission of innovation and cluster growth across the Commonwealth. Created in 2003, the Innovation Institute intervenes in the economy in the following four ways:

- Conducts research and analysis that improves the state’s understandings of unmet needs and opportunities in the innovation economy;
- Serves as convener and key strategic broker on the landscape;
- Manages high-value projects on behalf of the Commonwealth; and
- Makes strategic investments in support of innovation-based economic development.

About the Manufacturing Emergency Response Team

The Massachusetts Manufacturing-Emergency Response Team (MERT) is a coordinated effort comprised of members from academia, industry, and government to address the urgent need for PPE to support healthcare workers on the front-lines of Massachusetts’ COVID-19 response. The M-ERT is managed by MassTech and includes partnerships with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center and the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MassMEP).

Since the outbreak of the COVID -19 pandemic in Massachusetts, the MERT has been tasked with mobilizing, organizing, and operationalizing the critical path work streams necessary for the Commonwealth’s manufacturers to pivot their operations to produce needed materials in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 900 companies from around the world have submitted their interest to the MERT, including over 550 from Massachusetts. Of those, over 50 companies have made it through the program, producing nearly 5.5 million individual pieces of PPE and other critical materials to date.