



Massachusetts COVID-19 Innovation Challenge

ConnectTech Innovations | Request for Applications

We seek Massachusetts startups developing connective technologies to compete in the Massachusetts COVID-19 ConnectTech Innovation Challenge. **ConnectTech innovations** create solutions that cross boundaries between physical and digital spaces to support the evolution of workflows and the exchange of goods, services, and information. Innovations must have the potential to spark economic recovery from the pandemic and enhance resiliency in the Massachusetts economy.

The Innovation Challenge is a six-week accelerator program managed by Lever and sponsored by the Innovation Institute at the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. The Challenge culminates in early April 2021 with a pitch event during which the winner will be awarded \$40,000 and a runner-up will be awarded \$10,000 to support the commercialization of their innovation.

Participation Requirements

1. **Tech and Innovation:** Products and services must fall within the theme of ConnectTech inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. **Massachusetts-based:** Only companies headquartered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are eligible.
3. **Start-ups:** Companies must be less than 2 years old with less than \$500,000 in annual revenue.
4. **Economic Recovery & Job Creation:** Participating companies must demonstrate a strong potential to commercialize scalable technologies and to create high-quality, high-wage jobs.

Award & Priorities for Selecting Finalists

\$40,000 will be awarded to the Challenge winner | \$10,000 will be awarded to the 2nd place winner

Priority will be given to applicants demonstrating:

1. **Product/market fit:** Ability to develop innovative goods or services that directly support long-term adaptations to conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. **Potential to aid economic recovery:** Innovations with potential for job creation at both the host company AND at other companies or organizations in the Commonwealth.



Business Models We Hope to See

The following is a list of the types of innovations we hope to see in this Challenge. It is not an exhaustive list of technological applications, but rather an idea set intended to spark the imagination of innovators eager to support economic recovery with ConnectTech innovations.

Ecommerce & Retail

- Smart Contracts
- Augmented Reality
- Sales & Marketing Automation
- Automated Customer Service
- Fulfillment Technologies
- Warehouse Robotics
- Delivery Robots & Drones

Manufacturing & Supply Chain Tech

- Supply chain management platforms
- Inventory management
- Asset Tracking
- Procurement, Sourcing & Financing
- AgTech & Food Sustainability

Digital Health

- Telemedicine
- Remote health sensors

FinTech

- Contactless Payments
- Branchless Banking

EdTech

- K-12 & Higher Ed Remote Learning Technology
- Corporate Learning Technology

Timeline

Release RFA: Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Application deadline: Friday, February 19, 2021

Finalists selected: Friday, February 26, 2021

Kickoff meeting*: Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Workshop 1*: Friday, March 5, 2021

Workshop 2*: Friday, March 12, 2021

Workshop 3*: Friday, March 19, 2021

Workshop 4*: Friday, April 2, 2021

Pitch Practice*: Thursday, April 8, 2021

Pitch Event*: Friday, April 9, 2021

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



Benefits to Participants

De-risk your business model – “look before you leap”

- Confidence in product-market fit
- Knowledge of market opportunity

Accelerate time from R&D to production

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

Funding Access

- \$40,000 award for 1st place
- \$10,000 award for 2nd place
- Ready for investor meetings

How to Apply

The ConnectTech Innovtion Challenge application is hosted on the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative’s virtual accelerator platform, powered by StartupWind.

[Click here to apply.](https://live.startupwind.com/MassTech-ConnectTech-Innovation-Challenge) <https://live.startupwind.com/MassTech-ConnectTech-Innovation-Challenge>

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