



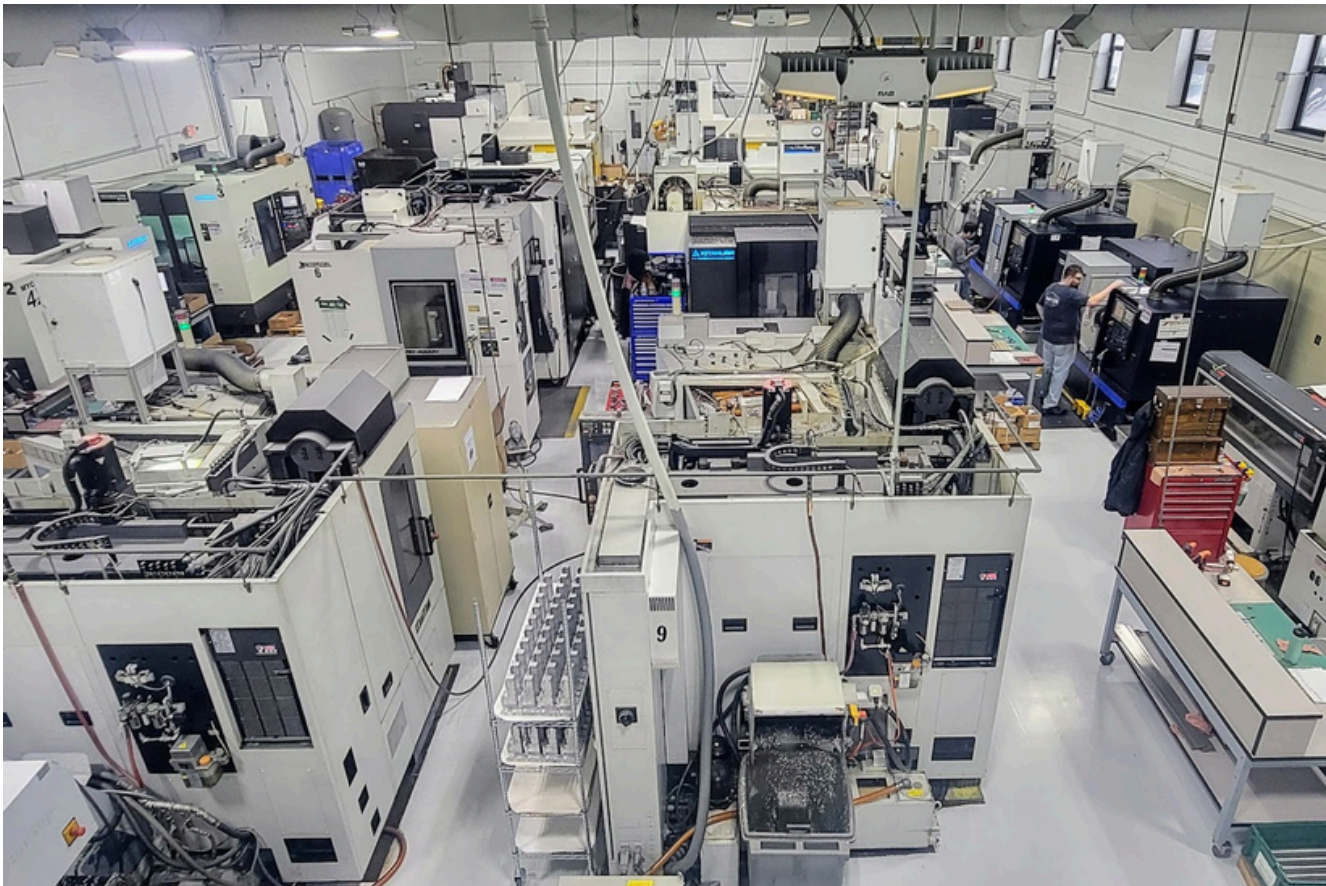
FORGE

2024 Impact Report



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Introduction

Aeroshield Materials first came to FORGE with a problem: eager, early customers wanted proof that they could produce their super-insulating transparent, silica aerogel window insulation at scale. After first connecting with FORGE in 2020, Aeroshield pitched for, and won, a FORGE grant to buy key production-grade equipment. Since then, they've leveraged FORGE educational resources, attended our Manufacturing Readiness workshops, and consulted with one of our Innovation Advisors to structure a deal for a large capital equipment purchase. We've supported and cheered on Aeroshield as they completed a first pilot, built supply chains, and secured increasing funding and accolades. **In 2024, Aeroshield opened a 12,000 square foot facility that will employ more than 30 employees.**

Stories like this are what fuel the team as **we work at FORGE to accelerate the success and impact of manufacturing hardtech innovations at scale.**

We open the doors to the expertise, resources, and relationships that advance product development, manufacturing, and local supply chains. This work delivers unique value to innovators, manufacturers, suppliers - and the local economy. And this work drives the successful deployment of the next generation of high-impact, innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges of our time.

In 2024, FORGE reached and exceeded 900 startups served all time. While 97% of startups with physical products fail, FORGE-supported startups boast an 84% survival rate across many hundreds hardtech startups served. An incredible 20% of those have reached or surpassed the milestone of pilot scale production.

We served nearly 200 new startups in 2024, a new annual record for us! Our maturing activity in Connecticut, where we publicly launched operations in early 2023, significantly drove the number of startups we served. Thanks to the support of the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund we have now served more than 100 CT-based startups and begun deployment of larger-scale product development grants for CT startups to work with CT suppliers.

Throughout 2024, we continued our work providing hyperlocal, curated, innovator-friendly manufacturing and supply chain referrals, making hundreds of connections to facilitate the local manufacturing of innovative products.

Seventy-two percent of our connections in our current service area were within 100 miles of each other.

As I write this, new U.S tariffs are anticipated in early 2025. Tariffs will raise the costs of select materials, components, and services, affecting our community of small- and medium-sized manufacturers. This will drive increasing demand for supply chain diversification and localization.

FORGE is poised to support manufacturing readiness and help facilitate nearshoring for innovative hardtech companies. Support for nearshoring innovative supply chains can unlock competitive advantages that help innovators succeed. Nearshoring also invigorates domestic manufacturing, builds resilient local economies, and reduces the carbon footprint of production of new products.

FORGE is also poised to help innovators navigate shifts in the funding landscape heading into 2025 with expansion of our innovation advisor program and increasing deployment of non-dilutive product development grants.

In 2025, FORGE will celebrate 10 years of our Manufacturing Initiative. Over those years, we've developed deep relationships with our local manufacturing and innovation communities. We've collected unique data sets to support our work preparing and matching innovative companies to manufacture locally. And we've built an experienced and knowledgeable team with more than 150 collective years of product development, manufacturing, and supply chain experience. All this has positioned us to be a valuable resource for innovators and manufacturers in the years to come. The businesses we collaborate with are making the solutions of tomorrow. They are the backbone of the U.S. economy. We are here to support them.

Read on to celebrate everything our network of innovative companies, supply chain members, and ecosystem collaborators achieved in 2024. **Together, we've made a significant and tangible impact on physical product innovation in New England, and we look forward to continuing to fulfill our mission in 2025 and beyond.**



Laura Teicher,
Executive Director

The FORGE Story

Our Mission

FORGE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit on a mission to help innovators with physical products navigate the journey from prototype through to commercialization and impact at scale.

The Problem

Startups making physical products face:



High early production costs and burn rates



Lack of experience and expertise in scaling production, manufacturing best practices, and inroads to local suppliers



Risk of damaging relationships with local manufacturers by trying to scale without adequate preparation and documentation

Our Solution

FORGE addresses these gaps via:



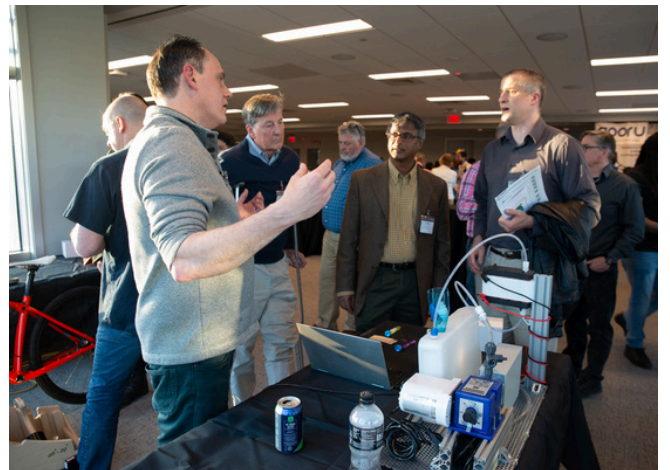
Education: Training and support for companies to understand pathways to manufacturing



Curated connections: Making right-fit introductions to industry expertise



Funding: non-dilutive Product Development Grants to address product-specific scaling challenges



Tom Merle, Fikst Product Development general manager, leads a group including MA State Senator Barry Finegold on a private FORGE Facility Tour



CT Chief Manufacturing Officer Paul Lavoie (center) at the Climate-Haven and FORGE Rocket Pitch in New Haven, CT

Innovative Companies: By The Numbers

“When we first developed the concept for KARSA, our product designed to revolutionize cleanliness and hygiene in gyms and fitness-studio environments, we knew we had something special—but taking the leap to share it with others and execute was a big step. FORGE saved us invaluable time by leveraging their reputation to get us directly to the right people. When manufacturers and designers saw that FORGE had made the introduction, they were eager to take our calls. This fast-tracked KARSA’s development process, allowing us to iterate, grow, and gain momentum far more quickly than we could have on our own.”

Timothy Roy, Co-Founder, KARSA Inc.

ALL TIME

945 startups supported

8,593 innovation jobs supported

20% of FORGE startups scaled to pilot production or beyond

67% of startup connections to manufacturers and suppliers are within 100 miles

65% of resulting contracts are within 100 miles

2024

189 new startups served

93% of startups agreed that educational information presented by FORGE will influence the way they approached development, manufacturing, and/or supply chain for their products

746 connections between startups and regional manufacturers and suppliers

\$120K in non-dilutive funding disbursed over 14 product development grants

20 educational events*

**includes factory tours, manufacturing readiness workshops, office hours, and more*

SECTORS SERVED

-  Aerospace & Transportation
-  Agricultural Water & Waste
-  Building & Energy Efficiency
-  Chemical & Advanced Materials
-  Consumer Products
-  Defense
-  Energy Generation, Storage & Distribution
-  Manufacturing
-  Medical Device, Assistive Technology & Diagnostics
-  Robotics & Process Efficiency
-  Telecommunications & IoT



Innovative Companies: Connecticut

“FORGE has been extremely helpful in terms of catalyzing the ecosystem required to establish StarCube's hub of advanced manufacturing and advanced nuclear. FORGE has helped us be in contact with manufacturers and some of the regional resources that are available to help bring our product to market.”

Chris Ricks, CEO, StarCube

113

Connections between CT startups and CT suppliers made in 2024

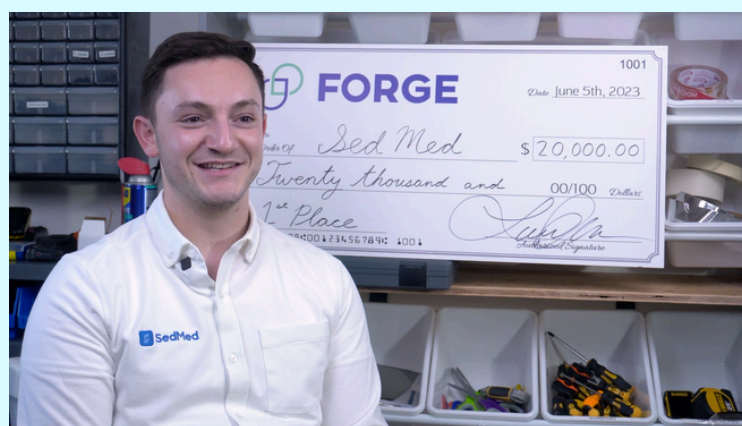
Startup Highlight



Medical device makes the bathroom safer for elderly people and healthcare workers

Startup SedMed has created a durable toilet lift assist product to make the bathroom safer for elderly people and the medical staff and family members who care for them. Eighty percent of falls occur in the bathroom for those over 65, and assisted living and rehab facility workers are at risk of injury when they lift patients during toilet transfers. SedMed's Toilet lift assist product addresses these issues by supporting up to 80 percent of users' body weight while transferring to/from the toilet.

SedMed CEO Jeremy Bronen first met FORGE Vice President Adam Rodrigues at an UConn senior design project event that SedMed was sponsoring. Rodrigues encouraged Bronen to apply for FORGE's first pitch competition in Connecticut. SedMed applied and won the contest, earning the grand prize of \$20,000 in non-dilutive product development funding.



Jeremy Bronen, SedMed founder (Courtesy SedMed)

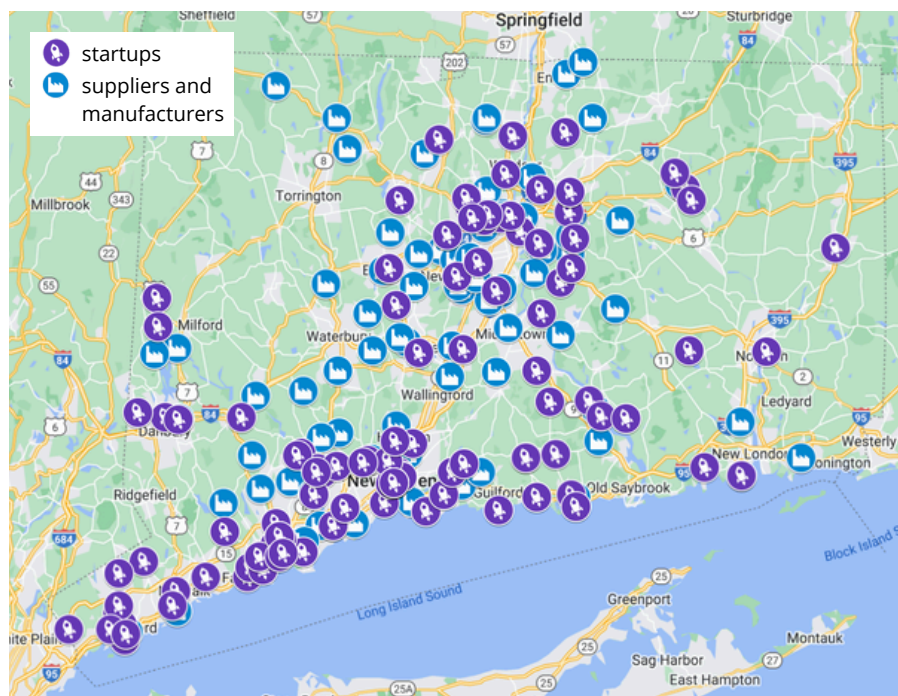
SedMed found another funding opportunity that day when an investor heard its founders' pitch at FORGE's event.

"We not only won the event, but gained a fantastic investor," Bronen said.

Since then, SedMed has taken advantage of FORGE's personalized introductions to members of its local supply chain network and is consulting with its customers to see what activities of daily living need solutions. SedMed has reached mass production. Bronen said that FORGE's support was critical for the company's rapid growth and manufacturing journey.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

The FORGE Network in Connecticut



10.2%

Manufacturing accounts for 10.2% of total gross state product

4,500+

manufacturing companies

>70%

of manufacturing jobs are advanced

STRENGTHS:



Aerospace & Transportation Equipment



Chemicals & Plastics



Fabricated Metal

Connecticut Event Highlights

ClimateHaven and FORGE Rocket Pitch



CLIMATEHAVEN

In New Haven, Connecticut, regional manufacturing experts came together at the ClimateHaven Innovation Hub to advise startup founders on solving their hardest hardware challenges. Three hand-selected startups presented their physical product prototypes to a panel of eight seasoned manufacturing experts at the ClimateHaven and FORGE Rocket Pitch. Key members of the regional manufacturing and innovation ecosystems, including Connecticut Chief Manufacturing Officer Paul Lavoie, joined the exclusive event to learn more about the startups, provide valuable product

development advice, and connect with local startups and manufacturers.

Yurou Zhang, Earthos co-founder, pitching at the ClimateHaven /FORGE Rocket Pitch event



[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

Novo Precision Facility Tour



Aside from the wire-forming and -cutting equipment on display in the lobby of Bristol, CT company Novo Precision, there's little indication that beyond the lobby doors, ultra-accurate machines are clicking and clacking as they manipulate wires as thin as hairs into neat and perfect shapes. Novo showed us those machines, and shared its vision for continued growth, on a facility tour of its more than 50,000 sq. ft. of facilities. Novo's mission is "to simply solve our customer's problem." FORGE brought together innovators, supply chain members, and ecosystem

collaborators to see how Novo solves all those problems.



Novo President Bill Hazard (left) giving a facility tour.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



To bring together and shine the spotlight on some of Connecticut's brightest and most enterprising minds, FORGE teamed up with Innovation Nights® to show off physical products from CT-born companies at Innovation Nights Connecticut. Participating startups demonstrated their physical products, with select finalists participating in a live pitch for \$24,000 in cleantech product development funding supported by a private cleantech-focused foundation.

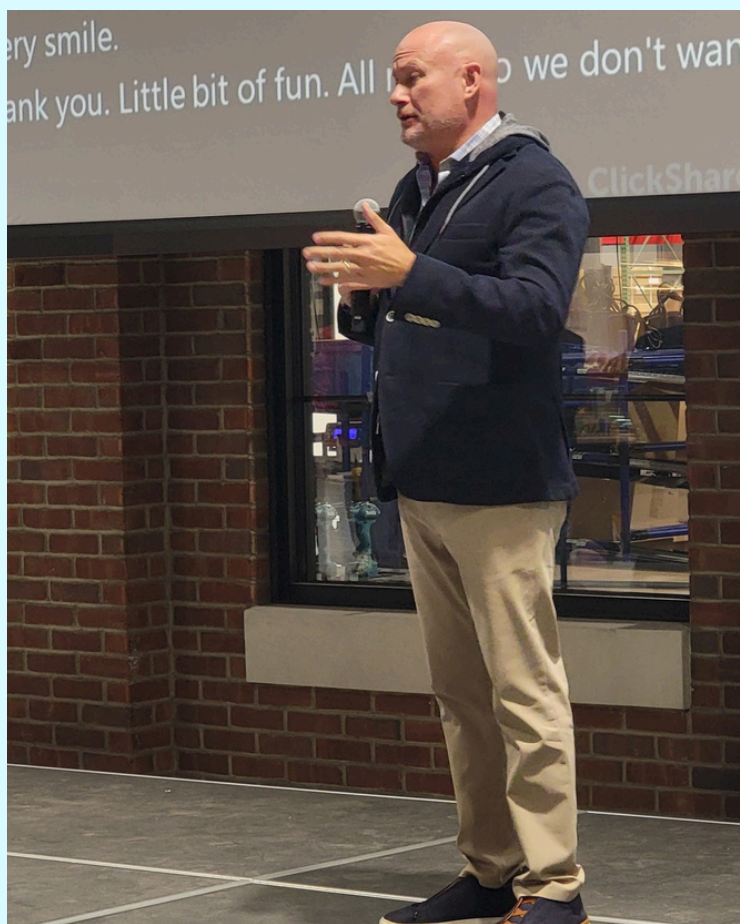
At this event, FORGE awarded the first of a tranche of \$30,000 - \$100,000 Product Development Grants powered by the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) to support the manufacturing of CT innovation in CT. We awarded Floe, Inc. our largest grant to date, \$30,000 in non-dilutive product development funding.

Keynote speaker Dan O'Keefe, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (CDECD), emphasized Connecticut's commitment to supporting innovators and the growing hardtech ecosystem in the state. He spoke on how manufacturing is not just important, but existential to the state's economy.

The CT MIF is sponsoring further grant funding to support Connecticut-based startups working with Connecticut-based manufacturers. We opened applications for an even larger grant in December 2024 and look forward to awarding it and many others in 2025.

Read more about the event and the CT-grown hardtech companies that demoed and left the event with grant awards.

WATCH VIDEO AND READ FULL STORY



Connecticut CDECD Commissioner Dan O'Keefe speaks at Innovation Nights Connecticut



Innovative Companies: Massachusetts

“FORGE is a valued organization in the region that has provided impactful networking opportunities with industry partners. These connections have been meaningful as an early stage start-up navigating the prototype to commercialization path over the past 4 years.”

Dan White,
CEO, Co-founder, Board Director, Clean Crop Technologies

186

connections between MA startups and MA suppliers made in 2024

Startup Highlight: Active Surfaces



Lightweight, durable solar panels flex and bend to generate power from more surfaces

Traditional solar panels don't work for every application. Dr. Richard Swartwout and Shiv Bhakta, the co-founders of Active Surfaces, have added a new option. Active Surfaces' solar module is flexible, lightweight, and easy to deploy on a wider range of surfaces.

Bhakta and Swartwout first learned about FORGE through Greentown Labs' ACCEL program. They applied to FORGE's cleantech pitch competition at the Massachusetts Manufacturing Mash-Up and won second place and a \$6,000 non-dilutive FORGE Product Development Grant.

“The grant we won from FORGE was helpful,” Bhakta said. “The use of funds was entirely on product development, so we can show customers a larger prototype that actually works, validate it from a testing perspective, and make something as close to the final product as possible. We plan to leverage FORGE more as we focus on scaling our product and more and more on manufacturing.”



The Active Surfaces team at the ribbon cutting for their new facility in Woburn, MA. (Photo courtesy Shiv Bhakta)

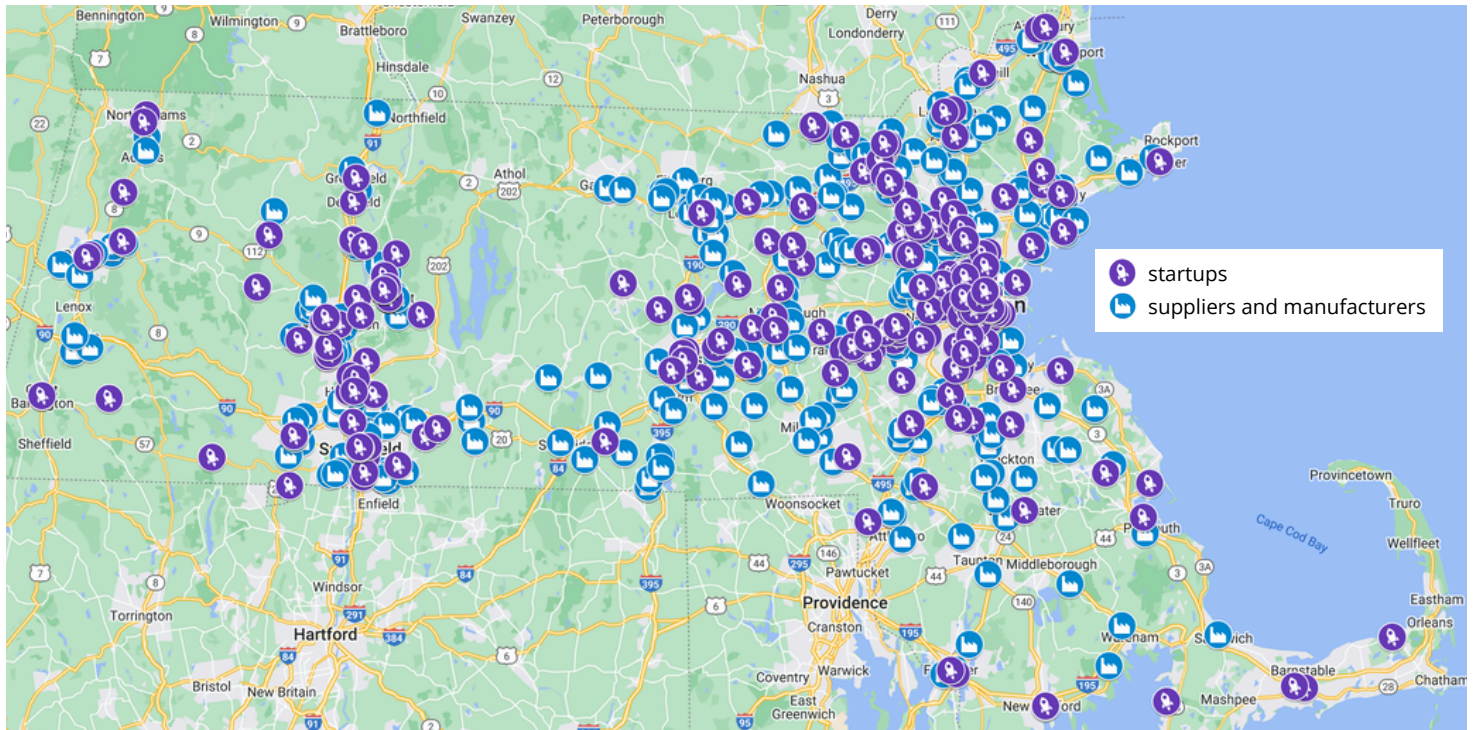
Active Surfaces just opened a 4,800 square foot manufacturing facility in Woburn, MA. There, the company can do small-scale production, R&D, and demonstrations for customers.

Active Surfaces invited FORGE to the exclusive opening of the manufacturing facility. We were thrilled to tour the space and to celebrate this impressive milestone. FORGE is proud to have contributed to Active Surfaces' success!

READ THE FULL STORY



The FORGE Network in Massachusetts



3rd

out of 50 states for R&D spending

240,000+

Manufacturing workforce

11.3%

of total gross state product is manufacturing

STRENGTHS:



Computers & Electronics



Chemicals & Plastics



Biotech & Medical Devices

State of Manufacturing in Western Massachusetts

Manufacturers, suppliers, innovators, and other members of the local supply chain joined us to celebrate Manufacturing Month, share delicious locally brewed craft beer, and discuss the state of manufacturing in Western Massachusetts at White Lion Brewing Company in Springfield, MA. MassDevelopment, the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council, and the Center for Advanced Manufacturing sponsored the event. We looked back on the region's economic successes in 2024 and explored the opportunities that local manufacturers could look forward to in 2025.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Massachusetts Event Highlights



Fikst Product Development Facility Tour



The Fikst team hosted FORGE and our guests on a behind-the-scenes tour of their Wilmington, MA facility. Attendees included a curated group of innovators, supply chain members, ecosystem collaborators, and Massachusetts State Senator Barry Finegold, Chair of the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies.

During the event, attendees heard pitches from four startups with product development needs relevant to Fikst's capabilities. We saw those capabilities firsthand during the walkthrough of Fikst's 8,000 sq. ft facility, where engineers work in brightly lit shops, don PPE to go in the cleanroom, and collaborate in conference rooms named after national parks.



[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

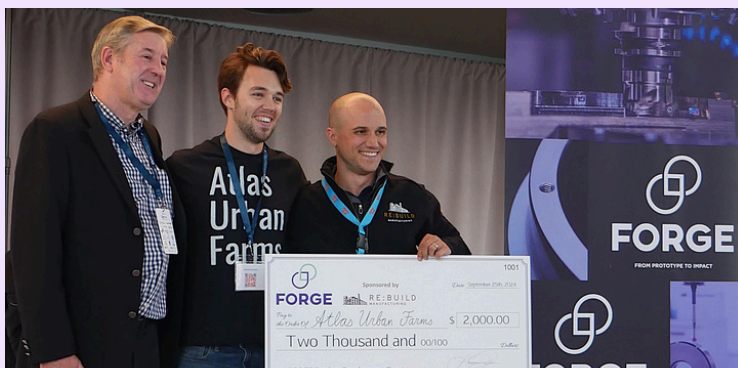
Manufacturing Mash-Up



For its fourth year, the annual Manufacturing Mash-Up moved to Gillette Stadium for even more manufacturing ecosystem networking, panels, grants, and awards. FORGE joined MassTech Collaborative as an event partner again.

We brought manufacturers, suppliers, and startups to table at the event. Mark Michalski, one of our Manufacturing Experts-In-Residence, led a panel on design for manufacturability (locally!). Best of all, we gave out \$22,000 in funding during our cleantech startup pitch contest. More than 2,000 people signed up for the event. It was a great day to be a part of the Massachusetts manufacturing ecosystem!

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)



Our Offerings

Education

SEE UPCOMING EVENTS

Manufacturing Readiness Workshops

FORGE holds regular virtual manufacturing readiness workshops to give innovators the knowledge to successfully scale from prototype to manufacturing. Physical product entrepreneurs tell us these workshops have given them perspective, helped them organize their strategies, and accelerated their build stage progression. Topics include:

- **Planning for Scaling Your Manufacturing** - exploring strategies for effectively scaling manufacturing processes for startups, including defining a strong business foundation, exploring startup business models, analyzing operations processes and assessing manufacturing readiness
- **Design for X** - defining your startup's 'x' in 'design for x' and the methodologies to achieve excellence and success for startups, manufacturers, and customers through design
- **Managing Development** - covering best practices for the transition from product development to commercialization, including prototyping, selecting optimal manufacturing methods and documentation like a Bill of Materials and Bill of Processes
- **Selecting and Managing Your Primary Contract Manufacturer** - selecting a primary contract manufacturer for good technical and relational fit, evaluating potential manufacturers, and communicating with a manufacturer before and after signing a contract
- **Funding Innovation from Idea to A-Round** - understanding the diverse funding options such as grants, venture capital, and crowdfunding, and the considerations for determining company valuation.

This year, federal agencies and universities engaged FORGE to deliver manufacturing readiness programming. UMass Lowell's Massachusetts Medical Device Development Center (M2D2), National Renewable Energy Laboratories' Camp Cleantech, and Yale University's engineering school PhD program, engaged FORGE to deliver the program as part of their curriculum. M2D2 also embedded us in their accelerator/incubator program to help entrepreneurs connect with local supply chains.

Educational Events

In addition to FORGE's recurring manufacturing readiness workshop series, we also run other events based on current and emerging needs in the innovation ecosystem.

- **Manufacturing Meetup Groups** - a regular community group for startups that interface with manufacturing, supply chain, and physical product development
- **Facility tours** - exclusive tours behind the scenes at factories and manufacturing and supply chain facilities
- **More** - rocket pitches, networking meetups, and webinars addressing emerging challenges and trending solutions

Digital Educational Resources

Startups and innovative companies also benefit from our workbooks and other digital resources.

From business development to FDA approval and preparing a supply chain, these resources give innovators the knowledge they need to make business decisions that will help them get into, and stay in, mature production. Read more [here](#).

FORGE partners share Tools of the Trade articles, pieces that address specific design, manufacturing, and supply chain issues. Read about market validation, techno-economic analysis, selecting a contract manufacturer, and more [here](#).



Pearse Bertram+ facility tour

Connections and Resources

“FORGE helped us find several of our key supply chain partners, including our actual primary contract manufacturer. To be able to meet someone like that at a FORGE event and make that introduction really reduces our activation energy and is such a value add.”

David Dellal, founder and CEO, Floe

Product Development Sessions

Even with significant traction and a well-rounded prototype, startups and innovative companies can struggle to find manufacturers and suppliers who will answer their calls, let alone enter a contract together. FORGE’s unique educational resources for innovators and relationships with local supply chains mean that manufacturers and suppliers trust – and are eager to collaborate with – the innovators we refer to them.

FORGE’s curated supplier referrals begin with a Product Development Session. Startups that have a dedicated manufacturing budget and at least an early prototype are

85% The FORGE startup survival rate since 2015 compared to 3% overall hardware startup survival rate

candidates for these sessions, during which they meet with FORGE program team members to discuss their specific prototyping or manufacturing needs. We provide expert advice and make right-fit connections to manufacturers, suppliers, design firms, or other experts who can help hardware innovators move forward locally – connections that are far more likely to result in an initial meeting and a contract compared to a cold call.

Product Development Grants

Although 20 percent of the innovative companies that FORGE supports have achieved pilot production or beyond, the remaining 80 percent have not—and, despite having radically innovative physical product prototypes, manufacturing readiness knowledge from FORGE, and a drive to work with local manufacturers and supply chains, they often struggle to reach the production stage. A key reason: **they need more funding.**


Manufacturing physical innovation is capital intensive, yet only five percent of all venture capital goes toward physical innovations. FORGE Product Development Grants are designed to bridge the funding gap for promising emerging hardtech companies. These grants are non-dilutive and awarded to address product-specific scaling or market entry challenges. Our grants don’t just support the growth of innovative companies solving some of the toughest problems, but also position those companies to reach challenging but essential milestones on the route to achieving next stage traction in the form of pilots, customers, and/or raising dilutive capital.

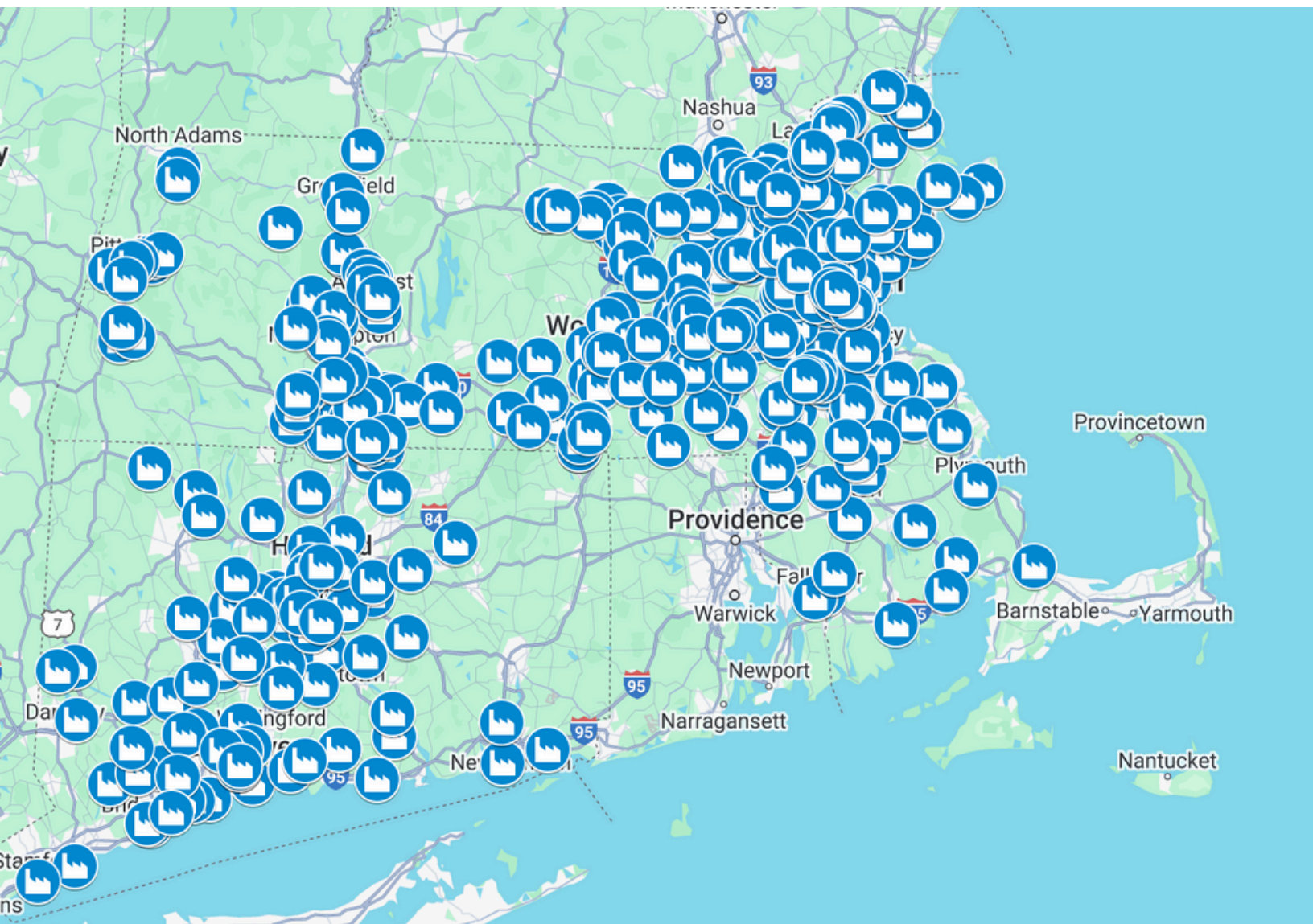


FORGE Spring Startup Showcase pitch contest winners: Sunny, Tubender, and LiftLabs Inc.

Product Development Grants are just one part of the virtuous cycle that FORGE’s services create and drive forward. Our education and community engagement help innovative companies get ready to manufacture and scale, and the direct connections we make and funding we award give companies the resources to go from “ready-to-scale” to “scaling” or “scaled”.

FORGE's Supply Chain Network

 suppliers and manufacturers



BY THE NUMBERS



71%

of connections in MA and CT are within 100 miles



87%

of contracts are within 100 miles



746

connections between supply chain network and innovative companies in 2024



82%

of FORGE's supply chain network is willing to engage with a startup on a contract less than \$10,000



63%

of FORGE's supply chain network is willing to engage at the prototype level



Best Practices For Scaling

BY DAVID THOMPSON, PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Documentation, Documentation, Documentation

The key to setting up a successful partnership with your supply chain is to ensure clear expectations are set. The best way to effectively do this is to build out your documentation. Such documentation includes your CAD files, bill of materials, and assembly instructions. While it may feel like boring paperwork, continuously updating and improving your documentation helps to reduce the risks -- and potentially costly outcomes -- of miscommunication. For documentation resources, see FORGE's [Managing Development](#) Workbook.



Invest in the Relationship

Take the time to learn about your manufacturer and how they run their business. Developing a genuine relationship establishes a foundation of the trust which will help you to navigate the inevitable challenges that come up when scaling a hardware business. [FORGE can help with warm introductions to right-fit, local manufacturing partners.](#)



Communicate Early and Often

As new needs arise, communicate them with your manufacturer proactively - this reduces the risk of unintended delays and disruptions. Establish a regular meeting cadence with your manufacturer to deepen communication channels and serve as a forum to navigate any challenges that might arise during your production cycle.



Plan Proactively But Prioritize Strategically

When developing a physical product, it's important to proactively look ahead to challenges that will arise when scaling such as regulatory hurdles or anticipated changes in manufacturing methods. The art of scaling a hardware company is having the perspective to see the upcoming hurdles while having the discipline to address what is most pressing and actionable at the moment.

Partners

“The quality of introductions have been outstanding so far from FORGE. They do an unbelievable job of engaging with the startups. We sample products for startups’ initial prototype designs, and that’s an extreme cost savings because they don’t have to buy the material, and we can get it to them in a timely manner to help them facilitate getting their prototype into market quicker.”

Mark Tabor, Senior Market Development Manager, NE/Northeast US, Samtec Inc

Titanium



Steel



Iron



Friends of FORGE



What it means to be a FORGE partner

Staying abreast of emerging technologies while supporting innovation in your region. Helping smart, creative people build the future of physical products. Keeping manufacturing local and attracting the rising workforce. Brand visibility. These are just a few of the benefits of supporting FORGE.

Companies partner with FORGE because they understand the importance of supporting their regional innovation community. Additional benefits can include:



Establishing thought leadership and building your brand with our communities of innovative companies and suppliers



Hosting and speaking at public and curated events like factory tours, educational webinar sessions, and panel discussions



The opportunity to place an educational content piece on our website, showing innovative companies your expertise and value



High-visibility opportunities with innovation and manufacturing ecosystem attendees. Partners can get a table in the showcase, a logo banner, and the opportunity to network with dozens of relevant startups and ecosystem partners



Your logo in the Manufacturing Showcase Room. We display sponsors' logos, products, and print materials in the manufacturing showcase room in our headquarters



Frequent mentions on social media, including direct posts and retweets

Partner Success Story: AMI

FORGE partner Alternative Manufacturing Inc. (AMI) isn't your average electronics manufacturer. Its business model makes it uniquely friendly to innovators and startups. FORGE's connections between AMI and innovators have yielded fruitful relationships for both.

AMI and FORGE first connected when AMI opened its prototype shop in Somerville, MA near FORGE's headquarters. Soon AMI was participating in FORGE's Rocket Roundtables, panel discussions, and office hours. FORGE regularly refers cleantech startups or other innovative companies with identified manufacturing or supply chain needs to AMI.

AMI has also connected with startups through FORGE's Startup Showcase events and gained visibility through promotion on FORGE's social media and website. AMI is currently working with 12 FORGE-referred companies.



[READ MORE](#)

Manufacturers and Suppliers

“ I have seen first-hand the positive impact [FORGE has] on the startup community. My company provides human factors and usability engineering services to medical device innovators, and FORGE has introduced me to several startups that could use our services. The result will be the local development of medical devices that are easier and safer to use. ”

Beth A. Loring, Founder, Loring Human Factors

By connecting startups with local manufacturers and suppliers, FORGE fosters economic growth and strengthens the innovation ecosystem, making it easier for companies to scale and remain anchored in the region. Nearshoring supply chains doesn't just help innovators succeed. Nearshoring also invigorates domestic manufacturing, builds resilient local economies, and mitigates the carbon footprint of producing new products.

Manufacturers, suppliers, design and contract engineering firms, product experts and more choose to join FORGE's Supply Chain Network to:

- Attract and retain forward-thinking talent by working on exciting innovative products
- Keep abreast of emerging technologies and markets
- Access de-risked, innovative opportunities to build relationships with rapidly growing businesses

The unique power of FORGE's supply chain network is in our right-fit connections. We only make introductions between innovators and manufacturers whose services and business models align—like a prototype-stage startup creating a household item with a design firm that specializes in consumer goods, or a larger contract electronics manufacturer with an established robotics company ready to escalate from small-scale to mass production.



The Burt Process Equipment table at FORGE's 2024 Spring Startup Showcase

FORGE's unique relationships and data sets support the right-fit connections we make. Our connections deliver value to innovators in the form of:

- Streamlined product development, communications , and IP protections
- Alignment with certifications and quality requirements for regulated domestic markets
- Savings on often-hidden costs like tariffs, shipping/delays, and overseas management
- Reduced manufacturing and supply chain emissions

At FORGE, we believe that if you can invent it here, you should be empowered to make it here!

JOIN OUR SUPPLY CHAIN NETWORK

Ecosystem Collaborators

“Working closely with the UMass Lowell Innovation Hub, FORGE has been instrumental in helping our startups make connections with the regional supply chain that are crucial to their success.”

Julie Chen, Chancellor, UMass Lowell

When we say ecosystem at FORGE, we're talking about the network of support organizations for the startup and manufacturing communities that we serve and work alongside. Our ecosystem collaborators are organizations that also work tirelessly to support these communities. They award grants, provide resources, and offer mentorship and training—and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Ecosystem collaborators help local innovation and manufacturing thrive and grow. We make an even greater impact when we team up, cross-promote each other, and refer community members to each other.



MassDevelopment's table at the FORGE 2024 Spring Startup Showcase

Interested in becoming a FORGE ecosystem collaborator? [Contact us](#) to talk about opportunities to collaborate.



News and Media Coverage

Articles



CT INSIDER

These 3 Connecticut-based startups received \$24K in funding at innovation event

READ NOW



BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

FORGE Program Director David Thompson named one of BostInno's 2024 25 under 25

READ NOW



HARTFORD BUSINESS JOURNAL

DECD provides \$800K to FORGE for product development grants

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Startup BOSTON

Meet the Accelerator of the Year: FORGE President and Executive Director Laura Teicher

READ NOW



businesswire A BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY COMPANY

FORGE unveiled as Wells Fargo Innovation Incubator Strategic Award Winner

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22 NEWS WWLP.com

Mass. Manufacturers Saluted For \$56 Bil Impact at Event, FORGE Hosts Cleantech Pitch Contest

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Podcasts



The VentureFizz Podcast: Laura Teicher – Executive Director, FORGE

LISTEN NOW



Climate Tech Innovations and Local Manufacturing for Global Impact with Laura Teicher of FORGE

LISTEN NOW

FORGE Team



Laura Teicher
President &
Executive Director



Adam Rodrigues
Vice President



Anya Losik
Chief of Staff



Paul Butler
Director of
Partnerships



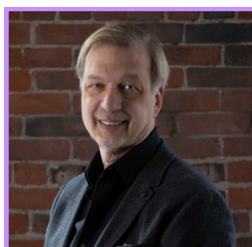
Trinell Ball
Program Director



David Thompson
Program Director



Sophie Cestari
Program Manager



Mark L. Michalski
Manufacturing Expert-
in-Residence



Scott Longley
Manufacturing Expert-
in-Residence



Sofia Bueso
Event Marketing
Associate (Fall)



Grace Skepner
Event Marketing
Associate (Spring)



Brady Munnerlyn
Operations Associate
(Fall)



Alisha Werry
Operations Associate
(Spring)



Paige Romanick
Startup Program
Associate (Fall)



Erin Kiesewetter
Startup Program
Associate (Spring)



A FORGE team bonding activity at the Technocopia makerspace



The FORGE team at Manufacturing Mash-Up

Board of Directors



Arthur Trapotsis

Co-Owner,
Consolidated
Sterilizer Systems



Sarah Jane Maxted

Climate Change
& Sustainability
Leader, Deloitte,
Board Treasurer



Rodney Dowell

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Massachusetts
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Overseers



Ben Downing

Vice President
Public Affairs,
The Engine



Nina Birger

Vice President of
Climate Solutions,
Choose



Julie Chen

Chancellor,
UMass Lowell



Raj Melville

Executive Director
Emeritus, Deshpande
Foundation



Pedro Arce

Senior Vice President,
M&T Bank



Sheri Palazzo

Founder, Coach, & Mentor,
Saplings Consulting,
Expert-in-Residence,
Greentown Labs

Regional Advisory Councils

Connecticut Advisory Council

- Ron Angelo, President and CEO, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc.
- Jack Crane, Senior Advisor, CONNSTEP
- Martin Guay, Vice President of Business Development, Stanley Black & Decker
- William Hazard, President, Novo Precision LLC
- Frank Kuchinski, Senior Principal Consultant, ServiceNow
- Paul Lavoie, Chief Manufacturing Officer, Office of Manufacturing, State of Connecticut
- John Logan, Executive Director, MakeHaven
- Jamison Scott, President, Air Handling Systems
- Devra Sisitsky, Executive Director and Founder, MakerspaceCT
- Emily Yale, Founder and CEO, Land Maverick
- Dr. Marien Zanyk, CEO and Founder, Zaneez; Consultant, US Capital Global Partner

Northeast Massachusetts Advisory Council

- Lilia Chan, Lead Mechanical Engineer, MITRE
- Stephanie Cronin, Executive Director, Middlesex 3 Coalition
- Maria Dickinson, Economic Development Specialist, The City of Lowell
- Ellen Ellsworth, Innovative Growth Services Director, MassMEP
- Jeffrey Hovis, Program Director, Graduate Product Management Program, Merrimack College; Managing Principal, Product Genesis
- Allison Lamey, Executive Director, The Lowell Plan and Lowell Development & Financial Corporation
- Galen Nelson, Chief Program Officer, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center
- Theresa Park, Senior Executive Vice President and Deputy Director, MassDevelopment
- Arlene Parquette, Associate Vice Chancellor, Industry Partnerships and Economic Development, UMass Lowell
- Geetha Ramani, Vice President of Business Development, MassDevelopment
- Stephen R. Smith, Esq., President, S&H Engineering Inc.

Western Massachusetts Advisory Council

- Chris Bignell, Partner, The Alchemy Fund
- Kristin Carlson, President, Peerless Precision
- Jean Coyle, Entrepreneur and Founder
- Dawn Creighton, Community Outreach Officer, Liberty Bank
- David Cruise, President and CEO, Regional Employment Board of Hampden County
- Kevin Moforte, TDI Fellow for Holyoke, Mass Development
- Neil Scanlon, Co-Owner and President, Worthington Assembly
- Judy Silvia, Senior Director of Public Affairs, MassMEP
- Mike Stone, Partner, Cofab Design
- Rick Sullivan, President and CEO, Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council
- Gregory Thomas, Executive Director, Berthiaume Center for Entrepreneurship at UMass Amherst

Innovation Advisors

- [Sera Evcimen](#), Founder and Principal, Pratik Development
- [Joseph Gifford](#), President and Principal Consultant, Catalytic Consulting, Inc.
- [Stacey Weismiller](#), Expert in Manufacturing

Looking Forward

We're proud of what we achieved in 2024: We supported 277 innovative hardtech companies! We made over 746 connections for them to regional contract manufacturers and suppliers, hosted 20 events to educate and uplift local innovation and manufacturing, and awarded 14 Product Development Grants. We set a strategic plan for the coming years to firmly establish FORGE as the top mission-driven organization supporting the development and local manufacturing of innovative physical products in the U.S.

Looking forward to 2025, FORGE will remain dedicated to our north star of working to increase and accelerate the success of producing impactful physical innovations at scale. Every day, our innovators, supply chain network, partners, and ecosystem collaborators are contributing to the future we want to see. That future creates and maintains local jobs, with high deployment of the innovative physical products that make the world safer, healthier, more efficient, and even a bit more fun.

Our strategic plan calls for us to deepen established programming — our educational and connection offerings — and enhance our regional operations, meeting our community's needs with more impact and efficiency than ever. We will expand our Product Development Grants to help more innovators successfully scale up and cross the 'valley of death'. We will continue to grow FORGE's thought leadership and diversify our revenue streams. And we will identify opportunities to geographically expand our program, so we can bring the model that has helped nearly 1,000 startups to support more worthy innovators and further interconnect innovative domestic supply chains across the country.

Please join us to celebrate 10 years of FORGE's Manufacturing Initiative in 2025. We're prepared to support our local manufacturing and innovation ecosystems through any challenge that comes our way, and we look forward to seeing what our community achieves this year!

