



10 YEARS OF IMPACT

2025



FORGE

2025 Impact Report

ALL TIME

INNOVATORS

- 1,124** innovative hardtech companies supported over 10 years of operations
- 24%** of FORGE innovative companies have reached pilot to full commercial production
- 87%** survival rate for FORGE innovative companies
- 84%** of surveyed innovators agreed FORGE has meaningfully influenced the way they approach development, manufacturing, and/or supply chain for their products
- 10K+** innovation and manufacturing jobs supported

SUPPLY CHAIN NETWORK

- \$47M+** in known contracts between FORGE companies
- 94%** of FORGE suppliers engage to challenge their company to remain current
- 87%** of FORGE suppliers engage with startups as an opportunity for workforce development
- 59%** of FORGE connections are within 100 miles

2025

236

innovative hardtech companies served

\$126K+

in non-dilutive funding disbursed

363

connections between innovative companies and regional manufacturers and suppliers

TOP AND EMERGING SECTORS

Consumer Products, Climate Tech, Dual Use, Medical Devices and Diagnostics, Assistive Technology, Robotics

EVENTS

16 events in 2025



Make It Here in CT at Gyre9

Manufacturer Gyre9 took CT innovators and suppliers behind the scenes at its 50,000 sq. ft. facility and hosted a panel with Floe, a rooftop ice and snow management company that has won multiple FORGE Product Development Grants (PDGs). FORGE announced two new winners of PDGs supported by the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund.



10 Years of FORGE

Our 2025 Spring Startup Showcase celebrated 10 years of the FORGE Manufacturing Initiative and over 1,000 emerging hardtech companies served, featuring demos from innovative companies and stories from supply chain members on their successful collaborations with FORGE over the years.

LEARN MORE:

FORGEimpact.org

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Introduction

Hera Materials first came to FORGE in 2022 for support in developing and manufacturing Woodpack, a sustainable, recyclable biomaterial that replaces single-use plastic films like those in garment packaging and grocery bags. Since then, Hera has leveraged almost every element of FORGE's programming, from manufacturing readiness workshops to local supply chain connections. FORGE awarded Hera a \$100,000 Product Development Grant to fund its first demo production line of Woodpack. Hera's high-speed production line, made in collaboration with local suppliers Prime Electric and P&H Services, will produce continuous, full-format, 300-pound rolls of Woodpack — a vital step on Hera's journey to full-scale commercial production.

This year, we celebrated 10 years of the FORGE Manufacturing Initiative. Stories like Hera's are what have driven FORGE's mission for the past decade: fostering hardtech innovation and empowering local manufacturing to bridge the gap to scaled production.

Over ten years of proudly supporting and cheering on our network of amazing innovators and manufacturers, FORGE has served 1,124 innovative hardtech companies. **An incredible 24% of those companies are in pilot to full scale production today.** These innovators strongly agree that FORGE has meaningfully influenced the way they approach development, manufacturing, and/or supply chain as they grow and scale their companies. Manufacturers, suppliers, and other supply chain members tell us they engage with FORGE's innovative companies to stay abreast of emerging technologies and markets, attract and retain rising talent, and find forward-looking business opportunities.

FORGE's mission-driven support was essential for innovative companies and small/medium domestic manufacturers in 2025. Despite federal policy and initiatives aimed to support domestic manufacturing and suppliers, these companies faced tariffs, uncertainty about international politics and trade, and ongoing labor shortages. FORGE worked to help them continue to survive and thrive. In 2025 alone, we served 236 innovative companies through a mix of manufacturing education, curated introductions to relevant, local contract manufacturers and suppliers, and, on a competitive basis, deployment of non-dilutive supporting capital.

FORGE's work to ensure access to the manufacturing information and industry relationships innovative companies need to successfully scale and access near-shored production partners was crucial for hardtech to survive, thrive, and grow their local economies.

In 2026, we expect to see artificial intelligence and automation continue to transform the domestic innovation and manufacturing ecosystem. We will meet the moment with:

- More educational programming and networking opportunities to support hardtech product and manufacturing companies
- Increased in-depth deployments of our Manufacturing Experts in Residence
- A new AI working group to guide FORGE's internal use of AI and create educational resources for innovative companies and manufacturers
- Deployment of more non-dilutive Product Development Grants

Read on to commemorate 10 years of FORGE, celebrate big local manufacturing and innovation wins, and learn more about what's coming next. It's been an honor to serve the regional hardtech innovation ecosystem for a decade. Together, we truly have shown that if you can invent it here, you should be empowered to make it here.



Laura Teicher,
Executive Director

About FORGE

The 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

Innovative companies making physical products face:



Lack of experience scaling production and knowledge of manufacturing best practices



Perceived lack of readiness to effectively engage local manufacturing partners, including inadequate documentation



High early production costs and burn rates

Our solution

FORGE addresses these gaps via:



Education: Training and one-on-one support for pathways to manufacturing



Curated connections: Making right-fit introductions to manufacturers, suppliers, and experts



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



FORGE Program Director Trinell Ball (L) listens as Hector Castillo (center) and Ed Gilchrist (R) discuss Floe and Gyre9's work together at the Gyre9 Facility Tour.



L-R: U.S. Rep. Richard Neal, FORGE President and Executive Director Laura Teicher, FORGE Vice President Adam Rodrigues, Mass. Rep. Orlando Ramos and FORGE Manufacturing Expert in Residence Scott Longley

Supporting Hardtech Innovation

“ Being new to Connecticut and without an extensive network of manufacturers, I was concerned about the time, expense, and success of finding potential quality partners... Fortunately, I was put in touch with FORGE. They have built a network of cutting-edge manufacturers and suppliers that was beyond my wildest expectations. FORGE is plugged into literally every industry, and can refer quality business... most importantly, the staff of FORGE is such a joy to work with. They are resourceful, diligent, and genuine. What started out as a concern has become one of my biggest assets for my startup. ”

Jim Warner, Founder and Chief Design Officer, BETTA packaging

ALL TIME

- 1,124** innovative companies supported
- 10K+** innovation and manufacturing jobs supported
- 59%** of connections between innovative companies and manufacturers/suppliers are within 100 miles
- 24%** of FORGE innovative companies scaled to pilot production or beyond

2025

- 236** innovative hardtech companies served
- 84%** of surveyed innovators agreed that FORGE has meaningfully influenced the way they approach development, manufacturing, and/or supply chain for their products
- \$126K** in non-dilutive funding disbursed over **4 product development grants**
- 16** educational events*

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

SECTORS SERVED

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



Innovative Companies



“ The FORGE team's continued support — especially from Scott, Trinell, and Adam — has been invaluable. Their expertise and network have opened doors that are actively accelerating our development. FORGE has built a world-class team and high-impact ecosystem, and I look forward to deepening our collaboration as Decarb Energy moves into our next phase and towards fabrication. ”

Kevin Gallagher, Founder and Managing Partner, Decarb Energy Partners

Innovative Company Highlight

AtlasXomics

Your cells' genetic behavior constantly responds to your environment, your age, and your life experiences. Understanding these responses helps researchers make new discoveries about the biology underlying conditions like brain tumors, Alzheimer's disease, and prostate cancer, leading to better tests and treatments. Connecticut-based company AtlasXomics developed the FlowGel platform to let researchers see these gene-regulating changes exactly where they occur.

The global spatial omics market, which includes technologies like FlowGel, is projected to expand to over \$1 billion by 2030. Rising demand for FlowGel led to a significant order backlog. AtlasXomics had to scale production from 10-15 units a week to 100-200 while improving throughput and lowering production costs.

AtlasXomics needed a manufacturing partner that could meet its technical needs and quality standards. FORGE introduced the company to CPS Fluidics, a Connecticut-based microfluidics manufacturer. The companies are just 18 miles apart — a true local partnership.

AtlasXomics applied for a FORGE Product Development Grant to improve its manufacturing readiness. FORGE awarded the company \$70,000 in non-dilutive funding supported by the CT Manufacturing Innovation Fund. With that funding, AtlasXomics completed a full redesign of its platform, integrated critical improvements to boost throughput, optimized its platform's manufacturability to prepare for scale, and placed its first full prototype order with CPS Fluidics.



Colin Ng, AtlasXomics' vice president, said, "The updated design is expected to significantly improve both throughput and manufacturability."

Testing the updated design is AtlasXomics' next step on its journey to commercialization and driving impact in spatial biology and advanced life sciences research. With funding, right-fit connections, and manufacturing readiness expertise, FORGE was instrumental in helping AtlasXomics reach this milestone.

Read more innovator success stories at forgeimpact.org/success-stories.

100+ labs using FlowGel

\$70K in non-dilutive product development funding from FORGE

\$14.5 million in raised capital



Innovative Company Highlight



Because they're reusable, period cups can save people who menstruate a lot of money while reducing their carbon footprint. Many people would love to switch to period cups, but feel intimidated. Sunny has solved this problem by creating the first ever FDA-cleared menstrual cup with an applicator.

Sunny faced rejections from venture capitalists who were uncomfortable talking about periods and didn't see the Sunny Cup and Applicator's value — but even so, the product gathered 23,000 pre-orders. Founder Cindy Belardo heard from another entrepreneur that FORGE was a great resource for growing medical device companies. Sunny first engaged with FORGE for a referral to a local medical device manufacturer that could better meet Sunny's quality standards. Next, Sunny participated in the pitch competition at FORGE's 2024 Spring Showcase, winning second place and a \$2,000 Product Development Grant.

After its first production run, Sunny was ready to start ramping up to full-scale production and needed a new contract manufacturer to get there. A FORGE Manufacturing Expert in Residence with deep medical device expertise helped Sunny find and assess suppliers that would meet both production and FDA requirements.



"We've gone to meet the new supplier in person twice. Their facilities are clean and amazing. The manufacturing advisor asked more questions while we were getting samples, which was so good for trust and building our supplier relationship," Belardo said.

Now, FORGE is deepening the relationship with Sunny by working as its nonprofit partner for a state-sponsored capital equipment grant from MassTech Collaborative's Massachusetts Manufacturing Accelerator Program (MMAP). Sunny's manufacturing upgrade is helping it meet its large volume of back orders, stock inventory, and start earning consistent profits. Then the company can start looking for new distribution channels and become HSA/FSA eligible.

10.6M disposable period products saved from landfills

\$2.8M in equity funding

\$150K MMAP grant with FORGE in 2025

One Sunny cup replaces **528** disposable tampons, saving users upwards of **\$6,000** over the product's lifetime.



Driving Innovative Local Manufacturing

“ If your startup involves manufacturing a physical product, FORGE is an indispensable resource. They provide direct connections for machining and creation, give best practices for prototyping, and share deep supply chain knowledge across many industries. They don't just advise — they connect you to the resources needed to build your product faster and better — whether you're an innovator of medical devices, battery types, fabrics, or something else... All the entrepreneurs we've met through FORGE truly appreciate FORGE's expertise, network reach, and willingness to do everything they can to help an entrepreneur. ”

Mavis Chin, Co-Founder, Zenagos

BY THE NUMBERS



75%

of connections in MA and CT are within 100 miles



87%

of contracts are within 100 miles



94%

of FORGE suppliers engage to challenge their company to remain current



92%

of FORGE network suppliers engage for exposure to new markets



87%

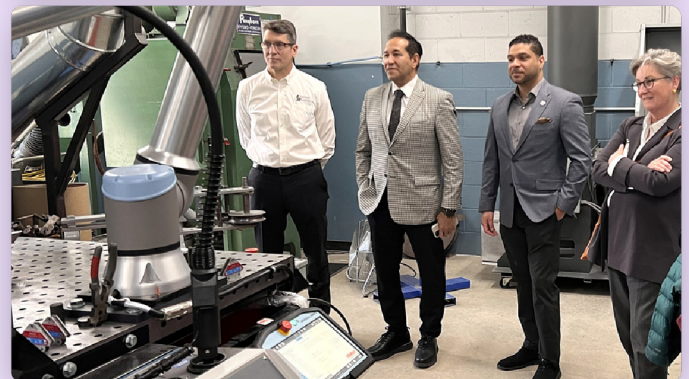
of FORGE suppliers engage with startups as an opportunity to attract new talent

By connecting innovative companies with local manufacturers and suppliers, FORGE 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 needs, services, and business models align.



Mass. State Representatives Gonzalez and Ramos (middle) join a facility tour of Advanced Welding in Springfield, MA

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 through supply chain localization

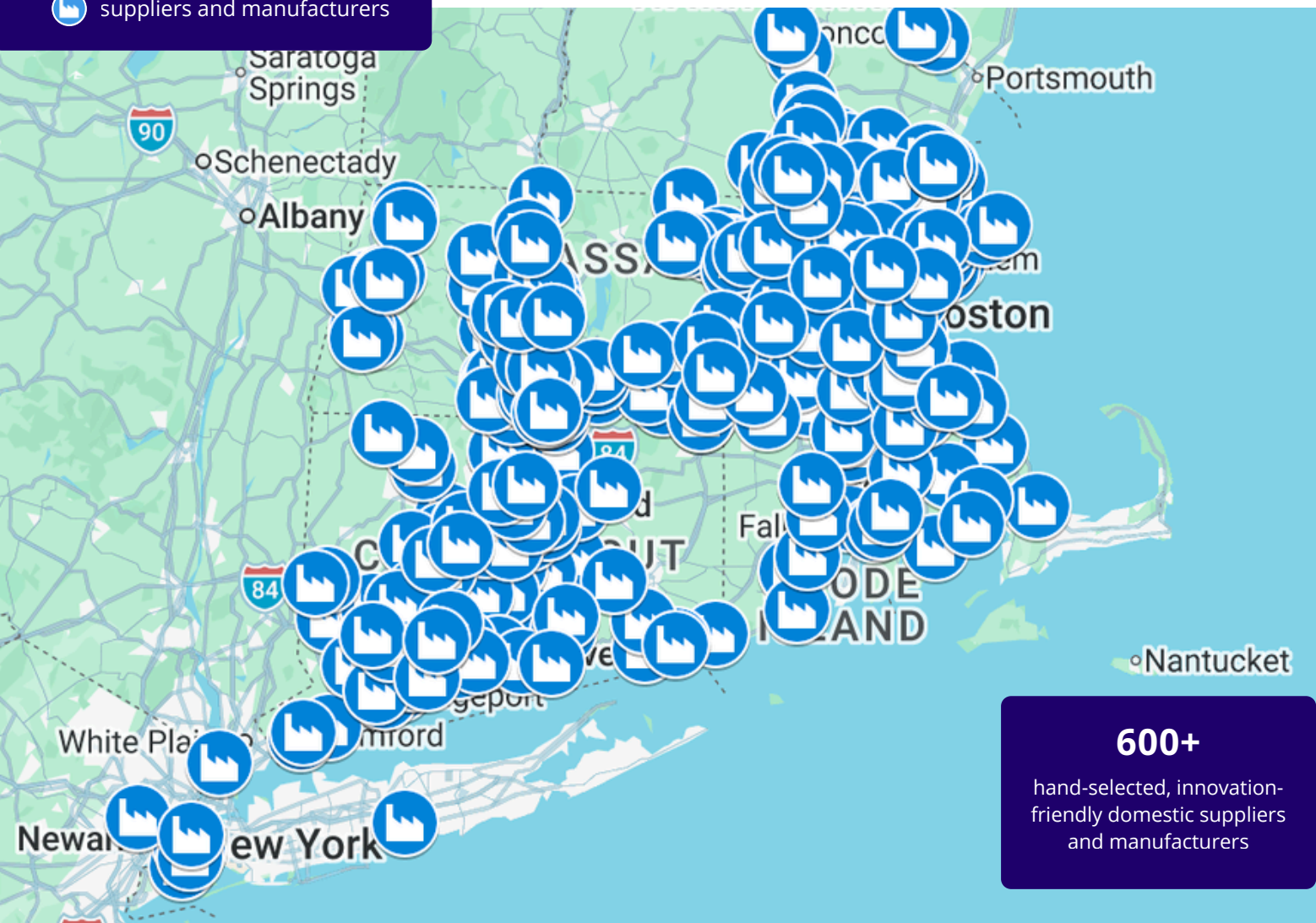
At FORGE, we believe that if you can invent it here, you should be empowered to make it here!



JOIN OUR SUPPLY CHAIN NETWORK

FORGE's Supply Chain Network

 suppliers and manufacturers



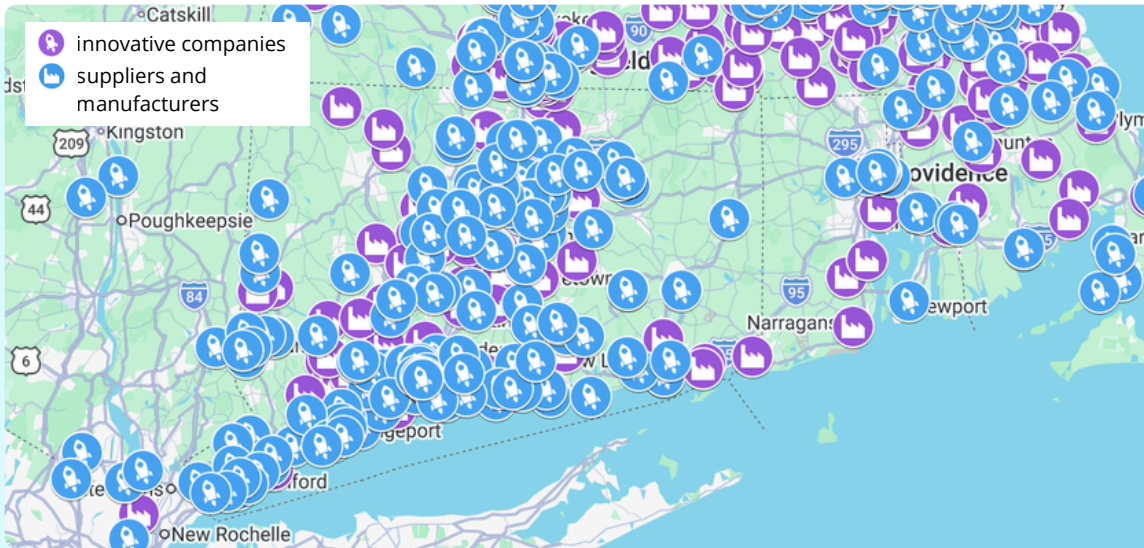
600+
hand-selected, innovation-friendly domestic suppliers and manufacturers

FORGE Connecticut



“FORGE was amazing at connecting me with my ideal manufacturer: a company with decades of experience, product testing capabilities, and an understanding of its capacity to assist in the volume of product that I can make. I'm also glad that they understand how to help diversify product so that I can branch out to have additional revenue streams.”

Natasha Harris, Owner, Bii & Blossom



335
FORGE
connections
between CT
innovative
companies and
CT suppliers all
time (since
2023)

153K+
manufacturing
employees, which is
10.4% of the state's
private sector
workforce

4,500+
manufacturing
companies,
1,100 of which
are advanced
manufacturing

\$2.60
generated in
additional
activity for every
\$1 spent in
manufacturing

\$34.21B
in GDP (11.6% of the state GDP)
- 58% of that is advanced
manufacturing, for the second
highest advanced manufacturing
state GDP in the US

CT poised to lead manufacturing revival amid Trump tariff turmoil, top official says

Liese Klein, Staff Writer, New Haven Register

Chief Manufacturing Officer Paul Lavoie said Connecticut manufacturing could serve as a model of modernization and innovation as companies seek to re-shore production. He spoke at an event on Tuesday celebrating collaborations to bring new Connecticut-made products to the market.

FORGE, a nonprofit that helps “hard-tech” entrepreneurs scale up, handed out grant checks to innovative companies at the event, held at Gyre9’s 40,000-square-foot contract manufacturing space in Southbury. AtlasXomics, a New Haven company that designed a tissue-analyzing device used in drug design, won a \$70,000 grant as part of FORGE’s Product Development Funding Program.



Woodbridge-based SedMed won \$50,000 to help develop its hydraulic toilet lift.

Programs like FORGE and the state’s Manufacturing Innovation Fund are why Connecticut could help model re-shoring of manufacturing on a national scale, Lavoie said.



Panel Discussion, Grant Award and Gyre9 Factory Tour



Gyre9 took FORGE, innovators, suppliers, ecosystem collaborators, and state leaders behind the scenes in more than 50,000 square feet of research, design, engineering, and manufacturing space. Ed Gilchrist, Gyre9's president, participated in a panel discussion with Floe, a rooftop ice and snow management company, and shared insights about their successful collaboration.



"It's been great to bring our product development journey to someone like Gyre9 who can really help us progress," Hector Castillo, CTO and co-founder of Floe said. "I learned so much from speaking with Ed and folks from the product and manufacturing teams."

FORGE announced the latest winners of the FORGE Product Development Funding Program grants supported by the Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF). Innovative epigenomics technology company AtlasXomics won first place and a \$70,000 grant. The second-place winner, earning a \$50,000 grant, was medical device company SedMed.

Gilchrest said, "As people have learned about FORGE, the quality of the companies coming to us has advanced. **Many companies come to us in that Valley of Death moment — we can't work for free, and this funding comes in at just the right time.**"

Made in Connecticut 2025 Manufacturing Summit



FORGE was proud to be part of the Made in Connecticut: 2025 Manufacturing Summit, hosted by the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA). FORGE joined hundreds of peers for a day packed with insights, awards, and opportunities.



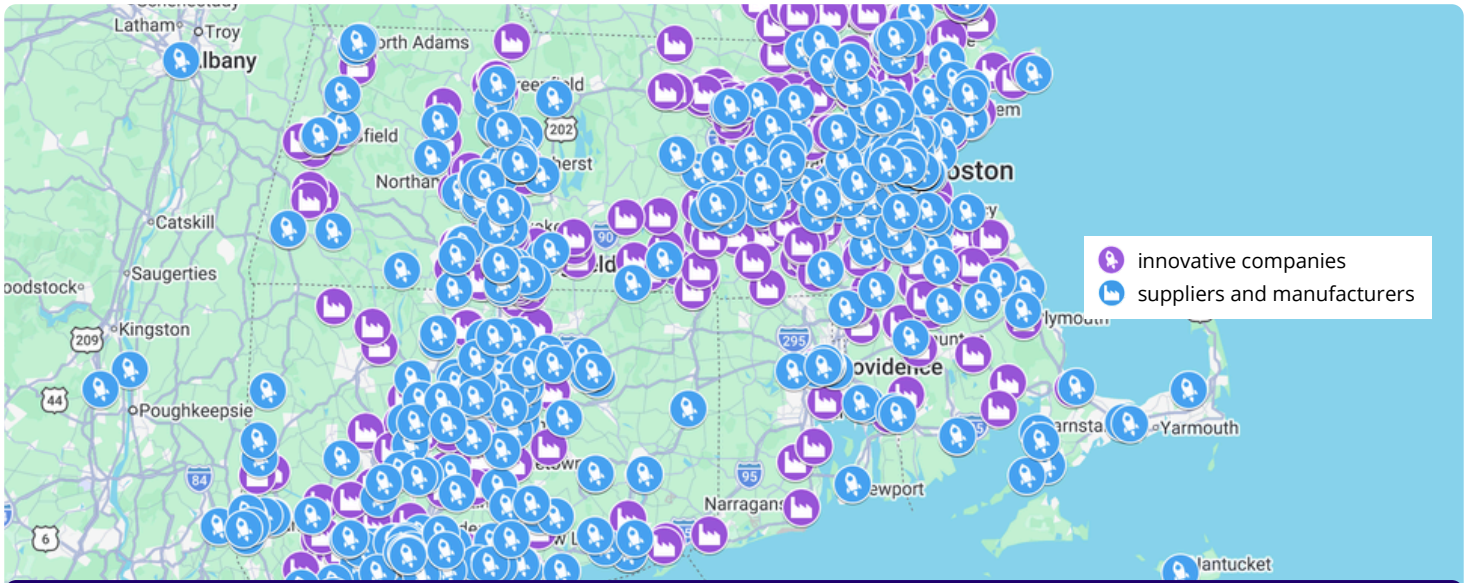
Highlights included the release of the 2025 Connecticut Manufacturing Report, a keynote conversation on trade, tariffs, and the global economy, a deep dive into Sikorsky's evolving supply chain models, and the Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut announcement.

As part of the event, FORGE hosted a Pitch Fest featuring pitches from Floe, Inc., forEVA Health, and Decarb Energy Partners. Expert panelists ProFlow Director of Technical Sales Larry Bee, P.E., Connecticut Green Bank Associate Director of Investments Larry Campana, Connecticut Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation Director of Strategic Partnerships Michelle Cote, Gyre9 President and owner Ed Gilchrest, and ClimateHaven Director Aishwarya Kuruttukulam provided feedback and guidance on relevant local resources.

Chris DiPendima, President and CEO of CBIA, said, "I want to thank FORGE, who I hope will make this an annual partnership, and will be hosting a Shark Tank-like event today showcasing some of CT's latest innovative products."



FORGE Massachusetts



2,126	227K+	6,000	62.2B	3rd
FORGE connections between MA innovative companies and MA suppliers all time (since 2015)	manufacturing employees	manufacturing companies	manufacturing GDP	out of 50 states for R&D spending

10 Years of FORGE

This year's FORGE Spring Showcase celebrated 10 years of the FORGE Manufacturing Initiative. Tickets sold out early. The Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation in Waltham, MA, was packed with local founders, suppliers and manufacturers, ecosystem organizations, and investors.

We kicked off the night with tabletop demos from FORGE innovative companies and partners. **Supply chain network members and innovators shared their stories of collaborating with FORGE over the past 10 years.** A panel of experts from MA and CT discussed economic development and emerging opportunities in AI and quantum computing.



Massachusetts Interim Economic Development Secretary Ashley Stolba spoke, saying, "We are proud to have innovative companies like FORGE connecting startups and manufacturers with the tools and resources they need to grow and succeed."

FORGE Executive Director Laura Teicher delivered remarks highlighting 10 years of impact and more than 10,000 jobs supported, the critical importance of manufacturing and supply chain support for product innovators, and what lies ahead for FORGE. **She thanked the local innovation and manufacturing communities for empowering FORGE to serve more than 1,000 emerging hardtech companies over the last decade.**



Fall 2025 marked the return of FORGE’s annual Fall Showcase, showing off demos of amazing physical products created by regional innovators. After an exclusive VIP networking hour, more than 150 innovators, local suppliers and manufacturers, investors, and innovation ecosystem collaborators filled the Dassault Systèmes North America HQ in Waltham, MA, for the Fall Showcase.

FORGE President and Executive Director Laura Teicher said, “It is possible to beat the hardtech odds with the right connections, expertise, and support. This is so important because physical innovation is essential to real-world problem solving — tackling today’s tough challenges in health, climate, energy, mobility, and more — as demonstrated by some of the awesome emerging companies we have showcasing here today!”

Dassault Systèmes SOLIDWORKS for Startups Program Manager Rollin Willis said he was excited Dassault Systèmes could host another FORGE Showcase, since both organizations value innovation and innovators.

The demonstrating innovators each gave a one-minute overview of their products, from medical devices for diagnosing rare illnesses to revolutionary new chemical processes.

Kevin Gallagher of Decarb Energy Partners said, “It’s an honor to be here tonight. We’re grateful for FORGE, not just for [inviting us to demo], but for the support and opportunities they’ve given us to help us grow.”



FORGE Prototype to Impact Award



The FORGE Prototype to Impact Award highlights companies for their outstanding contributions and continued support of the hardtech innovation ecosystem.

FORGE Vice President Adam Rodrigues presented the award to **Samtec, which has offered its time, guidance, and support to nearly 100 FORGE innovative companies.**

Rodrigues said, “It takes a partner who sees potential, embraces ambition, and supports a founder even when all they have is a prototype held together with hope... Since 2017, Samtec, a U.S.-based global leader in interconnects, cable assemblies, and innovative design solutions, has been exactly that partner.”

Samtec Senior Market Development Manager Mark Tabor said, “The connections FORGE has made for us have been very valuable to Samtec.”

Our Offerings

“ My experience with FORGE has helped me further understand the industry. They have given me resources to help me prepare and plan the next steps for my startup. ”

Johansen Wilson, Barber/Entrepreneur, The Clipper Boss

Education

Educational Events

In addition to our recurring manufacturing readiness workshop series, we run events based on the innovation ecosystem’s current and emerging needs.

- **Facility tours:** exclusive tours behind the scenes at factories and manufacturing and supply chain facilities
- **Rocket pitches:** rapid-fire presentations from handpicked innovative companies to regional manufacturing experts for advice and networking
- **Networking meetups:** gatherings of FORGE’s network of innovative companies, supply chain members, partners, ecosystem collaborators, investors, and more, often focused on a specific industry or topic
- **Panels:** community-focused conversations with experienced hardtech founders, local manufacturing experts, and legislators
- **Webinars:** online events addressing emerging challenges and trending solutions for the innovation and manufacturing ecosystems

Digital Resources



Innovative companies benefit from our educational digital resources, too. From business development to FDA approval and preparing a supply chain, these resources

give innovators the knowledge to make business decisions that will help them get into, and stay in, mature production.



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.

Manufacturing Readiness Workshops

FORGE holds annual manufacturing readiness workshops to give innovators the knowledge to successfully scale from prototype to manufacturing, addressing the most common gaps the organization has seen across over 1,000 innovative companies served in an interactive environment. Innovators leave with actionable insights and tools. Physical product entrepreneurs say these interactive workshops have given them perspective, helped them organize their strategies, and accelerated their build stage progression.

Topics include:

- **Planning for Scaling Manufacturing:** exploring strategies for effectively scaling manufacturing processes for innovative companies, including defining a strong business foundation, exploring business models, analyzing operations processes, and assessing manufacturing readiness.
- **Innovating for Excellence—Product Development and DFX Strategies:** exploring critical stages of product development, including concept ideation, market research, prototyping, manufacturing preparation, and Design for Excellence (DFX) strategies.
- **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.



FORGE Manufacturing Expert in Residence Mark Michalski speaking at EASTEC

Connections and Resources

“As the founder of a hard tech startup working to bring a physical product to market, I have experienced firsthand how challenging and costly it can be to navigate manufacturing, supply chain logistics, and design for manufacturability. FORGE has been an invaluable partner in helping me move through these complexities and build my venture with greater confidence... Their introductions to manufacturers and suppliers have been essential, and their educational resources filled critical knowledge gaps that can otherwise be risky and expensive for early-stage hardware companies.”

Cindy Belardo, CEO and President, Sunny

Product Development Sessions

Even with significant traction and a well-rounded prototype, innovative companies can struggle to find right-fit contract manufacturers and suppliers who will answer cold outreach, let alone sign a contract. FORGE's unique manufacturing readiness resources and relationships with local supply chains mean that manufacturers and suppliers trust — and are eager to collaborate with — the innovators we refer to them.

Our curated supplier referrals begin with a Product Development Session. Emerging companies with at least an early prototype and a dedicated manufacturing

85% FORGE innovative company survival rate since 2015

budget are candidates for these sessions, during which they meet with FORGE program team members to discuss their specific prototyping or manufacturing needs. FORGE then provides expert advice as needed to ensure readiness to engage, and then makes tailored 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 long-term partnerships.

Product Development Grants

Twenty-four percent of the innovative companies FORGE supports have achieved pilot production or beyond. Yet, despite having radically innovative physical product prototypes, manufacturing readiness knowledge from FORGE, and a drive to work with local manufacturers and supply chains, these companies often struggle to reach the production stage. **A key reason: access to capital.**

Manufacturing physical innovation is critical to solving the toughest problems the world faces today. It is also capital-intensive, and only a small percentage of venture capital goes toward physical innovations. FORGE Product Development Grants are designed to bridge the funding gap for promising emerging hardtech companies to reach challenging, essential milestones to achieving next-stage traction in the form of pilots, customers, and/or raising dilutive capital.

Our grants are non-dilutive and awarded to address product-specific scaling or market entry challenges, supporting the growth of companies solving some of the toughest problems.

Many innovative companies arrive with a prototype and hopes of attracting venture capital. However, to demonstrate customer traction and scalability that attracts investment, they have to deploy product and demonstrate feasible plans to grow production. Deploying and planning to scale requires significant capital, as well as manufacturing knowledge and relationships. This creates a chicken-and-egg scenario — hardtech startups need funding to get customers, but need customers to secure funding. While some turn to friends and family or small grants for prototypes, they struggle to fund manufacturing design and production scaling.

Product Development Grants are one part of the virtuous cycle that FORGE drives. Our education and community engagement help innovative companies prepare 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.”

Partners

“I love partnering with FORGE because they go beyond acceleration — they equip founders with the right resources, foster genuine collaboration, and create powerful networking opportunities that help hardtech startups grow with confidence.”

Jenna Kafel, Certified Business Performance Advisor, Insperty

Titanium



Steel



Iron



Friends of FORGE



Interested in becoming a FORGE partner? Get in touch.

FORGEimpact.org/become-a-partner



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. Supporting local manufacturing. Brand visibility and networking opportunities. 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 through features and branded educational content.



High visibility at FORGE Showcases with innovation and manufacturing ecosystem attendees, including VIP networking and tabling opportunities.



Opportunities to host and speak at public and curated events like factory tours, rocket pitches, educational webinars, and panel discussions.



Your logo in FORGE's monthly e-newsletter, annual impact report, website, and Manufacturing Showcase Room.



Mentions on social media, including direct posts and reposts.

“FORGE was a catalyst for our 2025 growth. Their introductions to the right customers directly translated into complex, rewarding, and profitable projects.”

Dan Holzer, Principal, Ground Up Innovations, LLC



Ecosystem Collaborators

“FORGE provides the kind of hands-on manufacturing support that...startups truly need. Prototyping and early production are often the biggest hurdles between ideation and reality. FORGE helps founders confidently bridge that gap, accelerating the time it takes to get new products to the market.”

Jennifer Mathieu, MBA, M.Ed., Executive Director, Connecticut Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, University of Connecticut

Our ecosystem collaborators are the network of support organizations for the innovation and manufacturing communities that we serve and work alongside. They work tirelessly to support these communities, awarding grants, providing resources, and offering mentorship and training — and that’s just the beginning. Ecosystem collaborators help local innovation and manufacturing thrive and grow.

Through collaboration, mutual referrals, and cross-promotion, our ecosystem evolves to serve current needs and seed future innovation. We make our biggest impacts when we help manufacturers, suppliers, and innovators get all the support they need: the support we can provide and the support our ecosystem collaborators can provide.



FORGE partner and ecosystem collaborator MassCEC's booth at the New England Regional Energy Summit

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



FORGE Team



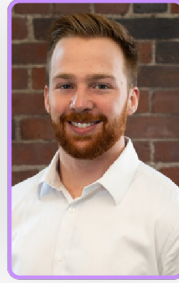
Laura Teicher
President &
Executive Director



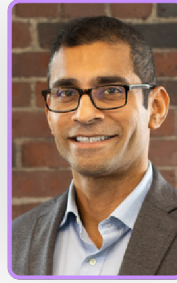
Adam Rodrigues
Vice President



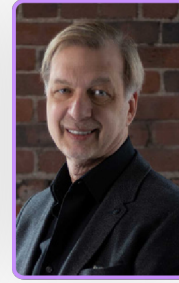
Anya Losik
Chief of Staff



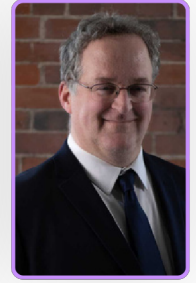
David Thompson
Program Director



Trinell Ball
Program Director



Mark L. Michalski
Manufacturing
Expert in Residence



Scott Longley
Manufacturing
Expert in Residence



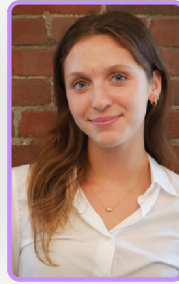
Maria Melo
Event Marketing
Associate (Spring)



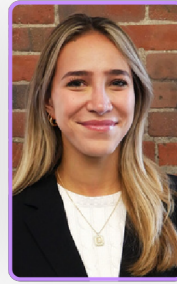
Brady Munnerlyn
Strategic Projects
Associate (Spring)



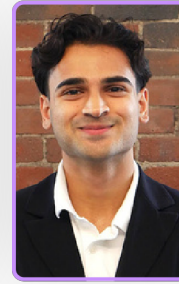
Sridhar Murthy
Operations Associate
(Spring)



Paige Romanick
Strategic Projects
Associate (Spring)



Lauren Weichold
Startup Program
Associate (Spring)



Aum Purohit
Operations Associate
(Fall)



Erin Mulligan
Startup Program
Associate (Fall)

Board of Directors



Arthur Trapotsis
Co-Owner,
Consolidated Sterilizer
Systems; Board Chair



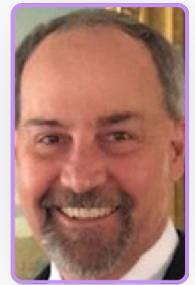
Pedro Arce
Senior Vice President,
M&T Bank



David Banks
Principal Consultant,
Banks Energy Consulting



Julie Chen
Chancellor,
UMass Lowell



Rodney Dowell
Executive Director,
Massachusetts Board of
Bar Overseers



Jennifer Jordan
Operating Partner,
iGlobe Partners



Sarah Jane Maxted
Climate Change
& Sustainability Leader,
Deloitte; Board Treasurer



Raj Melville
Executive Director
Emeritus, Deshpande
Foundation



Sheri Palazzo
Founder, Coach, &
Mentor, Saplings
Consulting

Innovation Advisors

- **Jorge Andrade**, Vice President – Senior Business Banker, M&T Bank
- **Sera Evcimen**, Founder & Host, Pratik Development
- **Joseph Gifford**, President and Principal Consultant, Catalytic Consulting
- **Brenna Schneider**, Chief Social Innovation Officer, Ascentria Care Alliance
- **Evan Taylor**, Managing Partner, Inquisitive Partners
- **Stacey Weismiller**, President and CEO, American Manufacturing Futures Institute

Regional Advisory Councils

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- **Ron Angelo**, President and CEO, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc.
- **Martin Guay**, VP Business Development, Stanley Black and Decker
- **William Hazard**, President, Novo Precision LLC
- **J.R. Logan**, Executive Director, Makehaven
- **Jennifer Mathieu**, Executive Director, Connecticut Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- **Casey Pickett**, Managing Director of Incubation, ClimateHaven
- **Claudia Reuter**, Director, Roberts Innovation Fund, Yale
- **Christian Rodriguez**, Field Application Engineer, Samtec Inc
- **Mike Roer**, President, Entrepreneurship Foundation
- **Devra Sisitsky**, Executive Director, MakerspaceCT
- **Emily Yale**, CEO and Founder of Land Maverick

Massachusetts

- **Chris Bignell**, Partner, The Alchemy Fund
- **Dr. Gavin Braithwaite**, CEO, Cambridge Polymer Group
- **Kristin Carlson**, President, Peerless Precision
- **Lilia Chan**, Lead Mechanical Engineer, MITRE
- **Mavis Chin**, Co-Founder, Zenagos; Owner, Mavis Chin LLC
- **Jean Coyle**, Entrepreneur/Founder, FedTech Mentor
- **Stephanie Cronin**, Executive Director, Middlesex 3 Coalition
- **Maria Dickinson**, Economic Development Specialist, The City of Lowell
- **Peter Farkas**, President and CEO, MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board, Inc.
- **Benjamin Grande**, President, Western Massachusetts Chapter, National Tooling and Machining Association; General Manager/Owner, Meridian Industrial Group
- **Allison Lamey**, Executive Director, The Lowell Plan and Lowell Development & Financial Corporation
- **Jennifer Murphy**, Regional Property Manager, Appleton Corporation
- **Galen Nelson**, Chief Climate Officer, MassCEC
- **Geetha Ramani**, Vice President of Business Development, MassDevelopment
- **Neil Scanlon**, Co-Owner/President, Worthington Assembly
- **Mike Stone**, Partner, Cofab
- **Rick Sullivan**, President and CEO, Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council
- **Gregory Thomas**, Executive Director, Berthiaume Center for Entrepreneurship UMass Amherst

Looking Forward

Whether you've been part of the FORGE network for ten years or just joined us in 2025, **thank you for coming along on our mission** to help innovators with physical products navigate the journey from prototype through to commercialization and impact at scale.

2025 marked many firsts for FORGE: our first decade of the FORGE Manufacturing Initiative, our largest single grant award and our first in the six-figure range, and the presentation of our first FORGE Prototype to Impact Award. **We surpassed more than 1,000 innovative companies served and more than 10,000 innovation and manufacturing jobs supported.**

There's so much that the firsts and the statistics can't capture — the relationships we've built with innovators and manufacturers new and old, the excitement we've seen on the faces of audiences watching demonstrations at our annual Spring and Fall Showcases, the inspiration we see coming from discussions at our workshops and panels, and the pride of watching innovators open their own facilities and become local manufacturers.

There's more of that, and more of everything that propels FORGE's mission forward, coming in 2026. More fundraising support and education. Deeper and greater deployments of our Manufacturing Experts in Residence. External workshops at universities and government programs. An exploration of the ways physical product innovators and manufacturers can use artificial intelligence. More FORGE Product Development Grant funding than ever before.

We can't wait for another ten years of FORGE.

KEEP IN TOUCH AT

FORGEimpact.org



The logo for FORGE, featuring a stylized circular icon on the left and the word "FORGE" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font on the right. The background of the entire page is a faded photograph of a workshop or laboratory with several people gathered around a piece of machinery.

FORGE