



Jeff Lawrence Innovation Fund

COMMERCIALIZATION COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Competition Application Period

Opens July 7, 2025

Closes August 8, 2025 at 11:59PM EST

Finalists Notified September 2025

Finalists Present In-Person October 29-30, 2025 at the
New York State Innovation Summit in Rochester, NY

Contact Information

Questions should be sent to the Innovation Fund program at fund@fuzehub.com.

FuzeHub Privacy Policy

Please review the complete FuzeHub privacy policy [here](#).

Posted/Modified July 1, 2025. Please check back to this site for updates and modifications to these guidelines.

INTRODUCTION

FuzeHub administers the Jeff Lawrence Innovation Fund, which supports initiatives to advance technology development and commercialization across New York State.

As part of the Jeff Lawrence Innovation Fund, FuzeHub will hold a New York State Commercialization Competition on October 29 & 30, 2025, in Rochester, NY. Participating companies will compete for up to \$150,000 in funding by demonstrating the commercialization potential of their product or technology. This competition is designed to help emerging manufacturing and technology companies further develop their prototype, attract customers and investors, and strengthen their “go-to-market” strategies, as they move from new product/production method to marketplace.

Target sectors include, but are not limited to: advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, cleantech, health/medical, photonics, textiles, consumer products, electronics, agri-tech, robotics, and IoT (such as wearables, or smart devices).

AWARD DETAILS

Up to \$410,000 in funding is available for this year’s competition, as follows:

- Grand award: \$150,000
- Runner-up: \$100,000
- At least 2 awards of up to \$80,000 each

FuzeHub reserves the right to adjust award amounts based on proposal strength and available funding. All winners must execute a Simple Agreement for Future Equity (SAFE) to receive funds. Awards are contingent upon continued funding from Empire State Development.



ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Companies must have an existing tangible prototype (defined as a physical representation of an idea or product).
 - Applicants must be available to pitch in person on October 29 - 30, 2025 in Rochester, NY.
 - Applicants must propose to fund activities to improve upon an existing tangible prototype and/or “go-to market” strategy.
 - Company must reside and operate in New York State from the time it submits the application until at least a twelve (12) consecutive month period following the award announcement, or project completion, whichever is **longer**; also, at least one of the founders must reside in New York State at the time of the award. Winning **companies that do not comply with the residency requirements shall be obligated to return all award funds to FuzeHub** to be reinvested in the Commercialization Competition.
 - Company must be pre-revenue (less than \$100,000 in revenue over the company’s entire lifetime, regardless of revenue stream).
 - Company must be pre-seed (less than \$500,000 in investments to date).
 - Company must have received no more than \$2,000,000 in grants in the past two years.
 - A company can receive up to \$250,000 total from the Jeff Lawrence Innovation Fund over its lifetime, across all tracks and rounds.
 - Applicants, whether founders or companies, are only allowed to submit one application per round.
 - In the case of a subsidiary, the parent company must fulfill all eligibility requirements listed above.
- Company must be registered with Dun & Bradstreet, and have an eligible North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code identified in their D&B profile. Acceptable codes include:
 - Manufacturing Sector (Any NAICS Code beginning with 3*) (See <https://www.naics.com/six-digit-naics/?v=2022&code=31-33>)
 - 423510 Metal Services Centers and Other Metal Merchant Wholesalers
 - 4841 General Freight Trucking
 - 4842 Specialized Freight Trucking
 - 488510 Freight Transportation Arrangement
 - 488991 Packing and Crating
 - 4931 Warehousing and Storage
 - 541330 Engineering Services
 - 541380 Testing Laboratories
 - 541420 Industrial Design Services
 - 541511 Custom Computer Programming Services
 - 541512 Computer Systems Design Services
 - 541713 Research and Development in Nanotechnology
 - 541714 Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology)
 - 541715 Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Science (except nanobiotechnology and biotechnology)
 - 561910 Packaging and Labeling Services
 - 811310 Commercial and Industrial Machinery & Equipment (except Automotive & Electronic) Repair & Maintenance

ELIGIBLE PROJECT COSTS

Consultants and vendors should be located in New York State unless the applicant demonstrates that the products, services, or expertise being procured are not available in the state.

Eligible costs include:

- Equipment;
- Materials;
- Engineering / design;
- Non-executive team personnel directly related to the project;
- Marketing / customer discovery¹; and,
- Other direct costs (subject to review).

¹Marketing costs are limited to 40% of the award amount and must be supported by measurable outcome expectations.

Ineligible costs include the following, but not limited to:

- Applicant company executive team salaries (Founder, Co-Founder, CEO, CFO, COO, CTO) are ineligible costs regardless of the nature of the work to be completed;
- Administrative costs (such as accountant, payroll service fee, etc.);
- Legal consultation;
- Patent fees; and
- Indirect costs (operational expenses that are not directly related to executing the project, for example: office rent, utilities, or non-project-specific personnel costs.)

Projects must be clearly defined and completed within **12 months** of award. Expenses incurred prior to award execution are not eligible.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Companies must complete the online application in the SurveyMonkey Apply platform at <https://fuzehub.smapply.io/>.

Online Application Opens	Application Deadline	Finalists Notified	Finalist Presentations
July 7, 2025 8:00AM	August 8, 2025 11:59 PM	Late September 2025	October 29 - 30, 2025

The full application consists of all tasks included in 2 stages. Both stage 1 and 2 must be completed by August 8 at 11:59 PM EST. No changes or additional documents are accepted after this deadline.

Stage 1 consists of the following tasks:

1. **Company Info** (form in SurveyMonkey Apply)
2. **Confirmation of Business Status and Founder Residency** (PDF files) - The applicant must provide proof that they are an existing company physically located in New York State, and that at least one founder resides full-time in NYS. For an up-to-date list of acceptable documents, check our FAQ.

3. **Confirmation of Revenue to Date** (PDF file) - Company Profit & Loss Report(s) for the entire lifetime of the company, either as single totals to date, or yearly breakdown since company inception.
4. **PR Blurp** (form in SurveyMonkey Apply) - for potential use if selected as a finalist.

Eligible applicants will advance to Stage 2. If an eligibility issue is found, feedback and instructions will be provided via email.

Stage 2 - applicant teams deemed eligible on Stage 1 receive access to all tasks necessary to fully submit the application, which includes the additional tasks below:

1. **Video Pitch** (.avi, .mov, .mp4 file or Youtube or Vimeo link) - **Maximum length: 10 minutes.**

The video pitch is a critical part of the application. It should bring the product, vision, and commercialization strategy to life. The video must include the following components:

- a. **Pitch Presentation:** Present the Commercialization Plan using your prepared slide deck (see #2 below). The pitch should walk reviewers through the business case by clearly addressing the key questions in the provided template. Focus on the product's value proposition, target market, competitive edge, business model, and go-to-market strategy.
- b. **Prototype Demonstration:** Founders must appear on camera to demonstrate a functional prototype. This demo should clearly show how the product works, highlight its key features, and illustrate the problem it solves. Focus on usability, functionality, and real-world application.

Note - The video does not need to be professionally produced, but it should be clear, well-organized, and easy to follow. See our "Project Video Dos and Don'ts" guide on the competition website for tips.

2. **Commercialization Plan Slide Deck**

(.pdf, .ppt, or .pptx file)

Applicants must submit a Commercialization Plan Slide Deck that outlines the company's strategy for bringing its product or technology to market. A template deck is available on the FuzeHub website to help guide this process. The template includes key topic areas and supporting questions that must be addressed in the video pitch.

Important: The slide deck should be a visually compelling storytelling tool that supports the applicant's spoken presentation. While the template provided includes detailed prompts, slides filled with written answers are strongly discouraged. Instead, applicants should create custom, well-designed decks that use visuals, key points, and data highlights to enhance the narrative and convey their message effectively.

3. **Project Budget** (form in SurveyMonkey Apply)

The Form must outline a \$80,000 project budget to clearly detail how the applicant intends to expend the FuzeHub funds, if awarded.

4. **Payment**

\$75 application fee must be paid by credit card.

For details, carefully address all questions in the Commercialization Plan Slide Deck, which is a mandatory part of the application and can be downloaded from our website.

Top applicants will be considered "finalists" and invited to "pitch" to a panel of judges at the Commercialization Competition on October 29-30, 2025. Details regarding the event and expectations of the participating companies will be provided to finalists at a later date.

While evaluating applications, panelists may request that FuzeHub ask applicants for additional information or clarification, or to present to the panel, as needed. In some cases, FuzeHub may discuss an application with an expert in the relevant technology field.

In anticipation of a high volume of applications, FuzeHub will not commit to providing debriefs to unsuccessful applicants.

Commercialization Competition Judges

A panel of judges will be announced prior to the event and information will be made available on the FuzeHub website. Semi-finalist and finalist judges are from local, regional and statewide partner organizations.

Award

FuzeHub will enter into an agreement with each award recipient. The agreements will detail project scopes, milestones, payment schedules, and commitments to participate in post-award project tracking and surveys.

Investment Instrument / SAFE

As a condition to receiving any award proceeds, competition winners will be required to enter into a Simple Agreement for Future Equity (SAFE). A template of the SAFE agreement is available on the FuzeHub website. No other versions of the SAFE will be accepted. Awardees that fail to sign the FuzeHub SAFE **within 5 business days** of the award announcement will forfeit their entire award.

CRITERIA AND REVIEW PROCESS

Applications that do not follow the instructions provided and/or applications that do not include all required items may be deemed incomplete and may be rejected without further review. Eligible applications will be evaluated by a selection panel based on the following criteria:

1. **Technology Innovation / Solution**
2. **Market Summary / Competition**
3. **Sales & Marketing / Customer Acquisition Strategy**
4. **Team**
5. **Financial Snapshot**
6. **Business Model / Scalability**