

MOHAWK TRAIL REGION ENTREPRENEURS: WIN \$25,000 TO LAUNCH YOUR BUSINESS

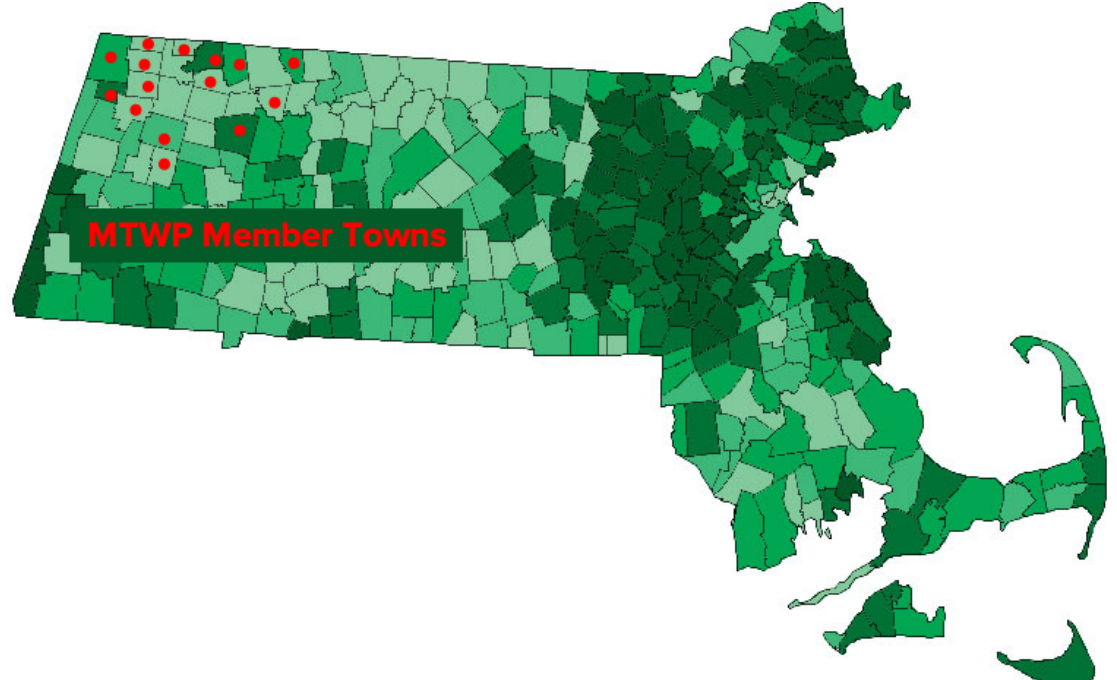
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS for the Mohawk Trail Entrepreneur Challenge

We seek entrepreneurs who wish to build regional businesses that will **create jobs** in the Mohawk Trail region. Examples of qualifying businesses include woodland-related tourism, woodcraft, and woodland-derived natural products. *Any entrepreneur seeking to establish and grow a sustainable, woodland-related business should apply.* To participate, the entrepreneurs or their businesses must be located in a Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership (MTWP) member town.

One entrepreneur or team will win a \$25,000 grant to advance their business

The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Member Towns

Adams
Ashfield
Charlemont
Cheshire
Clarksburg
Conway
Heath
Leyden
Monroe
New Ashford
North Adams
Rowe
Shelburne
Peru
Windsor
Williamstown



Apply Now – Space Is Limited!

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MOHAWK TRAIL ENTREPRENEUR CHALLENGE

The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Entrepreneur Challenge (MTEC) will help entrepreneurs contribute to regional economic development. The Challenge will prioritize business models that 1) serve customers from within and outside of the Mohawk Trail region, 2) have high potential to create new jobs, and 3) are capable of attracting grant, debt or equity financing.

Challenge participants will receive six months of no-cost business acceleration from Lever, a leading entrepreneurship center based in North Adams, Massachusetts. Acceleration programming will include technical assistance from Lever's experienced staff, consultation from domain experts, and a variety of additional resources. Participants will also learn strategies for attracting capital investment.

One participating business will be awarded a \$25,000 grant in early 2021. The grant will be awarded by a panel of independent experts who will assess businesses based on their business plans, customer validation, market traction, and a ten-minute pitch to be presented at the Challenge's culminating event.

Examples of Qualifying Businesses

The following mature business, while not located in the Mohawk Trail region, exemplify the types of businesses the MTEC is designed to accelerate.

H. Arnold Wood Turning (Tarrytown, New York) is a manufacturer of customized finished wood products. Certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, H. Arnold employs ten.

Suncadia (Cle Elum, Washington) is a resort hotel located in the Cascade mountains that offers visitors a variety of options to enjoy the natural beauty, including birding, rafting, horseback-riding and fly-fishing. Suncadia's amenities are LEED certified.

Mullican Flooring (Johnson City, Tennessee) is a leader in sustainable flooring. Its products are made from major North American wood varieties sourced in Appalachia.

Martin's Tree Service (Waterloo, Ontario) converts tree stumps into lawn furniture, stools, coffee tables, benches, and even place mats.

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Participation Requirements

- The business must create jobs in one or more Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) member towns. (Adams, Ashfield, Charlemont, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Conway, Heath, Leyden, Monroe, New Ashford, North Adams, Rowe, Shelburne, Peru, Windsor, Williamstown)
- Existing businesses must be less than 1 year old and receive no more than \$500,000 per year in annual in revenue.
- Individuals or business owners must be able to participate fully in the MTEC program, including three half-day workshops online via Zoom, completing weekly homework online via Google Classroom, video chat meetings with mentors, and an online final pitch event. Participants should expect to spend at least 5 hours per week on Challenge-related work.
- Business ideas must be consistent with the goals and intent of the [Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership](#) legislation.

Preference will be given to

- Business ideas that have the potential to attract revenues from elsewhere (i.e. tourism revenues or customers outside of the MTWP region).
- Business ideas that have the potential for swift scalability and rapid job creation.
- Individuals or business ideas that can identify potential funding sources to support rapid scaling of their business idea.
- Business plan ideas that incorporate resilience to climate change.

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Award Criteria

Individuals or businesses will be evaluated on:

- Product/market fit
- Ability of the individual or business to execute
- Time to market
- Potential to support economic development in the Mohawk Trail region
- Market opportunity outside the Mohawk Trail region

Award funding must be used to advance the concept presented at the final pitch event.

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

About Lever

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

About the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership

The purpose of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, established by State legislation, is to bring recognition and additional financial and technical resources to 21 municipalities in northwestern Massachusetts, via a locally led partnership with support from U.S. Forest Service and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to:

- Increase sustainable economic development related to forestry and natural resource-based tourism;
- Support forest conservation on private lands and use of sustainable forestry practices; and
- Improve fiscal stability and sustainability of the municipalities.

At present, the MTWP is a collaboration of sixteen towns that have opted in, joined by environmental, land conservation, economic development, planning and forestry organizations working in the region. Lever, Inc. is a member of the MTWP Board and received a grant from the State to support natural resource based economic development in the MTWP towns.

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