

Hello and thank you for your interest in Innovation factory's LiONS LAIR competition.

Innovation factory is a non-profit business accelerator and have been serving as the catalyst for tech innovation in Hamilton since 2011.

We provide entrepreneurs with business services, training, mentorship and strategic connections to help bring disruptive technologies to market, and drive economic impact.

We work with high-potential entrepreneurs within the six sectors listed here.

And here is a bit more information about how exactly, we help our clients grow their business.

And one of the reasons we are able to help Hamilton's innovators, is through the support of our funders and partners.

We are funded by the Ontario government and supported by these organizations who are passionate about entrepreneurship and innovation in the region.

Now another important thing to know, is how to get connected. Since you are visiting us here on our LiONS LAIR website, hopefully you are already following us somewhere. But you can stay up to date with us on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn. And definitely consider joining our newsletter. This is where we send out the latest News, innovation highlights, upcoming events and so much more.

Innovation factory's LiONS LAIR is an annual pitch competition which brings Hamilton's entrepreneurship and innovation community together.

Though we hope to host a great competition, with a cohort of high-potential entrepreneurs, who compete for big prizes, LiONS LAIR is more than just a pitch competition. We are dedicated helping these innovators gain the resources and networks they need to support them throughout their entire commercialization journey.

In this presentation I am going to talk about the phases of the competition, including the training and business advisory services provided to the finalists. I will also introduce the Pitch Tournament and sponsors and share some information about applying for to this year's LiONS LAIR.

This is the 10th anniversary of LiONS LAIR and this year, the competition will be delivered as a virtual, bracket-style tournament over four, exciting days in September.

It's basically like March Madness, but for start-ups.

The LiONS LAIR Pitch Madness tournament will feature, single elimination rounds, of head-to head pitch-showdowns.

The competition will accept 16 up-and-coming entrepreneurs and give them the opportunity to pitch their company to a panel of Hamilton's top business experts and investors.

It's this high-stakes environment, but we will make sure the 2020 LiONS LAIR finalists are prepared!

With networking events and workshops, the finalists receive training intended to strengthen their pitch skills and fine-tune their presentation for the big stage. We also provide them with on-going coaching and business advisory support throughout the competition and beyond to help them grow their business.

The finalists will then take on a series of interviews with the Pillar of Business LiONS. This phase of the competition is designed to test their legal, financial and business growth strategies.

Innovation Factory partners; KPMG, Gowling WLG and Jan Kelley take on the roles of the Financial LiON, the Legal LiON, and the Growth LiON, contributing their time to help coach and evaluate the finalists.

After a summer of training, the cohort of 16 finalists will be ready to for the final phase of the competition, the Lions Pitch Madness tournament.

As I mentioned, LiONS LAIR pitch madness will be delivered as a virtual, bracket-style tournament from September 21-24.

The finalists will pitch and compete head-head in a single elimination tournament, delivering their pitch and fielding questions from our Investor LiONS. Now, the Investor LiONS help determine the winners from each match-up to advance to the next round. These judges lend their time and decades of investment experience to judge the companies' pitches which includes the scores provided from the Pillar of Business LiONS.

The finalists of LiONS LAIR are competing for big prizes, which will help to further elevate their companies, create jobs, increase revenues and attract investment – all thanks to the generous support of this year's sponsors.

Alongside Innovation Factory, the innovation and entrepreneurship community is represented by business support providers, leading industry and professional firms, government and academic institutions. These organizations lend their support to entrepreneurs, fostering local talent and providing the type of resources and mentorship it takes to build a successful company.

This year's prizes are thanks to the generous support from the city of Hamilton's Economic Development office, KPMG, Gowling WLG, Jan Kelley, Meridian Credit union, McMaster University, McMaster Innovation Park, Mohawk College, Barter Pay, Cogeco, Hamilton Business Centre, the Hamilton chamber of commerce, cable 14 and Soundbox productions

Each year LiONS LAIR grows, with more and more applications submitted. Finalists are chosen based on their company's product, its commercial viability and the ability of entrepreneurs to execute. Applications are scored by expert judges who narrow the field down to just a handful of the best.

Ideal applicants of the LiONS LAIR competition

- are Past the prototyping stage
- in start-up to SME stages of their business
- Have an Innovative and scalable technology
- are Looking to build or relocate their business to the greater Hamilton area

- Fall within one of the following sectors: Life science, digital ICT, advanced manufacturing, integrated mobility, cleantech and social innovation
- And Will find value from Innovation Factory's business services and pitch training

So, we often receive questions about the commitment to the competition.

But because we want to ensure that everyone is set up for success, not only in this competition, but for their future commercialization milestones, all of the events, training, media opportunities and more are considered mandatory

This should represent approximately 30 hours of time committed to the competition program from June until the end of September – however this number doesn't not include the work you will need to do on your own.

At this time, everything will be delivered virtually until the current pandemic situation improves.

In order to submit a successful application, we recommend that you read the terms and conditions.

Carefully follow the instructions in the application and be sure to answer all the questions required in the form and the video submission.

Record your video presentation and include it in the online application form.

The goal of your LiONS LAIR application is to help the judges understand

- that your innovation is solving a real problem,
- that your solution is viable,
- that there is a market and your customers would be willing to pay for your solution
- that your business is scalable by describing your business model and go-to-market plans
- that you have a team, or understand who you need to add to your team to be successful
- what your intellectual property plans are and
- And how much funding your need to raise and why

We will continue to share more exciting information about LiONS LAIR Pitch Madness over the summer, so make sure you stay connected with us for more!

So, if you dare to enter the lair, apply to be a finalist in this year's LiONS LAIR

If you are interested in becoming a partner of the competition, scroll to the bottom of the page and get in touch!

Thank you and We hope you are excited to celebrate the 10th annual LiONS LAIR competition with us