



## CNY Innovation Challenge Rules

*Sponsored by Partners for Education & Business, Inc. and MACNY in collaboration with the Keenan Center at Le Moyne College and Maker Faire Syracuse.*

The CNY Innovation Challenge aims to spark ideas for developing unique products or services and to foster entrepreneurship through a “Shark Tank” style pitch competition for middle and high school students.

### The Challenge

*Develop a solution to a problem by whatever may inspire you.*

Talking to potential customers and learning about others’ perspectives can provide valuable information. In addition to designing and developing an idea, you will need to have a solid go-to-market plan and a marketing pitch to “sell” your concept.

Some topic areas may include:

- **Service providers.** Talk to someone who provides a service to your family or friends and ask what problems they have at their work. These individuals could include your postal worker, hairdresser, Uber driver, teacher, etc.
- **Shopping.** Go to a grocery store or other retailer and observe shoppers. Notice what they are buying, how they make decisions, how they seek help from employees. Use observations to create a new product or help customers’ retail experience.
- **Community.** Talk to neighbors or leaders in your community. Ask them what challenges they see and create a solution.

### What Should be in a Pitch?

- Answer these three questions:
  - So what?
    - What is your product/service?
    - What’s the problem?
    - Where does your product fit in the market?
  - Who cares?
    - Who is your customer?
    - What is your plan to create the product and sell it to the customer?
    - What is the financial outlook for your product, based on competition, demand, etc.?
  - Why you?
    - What makes your product/service unique?
    - What skills do you or your company have?
    - What value do you provide to your customer?

### Guidelines

- The Challenge is open to CNY students in grades 6-12.
- There will be winners in the high school category (grades 9-12) and middle school (grades 6-8).
- Teams need to have a minimum of two students and a maximum of four.
- If a team has students from different grades, they will be entered in the category of the oldest student.
- Teams need to register online by March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023.



- Teams should select an adult mentor who will check in throughout the process to receive assistance.
- Winners will be announced at the Maker Faire Syracuse at Le Moyne College on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.
- Winning teams will receive a check a few weeks after the competition made out to the winners.

### What is the process of developing a product and pitch?

1. Form a team of 2-4 members. [Click here to register your team.](#)
2. Brainstorm ideas.
3. Research the current market.
  - What products are already available?
  - Who would be interested in your product?
  - What is the potential for it to do well in the market over the long-term?
4. Define the product/service's function and name.
5. Understand what intellectual property entails and document relevant information. Identify what makes your product unique from what currently exists.
6. Develop a design for the product or services.
  - Think about what materials, engineering, and cost are required.
  - Learn more about intellectual property by referring to our Resources section.
7. Identify advertising/marketing considerations. Provide information on how the product will be presented to customer.
  - This includes the packaging, look and feel of the product, and messaging to customers.
8. Put it all together to develop your pitch.
9. Practice!

### Judging

Independent judges from the business community will be evaluating teams based on the following criteria:

- 5-25 pts – Originality/creativity of idea
- 5-25 pts – Market considerations
- 5-25 pts – Design worthiness
- 5-25 pts – Documenting intellectual property
- 5-25 pts – Advertisement & packaging
- 5-25 pts – Presentation

Participants can earn 30-150 potential points.

### Where can I get help with the pitch process?

Many students have never done a pitch before, and we want to help!

The Keenan Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation, & Creativity is available to support teams with the entire CNY Innovation Challenge process. They have 3-D printers, prototyping resources, and a MakerSpace, where students can develop their product. They can also help with developing a pitch. Please email [pebteam@macny.org](mailto:pebteam@macny.org), and we will connect you with the Keenan Center.



*Register a team*

Questions? Email [pebteam@macny.org](mailto:pebteam@macny.org).