Illinois Manufacturing Innovation Voucher Program
Empowering Illinois Manufacturers to Invest in R&D, Technology, and Innovation

The Illinois Manufacturing Innovation Voucher Program helps small and mid-sized manufacturers (SMMs) in Illinois obtain external technical assistance to solve technology adoption challenges. This competitive matching grant program is designed to remove hurdles in funding and know-how so SMMs can embrace new technologies in their products and processes – providing Illinois manufacturers a competitive advantage.

Eligible companies may be awarded up to $25,000 in matching grant funds to be used to access third party expertise in the areas of R&D and technology adoption.

Why this is important?

- Small and mid-sized manufacturers (SMMs) are 99% of Illinois manufacturers
- SMMs are cornerstones of Illinois communities across the state, representing over 12,000 companies
- SMMs are lagging in productivity growth and innovation, the drivers of global competitiveness
- SMMs often lack the necessary internal resources to adopt advanced technology and modern business practices that are necessary for them to grow and/or sustain the future of their organization

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Step</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Time Commitment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete application</td>
<td>• Ensure program fit and eligibility</td>
<td>Up to 4 hours. No cost.</td>
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<td>• Provide clarity of problem and business case</td>
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<td>• Clarity of technological needs and parameters</td>
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<td>• Provide budget of project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding award decision</td>
<td>• Up to 50% cost support for project</td>
<td>Decision determined within 10 business days of submission</td>
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<td>• Award not to exceed $25,000</td>
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<td>Project implementation</td>
<td>• Finalize contracts</td>
<td>Dependent on project</td>
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<td>• Implement project in scope of work</td>
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<td>• Payment of 50% of project cost to IMEC</td>
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<td>• Post-project assessment</td>
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<td>Impact survey</td>
<td>• Assess results in cost savings, investments, sales, and jobs created/retained</td>
<td>15 minutes + prep</td>
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<td>• Survey 9-12 months after project completion</td>
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Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Eligibility:

- Existing Illinois manufacturer with between 5 and 500 employees
- Funded projects must be conducted in Illinois
- Recipients must provide a cash match of 50 percent of the total project cost, up to $25,000. For example, under the matching requirement, a company that receives the maximum award of $25,000 must contribute $25,000.
- Funding assistance must be approved before project is initiated

Proposed projects should be practical in nature. The acquired knowledge from external technical assistance should help resolve a minor technological issue or outline possible solutions for a more complex problem. It is expected projects will be completed within a 6-9 month period.
Vouchers can be used to:

- Access research or scientific expertise, including preparatory work for research and development
- Develop and explore new technologies
- Commercialize new or enhanced products, including prototyping, piloting, testing, and product validation
- Implement new technologies
- Attain consultation regarding product or service development and/or production or technology
- Perform product tests and industrial experiments
- Conduct feasibility and cost-benefit research
- Contract intellectual property legal consultation
- Acquire metrology, standardization, and certification for new products

Vouchers or matching funds cannot be used for ordinary and necessary business expenses or any of the following:

- Any expenditure of time by in-house personnel of the applicant
- Standard training
- Software purchases or basic software, web, or application development
- Capitalized equipment
- Routine testing or maintenance
- General marketing or sales activities
- General business advice, consulting, or basic professional services
- Costs associated with applying for grants and programs
- Costs of internships or support for students
- Entertainment or hospitality costs

Reporting requirements:

- Post Project Completion Report
- Impact survey, administered approximately nine months after project completion

To apply for this program, please visit: www.imec.org/innovation

For additional information, please submit an email to IMEC at InnovationVouchers@imec.org.