

## Educator & Program Leader Guide

The Maine Startup Challenge (MSC) is a statewide entrepreneurship competition hosted by Maine Venture Fund. Students identify a real-world problem and capture an idea in a simple, one-page business plan format. See the [Applicant Guide](#) for full details.

Educators can use MSC as a short lesson, a project-based activity, or an enrichment experience, with flexibility to adapt it to their time, students, and setting.

### Support & Getting Started

Maine Venture Fund can support classrooms and programs through guest visits, workshops, Q&A sessions, and early access to materials when schedules align. Email Lydia at [lydia@maineventurefund.com](mailto:lydia@maineventurefund.com) to bring the Maine Startup Challenge to your students.

### Common Ways Educators Use MSC

- A standalone classroom lesson, after-school club or enrichment activity
- Independent or team-based student projects
- Career exploration or interdisciplinary units
- Field trip opportunity: Maine Startup Challenge Showcase (May 20, 2026 in Portland)

Participation in the statewide competition is optional.

### A Simple Classroom Flow (One Option)

1. Introduce entrepreneurship and problem-solving
2. Brainstorm problems students see in their community
3. Walk through the one-page Business Plan Canvas

Maine Startup Challenge Business Plan Canvas Template				
Business Name: [Insert business name]				
<b>PROBLEM</b> What is the main problem your business solves?	<b>SOLUTION</b> What is the product or service you are proposing?	<b>VALUE PROPOSITION</b> What is the value you are providing to customers?	<b>ADVANTAGE</b> What is not easily copied about your business approach?	<b>CUSTOMER SEGMENTS</b> Describe the type of people who are most likely to buy from you.
<b>ALTERNATIVES</b> What could your customers do instead of buy your product to solve this problem?	<b>KEY METRICS</b> What numbers will you track to know how your business is doing?		<b>CHANNELS</b> How will you reach your customer? How will they know your solution exists?	
<b>COSTS</b> List the things you will need to buy to run your business.		<b>REVENUE</b> List the products or services you will sell, and the prices you will charge.		


Students respond with short phrases or bullets in each section, including:


- The Problem
- The Solution
- Who It's For
- How It Makes Money

# Maine Startup Challenge

4. Give time for individual or team ideation
5. Optionally submit student work to Maine Startup Challenge

## Key Dates

 Applications open: April 1 – May 1, 2026 - [submit your application here!](#)

 Showcase Event: May 20, 2026 (Portland, Maine; virtual attendance options available)

## Contact us:

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