

Founding Product Design Engineer — Wearables

Early team · Full-time · Austin, TX, SF, LA, NYC

Define what an entirely new category of industrial wearable feels like on the body.

About Clema

Clema is building active cooling wearables for people working in extreme heat. Our thermoelectric system is worn under PPE and delivers 25–30°F of skin cooling in real field conditions for a full industrial shift. We are already shipping our first production run into paid deployments with major energy, logistics, and industrial operators, with one of the companies behind the country's largest AI infrastructure buildouts working toward a deployment. Customer demand is already ahead of what we can manufacture. We recently closed an oversubscribed pre-seed and are scaling fast.

The role

You'll own the part of Clema that touches the body: fabric architecture, fit, comfort, component integration, and product feel and design. The challenge is unusual: route ducts, TECs, wiring, and removable interfaces through something that has to survive heat, sweat, dust, washing, and PPE while still feeling considered and premium. The goal here is to accomplish "product love" from users; where users want to put it on day-in, day-out, and are addicted to the product.

You'll work directly with our CTO, set the design direction and quality bar, and direct interns, engineers, and contractors on sample building.

What you'll own

- Own fabric selection, pattern development, hardware mounting, and form-factor iteration for the wearable.
- Translate duct routing, TEC placement, wiring paths, and removable Velcro interfaces into a construction that holds up across a full industrial shift.
- Solve fit and comfort across the industrial worker population, accounting for body-size variation and PPE compatibility.
- Own the aesthetic outcome: make the product look and feel considered and well made within the technical constraints of active cooling hardware.
- Achieve "product love" through creating a visually appealing, comfortable, easy, and satisfying product to use.
- Direct in-house prototyping and iteration through interns or contract support while owning design calls and the quality bar.
- Develop manufacturing specs for cut-and-sew partners: technical drawings, material callouts, and assembly instructions.
- Source and manage relationships with fabric suppliers and cut-and-sew textile shops.
- Run ergonomic tests with real workers and translate feedback into design decisions.
- Own the long-term durability question for removable Velcro interfaces under wash, dust, and sweat exposure.
- Test durability
- Advise on webbing hardware, connector systems, and fabric-electronics integration as the product evolves.

What we're looking for

- A track record personally taking a functional soft-goods or body-worn product from concept through prototypes, user testing, and production. Your background could be at a technology company, hardware startup, design consultancy, or technical apparel or performance-gear brand. Ideally, you have worked directly on both embedded electronics and soft goods within the same product—for example, integrating sensors, wiring, flexible circuits, or removable electronic modules into garments or body-worn structures. What matters is the product you owned and the decisions you made.

- Enough hands-on fabrication fluency to direct, evaluate, and unblock manual work you delegate; this is a design and problem-solving role, not a sewing-production role.
- Experience owning factory-ready technical packs, material callouts, construction details, and sample reviews, with direct responsibility for cut-and-sew partners and fabric suppliers. You can identify why a sample fails and translate the fix into clear production instructions.
- Strong physical product design expertise: you can make a wearable beautiful, intuitive, and functional. Your portfolio or past products show judgment about form, proportions, materials, color, finish, and tactile quality—not just technical performance. You understand how stretch, pressure, movement, heat, and sweat affect fit and comfort, and use prototypes and wearer feedback to refine both the experience and the aesthetic. You can carry that design intent through manufacturing.
- Experience delivering in a fast-growth, high-ownership environment: an early hardware team, a startup scaling a physical product, or a new-product team inside a technology company. You can turn ambiguous requirements into testable prototypes, make cross-functional tradeoffs, and keep suppliers and contractors moving without waiting for a detailed brief.

Bonus points

- Background in industrial workwear, PPE, or occupational wearables.
- Experience integrating rigid hardware, electronics, sensors, wiring, or removable modules into textiles. Relevant examples include AR/VR headgear, wearable-device straps, medical wearables, robotics or exoskeleton harnesses, and smart apparel. Physiological sensing or thermoregulation experience is helpful, but not required.
- Experience with technical or performance fabrics: moisture-wicking, breathable, and durable under heat.
- Experience managing interns or junior staff on production or prototyping work.
- Background in fashion-forward performance apparel or premium consumer gear design where product feel and aesthetics are held to a high bar.

Why join now

Clema is still small enough that a few people will define the product, culture, and technical standards of the company. You'll work directly with the founders, get immediate feedback from real deployments, and have meaningful ownership in a rocketship company.