

Celebrating Innovation and Risk-Taking at the MassChallenge 2020 Virtual Awards

The MassChallenge Virtual U.S Awards was a community-wide celebration of the innovation and creativity of the more than [200 startups](#) that participated in MassChallenge's first virtual early-stage programs in the U.S. You can watch the full awards [here](#).

Our very own Dr. Kerry Buckley, VP, Air Force Center, kicked off the evening's \$100k Diamond Award presentations. "Those who value speed, adaptability, and risk-taking will have a deep appreciation for the work of entrepreneurs who live these values every day," said Dr. Buckley as she presented PathEX with their award. [Path EX](#) is a startup out of MassChallenge Houston that is diagnosing and treating sepsis through the development of an extracorporeal blood cleansing device designed to selectively remove pathogens and endotoxins from circulating blood.



MITRE's Vice President Dr. Kerry Buckley announces a \$100k Diamond Winner to startup PathEX during the MassChallenge Awards Ceremony.

"As a key strategic partner, MassChallenge is a trusted conduit for us to discover and mentor startups with capabilities that help us solve some of our nation's biggest challenges in healthcare, transportation, space, defense, and cybersecurity," said Dr. Buckley. She noted that our goal in

engaging with programs like MassChallenge is to help lower the barrier to entry for startups who want to work with the government.

MITRE began working with MassChallenge over six years ago to help the federal government tap into innovative solutions from the commercial sector and harness the power of the innovation ecosystem. Over the years, the value of MITRE's partnership with MassChallenge has led us to expand and build out our engagements and support. As MITRE works across government to tackle challenges to the safety, stability, and well-being of our nation, it has been important for MITRE to reach out to the innovation community to explore new and emerging technologies and work with those startups to deliver impacts.

Each year MITRE engages with as many of the startups in the programs as possible and to mentor and support in various ways. In 2020, MITRE supported MassChallenge with 22 judges, 18 mentors, and identified 13 startups for dedicated mentoring across MassChallenge Boston, Texas, and Rhode Island programs. Here are some selected mentorships during the 2020 program:

- Based on the success of the standup of the 2019 MassChallenge Safety and Security track for the USAF, MITRE worked hand in hand with MassChallenge Rhode Island to develop and launch MassChallenge's first BlueTech track to increase value for the Navy. As a foundational partner of the BlueTech track, MITRE brought together industry, government, and academic experts in the maritime domain to enable immediate success of the track. After the Pilot program this summer, MITRE is working with MassChallenge Rhode Island to expand the program's reach and line up potential government stakeholders for deeper engagements.
- [Kura AR](#): Producing an Augmented Reality headset with a 150° field of view, 95% transparency, and high brightness for outdoor activity all in an eye glass form factor. MITRE is exploring a research partnership to use the novel AR headsets in unique user applications. Outcomes from the research will provide Kura AR insights into their system performance in unique operational environments and help our government sponsors assess the state of the art in Augmented.
- [Shard Security](#): proprietary, patent-pending security platform that encrypts, shards and stores files on a decentralized multi-cloud storage network providing, multi-layer protection from internal or external threats. MITRE worked with Shard to build out relevant use cases for government applications and set up demos for potential government stakeholders to explore and identify the best opportunities.
- [HeyLeia](#): uses A.I. to automatically create and publish custom, high-quality website, blog, or an online store in seconds for free. MITRE connected HeyLeia to the UTSA Small Business Development Center where they are identifying collaborative opportunities and possible funding.
- [V2Verify](#): offers a solution to eliminate usernames and passwords with a voice biometric that needs just 2-seconds of speech. Connected to MITRE biometrics and voice experts, and integration currently being explored with Healthcare Innovation to use voice biometrics to protect patients.

- [Vitro](#): Vitro's Zero Trust IoT authenticates real-world device data while enforcing Zero-Trust policies for data access control and audit. MITRE purchased the zero-trust solution and is currently evaluating use cases in the various operational environments.

Overall, MassChallenge awarded equity-free cash and investment prizes to **33 startups** ([meet the winners](#)), had over 2,100 registered attendees, and included a keynote from Arianna Huffington and Linda Pizzuti Henry who discussed how to invest in innovation and support sustainable, high-potential businesses at the earliest stages.

MITRE is committed to continuing to grow and shape our partnership with MassChallenge to ensure we engage with the most promising and diverse group of startups to help us solve problems for a safer world.

Learn more about MITRE's Bridging Innovation activities [here](#).