

Built World Challenge

Innovator Onboarding Guide | Fall 2026

An eight-week sprint for students, developers, researchers, designers, engineers and industry professionals.

Applications open September 17, 2026.

Start here

Two Alberta industry partners handed us problems they would like solved this year. You get eight weeks, a team of up to five people, coaching from operators and engineers, and a shot at a funded pilot with the company that raised the problem.

This challenge involves real customers.

No startup experience required. No construction background required.

Why join

- **A problem worth solving.** Skip the blank-page startup search. Start with a pain point a real customer already validated.
- **A team with range.** Teams of one to five mix software, AI, design, research, commercial and industry skills. If you are an incorporated company, you can also be a team.
- **Coaching that sharpens the work.** Technical and business mentors help advancing teams pressure-test feasibility, customers and pilot design.
- **\$10,000 in prizes** split across the two challenge streams.
- **Potential for a paid pilot on the other side.** Winning projects can be reviewed for funding through Edmonton Unlimited's Venture Pilots program.
- **60 student stipends**, merit-based, for students attending a post-secondary institute in the Edmonton Region.

Pick your challenge

Full technical scopes, judging criteria and challenge resources sit on the Built World Challenge webpage. Start with the outcome each stream wants.

01 | Building Codes Challenge

Sponsors: Safety Codes Council, BILD Alberta, Jayman Homes, City of Edmonton

Building codes are prescriptive. Builders are creative. When a builder wants an alternative to what the code prescribes, they file an application proving equivalent or better performance. Those applications land incomplete, inconsistently referenced and slow to assess.

Your build: an AI-powered tool that takes in a proposed alternative solution, identifies the relevant code references, and checks the application for completeness before a Safety Codes Officer ever opens it.

Design for: clarity, traceability, appropriate human review, and the real workflow on both sides of the counter.

02 | Embodied Carbon Challenge

Sponsor: Landmark Homes

Whole-building embodied carbon assessments cost too much and take too long for routine residential work. Federal rules now require whole-building life cycle assessments on major federally funded projects, including housing that expands affordable supply.

Your build: a software platform that turns the drawings residential builders already produce into affordable, compliance-ready embodied carbon assessments.

Design for: usable inputs, credible calculations, transparent assumptions, and a workflow that matches how homes actually get designed and delivered.

The Eight Weeks

Date	What happens
Sept 17	Applications open. Apply solo or with people you already know.
October 6	Discord opens. Data packages shared for each challenge. Meet teammates, read the onboarding post, register your roster.
October 6	Kickoff. Hear the problems straight from the industry partners.
October 13	Applications close
October 17	Hackathon day. Optional, but the fastest way to find your direction.
Oct 29	Submission 1: your semi-final package. Top ~10 teams selected for semi-finals
November 10	Semi-final presentations. Show the problem, the evidence and the prototype. Up to 5 teams selected for finals.
November 10 - 26	Build and refine with technical and business coaches.
November 26	Submission 2: your final package. Up to 5 teams selected for finals
Dec 1	Demo Day. Finalists demo what they built and compete for prizes. Winners announced. Celebration
Dec 2 - Mar 2	Implementation of the prototype into a customer environment (not guaranteed but this is indeed the point, so let's make it happen!)

Exact submission deadlines, templates and instructions to be posted in Discord. If an old message conflicts with a newer program announcement, follow the newer one.

Build a team that can execute

Range beats redundancy. Teams run one to five people and self-form through Discord. Mixed teams are the point.

- **Product and technical:** software, AI and data, architecture, prototyping, testing.

- **Industry and domain:** construction, housing, codes, engineering, architecture, carbon.
- **Customer and commercial:** user discovery, business models, pilots, implementation.
- **Design and storytelling:** UX, research synthesis, demos, pitches.

Your first team conversation

- Name a primary contact who owns program communication.
- Register your team using the team registration form in Discord
- Name what each person owns for the next eight weeks.
- Agree on availability, response times and how you make decisions.
- Write your first bet in one paragraph: the user, the problem, the outcome, the riskiest assumption.
- Have the discussion now about what happens if you win: are you shipping it together?

Rules that protect momentum

- Discord is the source of truth. Deadlines, templates, clarifications and answers all land there.
- Keep sponsor material in approved locations. Nothing confidential or proprietary goes into open channels or outside tools.
- All team members must complete the registration form and sign the participant agreement in order to participate and receive the challenge data package
- Bring evidence. Record your interviews, tests, results and what changed your mind.
- Ask early. A better question beats a week of building around a misunderstanding.

Student stipends

60 student stipends. Merit-based. \$550 per stipend. Program commitment required. Must be attending an Edmonton Regional Post-Secondary Institute to qualify.

Use your registration video as your application. Detailed criteria used to score your application are posted in the registration form. We will be reviewing applications on a rolling basis; so apply early! We expect to approve 50% of the stipends by the first week of October, with the balance approved by Oct 15.

Stipends are separate from prizes and have no bearing on whether your team advances. Eligibility is limited to qualifying students and depends on verification, an approved Submission 1, and the published program terms. Payment details go out through Discord.

Prizes

Placement	Building Codes	Embodied Carbon
First place	\$3,000	\$3,000
Runner-up	\$1,000	\$1,000
Runner-up	\$1,000	\$1,000
Total per stream	\$5,000	\$5,000

Prizes follow each stream's published criteria and judging process. A prize does not guarantee a pilot, an investment, incorporation or a procurement outcome.

What happens after Demo Day

Demo Day is a checkpoint to see what's been proven so far. Winning projects can be reviewed for funding through Edmonton Unlimited's Venture Pilots program to run a paid pilot with the sponsor, and Edmonton Unlimited works with top teams on incorporation where the opportunity warrants it. Each of those runs through its own review and agreement.

Come to Demo Day ready to explain the customer, the value, the technical case, the pilot design, the risks and what you need next.

FAQs

- **Who can apply?**
 - Students, developers, designers, researchers, engineers, industry professionals and startups. If you can contribute to building a solution, you're eligible. Participants must be currently living in Alberta or, if applying as a company, be an Alberta-based company. Alberta-based means you are either incorporated in Alberta or your senior team is present in Alberta.
- **I'm a student, how do I apply for a Stipend to participate?**
 - Simply fill out the registration form and fill in the appropriate details about your degree program in the application. We have 60 merit-based stipends. Your registration video will be used as your stipend application. Details on the judging criteria for stipends are in the registration form. Stipend recipients must be attending a post-secondary institution in the Edmonton Metro Region.
- **Do I need a team before I apply?**
 - No. You apply as an individual, and teams form after applications are approved. Teams run one to five people. If you already have a group, you can sign up together after everyone completes the registration form.
- **Do I need a background in construction?**
 - No. The challenges are cross-sectional by design. Teams that mix technical builders with people who understand the industry tend to do best, and the sponsors are available to answer questions about their world.
- **What's the time commitment?**
 - 30 - 40 hours throughout the duration of the program.
- **Does the program have a virtual option?**
 - Events will be in person. Teams can work asynchronously, but must be able to attend the semi-finals day in November and the finals in December.
- **Is there a cost to participate?**
 - No.
- **Who owns what my team builds?**
 - The team does. Challenge sponsors and Edmonton Unlimited take no ownership of solutions or associated IP.

- **What happens if my team wins?**
 - Top teams receive prizes at Demo Day and have the potential to receive funding through Edmonton Unlimited's Venture Pilots program to implement their solution with customers. Edmonton Unlimited also works with top teams on incorporation where the opportunity warrants it.
- **I am a corporation. How do I submit a challenge for a future cohort?**
 - Reach out to Zack Storms directly: zack@edmontonunlimited.com

Questions? Builtworldtech@edmontonunlimited.com

Final eligibility, participation, stipend, judging, intellectual property, confidentiality and pilot conditions are governed by the applicable program terms.