

MOVE AHEAD FASTER.

IMEC Launches Move Ahead Faster Initiative to Advance Illinois Manufacturing Competitiveness

*The **Move Ahead Faster Projects** will equip small & medium-sized manufacturers (SMMs) to accelerate growth and productivity.*

Peoria, IL – February 3, 2021: Today, IMEC, the Illinois affiliate of the U.S Commerce NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) National Network, launched the **Move Ahead Faster Projects** for Illinois small and mid-sized manufacturers. This initiative provides the necessary assessments and technical assistance to improve key drivers of their organizational success. Presented with fully funded projects to address their most critical needs, eligible Illinois manufacturers can receive support led by industry experts to help them plan, implement and excel. Projects vary in focus and were developed based on insights and immediate needs reported from over 1,200 manufacturers. These projects are fully funded through the CARES Act Recovery Assistance Funds.

Illinois manufacturing is a major contributor to the Illinois economy. In fact, the Illinois Manufacturers Association's *Manufacturing Matters* report highlights that Illinois manufacturing is 12.0% of the Gross State Product and creates 592,200 jobs. In many cases, these manufacturers are at the heart of their community and their success drives the success of the people and places where they reside.

“Our state is an incredibly powerful manufacturing engine for the global economy. Coming out of the pandemic, this is the right moment for manufacturers to upskill and retool. These Move Ahead Faster Projects will build on manufacturing strengths and ensure our manufacturers become even more competitive in 2021” – David Boulay, Ph.D. President - IMEC.

The **Move Ahead Faster Projects**, valued at \$5,000 each, emphasizes topics such as: Industrial Hygiene, Global Market Presence, Maintenance, Leadership, Finance, and Technology. Existing small and mid-sized Illinois manufacturers with less than 500

employees are encouraged to apply for one project that best suits their immediate needs. Selected projects must be conducted in Illinois and completed by July 30, 2021 and projects are limited to one project per company.

“This is a great opportunity for our state's manufacturing companies. The Move Ahead Faster project options are the right range of topics critical to advancing manufacturing competitiveness in today's marketplace” – Marcia Ayala, President -Aurora Specialty Textiles Group.

For more information about the program and to apply for a **Move Ahead Faster Project**, visit <https://www.imec.org/rebound/>.

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About IMEC

IMEC is a team of improvement specialists who are dedicated to changing lives and creating a positive impact on Illinois' workforce and economy. With a mission to drive growth through enterprise excellence, they help organizations become more effective and efficient by identifying issues, developing and implementing solutions and providing the necessary support that will allow them to excel in areas of leadership, strategy, customer engagement, operations, workforce, and measurement and results. In 2020, they assisted over 1,144 companies and help create or retain over 6100 jobs, resulting in over \$645M aggregate [impact](#) to the Illinois economy. IMEC has seven offices statewide and 48 full-time industry improvement specialists. For more information, visit www.imec.org.

IMEC is one of the 51 MEP Centers in the US and Puerto Rico. MEP Centers are part of the MEP National Network, which includes the National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP) and over 1000 manufacturing experts at over 400 service locations, with the tools and resources to help US manufacturers succeed and advance US Manufacturing. Being that each Center is a public-private partnership, they are able to connect manufacturers with government agencies, universities and research facilities, trade associations and many more resources that foster growth and innovation. In 2018, the MEP National Network helped over 2700 manufacturers and created over 122,000 jobs. Find your local MEP Center [here](#)