



Your Launchpad for Impact

An abstract graphic element consisting of a large teal swoosh on the right, a grey circle on the left, and a white circle in the center. They overlap on a white background.

Impact Report

2025



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Message from the Team

Dear LabStart Community,

The year 2025 for us was about growth and refinement. After we lit the spark of our first cohort in 2024, we celebrated big successes and focused deeply on new insights and learnings.

More than doubling the size of our cohort in 2025—from supporting 10 fellows to 24—was a milestone achievement. We expanded geographies as well as the range of people and solutions we support.

We grew our team, adding Alex Riewer to our roster as Operations Manager, two amazing new Board of Director members, and multiple industry experts to our Advisory Board. Among our community of donors, we also doubled our support from foundation partners in 2025.

It is an honor to be on this growth journey with the commercialization and entrepreneurship communities at large—to lead with integrity, follow trailblazers, and continually innovate, with a deep tether to our mission as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

In a year when nationwide funding for climate projects slowed, strategies shifted, and uncertainties abounded, we chose to stand strong behind our values, showing up and speaking up while adapting wherever possible. Thank you to our partners who continue to make this possible!

Thank you to every individual who has served as a guiding light and encouraging tailwind in our community. We're excited to share what we accomplished collectively in 2025!

Deepa, Megan, Troy, and Alex



About LabStart

LabStart is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to helping visionary founders launch breakthrough climate startups. Our vision is to build a world where groundbreaking climate solutions aren't stuck dormant in research labs, but instead are cultivated by creative entrepreneurs ready to bring them to life.

What We Do

- **Unlock climate innovations** trapped in premier research laboratories to help underinvested entrepreneurs launch startups.
- **Build relationship bridges** between entrepreneurs, scientists, and industry partners to improve technology transfer for all.
- **Provide comprehensive support** to our fellows through 12 months of training and mentorship, \$100K in funding, and connections to industry partnerships to help overcome barriers to launch.
- **Foster an experimental, collaborative culture** that catalyzes high-impact innovation with authenticity, resilience, and joy.



There's a treasure trove of climate and energy technologies frozen in universities and research institutions across the U.S. At the same time, there are talented entrepreneurs across the country who have the drive, skills, and unique market insights to turn these innovations into successful companies. **We bridge this gap.**

Impact Highlights



24

Fellows in our
2025 Discover
cohort



06

Fellows moving
on to 2026
Launch cohort



12

States
represented



800+

Patents
evaluated



15

Funders
supporting us



10+

Climate industries
addressed

We're proud to have doubled our fellow count in 2025 with founders from a broader reach of the United States building transformative solutions in a wider range of industries. We continue to uplift impressive trailblazers who might not otherwise have found their way into climate innovation. Regular surveys reveal founders are loving LabStart: Our fellows report a consistently strong NPS (Net Promoter Score, a common metric of program satisfaction).

The 24 fellows in our 2025 Discover cohort represent Climate 3.0—the next generation of climate companies creating safer, healthier, and more reliable communities.

The fellows you see on the following pages represent:

24 opportunities to commercialize climate technologies that will make real-world impact.

24 individuals with the talent and hustle our planet needs to build better.

Hear From Our Fellows

The work we do at LabStart will always center on people—fostering new connections, continued inspiration, and the raw stamina necessary to turn tech into enterprise.



"I realized how many barriers there are to not just being an entrepreneur, but also for people that are like me, an immigrant background, not someone who comes from wealth. **LabStart really focuses on helping lower barriers for people.**"

"LabStart has been a game changer for me as an entrepreneur. They believed in me at a time when most investors were pulling back from cleantech and underrepresented founders."



"I'm not usually in spaces like this, so being invited to be here, and **being seen as somebody who can actually build a solution and take a solution to market**, that was really validating for me."

We're committed to discovering talented entrepreneurs and empowering first-time, often nontraditional founders. Many bright minds do not have the luxury of taking the first steps toward entrepreneurship. It's our mission to get them started.

Discover Fellows

LabStart's 2025 Discover fellows are developing advanced energy technologies and next-generation materials, pioneering emission reductions, improving infrastructure, and so much more. They're just getting started and need your support to continue onward.



Aidan Mickleburgh
SolidSky
Berkeley, CA



Akash Borde
San Francisco, CA



Ari Brown
Bellwether
Washington, D.C.



Betty Watson
Venki Energy
Washington, D.C.



Crystal Cook
Stealth
North Carolina



Eli Baier
Stealth
Windsor, CO



Emilio Balderas
Aura Life Science
Chicago, IL



Harshul Thakkar
Nanuet, NY



Juan Sepulveda
Seattle, WA



Kristi Shaw, Ph. D.
Mermaid Energy
Easton, MD



Marianne Boules
Los Angeles, CA



Mill McLane
Farmington, NM



Monica Sanders
Bonne Terre Labs
Alexandria, VA



Ni Ni
San Francisco, CA



Pilanda Watkins-Curry, Ph. D.
AuraChrome
Henrico, VA



Reshini Premaratne
New York, NY



Sahil Jain
Soil Sage
Bengaluru, India



Saman Koohmaraie
New York, NY



Sara Haris
Clean Crop
New York, NY



Sebastian Garcia
Khaya Biosciences
New York, NY



Tinia Pina
Stealth
New York, NY



Warren Ndlovu
Stealth
Oakland, CA

[Learn more about what each fellow is working on.](#)

Note that for privacy and professional reasons, we are unable to publicly disclose the names of all 24 fellows.



Making AI More Sustainable Through Our Data Center Specialization

In 2025, LabStart began working with corporate partners to launch a specialization of startups within our cohort focused on data center sustainability solutions. We harnessed needs and opportunities from a coalition of data center stakeholders including builders and operators, AI companies, utilities, and more.

This sector-focused specialization supercharges how startups begin: with the identified problem first. Industry leaders can name where innovation is needed the most before our fellows begin to build, increasing their likelihood of success and early partnership.

This initiative included a corporate reverse pitch at VERGE 2025 where climate leaders pitched real data center challenges and the solutions they're eager to partner on.

Committed Partners

\$650K commitment



**Hewlett Packard
Enterprise**



EQUINIX



White Paper

We delved into the areas in the data center industry that are ready for innovative sustainable solutions.

Some of Our Fellows & What They Built



Liquid coolants for data centers that are non-toxic, flame resistant, and biodegradable to help address data centers' massive energy and water consumption.



A solution at the intersection of data center sustainability and grid modernization that enables public-private partnerships for transmission financing.



A tool helping tech leaders make data center siting and sustainability decisions that are equitable, transparent, and community-backed, reducing the chances of costly litigation.

Catalyzing Community

LabStart is dedicated to nurturing a vibrant community that champions climate innovation. In 2025, we continued to cultivate an engaged community and reimaged exciting initiatives involving new sectors like data centers and new places such as Napa, California.



San Francisco Climate Week
April 2025

We hosted a fellow showcase with DLA Piper and a panel focused on the impact of mission-driven capital for early-stage founders and technologies.



Clinton Global Initiative
September 2025

We were honored to announce a [Commitment to Action](#) to support 75 entrepreneurs and launch 24 breakthrough climate companies in three years.



Climate Week NYC
September 2025

Our panel focused on the importance of catalytic capital and how launching climate deep tech startups requires an ecosystem of support.



Napa Chamber of Commerce
November 2025

Our CEO, Deepa Lounsbury, joined a panel on how investment, innovation, and collaboration can help shape the next economy in Napa Valley, California.

Alumni Success

\$3M+ 05 02

Follow-on
funding to
date

Patents
filed

License
agreements
signed



2021 Cohort Alum
Mars Materials

- Raised \$6.7M
- Built plant
- Breakthrough Energy fellow

Downstream Programs

Past fellows have been accepted into prestigious programs such as:



Partners

Our partners help make everything happen at LabStart. From premier national labs and universities that provide frontier climate technologies and groundbreaking research to funders whose support helps our nonprofit continue to launch and grow our cohorts, we're so grateful for this wonderful ecosystem.

Technology Engines



Funding and Support



Looking Ahead

As we move into 2026 and beyond, LabStart is focused on slow and steady growth—deepening what already works while carefully expanding what's possible.

We're exploring the addition of place-based and sector-based cohorts while looking forward to the potential of another Discover fellowship in late 2026, pending funding.

LabStart is also developing our first long-term strategic plan to ensure we can continue growing, improving, and bringing opportunities from lab to market well into the future.

2028 GOALS



Launch 100+ climate-focused startups led by diverse founders



Create 1K+ equitable jobs in the climate tech industry



Demonstrate a clear path to 50+GT of carbon savings



Multiply capital to \$200M+ in follow-on funding for our startups



Join Us



Partner

megan@labstart.co



Donate



Our Newsletter

LabStart is poised to keep making momentous impact and unlocking the potential we need to solve our climate crisis.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, our work depends on the generous support of our community. We invite you to deepen your commitment to this critical work.

Together, we are building a more resilient future—one entrepreneur, one technology, and one new visionary company at a time.

labstart.co

Accelerating Innovations from Lab to Market

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