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## FIRST Future Innovator Award presented by the Abbott Fund

This award celebrates innovation and intellectual property creation inspired by the *FIRST* season experience. This award recognizes creativity in effectively solving a real-world, complex problem through the invention of a unique solution beyond the requirements of the *FIRST* competition season and events. This award directly links to the *FIRST* mission to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders that inspire innovation and to the *FIRST* vision to transform the culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated.

The *FIRST* Future Innovator Award will be judged by a panel of leading experts in the fields of engineering and patent law, including Dean Kamen, President of DEKA Research & Development Corporation and inventor of the Segway Personal Transporter, and representatives from Abbott and others, to determine the winning idea.

The winner will be announced at the *FIRST* Championship in St. Louis, Missouri, April 26-28, 2012. The winning students will be granted an award presented by the Abbott Fund and also will have the opportunity to meet with a venture capitalist firm for a real-world experience to discuss their invention and possible business application.

The *FIRST* Future Innovator Award competition is open to all North American FRC and FTC teams officially registered for the current 2011/2012 *FIRST* competition season. The portal for student submissions will open on January 27, 2012 and the deadline for submissions will be Noon, March 30, 2012, Eastern Standard Time.

### Award Guidelines

- Applicants make a formal submission electronically, to be reviewed and evaluated by a designated judge panel independent of current *FIRST* Program competition season judged awards.
- Submission consists of properly filled out Future Innovator Award Disclosure Form (DF), along with supporting documentation.
- *FIRST* strongly encourages all teams to file for patent protection by filing a provisional patent application with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), before submitting an for the Future Innovator Award.
  - Additional information regarding provisional patent applications can be found at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov) as well as in the guidelines available through the this website.
  - Once an idea is shared through submission for this award, patent protection can only be sought in the United States and cannot be sought in any other jurisdiction, unless a provisional patent has been filed before submission.

### Evaluation Criteria

Submission will be judged on the following criteria:

- Practicality of developing and implementing the invention
- Whether the invention has the potential to better society through a unique and innovative technological application
- Whether the invention was utilized for a *FIRST*-related activity
- Complexity of the problem to be solved by the invention
- Effectiveness of the invention in solving the problem
- Uniqueness of the invention
- Simplicity of the invention
- Whether the invention has applicability outside of *FIRST* in solving problem(s) in the following categories:
  - National Academy of Engineering 14 Grand Challenges
  - Autonomy, navigation, and mobility solutions for emergency, rescue, and security responses
  - Revolutionizes robotics for the mass market
  - Solutions for home, hospital, and public environments
  - Space solutions – lunar robots, mars robots, satellite autonomous programming

### Additional Documentation

[FIRST Future Innovator Award Disclosure Form](#) 

[Award Scoring Guidelines](#) 

[How to Apply for a Patent](#)

[Submission Category Details](#) 

## FAQ

### *Who is eligible?*

Only US FRC and FTC teams who have registered to attend an event are eligible for this award in 2012.

### *How do I Apply?*

To apply for this award the student(s) must submit a completed Future Innovator Award Disclosure Form and requested information by **Noon EST, March 30<sup>th</sup>**. Submissions will be open starting on January 27, 2012. More details can be found in the Future Innovator Award Disclosure Form.

### *If more than one person develops the invention, do we each have to submit separate Future Innovator Award Disclosure Form (DF)?*

No, you do not have to submit separate Disclosure Forms. The DF provides space to include multiple inventors for a single invention submission.

### *Can I submit more than one invention for consideration?*

Absolutely, we encourage you to submit a Disclosure Form for each invention that you conceive.

### *What types of inventions can be submitted?*

The invention must have applicability outside of *FIRST* in contributing to solutions for problem(s) in the following categories:

- National Academy of Engineering 14 Grand Challenges (<http://www.engineeringchallenges.org>)
- Autonomy, navigation, and mobility solutions for emergency, rescue, and security responses
- Revolutionizes robotics for the mass market
- Solutions for home, hospital, and public environments
- Space solutions – lunar robots, mars robots, satellite autonomous programming

### *How will submissions be evaluated?*

Submissions will be evaluated on these criteria:

- Practicality of developing and implementing the invention
- Whether the invention has the potential to better society through a unique and innovative technological application
- Whether the invention was utilized for a *FIRST*-related activity
- Complexity of the problem to be solved by the invention
- Effectiveness of the invention in solving the problem
- Uniqueness of the invention
- Simplicity of the invention

### *How do we determine who should be listed on the DF as inventors?*

Inventors are determined according to who “initially came up with the idea,” that is the person(s) who thought of the solution, or an inventor may be someone who made necessary “improvements upon the original idea”. Inventors are not those who reduced the invention to practice, i.e. build the prototype etc. (The whole team should not be listed as inventors, unless they all initially came up with the idea or made improvements to the original idea.)

### *Who judges the submissions?*

Your submissions will be judged using the criteria detailed in the Award Scoring Guidelines (see above). The judging panel will consist of individuals with scientific backgrounds as well as individuals who specialize in the practice of patent law.

### *How can I learn more about Intellectual Property and the patent process?*

The [United States Patent Office's website](#) is a great resource to learn more about Intellectual Property and the patent process.

### *How does one become a Patent Attorney?*

To become a patent attorney, you must first graduate from college with a scientific based degree (a listing of the accepted degrees are listed here on page 6: <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/dcom/olia/oed/grb.pdf>). After graduating with a scientific degree, you then must graduate from an accredited law school. Once you have your two degrees in hand, you must then sit for and pass both the Patent Bar Exam and a bar exam in any state within the United States.

### *Is there a way to practice patent law without attending law school?*

Yes, if you have graduated from college with a scientific degree you may be eligible to take the Patent Bar exam to become what is known as a Patent Agent. A Patent Agent can represent inventors before the USPTO. However, a

Patent Agent may not engage in the practice of law. For example, a patent agent would not be able to represent a client in litigation or contract matters.



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