

CatapultTM

MAKERSPACE

What is the Catapult Makerspace?

The Catapult Makerspace is designed for start-ups and small businesses who need access to prototyping equipment and small batch manufacturing capabilities to grow, scale, and launch their businesses.

The makerspace is equipped with:

- Rapid Prototyping Equipment: 3D Printers, Lasers
- Textile Room
- Electronic Stations
- Wood Shop
- Metal Shop
- Dedicated Manufacturing and Micro-Factory Spaces
- Training Equipment and Simulators

Each of these spaces is furnished with state-of-the-art equipment to help businesses achieve their goals.

The makerspace is a branch of Catapult Lakeland, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to increasing the viability of startups in our community. Catapult also includes a coworking space, office and desk spaces, and a kitchen incubator.

Why does the Catapult Makerspace exist?

The makerspace exists to provide a launchpad for businesses that need cost-prohibitive machinery to get started. By using shared equipment, we hope that the businesses can test out their ideas, validate the market, and generate revenue before moving into a space of their own.

Catapult was founded by the Lakeland Economic Development Council to act as a catalyst for the entrepreneurs in our community. Today, Catapult functions as an independent nonprofit entity, and we exist to:

- Launch companies into brick + mortar spaces
- Provide value-added educational opportunities that result in growing companies
- Connect corporations with the innovative startup community and vice versa
- Showcase Lakeland as a place where you can start something
- Recruit and retain talent
- Foster the growth of third spaces for Lakeland employees to enjoy after work

We chase these goals by providing space, education, and funding opportunities to scalable startups in Lakeland.

Who is a good fit for the Catapult Makerspace?

We are a fit for companies who are looking for space + resources to grow their business.

We find that those who have prior shop, manufacturing, or engineering experience as well as those with existing sales avenues or customers and industry certification or business licenses are the best fit for membership.

It is our goal to see each Catapult Makerspace member launch into a space of their own, whether that is a retail, manufacturing, or mixed-use location, within six months to three years of becoming a member.

Catapult serves members in various stages of business development, including:

Ideation: A business concept that is not fully formed, but a target customer and a working solution have been identified. This type of member needs access to commercial equipment to prototype their concept before bringing it to market.

Operation: A business that currently sells goods or services to its customers. We find that operations run by owners are the most effective fit in the makerspace. Catapult's goal for businesses in this stage is that they can create repeatable systems to scale their business.

Growth: A business with a small team and consistent revenue that is pursuing expansion. Catapult's goal for businesses in this stage is to prepare them to launch into a space of their own.

While members are not required to be committed full-time to their business at the beginning of their journey, we expect them to transition into full-time employment in their businesses within one year of joining Catapult.

Unfortunately, we are not a fit for makers that do not have a desire to move into a permanent location of their own. We are also unable to accommodate businesses that require a wet lab or heavy use of aerosol spray paint.

If you are pursuing this type of business, ask us about makerspace alternatives, and we can refer you to other options in Central Florida.

What is Catapult's mission?

Our goal is to launch businesses into the Lakeland community that create jobs, boost the economy, and provide new experiences and destinations to be enjoyed by all.

We're focused on serving businesses who are:

- Scalable in terms of cost, quality, and time
- Pursuing a specific growth goal for their company
- Contain an innovative aspect that sets the business apart in the market
- Ready to challenge assumptions about their business
- Willing to give back and share experience and knowledge with others

Success for Catapult members is launching a business into their own facility in Lakeland, where they continue to grow their operation and add value to the community.

What are the benefits of a Catapult Makerspace membership?

- Professional workshop space with state-of-the-art equipment
- Member portal with resources such as templates, guides, and databases
- Free mentorship opportunities through Expert-in-Residence programming
- Specialized guidance through Technical Advisor programming
- Cross promotion – social media posts, event listings, etc.
- Sales opportunities through member markets and connections
- Discounted education programming
- Discounted space rentals – conference rooms, event spaces, etc.
- Discounted coworking membership
- Member only events and networking
- 24/7 space access
- Downtown location

What equipment is available in the makerspace?

View the full list of makerspace equipment at the link below.

catapultlakeland.com/maker-space-equipment-list/

What kind of training is available in the Catapult Makerspace?

Equipment training is required prior to operation for select pieces of equipment, to ensure safety of the member and the machine.

Currently, training is available in an apprenticeship-style format, with a member shadowing the makerspace director, makerspace assistant, or an experienced makerspace member until proficient.

Members are expected to complement this training through reading manuals, watching tutorials, and practicing on their own. As the makerspace grows, Catapult hopes to create formalized programs based on community needs.

How do I become a makerspace member?

Because of our mission, Catapult is intentional about the businesses we accept as members. Our process includes three steps: a tour, an application, and an interview.

Tour: During the tour of the space, we review details about the operation in the makerspace and the documentation needed to formalize your business. Tours are given during our staffed hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Fill out our [contact us form](#) on our website to express interest in touring.

Application: After the tour, the Catapult staff will send a link to apply for makerspace membership. Fill out this form with as much detail as possible to allow the staff to make an informed decision about membership.

Interview: The final step of the process is an interview with Catapult staff. Depending on the business needs and the founders' prior experience, this interview may be conducted via phone or in-person.

How does Catapult make a makerspace membership decision?

After the interview process, the Catapult team evaluates the business according to several criteria. We find that the members best suited for the space have gathered items in their process of business formation and demonstrate business viability through product costing and marketing strategy.

Additionally, we examine potential for launch, unique to Lakeland concept, and compatibility in a shared space.

Potential for Launch: Because the end goal for Catapult is to see each of our makerspace members launch into a space of their own, we consider each company's pathway to that launch before accepting the business as a member.

Unique to Lakeland Concept: We also focus on new to Lakeland concepts that can serve to diversify our local economy. We look for members who are innovating in their field.

Compatibility in a Shared Space: The makerspace is shared among many members, so a willingness to operate side-by-side with other entrepreneurs is key.

What happens after acceptance in the makerspace?

After the interview, the next step is orientation with Catapult staff. At orientation, the makerspace director reviews policies and procedures, enables a member's Bluetooth access, and performs a safety test.

At this time, a new member is responsible for pro-rated membership for the month they joined along with a \$65.00 joining fee.

What type of documentation do I need to operate in the makerspace?

There are several pieces of documentation needed to transform a start-up idea into a formalized business.

- Business Entity Paperwork (LLC, Corp, Partnership, etc.)
- Florida Fictitious Name (if applicable)
- Employer Identification Number
- Sales Tax ID Number
- Business Bank Account
- Insurance
- Polk County Business Tax Account
- City of Lakeland Business Tax Receipt

Catapult has created a separate document entitled the “How to Start a Business Guide” to review how to obtain each piece of documentation. This guide is available upon request.

Catapult requires a copy of the ACORD form, paperwork from the members’ insurance company that lists Catapult as an additional insured location.

How long does it take to get into the makerspace?

This timeline heavily depends on the business owners’ ability to devote time to get to Catapult for various meetings, and as well as the availability of Catapult staff. The average member moves from interest to membership between two weeks and two months.

What expectations exist for membership?

We offer our space at below-market rate to members, and our operational costs to run Catapult are subsidized by private donors in our community. When we make a membership decision, we are then held accountable to see that member go from a nascent business idea to a launched brick and mortar in their own facility. We expect that our members will:

- **Participate in member check-ins:** We have open financial relationships with our members, which allow us to suggest targeted strategies to promote growth.
- **Education participation:** We curate educational sessions and opportunities based on member requests and needs, and we expect our members to prioritize participation in education programming at Catapult.
- **Data collection:** We collect data in yearly surveys to assess Catapult’s economic impact on the community and to make operational decisions for our future. Members are asked to share data such as gross revenue, employee roster, etc.

What is it like to work out of the makerspace?

Working out of a shared makerspace has both significant benefits and drawbacks to consider. Benefits are detailed above and include access to a collaborative environment with other startups and access to equipment and infrastructure that would be costly for a new venture to afford at the beginning of their business.

However, working in a shared space also means:

- Completing set-up and break-down tasks each shift, which are more intensive in a shared space than in a dedicated area.
- Encountering cleaning mistakes from other businesses that may impact the entire work area.
- Experiencing the challenges and joys of working alongside others with varying personalities, backgrounds, expectations, and values.

How does pricing and billing work?

The Catapult Makerspace Membership is \$170.00 per month. Members pay an additional hourly rate to use specific makerspace equipment, to offset the variable cost of electricity, machine maintenance, and consumables.

- Welders \$12 per hour
- Plasma Table \$20 per hour
- CNC Wood Router \$15 per hour
- Knee Mill \$10 per hour
- Haas VF2SS \$30 per hour
- Epilog Lasers \$2 per hour

Monthly Bills: On the 1st of each month, our members are charged their minimum amount of \$170.00 for the current month, plus any hourly usage from the prior month and any applicable storage charges.

Joining Fee: A \$65.00 joining fee per business is applied at orientation

Can I store items at the makerspace?

We have limited storage available at the makerspace, subject to availability and approval. Due to limited space, not all storage requests will be granted.

Storage charges are billed per unit per month:

- \$10 per additional shelf
- \$55 per rolling rack, pallet bay, or pole rack section
- \$90 per combined pallet and pole rack storage
- \$175 per studio assembly space with table

Can I bring employees to the makerspace?

Each person operating in the makerspace must have a membership (\$170.00 a month). Employees may apply for membership and the cost of employee membership can be billed through one company account.

The makerspace is best fit to work with owner-operators who want to be actively involved in the community at Catapult and are present in the makerspace during the initial weeks and months of business operations.

How do I learn more about the Catapult Makerspace?

We would love to connect with you and share more about our makerspace and the work that we do.

Website: catapultlakeland.com/makerspace

Phone: (863) 940-9660

Address: 502 E. Main Street, Lakeland, FL 33801

Makerspace Director: Brett Chamberlin, brett@catapultlakeland.com

Catapult is staffed Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., excluding major holidays. We would love to answer additional questions that you may have.