

Purina Seeks Next Generation of Pet Care Innovators Through 2027 Pet Care Innovation Prize

Early-stage companies across the pet industry can now apply for a chance to receive up to \$50,000 in non-dilutive funding

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 1, 2026 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Today, the [Pet Care Innovation Prize powered by Purina](#) opened applications for its 2027 competition, calling on entrepreneurs with bold ideas and innovative solutions for pets to apply for funding and support from Purina to help scale their businesses. Early-stage companies developing novel products or services across the pet care industry can apply for the 2027 Pet Care Innovation Prize [here](#) through Oct. 6, 2026.

Each year, Purina and investment partner [Active Capital](#) select five pet-focused startups to receive \$25,000 each in non-dilutive funding, along with mentorship from pet care industry leaders at Purina and Active Capital. The five finalist startups are invited to participate in an accelerator boot camp at Purina's headquarters in St. Louis and compete for an additional \$25,000 grand prize at a live pitch competition at [Global Pet Expo](#) in Orlando in March 2027.

"At Purina, we know elements of the future of pet care will be shaped by entrepreneurs who see opportunities to solve new challenges and meet the evolving needs of pets and their people," said Patrick Mullen, Co-Lead of Purina's 9 Square Ventures group and Vice President of Strategic Planning at Purina. "The Pet Care Innovation Prize gives us an opportunity to support these entrepreneurs with more than funding. Through mentorship, access to industry expertise and shared connections, we can help promising startups take their ideas to the next level."

Selected startups will gain access to Purina leaders and subject matter experts across areas including science, nutrition, research and development, marketing and business strategy providing resources, expertise and connections at a critical stage of their growth. The program also connects entrepreneurs with a broader pet care innovation ecosystem through Active Capital and other industry partners.

Supporting the Next Generation of Pet Care Innovators

Since partnering with Active Capital to create the Pet Care Innovation Prize in 2016, Purina has awarded more than \$1 million in non-dilutive funding to early-stage companies working to advance pet care. The program has supported startups across areas including pet health and wellness, nutrition, sustainability, technology and enrichment.

The impact of the program can be seen in companies like [PetPax Co.](#), the 2026 Pet Care Innovation Prize grand prize winner. Founded by two dog dads in Boston, the startup is redefining everyday pet wellness through its flagship SupplaMelts™ product line, which uses a proprietary, fast-dissolving oral thin-film delivery method to make veterinarian-approved supplementation easier to administer and gentler for dogs.

"Winning the 2026 Pet Care Innovation Prize was a meaningful milestone for PetPax Co. and gave us valuable validation at an important stage in our growth," said Anthony Gatti, CEO & Co-Founder of PetPax Co. "The mentorship, connections and continued support from Purina and Active Capital have helped us build momentum as we expand SupplaMelts and work to make everyday wellness easier for more dogs and their people. Specifically, it has enabled us to expand into the feline category. We're grateful to be part of a

community that is invested in helping the next generation of pet care companies grow."

Other past Pet Care Innovation Prize participants have gone on to scale their businesses, secure additional funding and reach new customers through leading retailers and pet care channels.

For more information about the Pet Care Innovation Prize powered by Purina and to apply, visit PetCareInnovation.net.

About Purina

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations.

Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. Nearly 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than \$150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive. Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit purina.com or [subscribe here](#) to get the latest Purina news.

About Active Capital:

Active Capital is a St. Louis-based impact investing leader, helping startups and investors come together to grow innovative products and initiatives. Active Capital manages the Pet Care Innovation Prize.

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