



Fact Sheet - Feb 8, 2012 | <http://www.uspto.gov/patentsforhumanity>

For over two centuries, strong patents have provided business incentives that encourage technological progress to build our modern world. As we struggle against humanitarian issues plaguing many of the world's poor, patents play an essential role in creating lasting solutions.

Today we're announcing the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's (USPTO) *Patents for Humanity* program, which creates business incentives for patent holders to engage in humanitarian issues. After consulting with industry, universities, and non-profits, the USPTO has developed this 12-month voluntary pilot program to recognize patent owners and licensees who apply their technology to pressing global challenges.

- **WHAT:** The program is structured as a prize competition. Participants will submit applications describing how they have used their patented technology or products to address humanitarian needs. Judging will be performed by experts from academia and Federal labs donating their time. Up to 50 winners will be chosen in the pilot year, with winners receiving a certificate for accelerated processing at the USPTO.
- **WHO:** The program seeks to recognize businesses of all shapes and sizes that leverage life-altering technologies to confront global challenges in four categories:
 - Medical Technology
 - Food & Nutrition
 - Clean Technology
 - Information Technology

Such technologies may include life-saving medicines and vaccines, medical diagnostic equipment, more nutritious or heartier crops, food storage & preservation technology, water sterilization devices, cleaner sources of household light and heat, or information devices promoting literacy and education, among others.

- **WHY:** The program advances the President's global development agenda by providing companies with business incentives to bring life-saving technologies to underserved regions of the world. The program also highlights successful examples of how business interests and strong patent rights contribute to humanitarian solutions.

Competition: A focus on delivering life-altering technologies into the hands of people in need

Applicants must demonstrate how they have fostered use of their patented technology to significantly address public health or quality of life issues faced by an impoverished population, or how they have contributed patented technology to advance scientific research on neglected humanitarian issues. Eligible technologies must be disclosed in a patent or pending patent application.

Judges selected from academia for their expertise in medicine, law, science, engineering, public policy, or a related field will review applications and recommend winners in each of the four categories. Awardees will receive a certificate for accelerated processing of a select matter before the USPTO. Up to 50 awards will be given during the 12 month pilot, depending on the number and quality of applications received. Diversity of contributions will be a prime consideration as the program highlights success stories across all types of technologies, practices, and organizations.

Awards: Winners receive a certificate for accelerated processing of select matters before the USPTO

The certificate may be redeemed to accelerate a patent application, an appeal, or an *ex parte* reexamination proceeding before the USPTO. Any one matter in the certificate holder's portfolio may be accelerated, not just the humanitarian technology that qualified for the award. This creates a powerful tool for businesses to expedite handling of their most important matters, helping them validate their technology to the market and resolve investment decisions more quickly.