



Hasbro's Women Innovators of Play Opens Fourth Annual Design Challenge and Expands Program with New In-Person Event Series

12 Oct, 2026

Submissions open October 15 through November 20, 2026; the program evolves from a virtual conference into year-round in-person networking events, held in partnership with Women in Toys, Licensing & Entertainment

PAWTUCKET, R.I., Oct. 12, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Hasbro today announced that the Women Innovators of Play (WIOP) Design Challenge returns for a fourth consecutive year, opening to submissions on October 15 and closing November 20.

Alongside the Challenge, Hasbro is expanding the WIOP program into a series of in-person networking events held throughout the year to bring together women across the gaming, toy, licensing, entertainment, and play industries.

The 2026 Design Challenge invites women of all backgrounds and experience levels to submit an original concept for the next great mass-market toy or game. Entries are judged on innovation, ability to scale, fun factor and playability, design and aesthetics, and manufacturability. Each winner receives a \$10,000 USD prize, a day of programming at Hasbro's new Boston headquarters, a mentorship session with one of Hasbro's top women leaders, and a one-year complimentary membership to Women in Toys, Licensing, and Entertainment (WiT). Since 2023, Hasbro has awarded mentorship, exposure, and \$90,000 USD in prize money to winners from around the world – several of whom have gone on to win industry awards and build careers in independent game design.

"Play has always been shaped by women – as inventors, designers, storytellers, and players – and Women Innovators of Play exists to celebrate that talent and help more brilliant women find a way into this industry," said Kim Boyd, President, Global Licensing & Entertainment at Hasbro. "Our Design Challenge is the clearest expression of that commitment. Four years in, it has put real prize money, mentorship, and industry exposure behind women with great ideas and the ambition to bring them to life. Pairing our Design Challenge with in-person events throughout the year means we're not opening a door once a year, we're building lasting pathways into the toy, game, and entertainment industries."

From Virtual Conference to Year-Round Community

Launched in fall 2023, Women Innovators of Play has connected, educated, and inspired thousands of women worldwide through its annual Design Challenge, virtual thought leadership conferences, and digital content. In 2026, the program expanded to include in-person gatherings anchored to key industry moments: panels, screenings, and networking receptions that give women in play-based industries direct access to the people shaping them.

The first of these events, celebrating "Women Innovators of Magic," was held July 22 at Wizards of the Coast's Renton, Washington headquarters, in partnership with WiT. It was the largest event in WiT Seattle's history, with *Magic: The Gathering* superfan and Olympic figure skater Amber Glenn among attendees. The evening premiered [a new Spark Moment documentary short](#) and featured a panel with the creative team behind the *Magic: The Gathering* Secret Lair x [Global Fund for Women](#) release, who discussed career paths in game design, storytelling, art direction, and creative leadership. Proceeds from the event benefited the WiT Foundation Scholarship.

The second event, held in partnership with WiT, occurred Wednesday, October 7, 2026, in London during Brand Licensing Europe, and brought together women from across the licensing, entertainment, toy, and game industries to exchange ideas and meet the people shaping what's next in play.

"Our partnership with Hasbro's Women Innovators of Play is a natural extension of WiT's mission to advance women through leadership, networking and education," said Angelina Castro, Executive Director of WiT. "Seeing the largest crowd in WiT Seattle's history come together in July, and reconnecting with our global community in London, shows how much women in this industry value real, in-person connection. We're proud to welcome each Design Challenge winner into the WiT community and look forward to supporting their growth long after the Challenge ends."

How to Enter

The 2026 Women Innovators of Play Design Challenge is open for submissions from October 15 to November 20, 2026 at <https://spark.hasbro.com/womeninnovators>. Winners will be announced in early February 2027.

Aspiring inventors, designers and creators can also join the Hasbro Women Innovators community on LinkedIn, now more than 1,400 members strong, at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/14607918/>.

About Women Innovators of Play

Hasbro's Women Innovators of Play launched in fall 2023 to attract more women and girls to the toy, licensing and gaming industries by celebrating and connecting women innovators of play worldwide. Through its annual Design Challenge, virtual thought leadership conferences, digital content and in-person networking events, WIOP has connected, educated and inspired thousands of women globally. The program also includes Hasbro's Girl Innovators of Play program, anchored in a partnership with Girl Up, a girl-centered leadership development initiative focused on equity for girls and women in spaces where they are unheard or underrepresented. Learn more at <https://spark.hasbro.com/womeninnovators>.

About Hasbro

Hasbro is a leading games, IP and toy company whose mission is to create joy and community through the magic of play. With 165 years of expertise, Hasbro delivers groundbreaking play experiences and reaches more than 1 billion fans annually around the world, through physical and digital games, video games, toys, licensed consumer products, location-based entertainment, film, TV and more.

Through its franchise-first approach, Hasbro unlocks value from both new and legacy IP, including *Magic: The Gathering*, *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Monopoly*, *Hasbro Games*, *Nerf*, *Transformers*, *Play-Doh* and *Peppa Pig*, as well as premier partner brands. Powered by its portfolio of thousands of iconic marks and a diversified network of partners and subsidiary studios, Hasbro brings fans together wherever they are, from tabletop to screen.

For more than a decade, Hasbro has been consistently recognized for its corporate citizenship, including being named one of the 100 Best Corporate Citizens by 3BL Media, a 2026 JUST Capital Industry Leader, a Brand that Matters by Fast Company, and one of the 50 Most Community-Minded Companies in the U.S. by the Civic 50 for fourteen consecutive years. For more information, visit <https://corporate.hasbro.com> or follow Hasbro on LinkedIn.

About Women in Toys, Licensing & Entertainment

Founded in 1991, Women in Toys, Licensing & Entertainment (WiT) is a premier global nonprofit organization that champions a community of professionals who create, license, market and bring brands, products and experiences to life. Through meaningful connections, WiT expands access, advances careers and fosters collaboration. With 25 chapters worldwide, WiT supports women at every career stage through impactful programming, mentorship, scholarships and community-building. Learn more at womenintoys.com, or follow us on LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

Media Contact:

Abby Hodes | Hasbro, Inc. | communications@hasbro.com

HAS-C

Press assets:

Spark moment: How to become a Magic: The Gathering artist: https://youtu.be/By3N2MfU_1U?si=m_aBs87nwqd2r3zl

