



# 2025

York Region Economic Development **YEAR IN REVIEW**



**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** We acknowledge that York Region is located on the traditional territory of many Indigenous peoples including the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Métis peoples and the treaty territories of the Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Williams Treaties First Nations. Today this area is home to many diverse Indigenous Peoples, and we recognize their history, spirituality, culture and stewardship of this land. We also acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as our closest First Nation community.

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

2025 was a year of delivery, innovation, and impact for York Region's economic development team. Building on the strong foundation of previous years, we successfully achieved all actions outlined in our strategic plan for the year, reinforcing York Region's position as a leading destination for business growth and investment.

York Region is home to over 59,000 businesses and more than 625,000 jobs, making it one of the largest and most diverse business communities in Ontario and across Canada. This dynamic ecosystem continues to attract investment and talent, driving prosperity across our nine local municipalities.

In the face of economic uncertainty spurred by the tariff disputes, we championed trade diversification, helping businesses across multiple sectors explore expansion into new markets and build resilience in an evolving global economy. Our support for entrepreneurs and small business owners in the Region's Norther Six communities remained a priority, ensuring they have the tools and resources to thrive.

Our innovation related efforts continue to bear fruit and a significant milestone in 2025 was securing the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) Regional Technology Development Site (RTDS) investment, to be delivered with our primary partners York University and ventureLAB. This strengthens York Region's role in advancing automotive innovation and mobility technologies. This achievement creates new opportunities for collaboration and economic growth in emerging sectors.

Recognizing the importance of talent in driving competitiveness, we developed a specialized toolkit to assist advanced manufacturers with talent acquisition and workforce support. This initiative reflects our commitment to addressing workforce challenges and enabling businesses to scale effectively.

Marketing efforts in 2025 amplified York Region's profile, showcasing the assets and advantages that make our region a premier location for business. Through strategic campaigns and storytelling, we increased exposure for local businesses and highlighted the innovation ecosystem that powers our economy.

Finally, our success is rooted in strong partnerships. In 2025, we worked closely with local municipalities, provincial and federal governments both domestically and internationally to deliver joint initiatives that promote investment, innovation, and global connectivity. These collaborations amplify York Region's profile and ensure our businesses have access to the resources and networks they need to succeed. I invite you to follow our York Link social media channels to stay aware of business news and activities across York Region.

As we look ahead, York Region remains focused on fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready economy. Thank you to our partners, stakeholders, and the business community for your continued collaboration and trust. Together, we are building a stronger York Region.

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**Jonathan Wheatle**  
Director, Economic Development  
The Regional Municipality of York

# REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS



## Regional Advisory Services and Sector Development Initiatives Support Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction

York Region’s strength lies in its economies of scale as Ontario’s third-largest business centre, anchored by cross-municipal industry, innovation, and talent clusters that play a critical role in attracting and retaining businesses. To support and grow these clusters, the Region delivers targeted business advisory and sector development strategies that integrate research, sector expertise, business engagement, a strong partner network, and a robust marketing platform.

Regional business advisory services target established companies in priority growth sectors and are delivered in collaboration with local municipalities, expanding the reach and impact of municipal corporate outreach programs.

In 2025, priority sectors included automotive and autotech, information and communications technology (ICT), life sciences, and agri-food, with advanced manufacturing serving as a common theme. This year, these industries remain central to our services and an additional focus was placed on the aerospace and defence sector that is experiencing significant investments by the federal government.

Small businesses in northern York Region—Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket, and Stouffville—receive dedicated support through the York Small Business Enterprise Centre (YSBEC), which offers advisory services, programming, and access to targeted funding programs.

Regional business advisory and small business services consistently earn positive feedback from clients, industry stakeholders, and municipal partners for their professionalism, responsiveness, and valuable contributions to business growth.

Working in collaboration with local municipalities and service delivery partners, York Region’s Economic Strategy team plays a pivotal role in advancing business retention, expansion, and attraction across the Region. This publication highlights some of the key initiatives and achievements from 2025.

## York Region Offers Strategies to Strengthen Agri-Tourism and New Business Investment at EDCO Regional Event in Georgina

In May 2025, the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) hosted its Central Regional Event at Clearwater Farm in the Town of Georgina, bringing together economic developers from across Ontario to explore key topics such as Indigenous partnerships, agri-tourism growth, investment readiness for rural communities, and leveraging community stakeholders for collective economic development. The event featured opening remarks from Mayor Margaret Quirk and a keynote by Lauri Hoeg, Indigenous Relations Advisor at York Region, followed by presentations and panel discussions.

Our team actively contributed to these discussions: Meena Hassanali, Program Manager of Rural and Agri-Food Initiatives, led a presentation and joined a panel on fostering sustainable connections between farming and tourism, while Katie Maginn, Senior Business Development Advisor, participated in a panel on preparing smaller communities for investment. The event also featured insights from industry leaders and partners, offering practical strategies to strengthen agri-tourism and attract new business investment.



## LGC Group’s New Facility a Major Investment in York Region’s Life Sciences Sector

York Region’s life sciences sector continued to expand with the opening of LGC Group’s new 203,000 sq. ft. Organic Chemistry Synthesis Centre of Excellence in Vaughan. This \$100 million expansion was supported through collaboration between Invest Ontario, Vaughan Economic Development, Toronto Global, and York Region Economic Strategy.

LGC, a UK-based global leader in life sciences, is supporting up to 400 high-skill jobs at the new facility and significantly boosts the global production capacity of Toronto Research Chemicals (TRC), an LGC-owned company. TRC’s products reach over 170 countries, supporting research in cancer, infectious diseases, mental health, and environmental safety — strengthening Canada’s life sciences ecosystem.

The investment underscores York Region and Ontario’s position as a growing life sciences hub, powered by a strong innovation ecosystem, strategic location, and a highly skilled talent pool.

## Supporting York Region Businesses Through Trade and Tariff Impacts

York Region's economy continues to deal with the impact of U.S. tariffs and ongoing trade uncertainty. Manufacturing — the Region's largest export sector and the most sensitive to tariffs — accounts for roughly \$12 billion in exports, with more than 80% shipped to the United States.

Auto parts manufacturing is particularly vulnerable, representing 22% of total exports.

Other sectors closely tied to the auto industry, such as plastics and rubber-based products and fabricated metal components, also face significant risk. The Region's agri-food sector is also exposed to tariff-related risks.

In response to U.S. tariffs, the federal and provincial governments launched or expanded financial relief and support programs to help businesses navigate trade and supply chain disruptions.

At the regional level, York Region Economic Strategy introduced targeted trade and tariff support initiatives. These efforts are strategically aligned with municipal and upper-tier government programs to strengthen regional-municipal collaboration and maximize impact. Collectively, these initiatives reinforced York Region's position as a responsive, data-driven leader in economic development amid global trade uncertainty.

Business advisory services were adapted to address trade-related challenges, leveraging provincial and national partner organizations including, Export Development Canada, Ontario's Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Global Affairs Canada and the Trade Commissioner Service, and Next Generation Manufacturing Canada (NGen).

**View trade and tariff resources:** [yorklink.ca/trade](http://yorklink.ca/trade)

In 2025, York Region addressed evolving trade and tariff dynamics with the U.S. by actively engaging in targeted international business missions. Through strategic partnerships with local, provincial, and federal stakeholders, as well as the business community, these efforts aimed to help unlock new international opportunities and connections in innovation-driven industries.

Communications and outreach were enhanced with the launch of a centralized trade and tariff resource page with a focused trade events calendar on [yorklink.ca](http://yorklink.ca) that has amassed more than 5,000 views, and a #MadeinYR social media campaign to spotlight locally manufactured products.

Regional activities were informed by robust research and data, including in-depth analysis of Statistics Canada export/import data for York Region, sector-specific analysis, a tariff impact forecast developed with the Conference Board of Canada, and involvement with various economic and sector tariff workshops.

Impacted small businesses and startups were supported by the York Small Business Enterprise Centre and small business centres in the Region's southern three municipalities and innovation centres including ventureLAB, YSpace, and Treefrog Accelerator.

Other specific initiatives undertaken include, but not limited to:

- Co-hosting the Canada Automotive Summit and a tariff Q&A with the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association (APMA) and the City of Vaughan.
- Partnering with Global Affairs Canada for a masterclass for food and beverage manufacturers looking at expanding to the Danish market and with International Centre for Training of Authorities and Leaders-York University for a supply chain resiliency webinar.
- Cross-sector efforts including an exclusive York Region-led expert advice podcast series, The Tariff Impact, offering actionable insights for manufacturers and exporters impacted by U.S. tariffs.
- A new defense sector market-entry and diversification initiative was launched in late 2025 and roll out through 2026 and beyond.

### Key Tariff Support Actions Included:

- Refocusing business advisory services to address trade and tariff impacts and identify mitigation opportunities.
- Implementing targeted initiatives to support sectors most vulnerable to tariff-related disruptions.
- Centralizing communication to keep the business community informed on trade updates, federal and provincial programs, and available support measures.
- Supporting market diversification for impacted businesses to expand trade and investment opportunities outside the U.S. market.
- Enhancing assistance for small businesses, entrepreneurship, and innovation through dedicated programs and regional partnerships.





## APMA Canada Automotive Summit 2025: Driving Industry Resilience

The APMA Canada Automotive Summit, held in Vaughan for the second straight year, brought together more than 400 attendees, including government officials, industry leaders, and innovators representing over 180 companies.

Opening remarks were delivered by Steven Del Duca, Mayor of Vaughan, and Eric Jolliffe, York Region Chairman & CEO, followed by industry-led panels and discussions on the future of Canada’s automotive sector amid ongoing trade uncertainty with the U.S.

Despite these challenges, speakers expressed confidence in the industry’s resilience and long-term growth. The event featured high-profile speakers, including executives from Ford Motor Company of Canada, CIBC, Martinrea International, and others, as well as cabinet ministers from the federal and provincial governments.

The 2025 summit achieved significant visibility with extensive media coverage, over 1 million digital content views and additional exposure through two regional tables hosted with senior leadership and industry guests.

This successful collaboration reinforced York Region’s commitment to supporting the local automotive sector and fostering strategic partnerships. York Region Economic Strategy is proudly hosting this national summit for a third time on June 9, 2026 in collaboration with Vaughan Economic Development.

## Advancing International Trade and Foreign Direct Investment Diversification Through Collaboration

York Region is a top destination for foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Greater Toronto Area; home to approximately 600 international companies contributing roughly 10% of employment in the Region.

In May 2022, Regional Council approved a “Made in York Region” FDI partnership framework that balances regional economies of scale and the independent municipal FDI programs and priorities within York Region. This framework focuses on:

- Supporting local-municipal FDI goals through cost-sharing of professional investment attraction readiness and prospecting services. All nine municipalities are eligible to access the fund for qualifying FDI initiatives.
- Regional visibility and representation in key sectors and markets through select targeted in-market activities and promotional efforts, plus enhanced marketing exposure through the York Link marketing channels.
- Enhancing regional visibility, regional funding, coordination, and collaboration with Toronto Global - the GTA’s dedicated FDI attraction agency funded by all levels of government.
- Providing on-demand professional support for municipal-led FDI clients and regionally significant investment opportunities.

York Region’s FDI partnership framework continues to position the Region as a competitive destination for global investment while directly supporting municipal-led FDI efforts. This approach was instrumental in York Region ranking among “Canada’s Best Locations” for investment for a second consecutive year by Site Selection Magazine, which caters to an international audience.

In addition to Region-led initiatives highlighted in this publication, York Region’s FDI Partnership Fund remains a vital tool for advancing local investment readiness and attraction efforts.

In 2025, several municipalities accessed the fund for targeted initiatives:

**Aurora:** Updated its economic development community profile and launched a branded virtual guided tour showcasing developments and downtown assets.

**Georgina:** Continued a retargeting promotional campaign focused on investment sites and promoted an investment attraction testimonial video.

**Richmond Hill:** Leveraged lead generation services for Hannover Messe, a major industrial trade show in Germany, and developed an FDI promotional brochure.

**Vaughan:** Acquired professional services to support international missions through direct engagement with trade organizations and potential investors.

Alongside maintaining a focus on facilitating and supporting FDI efforts, York Region addressed evolving trade and tariff dynamics with the U.S. by leading and supporting market diversification initiatives through targeted representation in international trade and investment missions. This included Hannover Messe (page 14), IAA Mobility in Germany (page 16) and SEMICON Taiwan (page 18); both countries are strategic markets for the region’s advanced manufacturing and technology sectors.

These partnered activities with region-based companies and economic development partners fostered trade and investment connections in key sectors and opportunities for access to new international markets.

## York Region Showcases Advanced Manufacturing Leadership at Hannover Messe 2025 and Supports Local Companies with Diversification Efforts

Last April, York Region Economic Strategy staff executed a high-profile trade diversification and FDI initiative as part of Canada's broader presence at Hannover Messe, the world's largest industrial manufacturing technology expo.

York Region's presence included eight businesses, three local municipalities, and two innovation partners. It was led by regional representatives with a focus on advanced manufacturing technology and innovation.

The Region maintained a prominent presence through three separate branded spaces in collaboration with Invest Ontario, NGen — Canada's manufacturing innovation supercluster organization, and York University.

Business delegates participated in York Region-facilitated show floor industry panels on robotics, market diversification, and technology, presented in collaboration with NGen and the Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing. York Region's partners, NGen and Canada's Trade Commissioner Service, also arranged pre-scheduled FDI and business-to-business meetings for participating businesses and organizations, complementing numerous onsite connections established during the event.

The initiative generated significant visibility, including high-profile promotional activations and 400,000 digital content views that reinforced York Region's position as a hub for manufacturing innovation in Canada. The activity received very positive feedback from participating businesses and partners, and it also paved the way for several follow-on trade and investment initiatives vis-à-vis the German market.



## York Region Expanding Global Semiconductor Connections at Semicon Taiwan

Global semiconductor leaders — including AMD, Qualcomm, Marvell Technology, Arm, and Astera Labs — have established and expanded R&D operations in York Region. Their presence has created thousands of high-quality jobs and cements the Region’s status as a leading hub for semiconductor innovation in applications ranging from AI and automotive to consumer electronics, computing, networking, and data centres.

In September 2025, York Region Economic Strategy joined the Ontario-led trade mission to SEMICON Taiwan; one of the world’s largest semiconductor industry events, attracting more than 100,000 professionals and 1,200 companies from 56 countries.

Alongside partners including Ontario’s Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Toronto Global, and the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei, our team promoted York Region as Canada’s leading cluster for semiconductor design and microelectronics manufacturing. The mission

showcased the Region’s innovation ecosystem with several local businesses participating as part of the Ontario delegation.

York Region maintained a dedicated presence within Ontario’s pavilion, participated in market briefings organized by the Canadian Trade Office, and engaged in onsite and offsite meetings in partnership with Toronto Global. The Region achieved strong visibility through an earned media feature article in a Taiwanese technology publication, TechSoda, as well as through digital media promotion and engagement on the York Link channels.

These efforts at SEMICON Taiwan strengthened relationships with provincial and federal partners and key semiconductor stakeholders. Additionally, reinforcing York Region’s role in global trade diversification for Region-based businesses and investment attraction within one of the world’s most critical technology markets.



## Marvell Technology’s \$238M Investment Boosts York Region’s Semiconductor & AI Leadership

The semiconductor subsector in York Region is set to benefit from Marvell Technology’s \$238 million, five-year expansion to strengthen Ontario’s position as a global AI infrastructure leader, supported by a \$17 million investment from the provincial Invest Ontario Fund announced by the Province in early December.

The investment will scale their semiconductor research and development centre in York Region, along with the opening of a new office and optical lab in two other Ontario municipalities.

York Region Economic Strategy staff joined Toronto Global and other partners including the City of Markham, ventureLAB, and York University in 2023 for a visit to the company’s California headquarters to reinforce the GTA’s leadership in hardware and semiconductors. This led to continued engagement by partners and the announcement of this major business investment by Marvell Technology last year.

Additionally, the investment is creating up to 350 direct high-value jobs across Ontario’s tech corridor and contributes to the Region’s excellent reputation as a critical innovation hub.



## York Region Strengthens European Trade and Innovation Connections in the automotive and smart mobility sector at IAA Mobility

In September 2025, York Region Economic Strategy took part in the Ontario Government's trade mission to IAA Mobility in Germany, enhancing the Region's visibility and strengthening strategic connections within the European mobility innovation market. The event, which attracted more than 500,000 visitors, provided an opportunity to showcase York Region as a leading Canadian hub for automotive parts, electronics manufacturing, and mobility innovation.

During the trade show, York Region staff supported local companies participating in the Ontario delegation, with many of them receiving strong interest from attendees for their advanced AI-powered solutions and vehicle inspection technologies. Maple Advanced Robotics, a York Region-based company, represented the Region on a high-profile industry panel, further showcasing its leadership in mobility innovation.

Participation at IAA Mobility delivered significant outcomes, including strong regional visibility through onsite pavilion branding and digital promotion, as well as direct engagement with key market stakeholders through targeted meetings. Follow-up opportunities emerged with incoming German business missions from Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, along with aftercare support for a new investment in York Region by a Germany-based automotive technology R&D company.

The Region's presence was further amplified through the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development's digital channels and formally recognized by provincial officials. These efforts strengthened York Region's role in global trade diversification and laid the foundation for future initiatives, including a planned Regional-led activity at Hannover Messe 2026.



## York Link: Driving Regional Business Promotion to a Global Audience

York Region's widely recognized York Link marketing platform — that leverages a standalone economic development website, well-established social media channels, and a monthly e-newsletter — plays a central role in promoting business growth and economic development from across all local municipalities. Targeting businesses and professional talent both locally and internationally significantly extends and complements municipal outreach by showcasing York Region's economies-of-scale strengths as a destination for business investment, innovation, and talent attraction.

York Link's messaging has proven to directly influence business location decisions, as business leaders notably leverage data and York Region's competitive value propositions that are available on the site.

The website (yorklink.ca) serves as a regional hub, offering business news, key municipal updates, industry cluster profiles, economic data, job boards,

business event listings, and other resources that support business retention, expansion, and attraction, as well placemaking messaging focused on attracting top professional talent. The website's design was refreshed in 2025 to enhance usability, accessibility features, language options, and more.

Last year, York Link was instrumental in delivering a joint digital campaign with Invest Ontario, the provincial organization focused on foreign direct investment. This campaign boosted regional visibility and cross-promoted York Region's value propositions on a major provincial marketing channel.

By 2025 year-end, York Link surpassed more than one million annual content views and attracted more than 33,700 followers and subscribers across its digital platforms. This demonstrates its effectiveness in building a vibrant, engaged business community and supporting key priorities from the 2024 – 2027 York Region Economic Development Action Plan.



## Addressing Workforce Gaps: York Region Introduced Manufacturing Talent Toolkit in Collaboration with Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters

In 2025, York Region Economic Strategy partnered with the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) industry association to develop and release the York Region Manufacturing Talent Toolkit. This valuable resource is designed to help manufacturers — particularly in the auto parts and electronics sectors — address workforce challenges.

The toolkit provides practical strategies for talent attraction and retention, including guidance on partnerships with academia at all levels, newcomer and immigration programs, corporate best practices for employer branding, funding opportunities, and training and upskilling programs.

After receiving positive feedback from local businesses and industry partners, the toolkit also generated strong engagement online through York Link with more than 750 download in the first few months following its release. The initiative played a key role in informing CME's Ontario-wide labour force report last year, highlighting the Region's leadership in supporting industry competitiveness and workforce development.

## York Regional Council has approved \$2 million from the Innovation Investment Fund to establish and lead an OVIN Regional Technology Development Site

York Region Economic Strategy, in partnership with York University and ventureLAB, is set to lead an Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) Regional Technology Development Site (RTDS), with the support of York Regional Council, which approved \$2 million in funding during a council meeting in June of last year. The Ontario Centre of Innovation approved the OVIN RTDS in October 2025.

The RTDS is positioned to accelerate the development and commercialization of advanced automotive and smart mobility technologies by giving small and

medium-sized enterprises access to critical infrastructure, technical expertise, and collaborative partnerships. By bringing together startups, industry leaders, academic institutions, and government, the RTDS will support innovation at every stage of development.

Led by York Region — alongside our partners at York University, ventureLAB, and support from the Ontario Government — the significant RTDS investments reinforce the Region's role as a growing hub for next-generation mobility innovation.



## JumpSTART, supported by the Region's Innovation Investment Fund, continues to support women-led businesses and tech startups

Now in the second year of a three-year funding agreement with York University and Treefrog Accelerator, JumpSTART continues to strengthen its role as an initiative dedicated to supporting women-led businesses and international tech entrepreneurs committed to establishing Canadian operations in York Region.

Delivered collaboratively by York University's YSpace and the Schulich School of Business, along with Newmarket-based Treefrog Accelerator, the program is designed to address systemic barriers to entrepreneurship while promoting inclusive innovation across the Region.

Supported through the York Region Innovation Investment Fund, JumpSTART advances key strategic priorities such as business attraction, job creation, and enhancing global competitiveness by equipping underrepresented founders with the tools, networks, and resources needed to scale their ventures.



## Fifteen Organizations Benefit from Combined \$75,000 in Funding from the York Region Tourism Fund

The York Region Tourism Fund, established in 2022, was created to strengthen and enhance tourism across York Region, contributing to the Region's placemaking efforts to attract new residents, visitors, and businesses. Through this support, the fund helps build a more vibrant and collaborative tourism ecosystem.

Last year, the fund provided financial support to 15 tourism events across York, allocating a total of \$75,000 in funding. This investment reflects York Region's ongoing commitment to supporting local initiatives that attract visitors and showcase the Region's diverse attractions and communities.

For additional details on the funding program, visit: [yorklink.ca/tourismfund](http://yorklink.ca/tourismfund).



## Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund Supports Eleven Organizations and Businesses

On the first night of HardTech, the York Region Economic Strategy team announced the 2025 Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund (EIF) winners at the Summit — celebrating businesses and organizations driving #YRtech innovation and making a lasting impact in the community.

Administered by ventureLAB, the EIF is a \$140,000 fund, supported by a \$100,000 annual contribution from York Region. Launched in 2019, the fund supports early-stage startups, accelerators, incubators, and non-profit community partners.

Since its inception, the EIF has supported more than 70 businesses and non-profit organizations, helping strengthen the Region's innovation ecosystem.

The 2025 winners of stream 1 and 2 received \$10,000 grants and included the following below. Stream 3 winners (see page 25) were the top two startups in the HardTech Pitch competition and split \$50,000 in prize money including a \$10,000 contribution from York Region.

### Stream 1: Non-Profit Community Partners Serving Underrepresented Communities

- FoundersGap
- The ClearWater Futures Foundation

### Stream 2: Small Businesses & Tech Entrepreneurs Developing Cleantech and Agri-Tech Solutions

- STEM Minds
- Nanodevice
- Just Vertical
- RadioWires
- Serenity Power
- Poket
- Cropinno.co

Learn more about the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund: [venturelab.ca/eif](https://venturelab.ca/eif)



## The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual HardTech Summit Featured Bold, Future Shaping Technologies

The 5th Annual HardTech Summit reaffirmed its position as Canada's leading event focused on hardware, semiconductors, medtech, AI, and automobility. Led by York Region's regional innovation partner, ventureLAB — and supported by core funding from the Region — HardTech brought together innovators, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders over two days.

A standout moment of the event was the fireside chat featuring Rahul Goel, CEO of Markham-based NordSpace, in conversation with Steve Paikin. Goel spoke about NordSpace's ambitious vision and its role in positioning Canada at the forefront of a new era in commercial space exploration.

### EIF Stream 3: HardTech Pitch Competition

The HardTech Pitch Competition - the most anticipated part of the annual event, showcased an impressive lineup of finalists presenting bold, future-shaping technologies.

Congratulations to Kiwi Charge, winner of the \$30,000 top prize. Their autonomous mobile charging robots operate overnight, replacing up to 30 traditional chargers at just 40 percent of the cost.

PROVA Innovations was the runner-up recipient of the \$20,000 award for their outstanding innovation. They are a clinical-stage MedTech company offering WithinStride®, a smart-insole platform providing real-time gait analysis, remote monitoring, and personalized home-based gait retraining.

## York Region and MaRS collaborate to deliver promotional media coverage of the Region's innovation ecosystem

The Economic Strategy team collaborated with the MaRS Discovery District PR Accelerator to promote York Region's innovation ecosystem. This was achieved through proactive outreach to key media outlets to generate earned media opportunities for local innovative businesses and initiatives. Their efforts centered on positioning the Region's programs, companies, and economic strengths in front of relevant journalists and media outlets.

As a result of this work, the MaRS PR team successfully secured strong media coverage for York Region, landing notable stories in Farms.com and the Toronto Star. In addition, MaRS achieved multiple top-tier media placements for Goats in the City, a York Region startup gaining attention for its innovative approach to tackling invasive plant species.

The coverage generated through these efforts included several media articles focused on topics such as:

- York Region launching a new Agri-Food Startup Program
- Goats in the City - a York Region-based startup tackling invasive plants in urban environments
- What Xanadu's move signals for quantum computing in Canada



## York Region strengthens industry connections at York University Biotech Showcase and OVIN Partnering Forum

In September, the York University Biotech Showcase and Networking event kicked off the second year of the Master of Biotech Management program — delivered at the Markham Campus — and highlighted a new cohort of emerging biotech leaders.

Attendees were given a unique opportunity to meet future innovators and connect directly with faculty members and industry partners who are helping advance the biotech sector. York Region Economic Strategy's innovation team participated in the event, delivering a presentation on the Region's growing biotech subsector within the broader life sciences

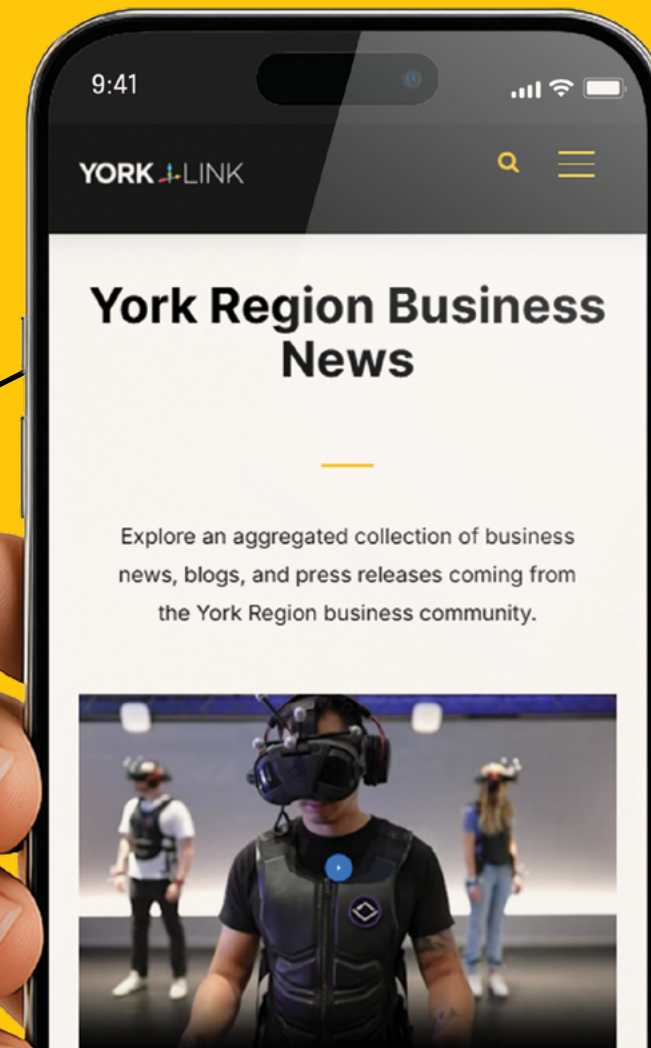
sector and emphasized York Region's role as a hub for innovation and biotechnology development.

The team also continued to build connections with industry leaders in the autotech and mobility sector with their attendance at the 2025 OVIN Partnering Forum in late October. The conference featured keynote presentations from industry experts, open-mic pitch sessions that allow participants to highlight challenges, solutions, or areas of expertise, as well as partnership success stories demonstrating the real-world impact of collaborative innovation.

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## Implementation of the 2024 – 2027 York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy is progressing well through collaborative efforts

Throughout 2025, York Region Economic Strategy along with the York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee, local municipalities, and agri-food partners, worked diligently on moving forward initiatives within the 2024 – 2027 York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector Strategy.

More than 60% of the actions — there are 27 in the strategy — have been initiated and are ongoing, driving measurable results in engagement, promotion and program delivery. Implementation will continue through 2027, with ongoing programming, partnerships, and evaluation to ensure the strategy remains responsive to sector needs and opportunities.

The strategy's impact was recognized by the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) being selected as the winner for the 2025 EDCO Awards of Excellence in the Planning & Strategic Development category for large municipalities.



**100+**

Events, webinars and meetings held



**15**

Newsletters shared with 400+ subscribers



**\$345K**

Funding leveraged by the Region and partners



**44K+**

York Farm Fresh maps delivered



**Launched**

York Region Agri-Food Start Up Program



**2,500+**

Stakeholders, businesses, and partners engaged



## Agri-Food Innovation Showcased on York Region Farm and Food Tour

In September 2025, the York Region Agriculture and Agri-Food Advisory Committee hosted a tour showcasing innovation across York Region's agriculture and agri-food sector.

Elected officials, municipal economic developers, planners, and school board trustees visited three York Region-based businesses:

**Dandyland Holsteins:** A family-run farm in the Township of King with robotic milking technology that showcases innovation in dairy farming.

**King Cole Ducks:** A fully integrated farm-to-fork operation in the Town of Stouffville, from breeding and hatchery to processing, cooking and more — offering a comprehensive look at every stage of duck production.

**Haven Greens:** Canada's first fully automated lettuce greenhouse, located in the Township of King, producing 10,000 pounds of sustainably grown, pesticide-free leafy greens per day.

This tour offered an opportunity to connect with local farmers, explore how technology and policy are shaping agriculture, and see innovation in action.

## York Region Agri-Food Startup Program Launched to Support Equity-Deserving and Indigenous Entrepreneurs

In September 2025, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Startup Program, which is designed to build and grow successful food-based businesses, launched with a mission to support twenty equity-deserving and Indigenous entrepreneurs from all over the region during the two-year program.

York Region Economic Strategy secured funding through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership to launch the program. Ten entrepreneurs were onboarded in the first cohort in 2025 and an additional ten will be onboarded this year.

The program aims to break down systemic barriers in the agri-food sector, including limited access to commercial kitchens and financing, while equipping participants with financial literacy and business training to support inclusive economic growth across the Region.

The York Region Agri-Food Startup Program is delivered in collaboration with Foodpreneur Lab, Syzl, York Region Food Network, the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, local municipalities, and other industry partners.

For more visit: [yorklink.ca/foodstartup](http://yorklink.ca/foodstartup)



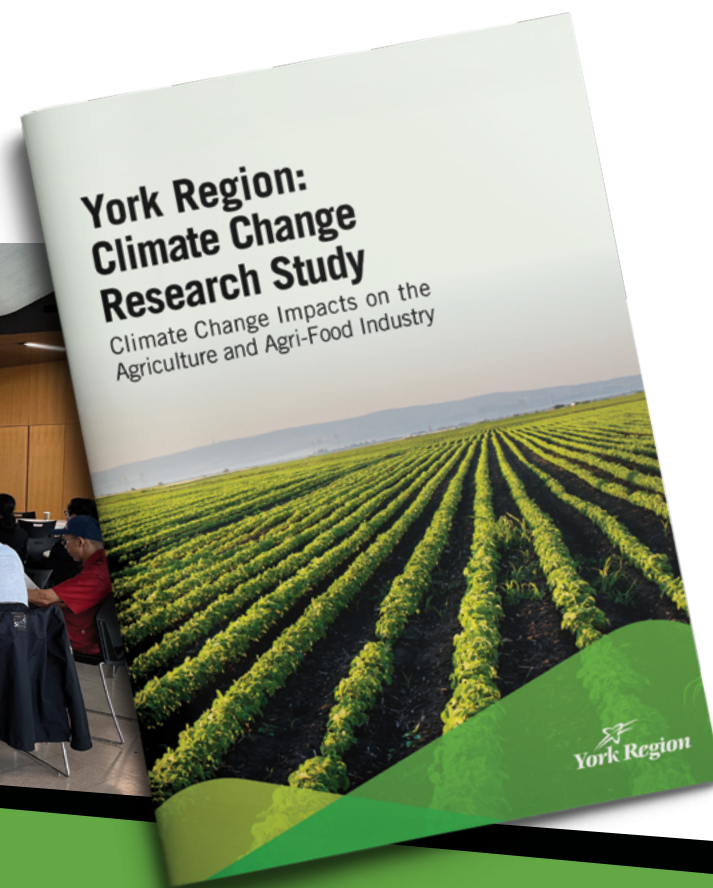
## Advancing Climate Resilience in York Region's Agri-Food Sector

York Region completed a research study on climate change impacts on the agriculture and agri-food sector, led by KPMG, to better understand how rising greenhouse gas emissions and increasingly unpredictable weather are affecting this industry.

The study highlights how climate impacts, such as drought, heat stress, and extreme weather, can disrupt every stage of the agri-food value chain, reducing yields, limiting food supplies, and increasing operating costs. It also identifies opportunities to strengthen resilience and recommends actions, including climate baseline assessments, sustainable farming practices, supply-chain technology improvements, innovation and diversification, expanded government and financial supports, and enhanced education and capacity building.

To share these findings in June 2025, York Region hosted the Making Business Sense of Climate Change Solutions Forum, a half-day event that brought together food and beverage processors, farms, and businesses across the agri-food value chain.

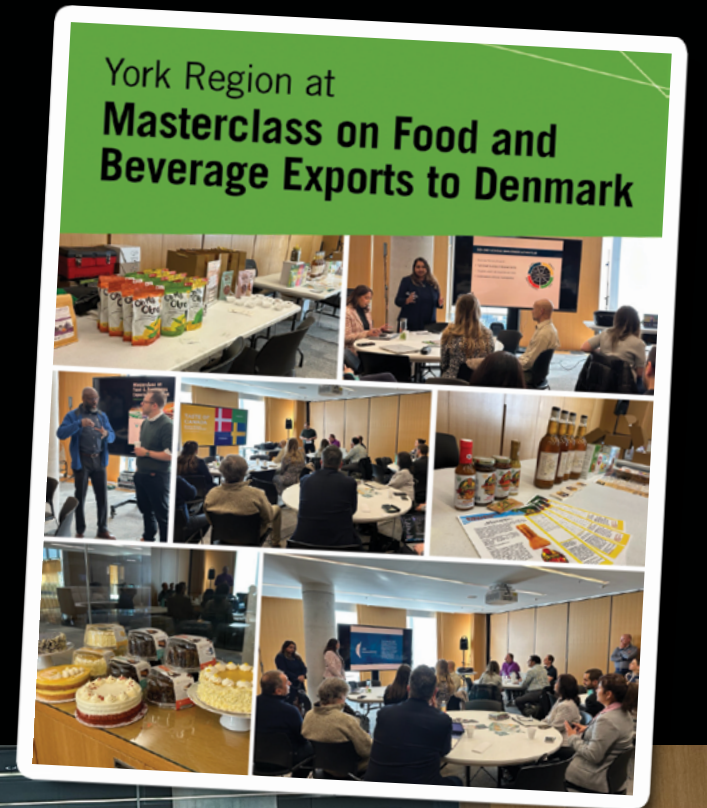
The forum featured expert speakers, practical insights on climate-related risks and opportunities, success stories from York Region agri-food businesses, and information on funding programs available to support local climate action.



## Masterclass Supports Agri-Food Businesses in Diversifying Trade Opportunities to New Markets

In 2025, trade uncertainty with the United States created unexpected challenges for many businesses, including those in the agri-food sector. To help support local businesses explore opportunities to diversify to new markets, York Region Economic Strategy's Agri-Food team, in collaboration with the City of Vaughan, hosted an insightful masterclass for food and beverage manufacturers on expanding to the Danish market, led by the Embassy of Canada to Denmark and Simmering Copenhagen.

Participants gained valuable market research about the preferences of Danish buyers and heard inspiring success stories from previous market entrants, highlighting the potential for new exporters. The workshop also featured individual meetings and feedback sessions on product-market fit, providing tailored advice to attendees.



## Partnerships and Collaboration Drive Positive Impacts for the Agri-Food Sector in York Region

Collaboration with local municipalities, advisory committee, industry and community partners is essential to advancing key actions in York Region’s agri-food strategy. In 2025, we worked closely with key partners to deliver impactful initiatives, including:

- Working with York Farm Fresh to raise awareness of local farms and farmers’ markets with distribution of 25,000 maps that connects residents with locally grown products.
- Partnered with ventureLAB to deliver a Masterclass on prototype development and market validation for agri-tech entrepreneurs.
- Initiated relationship-building with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation to foster future collaboration and inclusive economic development.
- Hosted a Career Pathways Networking Event in partnership with STEM Minds and Boreal Farms to connect youth and participants from the Skills Development Fund with local agri-food employers, promote workforce development, and showcase career opportunities across the agri-food value chain.
- Collaborated with members of the York Region Food Council including York Region Public Health and the York Region Food Network to update the 2013 Food Charter.
- Provided support to the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance to advance agri-food initiatives, including data tools like the ConnectON database, urban agriculture best practices, local food promotion, and sector knowledge exchange across the Golden Horseshoe.
- Partnered with the Township of King on the King Climate Change Agriculture Workshops to equip the agricultural sector with the tools and knowledge needed to tackle current and future challenges.
- Participated in a panel discussion on cultivating a sustainable connection between farming and tourism at the Economic Developers Council of Ontario’s Central Regional Event in Georgina.
- Collaborated with the Township of King to launch Farm 911: The Emily Project.



## Marketing Efforts Continue to Raise Awareness of the Positive Impact of the Region’s Agri-Food Sector

Raising the profile of the local agriculture and agri-food sector through various marketing campaigns targeting residents and businesses, is a key component of the Region’s agri-food strategy. Throughout 2025, the team delivered nine newsletters and published more than 120 agriculture and agri-food-related social media posts across our platforms and ran several campaigns and initiatives, including:

- Continued partnership with York Farm Fresh and the release of the 2025 Farm Fresh map and directory to raise awareness of local agricultural products, including a campaign during Local Food Week.
- Led a targeted farm vehicle road safety awareness campaign from May to October 2025 to promote safe driving around farm vehicles. The campaign featured roadside signage near agricultural areas and engaging social media content, resulting in over 200,000 impressions.
- Through the #MadeInYR social media campaign, select companies that manufacture consumer or business agri-food products in York Region were highlighted, along with other companies from key industry sectors.
- Secured five earned media stories for three York Region agriculture and agri-food businesses in partnership with MaRS, reinforcing key messaging about this important economic sector to a Canada-wide audience.

Learn about the Region’s Agri-Food sector: [yorklink.ca/agrifood](http://yorklink.ca/agrifood) or signup for the e-newsletter: [yorklink.ca/agrifoodnewsletter](http://yorklink.ca/agrifoodnewsletter)



# YORK SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE HIGHLIGHTS

## Small Businesses Get Expert Advice and Support from the York Small Business Enterprise Centre

In 2025, the York Region Small Business Enterprise Centre (YSBEC) supported the local business community in Northern York Region having:

- Delivered over 500 no-charge business consultations including one-on-one and group sessions to local small business owners and entrepreneurs
- Hosted and partnered on over 30 seminars and events with more than 800 attendees, covering topics such as marketing, sales, financing, market research, and business plan development
- Supported young entrepreneurs develop business skills through the successful implementation of the provincial program, Summer Company
- Executed the provincial Starter Company Plus program which provides funding, training, and skills development to small business owners that qualify
- Supported the creation of 73 new small businesses and 21 new jobs in the community

Northern York Region small businesses can access a variety of support from the York Small Business Enterprise Centre, such as business consultations, workshops and seminars, funding programs, and networking events.

If entrepreneurs are starting a new business or expanding an existing small business with fewer than ten employees, the York Small Business Enterprise Centre is here to help!

The YSBEC serves small businesses in Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Newmarket, and Stouffville. Those in Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan can reach out to their local small business enterprise centre for support.

## Professional Services Access Program Offers Assistance with Critical Professional Services

Having access to professional services is critical for the success of any business, but it can be expensive. The Northern York Region Professional Services Access Program makes it easy for eligible businesses to get no charge advice on legal, finance, marketing, and human resources from expert professionals.

Since the program's launch in 2021, this special program for YSBEC clients has helped more than 130 businesses by connecting them with experts like lawyers, accountants, and financial analysts.

Discover if your small business is eligible:  
[yorklink.ca/psap](http://yorklink.ca/psap)

**INTERESTED IN STARTING A BUSINESS, GET STARTED?**  
[YORKLINK.CA/SMALLBUSINESS](http://YORKLINK.CA/SMALLBUSINESS)

**OR**

**SIGNUP FOR THE YSBEC NEWSLETTER:**  
[YORKLINK.CA/YSBECNEWSLETTER](http://YORKLINK.CA/YSBECNEWSLETTER)



## Youth entrepreneurs learn essential skills while running their own companies during the summer break

In 2025, YSBEC proudly supported 11 student entrepreneurs through the province's Summer Company program, helping them launch a diverse range of businesses. Together, these young entrepreneurs learned valuable skills about running a business and how to turn a profit during the summer months. Notably, 9 out of 11 participants expressed a strong interest in continuing their entrepreneurial journey beyond the program.

Congratulations to these young entrepreneurs for their achievements last summer:

- Ana Demkovic – LexAna Academy of Advanced Writing
- Andrew Brown – Summer Swim Club
- Gloria Liu – Peace Echo
- Jack Cordingley – Atlas Watches
- Julia Jones – Framed By Her
- Michael Horvath – Stouffville Car Detailing
- Nadia Tahir – Math and Melodies
- Nicholas Fryer – Boats & Autos
- Samreen Khurram – Nova Events Photography
- Sarah Crone – Diamond Cleaning Services
- Steve Wong – PUREFLOW

The Summer Company experience included business workshops, one-on-one mentorship, and showcase opportunities. This year, in addition to the usual business workshops, we introduced a new "Entrepreneurship Mindset" workshop, designed to help students build the soft skills essential for long-term success in business.

To celebrate the achievements of our student entrepreneurs and thank our collaborating business partners, we held a graduation ceremony on August 22, 2025. Attended by Provincial Associate Minister Nina Tangri, Member of Provincial Parliament Dawn Gallagher Murphy, program participants, mentors, alumni, and school representatives.

Highlights included inspiring speeches from the Honourable Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Small Business, and Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Member of Provincial Parliament for Newmarket-Aurora, remarks from Summer Company alumni Rajmohan Santhosh on his journey founding AET Basketball, awards of excellence, and participants reflecting on their Summer Company experience.

**Do you know a student with entrepreneurial ambitions in northern York Region? Have them reach out to the YSBEC or visit: [yorklink.ca/summercompany](http://yorklink.ca/summercompany)**





## Starter Company Plus Program Supports 16 Entrepreneurs Through Training and Grants

Starter Company Plus is an Ontario Government-funded small business program administered by the YSBEC in northern York Region municipalities, while the southern three small business enterprise centres run it for their local small business community. The program offers entrepreneurs and small business opportunities to receive tailored business advice, mentoring, and training to help launch or expand their business.

The Starter Company Plus program runs from September through March, and for the 2025/2026 cohort over 120 inquiries and more than 50 applications were received for both the Existing and Training streams of the program. During the year, eight applicants were accepted into the Existing Stream, providing established entrepreneurs with tailored training and resources to help strengthen their operations. An additional fifteen participants joined the Training Cohort, gaining access to workshops, mentorship, and hands-on learning designed to develop their business skills.

The program provided grant funding to sixteen entrepreneurs after meeting eligibility criteria, reinforcing its role in empowering local business owners and contributing to economic growth across the Region.

Participants in the Training Stream completed an intensive 3-month program designed to equip them with the tools and knowledge needed to launch and grow successful businesses. By the end, participants had a fully developed business plan, improved confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities, and a strong foundation for applying for funding and scaling their businesses.

A collaborative event brought together small business enterprise centres from across York Region providing Starter Company Plus participants an opportunity to practice elevator pitch training, communication and branding skills, and a networking session of over 40 attendees.

**Interested in learning more about the Starter Company Plus program?**

Visit: [yorklink.ca/startercompanyplus](http://yorklink.ca/startercompanyplus)

## Black Entrepreneur Showcase Took Over Upper Canada Mall in Partnership with YSBEC and the Federation of African Canadian Economics Coalition

In 2025, the YSBEC was proud to strengthen its continued partnership with the Federation of African Canadian Economics (FACE) to support Black Entrepreneurs in York Region. Building on previous collaborations, the focus was on creating high-visibility opportunities for Black-owned businesses through two major showcase events.

These showcases were hosted at the Upper Canada Mall in Newmarket on April 15 and October 25. Each event provided Black entrepreneurs the opportunity to present their products and services to a broader audience, connect with potential customers and partners, and access resources such as the Black Entrepreneur Loan Fund to help secure capital and support business growth.

By partnering with FACE, our small business team continued its commitment to fostering inclusive economic growth and empowering Black-owned businesses to thrive in York Region.

Key outcomes included:

- Significant public engagement, with strong foot traffic providing Black entrepreneurs with heightened visibility and new customer reach
- Participating vendors reported notable increases in sales and lead generation, reflecting the direct economic impact of the events
- Attracted attendees from across York Region, broadening community reach and increasing local awareness of Black-owned businesses
- Strengthened inclusive economic growth by enhancing the visibility and representation of Black entrepreneurs within the regional business ecosystem



# INNOVATION PROGRAM METRICS

## Project JumpSTART

NOTE: Year 2 metrics not available until after March 31

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	Actual (Year 1 & 2)	Goal (Year 1 & 2)	Difference (Actual – Goal)
<b>International Tech Entrepreneurs:</b>			
New Participants	115 (awaiting Y2 Q4 report)	100	+
Jobs created	63 (awaiting Y2 Q4 report)	130	+-
<b>Female Tech Entrepreneurs:</b>			
New Participants	59 (awaiting Y2 Q4 report)	40	+
Jobs created	20 (awaiting Y2 Q4 report)	50	+-

**\*NOTES:**

- International Tech Entrepreneurs stream has exceeded Year 1 & 2 goals
- Female Tech Entrepreneurs stream has exceeded Year 1 & 2 goals
- Ongoing limitations imposed by the IRCC Start-Up Visa program and work permits backlogs continue to hinder the arrival of foreign-based tech entrepreneurs, and slow job creation

## ventureLAB - Core Services

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	Actual (2025)	Goal (2025)	Difference (Actual – Goal)
<b>York Region Business Engagement:</b>			
New Leads	107	70	+37
New Clients	37	40	-3
<b>Events and Workshops:</b>			
Hosted	124	60	+64
Attendees	3000+	2000	+1000

\*NOTES: Business Engagement, Events and Workshop performance indicators largely exceeded goals

## ventureLAB – 2025 Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund (EIF) Recipients

Stream 1: Community Partners

BUSINESS NAME	Description	Funding Received	Business Location
FoundersGap	Building bridges for Iranian and Persian-heritage entrepreneurs across North America through mentorship, networking, and community support.	\$10,000	Toronto**
ClearWater Futures Foundation	Educational hub dedicated to regenerative farming and environmental stewardship, providing hands-on training in sustainable agriculture for youth, women, and Indigenous communities.	\$10,000	Georgina

## ventureLAB – 2025 Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund (EIF) Recipients

Stream 2: Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

BUSINESS NAME	Description	Funding Received	Business Location
Cropinno	Agri-Tech startup transforming farming through satellite imagery and AI-powered analytics.	\$10,000	Toronto**
Poket	Customizable data collection and survey software solutions for platform for agricultural, sustainability and humanitarian uses.	\$10,000	Toronto**
Serenity Power	Next-Generation Solid Oxide Fuel Cell technology to bridge the gap between diesel and the green hydrogen economy.	\$10,000	Toronto**
RadioWires	Computer networking hardware solutions.	\$10,000	Ottawa**
Just Vertical	Sustainable indoor gardening systems.	\$10,000	Toronto**
Nanodevice Technologies Inc.	Advanced semiconductor-based sensors for agriculture, food, and medical applications.	\$10,000	Markham
STEM Minds Corp.	STEM and AgriTech education services.	\$10,000	Aurora

## ventureLAB – 2025 Entrepreneurship and Innovation Fund (EIF) Recipients

Stream 3: Pitch Competition

BUSINESS NAME	Description	Funding Received	Business Location
<b>Kiwi Charge</b> <a href="https://www.cattlescan.ca/">https://www.cattlescan.ca/</a>	Charging-as-a-Service specifically for electric vehicle owners in existing buildings that lack the charging infrastructure.	\$30,000***	Toronto**
Prova Innovations Limited	Solutions to help patients with brain injury, neurological disorder, degenerative disease, or mobility issues regain function through the promotion of neuroplasticity and neuromotor recovery.	\$20,000***	Hamilton*

\* Committed to co-locate to York Region or ventureLAB's innovation hub for at least six months upon prize acceptance

\*\* Outside of York Region but within ventureLAB catchment area

\*\*\* Of the \$50,000 in total prize value, \$10,000 was from EIF and ventureLAB contributed \$40,000

## ventureLAB - Hardware Catalyst Initiative (HCI)

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	Actual (Year 1 & 2)	Goal (Year 1 & 2)	Difference (Actual – Goal)
<b>HCI &amp; Hardware Stream:</b>			
New Companies Served	100	16	+84
Jobs created – York Region	185	32	+153
Jobs Created – Overall	581		
Products Commercialized	130	4	+126
Patents Registered	106	6	+100
<b>Canada Catalyst Stream:</b>			
Foreign Companies Landed	8	11	-3
Jobs Created – York Region	37	62	-25
Jobs Created - Overall	46		

**\*NOTES:**

- Hardware Stream exceeds all metrics
- Canada Catalyst Stream is tracking reasonably well with Foreign Companies Landed but is underperforming in Jobs Created. This is partially due to limitations imposed by the IRCC Start-Up Visa program and backlogs in issuing work permits hindering the arrival of foreign-based tech companies, and slowing job creation
- Combined metrics for this program are above targets

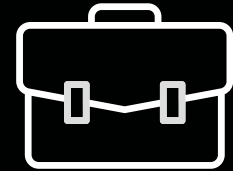
# **YORK REGION ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT**

# 2025 YORK REGION ECONOMY FACTS



## Population 1.3 Million

Ontario's 3rd Largest  
Municipal Jurisdiction



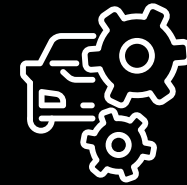
## Ontario's 3rd Largest Business Centre

59,000 Business  
Establishments Supporting  
625,000+ Local Jobs



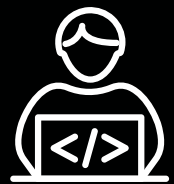
## Ontario's 3rd Largest Manufacturing Sector & 5th Largest in Canada

2,600+ Manufacturers



## Canada's Largest Auto Parts & Electronics Manufacturing Cluster

250+ Core Sector Companies



## 4,800 ICT Companies

Canada's 3rd Largest  
Technology Hub



## Ontario's 2nd Largest Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate Sector

5,300 Firms



## 3 of the Top 5 Corporate R&D Investors in the Greater Toronto Area. 5 of Top 10 in the Tech Sector



## Ontario's 2nd Largest F&B Processing Sector and 4th Largest in Canada 370 businesses

# YORK REGION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM

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Senior Business Development Advisor

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\* Indicates on approved leave in 2025.



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