Empowering Entrepreneurs to Succeed

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JumpSTART Program Aims to Fuel Innovation and Opportunities for Women and International Entrepreneurs in York Region's Ecosystem

The JumpSTART Program is aimed at supporting women and international entrepreneurs. The program has received a significant investment of $1.08 million from the York Region Innovation Investment Fund over the next three years.

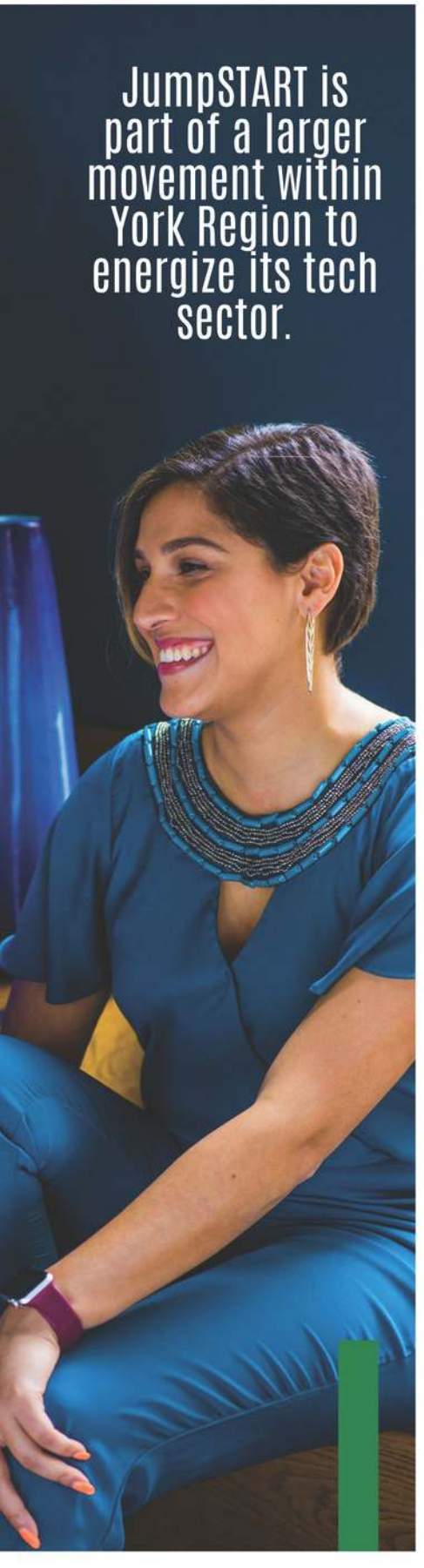


Collaborative Effort

JumpSTART is a collaborative effort between York University's YSpace, Schulich School of Business's Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and the Treefrog Accelerator. It is more than just a funding program, as it combines knowledge and experience from academic and industrial backgrounds to transform the landscape of entrepreneurship.

The initiative focuses on expanding YSpace's ELLA program, offering reserved spots in Schulich Startups Venture Academy, and supporting the growth of Treefrog's International Accelerator program.

"I'm excited to see this initiative move forward," says Laurie Baker, Executive Director of the Treefrog Accelerator program. "JumpSTART will provide important opportunities for female-led startups and international businesses in our growing ecosystem. The JumpSTART program will be a great springboard for these businesses. As we have seen, these businesses can grow to have national impacts, so creating clear pathways for founders through these programs is a win-win."



Entrepreneurs who participate in the JumpSTART program will have access to specialized workshops, mentorship, and training programs, particularly through the Schulich Venture Academy. This comprehensive approach ensures that entrepreneurs are equipped with the skills they need to succeed in the Canadian ecosystem.

"We can't wait to meet the amazing Founders from Project JumpSTART! With the Schulich Venture Academy, they are going to meet some of the top leaders in the Canadian Innovation ecosystem - as their personal Instructors. Those networks! Those insights! It's going to make a big impact on these companies and be another key piece of the puzzle in giving them a VIP onboarding experience into the Canadian startup world." says Chris Carder, Executive Director of the Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

The program's financing is sourced from the York Region Innovation Investment Fund, which is dedicated to backing a range of projects from research institutes to tech-related infrastructure. This strategic allocation underscores the region's commitment to fostering a thriving tech ecosystem and innovation culture.

Transformative Potential

JumpSTART is poised to address the notable gender disparities in Canada's entrepreneurial ecosystem and appeal to international entrepreneurs to come to York Region.

"The vision for JumpSTART is to support two sides, not only women entrepreneurs but also international," says David Kwok, Director of Entrepreneurship & Innovation at YSpace. "We saw a unique opportunity where many companies are looking at Canada as the next step, whether it's setting up a new business or expanding an existing business."

JumpSTART is part of a larger movement within York Region to energize its tech sector. Recent collaborative efforts, such as the partnership between York University's Schulich School of Business and Toronto's innovation hub OneEleven, exemplify the region's dedication to cultivating a dynamic and diverse tech ecosystem.

By focusing on international and female founders, JumpSTART aims to provide a nurturing environment for tech innovators. It is a bold step towards redefining the entrepreneurial fabric of the region and a beacon of hope for aspiring entrepreneurs everywhere.

"The JumpSTART program ultimately supports international companies coming over, and also women founders," explains Kwok. "We want to teach them how to grow and scale faster and create dedicated programming for women founders within York Region."