

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MEDIA RELEASE

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN FOR WINTER 2026 STARTER COMPANY PLUS – ARTS & CULTURE PROGRAM

Stratford Perth Centre for Business invites the next wave of local creators and entrepreneurs to apply by November 21, 2025

Stratford, Ontario – November 3, 2025 ... **The Stratford Perth Centre for Business is now accepting applications for the next cohort of the Starter Company Plus – Arts & Culture Program, beginning January 12, 2026.** This innovative program is funded by the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and designed to help artists, creators, and culture-based entrepreneurs across Stratford, St. Marys, and Perth County transform their ideas into thriving small businesses.

Applicants from diverse creative industries — including visual and performing arts, design, carpentry, food creation, tourism, and other culture-driven ventures — are encouraged to apply. Successful participants will receive comprehensive business training, one-on-one coaching, and may be eligible for a grant of up to \$5,000 to support their business growth. Applications are open until noon on November 21, 2025. Due to strong demand and limited spaces, early application is encouraged.

Participants accepted into the program are required to attend five training sessions:

Monday, January 12 (in person) – 7:00–9:00 PM

Monday, January 26 (virtual) – 7:00–9:00 PM

Monday, February 9 (virtual) – 7:00–9:00 PM

Monday, February 23 (virtual) – 7:00–9:00 PM

Monday, March 9 (in person) – 7:00–9:00 PM

*“The Starter Company Plus – Arts & Culture program has become an important launch pad for local creatives who are ready to take their work to the next level,” said **Holly Mortimer, Business Advisor** at the **Stratford Perth Centre for Business**. “Each cohort brings together an incredible mix of artists and entrepreneurs who learn from our training sessions and from each other. The peer support and collaboration that grow from this experience are what make the program truly special.”*

The Starter Company Plus program is funded by the Province of Ontario through the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Delivered locally by the Stratford Perth Centre for Business, a department of investStratford, the program provides mentorship, training, and financial support to help entrepreneurs strengthen their business foundations and achieve long-term success.

To learn more or apply for the Winter 2026 cohort, visit <https://tinyurl.com/starterco2026>

For additional information about the Stratford Perth Centre for Business, visit www.stratfordperthbusiness.ca

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About the Stratford Perth Centre for Business

The Stratford Perth Centre for Business, a division of investStratford funded in part by the Province of Ontario and the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, provides hybrid training and individual mentorship for entrepreneurs. Programs such as Starter Company Plus and Summer Company have already empowered countless local business owners to achieve their dreams. In addition to advisory services, events, seminars, and training opportunities are held throughout the year to meet small business essentials. www.stratfordperthbusiness.ca or info@stratfordperthbusiness.ca

About investStratford:

investStratford is committed to advancing the economic future of Stratford, Ontario, Canada through investment in arts, education, and industry. Globally Connected | Community Driven For more info visit: www.investStratford.com

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