FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MEDIA RELEASE

APPLICATIONS OPEN: WINTER 2027 STARTER COMPANY PLUS

Empowering Stratford & Perth County's Arts & Culture Entrepreneurs

Stratford, ON – November 2, 2026 … **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 delivered by the Stratford Perth Centre for Business which operates as the region's Ontario Small Business Advisory Centre (OSBAC) in partnership with the Government of Ontario. The program is 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 are eligible for a grant of $5,000 to support their business growth. Applications are open until noon on November 20, 2026 and 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 11 (in person) – 7:00–9:00 PM
Monday, January 25 (virtual) – 7:00–9:00 PM
Monday, February 8 (virtual) – 7:00–9:00 PM
Monday, February 22 (virtual) – 7:00–9:00 PM
Monday, March 8 (in person) – 7:00–9:00 PM

"Starter Company Plus – Arts & Culture gives local creatives the tools to build a sustainable business doing what they love," said **Holly Mortimer, Business Advisor** at the Stratford Perth Centre for Business. *"And they don't do it alone. The support they give each other is what makes this program work*."

The Stratford Perth Centre for Business is proud to serve the region as an Ontario Small Business Advisory Centre (OSBAC). OSBAC programs and services which include Starter Company Plus and Summer Company are delivered locally by Stratford Perth Centre for Business and funded in partnership with the Government of Ontario.

To learn more or apply, visit https://www.stratfordperthbusiness.ca/starter-company-plus
For additional information about the Stratford Perth Centre for Business, visit www.stratfordperthbusiness.ca

-30-

About the Stratford Perth Centre for Business: The Stratford Perth Centre for Business, operates as a department of investStratford and serves the region as an Ontario Small Business Advisory Centre (OSBAC). OSBAC programs and services are delivered locally by Stratford Perth Centre for Business and funded in partnership with the Government of Ontario. The Centre provides hybrid training and individual mentorship for entrepreneurs along with the Starter Company Plus and Summer Company programs which have empowered countless local business owners to achieve their dreams. In addition, events, seminars, and training opportunities are held throughout the year to meet small business needs.

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 www.investStratford.com

For further information contact: Elke Bidner, Marketing and Communications Lead 519-305-5055 x1003