



# LaunchNY

INVEST LOCAL



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Launch NY Limited Partner Fund Makes Second Round of Investments in Upstate NY Startups**  
*Launch NY's Newest Invest Local Financing Programs yields 39th portfolio and funds first responder and energy efficiency startups*

Buffalo, N.Y., June 12, 2019 – Launch New York (Launch NY), Upstate New York's first and only venture development organization to provide pro bono mentoring and capital access to high-growth startups across the 27 westernmost counties of the state, announced today that LaunchNY Seed Fund I, LP, its for profit Limited Partner Fund (LP Fund), has made its second round of investments in two promising startups, and the Launch NY Seed fund, the nonprofit fund has added a new portfolio company bringing the total to 39 companies. The investments are:

**Launch NY Limited Partner Fund:**

- [3AM Innovations](#), a tracking system that processes real time data such as location and temperature from ground zero firefighters to operational leadership in real time, based in Buffalo, NY;
- [EMPEQ](#), provides companies capital access for energy efficiency equipment through a subscription service, based in Ithaca, NY

**Launch NY Seed Fund:**

- [Nivitus](#), software allowing first responders and EMTs to quickly access and visualize patient health information when first arriving on scene, based in Rochester, NY;

Launch NY's for profit Limited Partner Fund invests alongside Launch NY's nonprofit fund in seed stage startups building the new economy, while targeting industry standard financial returns for investors. It is a part of Launch NY's new Invest Local Financing Programs offering donation and returns-based investment opportunities for accredited investors looking to make an impact on the Upstate New York entrepreneurial ecosystem and help transform the regional economy. This is the second round of investments from the LP fund bringing the portfolio to six companies since launching in Q2 2019. Launch NY announced the initial round of four investments in [April 2019](#).

The for profit LP Fund leverages the robust investment process of Launch NY's nonprofit Seed Fund, the most seed fund New York State, which provides investment capital to companies who meet Launch NY's [criteria](#). All applicants for funding are required to work with Launch NY's [Entrepreneur-in-Residence](#) (EIR) program for pro bono mentorship for at least three months. EIRs' work with client companies before, during, and after Launch NY's rigorous investment process that prepares entrepreneurs not only for achieving key milestones in their business, but also raising funding from Launch NY and other investors. Over 70% of investments from the Seed Fund have included co-investors bringing an average of 12 times Launch NY's capital to the portfolio companies. This brisk co-investment activity, spurred by Launch NY's deal leadership, drove the concept of the Investor Network being introduced in third quarter. The Investor Network is a key piece of the Invest Local Financing Programs that will allow accredited investors to fund a company for as little as \$10,000 by leveraging the mentorship, due diligence, deal formation, and portfolio management of Launch NY's Chief Operating Officer, Lindsay Stencel, and investment team.

“It is gratifying to see how we are connecting with other accredited investors and local companies who want to support local startups. Our startup clients are demanding and deserving more access to capital, and we are happy to do our part to meet this demand with our Invest Local Financing Programs,” said Dr. Marnie LaVigne, President and CEO of Launch NY. “I’m excited about all the accredited investors signing up to be beta users of our Investor Network who will see our first pre-vetted deals very soon. It speaks to the power of Upstate New York and the entrepreneurial ecosystem we are building here. People want to jump in and get involved.”

EMPEQ’s CEO, Herbert Dwyer, knew that an investment from Launch NY would help him gain traction with investors. “Let’s be honest, raising money is very difficult for any startup. Upstate NY is not Silicon Valley or NYC, so it can be even more difficult to raise here. Launch NY provided access to investment capital when we needed it the most,” he said. “Launch NY’s investment was the first made in our current round. This investment enabled EMPEQ to show other investors that a reputable institutional investor had already committed to the round. Their initial investment, mentoring, and networking capabilities has enabled EMPEQ to grow to next growth stage in our business.”

“Launch NY was pivotal in starting my business from idea conception to funding,” said Steven Mohnkern, co-founder of Nivitus. “I truly believe that this progression would not have been successful without the assistance of my EIR, Ed Bizari, and the excellent advice and guidance that he provided.”

3AM Innovation’s CEO, Patrick O’Connor, has appreciated the hands-on approach Launch NY takes with its portfolio companies. “Launch NY not only helps startups with cash investments, but they also have a wealth of knowledge in business, and manufacturing,” he said. “We are in contact with someone from their team almost weekly regarding various topics. The mentorship has helped us to set the groundwork for our next investment round.”

O’Connor also said the investment will help get 3AM Innovations’ product into the hands of more first responders sooner. “The follow-on investment will enable us to ruggedize our product in preparation for operational exercises with upstate fire departments in July.”

Launch NY has closed on 16 transactions in 2019 totaling over \$1.87 million dollars since 2016. This last round of investments brings the Launch NY Seed Fund to a total of 39 portfolio companies made up of investments in startups across Upstate New York with 33% being women-led and 20% being minority-led. The Launch NY Seed Fund has had over 120 co-investors resulting in over \$22 million invested across the portfolio. Overall, Launch NY have mentored over 950 client companies with more than 10,000 pro bono hours of mentoring from Launch NY Entrepreneurs-in-Residence.

For more information about Launch NY, its programs, including its Investor Network, Seed Fund and other entrepreneurial opportunities, visit [www.launchny.org](http://www.launchny.org), and follow Launch NY on its [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages.

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**About Launch New York:**

The mission of Launch New York, Inc. (Launch NY), the only U.S. Treasury-designated Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) directly funding businesses in New York State, is to identify, support and invest in high-growth, high-impact companies, and catalyze the entrepreneurial culture in the 27 counties comprising the western half of Upstate New York. Launch NY is a 501(c)(3) non-profit venture development organization that promotes economic development through best practices, including business mentoring and access to seed capital in order to create investment-ready companies which have the promise to create significant economic impact and jobs for our region.

Launch NY uniquely fills the gap in connecting all of Upstate New York's entrepreneurship resources to a pathway to success via unique proof-of-concept capital and high-quality pro bono mentoring support through 24 experienced local entrepreneurs-in-residence and its National Mentor Network of 2,000 industry, business and investment experts. Launch NY was formed as a result of a collaboration between private and public stakeholders in Upstate New York to create long term strategies that foster a robust, self-sustaining entrepreneurial ecosystem built on regional collaboration. Launch NY is headquartered in Buffalo and has regional co-locations with partner organizations in Binghamton, Ithaca, Rochester, and Syracuse. It has served over 950 companies comprising more than 3,400 jobs, attracting over \$22.75 million in co investment and follow-on capital. Launch NY Portfolio Companies have created over 187 jobs with 33% of portfolio companies being women-led and 20% minority-led.