

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celine Keefe, Marketing Director

716-999-0680 ext 404

ckeefe@launchny.org

Want to See the Hottest Startups in Upstate NY?

Be One of the First 100 Beta Users of Launch NY's New Online Investor Network

Calling all accredited investors to join the region's first & only on-demand Invest Local digital marketplace free to beta users

Buffalo, N.Y., June 25, 2019 – The Buffalo Niagara region and all our neighbors across the western half of New York State in Binghamton, Ithaca, Niagara Falls, Rochester, and Syracuse know there's something special happening when it comes to innovation and entrepreneurship. The feeling of optimism and change holds true for those who grew up, went to college, or simply worked or lived in this region for any amount of time. No matter whether urban, suburban, or rural, communities across Upstate New York feel the electricity coming from the surge in startup companies already transforming the economy in their own backyard. Now those investors who want to back promising entrepreneurs can be part of the excitement through the new Investor Network as one the first 100 beta users.

Launch New York (Launch NY), Upstate New York's first and only venture development organization to provide pro bono mentoring and access to the most active seed fund in the state to high-growth startups across the 27 westernmost counties of the state, is providing accredited investors with access to opportunities to #investlocal anywhere, anytime through the convenience of your smartphone or laptop. The first one hundred accredited investors to [sign up](#) for the Investor Network by July 15th at no cost, will have access to the inaugural slate of startup companies seeking funding this summer.

“Launch NY has already worked with over 130 co-investors across 70% of our transactions and so many more funders have asked to see our deals, so we decided it was time to create a marketplace that allowed all investors, but especially those with an affinity for Upstate New York, to have access to our amazing startup companies,” said Marnie LaVigne, Ph.D., President and CEO of Launch NY. “Our on-demand digital Investor Network platform will break down barriers for those who want to support local startups but who simply can't be in the room for more traditional fundraising pitches. Now our portfolio companies have a whole new audience of investors that's global, bringing not only capital but industry connections and experience to augment our robust mentorship. Smart investors can be a startup company's greatest asset.”

Launch NY is seeking 100 accredited investors to join the beta testing phase of the Investor Network by July 15, inviting them to sign up by [filling out a brief application](#). To further incentivize new investors, Launch NY will waive the membership fee and reduce the standard investment fees per transaction from now until December 31.

Beta users will receive a digital introduction to companies seeking investment and gain access to Launch NY's vetted deals with completed due diligence and continued portfolio management. Launch NY will digitally aggregate and match investors with companies that align to their interests, such as industry sector and geographic location. Investors will be able to select which companies they would like to fund through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) with as little as a \$10,000-dollar investment. Additionally, the use of an SPV will allow for accredited investors to benefit from tax incentives for businesses who are located in designated Opportunity Zones.

“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,” said Herbert Dwyer from [EMPEQ](#), an Ithaca-based Launch NY portfolio company that provides businesses with capital access through a subscription service on their energy equipment. “Launch NY provided access to investment capital when we needed it the most,” he said. “It enabled EMPEQ to show other investors that a reputable institutional investor had already committed to the round and enabled EMPEQ to grow to next growth stage in our business.”

Launch NY is also working with local marketing agency FIFTEEN on a targeted digital media campaign to attract accredited investors in the region, and expats to invest local. Ads will be running, starting today, on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn urging community-minded entrepreneurs to support their up-and-coming colleagues. “Give back to the place that built you,” and “Support your hometown team” are some of the taglines.

Working with investors to find opportunities that support high-growth, high-impact companies in Upstate New York, Launch NY has the most active seed fund in the state, with a strong pipeline of pre-vetted deals that investors can access in the new digital platform. There are currently 39 portfolio companies, and Launch NY has closed on 16 transactions this year alone, bringing the total number of investments to over \$1.8 million since 2012.

“Launch NY got us over that hurdle. We saw that we needed to rebrand, and without Launch NY’s help we would not have been able to do it. Without the funding, our company would not have taken off,” said Michele Liddle, Founder of The Perfect Granola, which started in Rochester and is now available at Walmart locations across the nation.

Patrick O’Connor, CEO of [3AM Innovations](#), a first responder tracking system, 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.”

To date, Launch NY has over 130 co-investors, who have added 12 times more capital to its deals.

For more information about Launch NY, its programs, including its Investor Network, Seed Fund and other entrepreneurial opportunities, visit 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 960 companies comprising more than 3,450 jobs. Launch NY Portfolio Companies have created over 187 jobs with 33% of portfolio companies being women-led and 21% minority-led, attracting over \$22.7 million in co-investment and follow-on capital.