



**City of Kingston  
Information Report to Council  
Report Number 24-217**

---

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Lanie Hurdle, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Resource Staff:** None  
**Date of Meeting:** August 13, 2024  
**Subject:** Quarterly Report: Kingston Economic Development Corporation  
– Q2 2024

---

**Council Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Theme: Regulatory & compliance

Goal: See above

**Executive Summary:**

In accordance with the Service Level Agreement entered into between the City of Kingston and Kingston Economic Development Corporation ([Report Number 21-014](#)), the attached report (Exhibit A) provides detailed reporting on Q2 2024 for the Economic Development Organization (EDO). Section 2.0 “Transparency, Reporting and Accountability” of the Service Level Agreement indicates “The EDO will be accountable to the Council of the City of Kingston in the performance of the activities and services provided in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and /or as determined in the approved annual operating budget.” Specific direction to EDO on reporting is included in Section 2.2 which reads in part:

*“2.2 The EDO shall communicate with the City as follows:*

- a) Annually, by way of the draft budget, annual work plan and the Integrated Economic Development Strategy as updated to reflect the priorities of City Council;*
- b) Annually, by way of the Annual Financial Report as required by Clause 4.6 of this Agreement;*

August 13, 2024

Page 2 of 4

*c) Quarterly, by way of Activity Reports to demonstrate the progress of the EDO in achieving the Integrated Economic Development Strategy and the impact of the EDO's actions and programs on the key performance measures of economic development as set out in Appendix B of this Agreement. The Quarterly Reports shall form the basis of an Annual Year in Review Report to Council. All Activity Reports shall be publicly accessible;..."*

The attached report is provided in fulfillment of the quarterly reporting requirement noted above.

**Recommendation:**

This report is for information only.

August 13, 2024

Page 3 of 4

**Authorizing Signatures:**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

**P.P. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief  
Administrative Officer**

**Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:**

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

August 13, 2024

Page 4 of 4

**Options/Discussion:**

Exhibit A to this report provides an activity report from Kingston Economic Development Corporation on results for Q2 2024.

The Integrated Economic Development Strategy was approved by Council on December 15, 2020 ([Report Number 21-012](#)). The key performance measures as set out in Appendix B of the Service Level Agreement, and as outlined in EDO's quarterly reports, demonstrate the progress of the EDO in achieving implementation of the Integrated Strategy.

**Existing Policy/By-Law:**

Council [Report Number 21-014](#) dated December 15, 2020

**Notice Provisions:**

None

**Financial Considerations:**

Section 4 of the Service Level Agreement relates to financial operations and provides clear parameters on funding to EDO to undertake its core activities.

**Contacts:**

Lanie Hurdle, Chief Administrative Officer 613-546-4291 extension 1231

**Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:**

None

**Exhibits Attached:**

Exhibit A - Kingston EcDev Q2 2024 Report

July 24, 2024

Lanie Hurdle, Chief Administrative Officer  
City of Kingston  
216 Ontario Street  
Kingston, ON, K7L 2Z3

Dear Ms. Lanie Hurdle,

RE: Q2, 2024 Service Level Agreement Performance Measures

Please accept this summary report for activities undertaken by the Kingston Economic Development Corporation in Q2 (April – June) 2024.

This quarter, we emphasized strategic collaborations within our sub-sectors, notably the 3rd annual Kingston-Syracuse Pathway Conference which focused on advancing health and economic development through research and innovation. This event strengthened our ties with U.S. partners and bolstered our Health Innovation sector. In addition, we actively participated in significant sector related events including BIO, Ontario Centre of Innovation's DiscoveryX, Collision and the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association summit. Notably, our participation in the BEV In-Depth: Mines to Mobility Conference led to the formation of the Kingston-Greater Sudbury Critical Minerals Alliance, fostering innovation in mining and clean-tech sectors.

This quarter also saw the celebration of local entrepreneurs. The Black Entrepreneurship Ecosystem of Southeastern Ontario recognized twelve outstanding local Black entrepreneurs with microgrants, while the Building Inclusive Communities: Newcomer Entrepreneurship Awards, hosted in partnership with Kingston Immigration Partnership and St. Lawrence College, honoured three newcomer entrepreneurs for their significant contributions to the community. Kingston Young Professionals (KYP) announced their second annual 40 Under 40 Awards - nominations for this year's distinguished group of young professionals are now open and will be announced at their event in the fall.

The continued collaboration between Kingston Economic Development and local businesses, health innovation and sustainable manufacturing sectors reinforces Kingston's position as a leading location for investment and economic growth. This was reflected in Startup Blink's announcement that Kingston is the top small city in Canada for its startup business ecosystem.

If you have questions or seek clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Donna Gillespie  
Chief Executive Officer

cc. Ms. Anne Vivian-Scott, Chair, Kingston Economic Development Board of Directors



# Q2 2024 Report

**KINGSTON**

— *Economic Development* —



# Quarterly Report – Q2 2024

## Corporate Updates

### Community

Kingston hosted the 3rd annual **Kingston-Syracuse Pathway Conference** on April 9, 2024, at the Delta Kingston Waterfront. This year's theme was **Advancing Health and Economic Development through Research and Innovation**. Colleagues from both sides of the border gathered to exchange ideas and opportunities in the health and life sciences space. Prior to the conference, on April 8, Kingston Economic Development hosted a **Solar Eclipse** viewing party for the Syracuse colleagues on the Royal Block building's rooftop patio.

Abby Fitzhugh, Operations Coordinator, and Simon Denford, Business Programs & Community Outreach Coordinator, represented Kingston Economic Development at the annual **Kingston Pride Festival** on June 15. As a 2SLGBTQI+ friendly service provider with **Rainbow Registered Accreditation**, Abby and Simon had the opportunity to share the programs offered for small business owners and entrepreneurs with Pride Festival attendees and provided outreach to local vendors at the Pride Vendor Market.

The Kingston Economic Development team had the pleasure of touring Kingston's latest marine attraction, the **S.S. Keewatin**, at the **Great Lakes Museum**. The team appreciated the historical significance of this piece of Canadian history as they explored the vessel and witnessed the dedicated efforts of the Great Lakes Museum in restoring the steamliner. Attractions like the S.S. Keewatin are vital to Kingston's tourism industry, which significantly contributes to the local economy by drawing visitors and supporting local businesses.

### Staff Updates

Kingston Economic Development welcomed **Daniel Solorio** as the new **Marketing & Communications Manager**. With 15 years of experience in advertising, creative marketing strategy, and media entrepreneurship research, Daniel is a valuable addition to the team. He recently earned graduate certificates in Project Management and Digital Marketing Communications. With great appreciation, Kingston Economic Development said farewell to Nour Mazloum, who dedicated five years of exemplary service to the Kingston community. Nour began her new role as the Executive Director of the Peterborough DBIA in early June, and we wish her outstanding success.

Kingston Economic Development was approved for funding through **Canada Summer Jobs**, adding 2 positions to the team. **Gianni Itegeli** began his 16-week summer contract as a **Health Innovation Assistant** on May 27, assisting Investment Manager

Ben McIlquham with administrative tasks and research. Additionally, **Abby Fitzhugh** started her full-time permanent role as **Operations Coordinator** on May 1.

### AI for Economic Development

AI Strategist Claire Bouvier led an informative Team Lunch & Learn session on **Utilizing AI for Economic Development** with the Kingston Economic Development team. This session highlighted AI's potential to optimize workflow, gain market insights, collect client data, and analyze performance metrics





## Attraction & Aftercare

### Sustainable Manufacturing

The Kingston Economic Development Corporation and **The Greater Sudbury Development Corporation** announced an alliance at the **BEV In-Depth: Mines to Mobility Conference** on May 29. The two corporations entered a **Memorandum of Understanding, The Kingston–Greater Sudbury Critical Minerals Alliance** to foster innovation and enhance collaboration by connecting mines, clean-tech, and mineral processing technology companies within the value chain. City of Kingston Mayor Bryan Paterson highlighted the alliance's benefits as an opportunity to advance together, maximize strengths, and achieve mutual objectives.

On June 6, **Cyclic Materials** opened its **Hub100 plant** in Kingston. This facility uses the new REEPure™ technology to recycle 100 tonnes of magnetic material per year. It produces reusable rare earth oxides, nickel, and cobalt hydroxides, showing the commercial potential of this recycling method and supporting a sustainable supply chain for critical metals.

Shelley Hirstwood, Director of Business Development, and Abdul Razak Jendi, Investment Manager – Sustainable Manufacturing, attended the **Automotive Parts Manufacturing Association (APMA) Summit** on June 11. The summit highlighted the evolving narrative around EVs, focusing on industry approaches and supply chain solutions, including diversifying battery chemistries and government incentives. The APMA Summit is a key event that brings together government leaders in the EV sector, providing a strategic opportunity to connect with ministers about ongoing activities and initiatives.

### Health Innovation

On April 10, **PapEasy**, an innovative cervical cancer screening prototype, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony in their new lab space at Providence Care Hospital. With assistance from Ben McIlquham, Norman Musengimana, and Shelley Hirstwood, this acquisition was made possible through the HI-YGK program, highlighting the impressive innovation and collaborative support within Kingston's startup ecosystem.

At the beginning of June, Ben McIlquham, Investment Manager - Health Innovation, and Abdul Razak Jendi, Investment Manager - Sustainable Manufacturing, attended the **BIO International Convention** in San Diego, CA, with partners from Invest Ontario, Invest in Canada, and Global Affairs Canada. As the largest biotechnology event, the convention attracted 20,000 industry leaders. This key life science event facilitated over 50 company meetings and fostered essential partnerships, targeting companies in the growth stage seeking potential expansion into Canada.

Congratulations were in order for Kingston's **Octane Medical Group**, which announced the acquisition of B. Braun Group's global orthobiologics business by their new venture, **Biotherapeutics (BioTx)**. This acquisition advances regenerative medicine and positions Kingston as a frontrunner in the life sciences sector.

Mid-June, Kingston Economic Development Corporation was represented by Ben McIlquham, Norman Musengimana, and Shelley Hirstwood at this year's **Collision Conference** in Toronto. They discussed investments in Kingston with **Minister Victor Fedeli**, aligning with the Provincial mandate to foster innovation and economic growth. Additionally, they participated in the **Austrian Business Breakfast** and the Central Eastern European Tech Forum, engaging with international partners and businesses to build global connections and explore collaborative opportunities.

### Agri-Food Industry

On April 12, Rob Tamblyn spoke at the **A to Z of Getting Your Food Products to Market** event hosted by the City of Kingston in partnership with the Township of South Frontenac to share opportunities and resources available for food production businesses.

On May 15 and 16, Abdul Razak Jendi attended the **SIAL Show** in Montreal as part of the **Ontario East Economic Development Commission** booth. SIAL Canada, the premier meeting point for the Canadian agri-food industry and a gateway to international markets, featured over 1,000 exhibitors from 44 countries and attracted 21,000 professional visitors. The event provided an opportunity to meet with companies and present the value proposition of locating in Kingston.

### Housing and Economic Drivers

Shelley Hirstwood presented on the **Housing and Economic Drivers** panel at the **Eastern Ontario Housing Summit**, hosted by the **Greater Ottawa Home Builders Association**. The panel included economic development colleagues Jay Amer, Rhonda Keenan, and Bob Peters, discussing how economic development has evolved and the critical role of housing and infrastructure in both short- and long-term planning.



## Business Retention & Expansion

### Funding Local Businesses

Kingston Economic Development hosted the **Tap into Funding Breakfast** on May 6, welcoming industry leaders and entrepreneurs to present funding and support programs for local businesses. Presenting partners included the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southeastern Ontario, Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, BDC, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Queen's University, St. Lawrence College, and Mitacs.

### Community Initiatives

Kingston Economic Development had the pleasure of collaborating with an interdisciplinary research team during the **Queen's University PhD-Community Initiative**. This program connects PhD students with local organizations to address community challenges. Kingston Economic Development collaborated with a research team on ways to inspire and address barriers faced by newcomers pursuing entrepreneurship.

### Talent Strategy

Kingston Economic Development Corporation was honored to collaborate with INNOVA Solutions and I2C Immigration Consulting for the **Kingston's Economic Advantage: Dynamic Inclusion Talent Strategy** discussion on June 26. Shelley Hirstwood served as a moderator for a panel discussion on ideas for inclusion and talent strategy and was joined by Meghan and Jamie from INNOVA, Sunita Gupta from I2C Immigration Consulting, and co-panelists Kayla Kent, CHRL, and Mike Schmidt.

### Workforce

On June 13, Kingston Economic Development attended a community outreach meeting with Frank O'Hearn, Executive Director, and Sandra Wright, LMI Analyst from the **Eastern Workforce Innovation Board (EWIB)**, to discuss and identify labor market challenges faced by job seekers and employers. Key topics included the overall improvement of workplace retention compared to previous years, succession planning for business owners interested in retiring or selling their business, and the challenges newcomers face when entering the Canadian workforce.

The **Kingston Young Professionals Annual Summer Networking Event** was hosted at the **Kingston Yacht Club** on June 26. This networking event was generously sponsored by **Cunningham Swan Carty Little & Bonham LLP**. During the Kingston Young Professionals Summer Networking Event, the **2nd Annual 40 Under 40 Awards** announced it is accepting nominations for the next group of outstanding local young professionals. The 40 Under 40 Awards recognize dedicated young professionals in Kingston who are leading in their contributions and initiatives within the community. The **40 Under 40 Awards Gala** will be hosted at the Frontenac Club on September 18.





# engag

## Start-ups and Entrepreneurship

### StartupBlink

**StartupBlink's 2024 Global Startup Ecosystem Index** ranked Kingston as one of the top 10 small cities in Canada for startups for the fifth consecutive year. Kingston received notable recognition, ranking 10th globally and 1st in Canada for Clean-tech, 4th in Canada for Health-tech, and 5th in Canada for Energy & Environment. Norman Musengimana, Business Development Manager for Startups & Entrepreneurship, attended the annual conference virtually to highlight the strength of Kingston's growing startup economy.

### Black Entrepreneurship Ecosystem – Southeastern Ontario

The **Black Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (BEE) – Southeastern Ontario Celebration and Awards Night** took place on May 11. Twelve local Black-owned businesses, Sparkle Cakes, Ella's Cuisine, Rumble Fitness, JD Physiotherapy Clinics, OMGosh BBQ, MO's Dainty Bites, Union 108 Yoga & Lifestyle Inc., Wakey Wacks Company, Blossom African Foods, Amiola, AFOMA Marketplace, Eudokas International Inc., were awarded a Business Enhancement Grant, donated by local business leader **Dan Desjardins** of **Distributive**, in recognition of their remarkable contribution to the Kingston business landscape.



### Kingston Newcomer Entrepreneurship Awards

Kingston Economic Development, in partnership with Kingston Immigration Partners (KIP) and St. Lawrence College, hosted the **2024 Newcomer Entrepreneurship Awards** in May. The awards ceremony celebrated three recipients who have made exceptional contributions to Kingston's economy and community, with awards granted for Newcomer Startup of the Year (Isabelle & Pierre Tardiveau, Sens Café), Community Builder (Tarek Hussein, Weller Pharmacy and MedaKi), and Inspirational Newcomer (Rathi Perumal, Uyir Engineering).

### Partnerships

Rob Tamblyn, Business Development Manager – **Small & Medium Enterprises**, adjudicated the **Innovate & Elevate Pitch Night** at St. Lawrence College. This event provided student entrepreneurs with the opportunity to share their business ideas and compete for a life-changing trip to attend the European Innovation Academy in Portugal.

Kingston Economic Development, in partnership with Queen's Partnership and Innovation, Dunin-Deshpande Queen's Innovation Centre, St. Lawrence College, KPM Accelerate, and GreenCentre Canada, participated in the **DiscoveryX Conference** hosted by the Ontario Centre of Innovation on April 17 and 18 in Toronto. DiscoveryX is Canada's premier innovation event, bringing together over 3,000 entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, government, and industry leaders.

### Starter Company Plus

The **2024 Starter Company Plus** cohort concluded their training at the end of April. Out of 32 participants, 9 outstanding entrepreneurs received microgrant funding totaling \$28,000 to grow their businesses. This year's cohort included Shirin Shafiei Zadeh (Wemmigration), Jillian Murphy (myoKingston Pain Clinic), Sky Skrotzki (EDITLESS), Michella Kaduc (Wild Lily Seed Co.), Cedric Pepelea (Cedric Pepelea Consulting), Elisa Corrigan (Rampant Kitchen), Aimee Shaw (Evergreen Health Collective), Peter Young (Virtual Encounters), and Jessica Green (Flourish Psychotherapy Kingston).

### Summer Company

Twelve students began their journey in entrepreneurship on June 3 as participants of the **Summer Company program**. Participants include Matthew Kong (Portal Wear), Elli Parsons (EGL Graphics), Corben Enright (Corben's Rooster Ranch), Sterling Seunarine (Silver Candles), Black Aylesworth (A+ Lawn Services), Ian Sheppard (Scrub n' Shine), Nathan Kashira (SkyShot Kingston), Yamen Abuelyazed (Urban Greens), Ben Renwick (No Splat Painters), Kaie Bain (Backyard Swimming Lessons with Kaie), Caiden Chase (Gear Glow Details), Griffin Wicke (TimeSavers). These young entrepreneurs will receive grant funding of \$3,000 to start their own business. Led by Simon Denford, Business Outreach & Community Programs Coordinator, Kingston Economic Development provides business mentorship from local business leaders and valuable guidance towards success.

### Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC)

Kingston Economic Development received 2 years of funding from the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) Program, effective April 1, 2024, with \$50,000 in additional funding from the Treasury. This provincial grant allows continued support for small and medium-sized business owners, entrepreneurs, and start-up companies. With the approval of the Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA), Kingston Economic Development will continue offering SBEC Core, Starter Company Plus, and Summer Company programs. Kingston Economic Development and KMPG LLP will begin the **2022-2024 Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC)** audit on July 16



## Media Coverage & Success Stories

During this period the media highlighted the Sudbury Kingston Alliance, the opening of the cancer research lab at Providence Care Hospital, and directly from Kingston Economic Development the Starter Company Plus program, 40 under 40 nominations opening, and the Newcomer Entrepreneur Awards.

- Kingstonist, Apr 10 – [Cervical cancer research lab opens at Providence Care Hospital](#)
- Cornwall Seaway News, Apr 15 – [Top students of SLC Innovate and Elevate to attend European Innovation Academy](#)
- Kingston Whig- Standard, Apr 25 – ['A dream come true'; Providence Care partnership will assist cervical cancer screening research](#)
- Kingstonist, May 15 – [Kingston tourism and economic agencies petition feds over LaSalle Causeway closure](#)
- Kingstonist, May 29 – [Three Kingston businesses recognized with 2024 Newcomer Entrepreneur Awards](#)
- Kingstonist, May 30 – [Kingston, Sudbury enter alliance to foster collaboration on mineral processing technology](#)
- Corporate Knights, Jun 5 – [This Canadian city is finding rare earth minerals needed for the green transition through recycling](#)
- The Sudbury Star, Jun 6 – [Cyclic Materials Opens "Hub100" Facility for Production of Recycled Mixed Rare Earth Oxide](#)
- Kingston This Week, Jun 13 – [Kingston, Sudbury join forces to create electric vehicle solutions](#)
- Kingstonist, Jun 18 – [10 local businesses selected for Starter Company Plus 2024 cohort](#)
- Frontenac News, Jun 19 – [Frontenac News - Canadian Digital Adoption Program](#)
- Newsroom Ontario, Jun 20 – [2022 and 2023 Champion of Diversity Award Recipients](#)
- Electric autonomy Canada, Jun 21 – [Sudbury continues to fuel EV supply chain conversation](#)
- Kingstonist, Jun 27 – [Nominations open for 2024 Kingston Young Professionals 40 Under 40](#)

## 2024 Measurements

Attraction & Aftercare	Q1 2024	Q2 2024	Q2 2024 Totals	Q2 2023	2023 Totals
Investment Inquiries	12	9	21	19	79
Health Innovation Inquiries	0	0	0	1	13
Sustainable Manufacturing Inquiries	1	9	10	7	27
Leads Generated	38	65	103	78	168
Leads Generated – Health Innovation	23	46	69	43	86
Leads Generated – Sustainable Manufacturing	14	12	26	3	41
Site Visits	3	4	7	-	-
Familiarization Tours	2	1	3	-	-
Business Attraction Active Opportunities	71	74		66	
Business Attraction Active Opportunities – Sustainable Manufacturing	46	47		16	
Business Attraction Active Opportunities – Health Innovation	22	22		44	





<b>Business Retention &amp; Expansion</b>	<b>Q1 2024</b>	<b>Q2 2024</b>	<b>Q2 2024 Totals</b>	<b>Q2 2023</b>	<b>2023 Totals</b>
Inquiries	157	107	264	95	322
Health Innovation Inquiries	1	0	1	0	3
Sustainable Manufacturing Inquiries	5	6	11	3	10
Small Businesses Supported with Grants	37	38	75	59	113
Value of Grants to Businesses	\$87,046	\$78,777	\$115,823	\$141,759	\$264,234
Company Site Visits	11	6	17	-	-
Business Retention & Expansion Active Opportunities	20	22		28	
Business Retention & Expansion Active Opportunities - Sustainable Manufacturing	8	9		12	
Business Retention & Expansion Active Opportunities – Health Innovation	12	13		15	

<b>Start-ups &amp; Entrepreneurs</b>	<b>Q1 2024</b>	<b>Q2 2024</b>	<b>Q2 2024 Totals</b>	<b>Q2 2023</b>	<b>2023 Totals</b>
Inquiries for Support	113	62	175	69	285
Consultations Provided	293	215	508	204	738
Events & Activities Hosted	36	25	61	67	196
Persons Attending Programs & Events	125	638	763	469	2,094

## Marketing & Communications

### Social Media

Kingston Economic Development manages social media campaigns on multiple online platforms ie. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn.

@investkingston shares information targeting the Kingston area and business community. It showcases events and activities, enhances lead-generation efforts with paid social media campaigns, and celebrates new investments and activities in the community.

The slight declines in audience on Facebook, X, and Instagram continue, as well as significant growth on LinkedIn and YouTube. This behaviour is aligned with our efforts to create content targeting professionals and businesses.

@investkingston	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Instagram	Google My Business	YouTube	LinkedIn
Followers/ Likes (End of quarter)	11,496	14,304	15,892		363	8,230
Followers/ Likes (Start of quarter)	11,609	14,342	15,999		357	7,623
% Change over previous quarter	- 0.9%	-0.2%	- 0.6%		1.6%	7.9%
Organic Impressions		30,495				137,411
Organic Reach	31,034		35,963			
Paid Impressions	-	-				-
Actions (Visit website, request directions, call)				410		
Searches				527		
Video Views					56,904	
Demographics (Most popular)						
Age	55-64		25-34			
Gender	Women		Women			
Location	Kingston		Kingston			Kingston

### [investkingston.ca](http://investkingston.ca)

The Kingston Economic Development website - [investkingston.ca](http://investkingston.ca) realized over 24,300 visits in Q2, 2024. There is a 29% decline compared with Q1, in correlation with the closing registration period of programs Starter Company Plus and Summer Company. Visits to the home page, team and major employers are the top three pages with 71% of the visits. Other pages like, CDAP, career and events account each for 5% of the visits. To review detailed quarterly website reports, please contact Daniel Solorio, Marketing & Communications Manager at [solorio@investkingston.ca](mailto:solorio@investkingston.ca).

### Email Communications

Every Monday morning, a weekly Small Business Digest is distributed to an audience of over 1,500 individuals, offering them the latest business events, valuable insights on support programs and funding opportunities and it has an average 39% open rate. Additionally, quarterly newsletters are dedicated to strategic sectors – health innovation and sustainable manufacturing with 49.1% and 37% open rates respectively. The Kingston Young Professionals newsletter is published bi-monthly with networking opportunities for young professionals in Kingston with a 61.4% open rate.

# KINGSTON

— Economic Development —

## June 2024 YTD Financial Summary

For the Sixth Month Ending  
Sunday, June 30, 2024

50% Through Year

	Actuals	Budget	% To Date
<b>Revenues:</b>			
City Funding	\$ 769,378	\$ 1,538,757	50%
Provincial Funding	\$ 54,210	\$ 427,685	12.68%
Federal Funding	\$ 95,988	\$ 1,359,802	7.06%
Investment & Bank Interest	\$ 7,476	\$ 40,000	18.69%
Other	68,023	\$ 160,000	42.51%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 995,075.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,526,244</b>	<b>28.22%</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>			
Salaries & Wages	\$ 573,144.00	\$ 1,251,044	45.81%
Overhead			
Administration	\$ 106,046	\$ 222,500	47.66%
Boards & Committees	\$ 2,423	\$ 7,500	32.31%
Human Resources	\$ 4,299	\$ 10,000	42.99%
Marketing Communications	\$ 34,919	\$ 65,000	53.72%
Projects			
Attraction & Aftercare	\$ 100,601	\$ 150,000	67.07%
Business Retention & Expansion	\$ 119,914	\$ 255,000	47.03%
Start Ups & Youth Business	\$ 91,579	\$ 150,000	61.05%
Funding Programs	\$ 121,719	\$ 1,415,200	8.60%
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 1,154,644</b>	<b>\$ 3,526,244</b>	<b>32.74%</b>
<b>Annual Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>-\$ 159,569</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>-</b>



KINGSTON

# Global Talent Local Business

*Celebrating Kingston's Newcomer Entrepreneurs*

2024

Gökhan

Inspirational Entrepre

Tango Nue  
Mayla Cor





# Contents

- 03 *Welcome*
- 05 *Extraordinary commitment,  
extraordinary coffee*  
*Isabelle & Pierre Tardiveau*
- 07 *Serial entrepreneur*  
*Norman Musengimana*
- 09 *Helping leaders grow & succeed*  
*Patrick Egbunonu*
- 11 *Bringing life to engineering*  
*Rathi Perumal*
- 13 *Community focused entrepreneurship*  
*Tarek Hussein*
- 15 *Dedicated to supporting inclusion*  
*Yu Jier Kou*

# Welcome

On behalf of the Kingston Economic Development Corporation and the Kingston Immigration Partnership, we are delighted to recognize the invaluable contributions made by newcomers to our vibrant city. It is our pleasure to come together and celebrate the entrepreneurial spirit and innovation of newcomer entrepreneurs in Kingston.

We understand the challenges that newcomers face when moving to a new country. Starting a business can be an overwhelming experience, especially in an unfamiliar environment. Despite these obstacles, these visionary individuals have significantly contributed to the economic development of Kingston.

Building an inclusive community brings numerous benefits, fostering a sense of belonging and creating an environment conducive to innovation and growth. With this in mind, we celebrate the success of these entrepreneurs and acknowledge their efforts in creating new products and services, generating jobs, boosting local demand and contributing to the overall prosperity of Kingston.

## **Donna Gillespie**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Kingston Economic Development Corporation

## **Yu Jier Kou**

Program Coordinator & Communications,  
Kingston Immigration Partnership at Kingston  
Community Health Centres







# Extraordinary commitment, extraordinary coffee

## Meet Isabelle & Pierre Tardiveau

Founders & Owners  
Sens Café

It must be said: walking into Kingston's SENS Café is like stepping into France, beginning with the cafe's natural stone and black-accented exterior. The interior aesthetic is an inviting blend of exposed brick and stone walls, warm lighting, thoughtfully arranged seating, and open space. By design, a visit to SENS Café is to comfortably slip into the quintessential French cafe lifestyle.

But what makes SENS Café truly stand out, and makes owners Pierre and Isabelle deserved winners of the Newcomer Entrepreneur Award, is the coffee. It's the product of a rare degree of commitment and the pursuit of excellence. Just as slow coffee-making methods produce a remarkable brew, successful entrepreneurship is a thoughtful, all-consuming process. The couple understood that coffee isn't just coffee, and that success in an established market requires more than investment in equipment and location. This led to Pierre spending well over a year researching and absorbing the nuances of café management, while training in Aix-en-Provence at BBS Barista Bartender School. "I went back to school just to learn how to make good coffee, especially specialty coffee." Having left their previous careers behind, they divided the myriad tasks of running

a busy cafe along complementary lines, with Isabelle handling operations and Pierre managing coffee-making and market development. Ready for business, they opened the Barista Café in Annecy, "the pearl of the French Alps," in 2014.

---

*The major assets in any business are the people. As long as you know how you want to do it, and if you have the support of the right people, it just takes time to be successful.*

---

In 2018, now committed entrepreneurs to the last drop and curious about life outside France, Isabelle and Pierre's next move was decidedly bold: they emigrated to Canada. "We sold everything in France to restart something completely new in Canada," says Isabelle. "It was a complete break from our previous life." The benefits were clear: bringing their French-inspired café concept to a new market eager for quality and specialty coffee offered clear advantages. Says Pierre, "We bring something different: a European touch or French touch which I think people really like when coming to SENS." Today, the café is established and growing, with an eye-catching menu featuring a range of specialty coffees — including espressos, lattes, and cappuccinos — crafted from carefully selected beans and expertly prepared. Freshly baked pastries, gourmet sandwiches, and seasonal salads are as enticing as the drinks.

---

*What we like specifically in Canada is the diversity of the people. People come from everywhere; that's something that we really like.*

---

The couple and their three children are now proud members of the community and enthusiastically praise the city, describing it as an ideal size with a wide range of

attractions and activities for families, from shows at the Grand Theatre to sports facilities. Pierre and Isabelle note the helpful role of business services, "In Kingston, you have various organizations that are really efficient and involved in supporting new businesses and newcomers." Local café owners know one another, and fill various geographic and market niches, "Instead of competitors, we are much more colleagues or friends. We share the market, and we work really well together," Pierre says.

Beyond discovering award-winning entrepreneurial success, the Tardiveaus appreciate Kingston's typical warmth, saying, "What surprised us the most when we moved to Kingston was to realize how welcoming the people are."

---

### Fast Facts

**Born in:** France  
**Business name:** Sens Café  
**Industry:** Food & Beverage  
**Website:** [senscafeinc.com](http://senscafeinc.com)

SENS  
CAFE







# Serial entrepreneur

## Meet Norman Musengimana

*Business Development Manager, Start-ups & Entrepreneurship  
Kingston Economic Development Corporation*

Norman Musengimana is the quintessential community builder, a self-made leader, and philosophically inclined to see the good in people and the upside of life. He possesses that rare blend of wisdom and perspective found only in people who've thrived in the face of true adversity, gaining know-how and resilience every step of the way. Today, at home in Kingston, he's committed to help others overcome their own obstacles. Making a personal difference for others not only defines Norman's career path, it's his calling.

*One thing that I've learned is that there are good people everywhere. If you go looking for the good in people, you will always find it.*

Norman brings this energy to Kingston Economic Development as Business Development Manager, Start-Ups and Entrepreneurship. Equipped with the vital insight that solving business problems is significantly more difficult for those facing personal challenges, he seeks to fully understand and connect with the people he meets. This holistic, empathetic approach to solving problems comes naturally and is heartfelt. "More than ever I am inspired and convinced of the power of human connection and the spirit of never giving up." It's a personal, difference-making outlook imbued with a practical upside: communities thrive when its citizens are at their best. It's also where Norman is at his best: opening the door for all

Kingstonians to make the sorts of game-changing civic and economic contributions upon which great communities are built.

Changing the game is a massive motivator for entrepreneurs, particularly when personal passion animates the work. Prosfata, Norman's startup, is designed to help experienced newcomers establish successful careers in Canada. Clients navigate the nuances of the Canadian labor market and workplace culture more quickly and easily after Prosfata matches them to industry experts from their field. BizSkills For Good, a non-profit, addresses a troublesome gap faced by new Canadians and other underrepresented professionals: business acquisition services. He and network partners, like Empowerment Squared in Hamilton, support Black entrepreneurs and shepherd those who would like to acquire businesses through the process of identifying and acquiring established businesses. For clients the rewards are exponential: it's not just about talented people becoming business operators and employers, it's the incalculable joy of self-fulfillment.

*What is life without people? It has no meaning.*

Coming from a background of well-intentioned individuals who prioritized doing the right thing, even in challenging circumstances, the concept of giving back has become an integral part of Norman's personal philosophy. Finding the good in everyone, he believes, leads to positive network effects that make navigating life's complexities easier. Norman attributes his success to others: the network of extraordinary people he has met across his international journey. It is a true odyssey, including a decade in Kenya, a year in Congo, a return in 2005 to his homeland, Rwanda, and subsequent stays in Dallas-Fort Worth, South Sudan, Belgium, and the UK before finally settling in Kingston, which he now calls home. His view of Kingston warms the heart, "What's very attractive about Kingston is the human side. People are patient. They're kind. They're always smiling. They care enough to ask what you do and what you enjoy." That personal touch is a powerful difference maker in a

world dominated by technology, big-city lifestyles, and limited time. "The moment I am driving back from Toronto, Montreal or Ottawa, and make a turn off the 401, I feel the calmness in Kingston," says Norman. "Less honking, less aggressive driving. This is how I know I am back home. We take these things for granted but they are essential to our productivity and lifestyle."

"I am grateful to have the opportunity to live and serve this community. I am enjoying and living every single second of my life in this community. This is the one thing I have refused to trade for anything because I feel loved, welcome, and empowered not only to serve, but supported to be able to bring my ideas to life. What else can I ask for? Thank you, Kingston!"

### Fast Facts

**Born in:** Rwanda

**Business name:** Kingston Economic Development; Prosfata; BizSkills for Good

**Industry:** Economic Development

**Website:** [prosfata.com](http://prosfata.com)

## KINGSTON

— Economic Development —







# Helping leaders grow & succeed

## Meet Patrick Egbunonu

Acting Dean of Business and Community Services  
St. Lawrence College

Leaders possess a clear vision of a better future. Patrick Egbunonu sees the fusion of technology and entrepreneurship as the great leveler: the path from poverty to prosperity. That outlook—the pursuit of change driven by technology—has taken Patrick along a fascinating path from Nigeria to Canada and to a fulfilling life in Kingston. Now the Acting Dean of Business and Community Services at St. Lawrence College (SLC) and the co-founder and Chair of several organizations, Patrick's long journey hasn't taken him away from the formative experiences of his youth, which continue to animate him to this day.

Some of those experiences resulted from fortunate circumstances. Of Igbo heritage, Patrick grew up in Lagos and spent his teenage and young adult years among predominantly Yoruba people. Enriched by intermingling styles of thought—the Igbo seen as entrepreneurs/innovators and the Yoruba as educators—he cultivated a love of learning and a desire to create. "Entrepreneurship, innovation, and creating and improving things have always been in my DNA," he says. However, various uncertainties often undermined any good fortunes provided by the culture and environment he grew up in. "I've seen poverty. I know what poverty means. I know what it means to go an entire day not knowing where the next meal will come from."

Patrick's talents in science and mathematics provided him a way forward, leading to an undergraduate degree in engineering and

a master's degree in chemical engineering from Queen's, on scholarship. But adjusting to life in a different country isn't easy. Navigating change at the personal level—the shift to life in Canada combined with the self-realization that he truly does see the world through the eyes of an innovator—has left him stronger and clear-eyed about handling life's constant challenges. "When you're different, people might think something is wrong with you. So you have to be okay with yourself. The way you think may be different, how you see things may be different. But nothing is wrong with you. It's okay to carve out a unique path for yourself."

---

*You have to believe in yourself more than anyone else believes in you.*

---

Today, Patrick's willingness to be different and innovative is channelled into digital technology, with a particular focus on analytics, which led to the encouragement to lead the launch of SLC's Business Analytics Graduate Certificate Program in 2017. He stresses the importance of digital transformation and the necessity for Canadian companies to adopt new technologies. He'd like to see improvements in digital and technology adoption, both locally and nationally. "Not every company is properly leveraging digital technologies to improve their processes, products, and business models," he says. "And organizations that aren't leveraging Artificial Intelligence, or planning to, aren't even in the game."

Patrick is also passionate about giving back and has not forgotten his roots. His wife, Cynthia, runs the family business (Informanus Analytics and Artificial Intelligence), which is focused on leveraging technology, analytics and artificial intelligence to help leaders grow and succeed. He's also hoping to leverage technology and analytics to hold leaders more accountable in developing parts of the world. Patrick's focus on change extends to education and digital skills, "We have to rethink what we teach, how we teach, and how

we assess our students to prepare them for a future that is different from the past." Patrick's aims further include encouraging black entrepreneurs, especially newcomers, by emphasizing the opportunities available in Canada. This passion continues to drive him as the Chair of the Black Entrepreneur Ecosystem – South Eastern Ontario. He believes Canada provides people with the chance to come, establish, and grow their businesses on a global scale. It's a positive, future-oriented outlook encapsulating Patrick's belief that technology-driven innovation is the way for people who think differently to change the world, from Kingston to the global stage.

---

### Fast Facts

**Born in:** Nigeria  
**Business name:** St. Lawrence College  
**Industry:** Education  
**Website:** [stlawrencecollege.ca](http://stlawrencecollege.ca)







# Bringing life to engineering

## Meet Rath Perumal

CEO/Founder, P.Eng.  
Uyir Engineering

Behind every new venture there is a compelling “why,” an animating spirit entrepreneurs bring to every new challenge and opportunity. For Rath Perumal, founder of Uyir Engineering, the answer lies in the name. Uyir, Tamil for “life,” is what she brings to each project, and what distinguishes her from the pack. It’s a thoughtful, philosophical point of difference, yet fundamentally practical. Contemporary engineering design is people-focused: creating a well-designed space imbued with energy and spirit pays endless dividends for all who use it. Rath has seized on this concept and made it her business: Uyir Engineering is a life-centric engineering design firm and declaration of her helping-hand worldview.

Rath, who holds an M.Eng. in Electrical Engineering, formed Uyir in 2020, seeing an opportunity to make a difference in the building construction industry, and willing to do anything it took to achieve success, “I don’t believe in safety nets. I never have,” she says. It truly meant starting from scratch, from finding clients to learning back-office finance. It also meant sorting out which projects to accept, resulting in times where reluctantly saying “no” took precedence over compromise. Clarifying her firm’s brand and values to the market makes finding and working with clients simpler and more rewarding given their shared outlook, “I have beautiful clients. I love them, and I would do anything for them.”

---

*We’re specialized in creating open office workspaces that have a modern touch. Our clients are willing to be creative, willing to take that step into the future.*

---

The road less traveled might be the character-forming one with the greatest rewards, but it’s less traveled for a reason. Rath arrived in Canada from India in 2010, immediately tackling her Masters. After graduating, Rath worked in the tool and die industry in Detroit, Windsor, Michigan and Tennessee, her career then taking her across south and central Ontario to Leamington, Chatham, London, and Brampton. Some of the less appealing realities of her engineering field began to reveal themselves. Despite abundant opportunities to make it so, the work often wasn’t creative or fulfilling. But it wasn’t until 2017, and arriving in Kingston, that founding her own firm began to take center stage. Family, from her parents back in India to her brother in Philippines, were supportive but worried: Rath being the first to tackle entrepreneurship. Further increasing the degree of difficulty, engineering is a highly regulated and male-dominated field. Carving out a niche for a life-centric engineering design firm that develops “conscious engineering designs through our intuitiveness, expansive creativity and robust skills” took next-level tenacity. It is therefore little wonder she says, “I am learning important lessons through it all, learning very important things about myself. I believe I’ve grown spiritually through this process.”

Kingston resonates with Rath, making her feel at home. That happiness and contentment – which she also feels every time she walks into her home – is perfectly balanced by professional opportunities: Kingston is less well-served by the bigger engineering firms, offering an opportunity to provide services without big-city overhead. Her recommendations for newcomers to the city form an astute list: stay true to your values; prioritize mental and physical

health; be open to learning; seek community and mentorship; be resilient and patient; and embrace uncertainty.

---

*I’ve found mentors who make me feel valued. I’ve never met such gracious women: Having a network like this lets me see what I want to grow into.*

---

Rath is making it all work: business is strong and revenue is up. Uyir Engineering is established as “one of Canada’s first women-owned global engineering consulting firms.” A Top 40 under 40 Kingston Young Professional, she has built a people-first company from the ground up based on a clear philosophy and set of values. Her creativity and willingness to find answers make her a well-deserved Startup Newcomer Entrepreneur Award winner, and ideally positioned for long-term growth and success. Rath Perumal is bringing life back to engineering.

## Fast Facts

**Born in:** India  
**Business name:** Uyir Engineering  
**Industry:** Engineering Design  
**Website:** [uyir-engineering.com](http://uyir-engineering.com)







# Community focused entrepreneurship

## Meet Tarek Hussein

Pharmacy Manager, Weller Pharmacy  
Chief Clinical Officer, MedaKi

Our health means everything. For Tarek Hussein, founder and owner of Weller Pharmacy, everything is about health.

Tarek has worked in pharmacy and pharmaceuticals his entire career, from global pharmaceutical companies to local pharmacies, from undergraduate studies to his Doctor of Pharmacy. So when he says Weller Pharmacy offers the Kingston community the “best personalized pharmaceutical services in a welcoming, inclusive environment,” he knows what he’s talking about.

Weller Pharmacy is a case study in preparation meeting opportunity: with healthcare costs increasing and people’s health needs becoming more personalized, one-size-fits-all, big-box pharmacy stores aren’t the answer. Tarek is positioned right where the market is heading, operating a forward-thinking, ethically focused, community-first independent store designed to meet personal healthcare needs. Having also participated in developing MedaKi, an e-commerce solution that provides independents with the supply-chain scale of national pharmacy chain stores, he is architecting the next generation of pharmacy solutions.

---

*We created an online e-commerce platform designed specifically for independent pharmacies, which has been getting much attention lately. If patients are sitting at home and order items, they will be delivered the same day. Even if I don’t carry it on the shelf, we can still fulfil their request within 48 hours.*

---

Cairo was once home; now it is Kingston (since 2011). However, in 2006, after finishing his MBA at IE Business School in Spain, an epiphany struck when he realized he was more into entrepreneurial and community-focused work than corporate. It was a catalytic moment, sparking Tarek to direct his business and pharmacy know-how toward improving people’s health his way.

---

*When I first arrived in Kingston, I immediately felt connected to the city. The history, waterways, green spaces, and strong sense of community really stood out to me.*

---

Weller Pharmacy opened its doors as an independent pharmacy in 2015, an auspicious moment for Tarek. He had the expertise, location, supplier relationships, and community ties. Most importantly, he had the strategy. The gap was evident, including important concepts Tarek strongly advocates, such as “social prescribing,” which recognizes that a range of social, economic, and environmental factors influence health. Referring patients to non-medical services and community resources to improve their overall well-being is more community-maker than money-maker; Tarek sees this as a logical and ethical extension of the pharmacy business.

Tarek highlights that the Kingstonians’ sense of community and inclusion is fundamental. He notes the city’s welcoming nature, describing locals initiating casual conversations with

newcomers in places like pharmacies or coffee shops. These interactions often begin with casual conversations, leading to offers of help or invitations to participate in various activities.

He emphasizes that newcomers gradually become involved and integrated into the community through these interactions. His own community-oriented approach has led to the Kingston Chamber of Commerce (Past Chair) and KEYS Job Centre (Vice President and Board of Directors).

---

*The community wants you to get involved, participate, and showcase yourself and your business. Kingston allowed me to do what I do, and I am grateful to be recognized for it.*

---

Tarek’s success is based not only on know-how but also on community involvement. He has given, and Kingston has given back. His prescription is succinct when asked for advice for newcomers, with both community and newcomer in mind: “Love Kingston and Canada, and they will love you back.”

---

### Fast Facts

**Born in:** Egypt

**Business name:** Weller Pharmacy

**Industry:** Health & Wellness

**Website:** [wellerpharmacy.com](http://wellerpharmacy.com)



# Dedicated to supporting inclusion

## Meet Yu Jier Kou

Program Coordinator & Communications  
Kingston Immigration Partnership at Kingston

From the moment they arrive, newcomers to Kingston benefit from Yu Jier Kou's advocacy initiatives. As Kingston Immigration Partnership's Program Coordinator, a part of Kingston Community Health Centres, Yu Jier is instrumental to the successful growth and development of the city's newcomer social infrastructure.

Immigration is pivotal to Canada's growth and success. Decades of immigration-friendly initiatives have led to a deserved international reputation as a welcoming and open nation for newcomers. It is a reputation dependent on results, leading to a constant and growing need to provide thoughtful, practical social and economic support. This is doubly true at the local level, where growth-focused cities like Kingston position themselves as destinations for newcomers hailing from a wide variety of backgrounds. Welcoming newcomers and helping them become established is rewarding yet complicated work, requiring dedicated and empathetic professionals like Yu Jier to make the transition to Canadian life as smooth as possible.

Yu Jier's dedication to fostering community and promoting inclusion is genuinely remarkable. She's an organizer of the Newcomer Entrepreneurship Awards, a Kingston Literacy & Skills

Board member, and active member of the Chinese Canadian Association of Kingston and District. Rather than offer advice to newcomers she says, "I would rather spend that time hearing about their experiences. Everyone's coming from such a diverse background and experiencing such diverse challenges and successes that I would be curious to learn more."

"Integration really is a 2-way street. When newcomers come to Canada they naturally have to adapt, they naturally have to change. They might have to learn a new language, learn a new culture; join a new community," says Yu Jier. "We also need to become more welcoming for folks, recognizing, on the part of the community, our need for change." Language is a prime example, given steady growth in Arabic, Mandarin, and Spanish speakers. "Language challenges are big, and really impact newcomers' access to different community services: going for a medical appointment, registering your child for school, or accessing any sort of municipal services." Service providers offering expanded language support can reduce newcomers' sense of dislocation and disconnection, while fostering a sense of community and welcome.

Yu Jier's work also addresses a practical need: accessing services is simpler when the level of inter-service coordination is higher. Simplifying newcomers' acclimatization experience involves strategic coordination and networking among government bodies, community leaders, and other organizations. She mentions the Welcome To Kingston mobile app as an example, which supports newcomers across sixteen languages. The app and other initiatives, like October's forthcoming Welcome Day, are well worth the effort: expanding and strengthening socioeconomic support for newcomers builds Kingston's reputation as welcoming and well-prepared. Kingston Community Health Centres, KEYS Employment and Newcomer Services, and Kingston Economic Development Corporation are among the organizations playing a leading role.

Kingston is smartly positioning itself for long term economic growth, while constructing a warm and welcoming social layer thanks to the efforts of people like Yu Jier Kou, "It's the opportunity to make a lot of change for a lot of people. Whenever you're able to change the system a little bit for the better, that ripples onto different clients and different folks, different newcomers, and really, all people in Kingston."

## Fast Facts

**Born in:** Taiwan

**Business name:** Kingston Community Health Centres

**Industry:** Social Services

**Website:** [kchc.ca/weller-avenue/kingston-immigration-partnership](http://kchc.ca/weller-avenue/kingston-immigration-partnership)



## Connect with Kingston Immigration Partnership

263 Weller Ave.  
Kingston, ON K7K 2V4

613.544.4661

# KINGSTON

— *Economic Development* —

**Kingston Economic  
Development Corporation**

366 King Street East, Suite 420  
Kingston, Ontario K7K 6Y3

613.544.2725



@investkingston



@investkingston



@investkingston