

# our latest media release

**For Release: July 22, 2020**

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## **Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund supports Harvest Builders, accelerating growth of local tech companies**

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**July 22, 2020** – The Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund (OCIF) will provide Harvest Builders up to \$4 million over three years to develop a service infrastructure to build, grow and scale new technology ventures in Calgary and across Western Canada.

Harvest is a Calgary-based Venture Builder that removes the barriers in starting tech businesses in the Prairies, by providing a de-risked co-building approach. Harvest also leverages its proven playbook and growth programming for startups across Canada, further accelerating companies forward.

“Our mission is to help fill the gaps within the Prairie tech ecosystem, which make it difficult for new ventures to not only get off the ground, but successfully scale into globally competitive companies.” said Harvest CEO Chris Simair, former CEO and cofounder of SkipTheDishes. “This investment will enable Harvest to expand our initial pilot, and work with founders to co-build new companies that will continue to fuel the funnel of new innovation and technology here in Calgary.”

Harvest’s Builder portfolio will initially focus on the Fintech and PropTech sectors, with plans to expand to other portfolios in the future.

If successful, Harvest’s activities will result in no less than 290 funded high skill full-time personnel in Calgary engaged through the Harvest Platform over the four-year project period. Harvest forecasts it will attract \$30 million in committed private capital investment; at least half is projected to be deployed over the next four years.

Harvest is the 10th submission to be approved for OCIF funding.

“Businesses that are going to solve the world’s biggest problems and disrupt their industries need access to capital, and the proven track record of Harvest’s founders show that they’re primed to make that happen,” said Mayor Naheed Nenshi, who is a member of the OCIF Board of Directors.

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“Harvest has made a significant investment in Calgary and it’s important because it empowers local entrepreneurs with game-changing ideas, creates highly-skilled technology jobs for Calgarians and supports a more vibrant tech ecosystem that will create opportunities to drive greater economic growth,” said Mary Moran, President and Chief Executive Officer of Calgary Economic Development and Chief Executive Officer of OCIF.

“There are still a number of barriers that make it difficult for start-ups to grow and scale across the prairies,” said Andrew Chau, CEO, Neo Financial (a Harvest portfolio company). “Partnering and co-building with Harvest has provided us the ability to bridge those gaps within the local tech ecosystem and ensure we have access to the right resources and talent throughout the different growth stages of our business.”

Over the past year and a half, Harvest has been steadily growing its footprint in downtown Calgary. Since moving into the East Village (EV) last year, Harvest has nearly tripled its office space and recently partnered with Calgary Municipal Land Corporation (CMLC) to reimagine the 8,000 square foot East Village Experience Centre into an active river front office space for their growing team.

“For the past seven years, the East Village Experience Centre has been the central storytelling space to describe the unfolding EV vision,” said Kate Thompson, President and CEO, CMLC. “With much of that vision now underway and complete, partnering with Harvest was an opportunity to reimagine the building to support EV’s growing commercial life and welcome a growing team of entrepreneurs to the community.”

The [Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund](#) was launched by The City of Calgary in April 2018 to support investments that spur growth and create jobs in strategic sectors identified in the economic strategy [Calgary in the New Economy](#).

**A live stream of the Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund announcement will start at 9 a.m. MT on July 22, 2020. Join using this link:**  
<https://bit.ly/30xLqFj>

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## **About Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund:**

Opportunity Calgary Investment Fund was created as a wholly owned subsidiary of The City of Calgary in 2018 to support catalytic investments within the city that will help diversify and transform the economy. The Fund is administered by Calgary Economic Development and has a volunteer Board of Directors. For more information, visit our [website](#).

For more information contact:

Media Cell: 403 880 7040

Email: [media@calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com](mailto:media@calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com)

## **About Harvest:**

Harvest is a Canadian Prairie venture builder that connects founders and tech talent across Canada with world-class services to co-build startups into globally competitive companies. Harvest was founded by Chris Simair, co-founder and former CEO of SkipTheDishes, which sold for \$200M in 2016 and is one of the largest tech companies in Canada, with over 2,500 employees across Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Calgary. The same infrastructure that made SkipTheDishes a success is what powers the Harvest Platform today. Harvest's vision is to build the Canadian Prairies to be an epicentre for innovation and technology, where the world's best talent converges to build a better future.

For more information contact:

Arianna Dametto, Head of Communications

Email: [arriana.dametto@harvest.builders](mailto:arriana.dametto@harvest.builders)