

## **NEXT Canada Introduces Largest Cohort of Next Founders at Annual Prototype Day** *Over 20 ventures span industries including healthcare, fashion and urban agriculture*

**TORONTO ON, May 8 2018** — After receiving a record number of applications, [NEXT Canada](#), a national, non-profit organization that develops exceptional talent to create industry-changing ventures and propel business technology adoption, announced that 22 ventures have been accepted into the 2018 cohort of [Next Founders](#). Building on a proven founder development model, Next Founders provides a select group of entrepreneurs with tailored education, access to funding and a network of influential Canadian entrepreneurs, investors and business leaders that will enable them to further scale their businesses. The impressive entrepreneurs were introduced to the NEXT Canada network at Scotiabank in Toronto during Prototype Day, the annual kickoff to an intense summer of programming for participants of all three NEXT offerings, including Next 36 and NextAI.

Nearly 200 applications were received, with only one in 10 accepted. Applications were received from entrepreneurs all across Canada with ventures representing industries such as healthcare, fashion and retail, consumer packaged goods, manufacturing and urban agriculture. The accepted founders represent ventures including:

- [Nomz Organic](#)
- [HelpWear](#)
- [LabsCubed](#)
- SensOR
- Stathletes
- [Grobo](#)
- [Flashfood](#)
- [Healthy Pets](#)
- [Rockwell Razors](#)
- [Makeup for Melanin Girls](#)
- [Rockmass Technologies](#)
- [FleetOps](#)
- [Nudnik](#)
- Curiato
- [Iris Technologies](#)
- [Mistplay](#)
- Anima Health
- [Will + Zack](#)
- [Vacation Fund](#)
- [RetiSpec](#)
- [Hedgehog](#)
- [Dropbike](#)

“The growth of the Next Founders program shows that Canada’s innovation ecosystem is gaining strength fast,” said Sheldon Levy, CEO of NEXT Canada. “NEXT Canada is part of a network of leading organizations that support entrepreneurship, including Communitel, the DMZ, the Creative Destruction Lab, the Founder Institute and Velocity--and our work is bearing fruit. By helping high-potential entrepreneurs scale their businesses quickly, the Next Founders program helps ensure Canada’s relevance and prosperity in the global innovation economy.”

The launch of the 2018 Next Founders program comes just weeks after NEXT Canada was named one of the first Ontario-based members of the SCALE.AI supercluster, an AI-powered supply chain consortium supported by the Government of Canada. NEXT Canada then announced the expansion of its [NextAI](#) program into Montreal, marking the organization’s first program offering outside Ontario.



Shortly following the news of its Montreal expansion, NEXT Canada also announced that over the next three years it will receive \$15 million from the Government of Ontario to invest in artificial intelligence entrepreneurs through NextAI, a program that supports entrepreneurs launching AI ventures across all sectors, from healthcare to agriculture to financial services.

To learn more about NEXT Canada, visit [nextcanada.com](https://nextcanada.com).

### **About NEXT Canada**

NEXT Canada is a national, non-profit organization that develops exceptional talent to create world-class ventures and propel technology adoption. Founded in 2010 as The Next 36 by a group of pioneering business leaders and academics, NEXT Canada is today a leader in the delivery of cutting-edge programming designed to foster lifelong entrepreneurship in three streams: NextAI, Next 36 and Next Founders.

Our programs, delivered through meaningful partnerships between government and the private sector, strengthen the foundations of Canada's current and future health and prosperity. NEXT Canada is supported by generous National Partners including, EY, Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt, and Power Corp as well as NextAI Founding Partners, BDC Capital, Magna, RBC and Scotiabank.

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