ONTARIO GENOMICS BIOCREATE C8
Program Guide - 2026

Fueling Ontario's Next Generation of Biotech companies

OVERVIEW

Ontario Genomics **BioCreate C8** program will advance the commercialization of made-in-Ontario biotech solutions. This funding is geared towards pre-seed and seed companies in Ontario commercializing genomics or engineering biology-enabled products or technologies in the health, food and industrial biotech sectors. BioCreate C8 is being supported this year on a pilot basis through Genome Canada's Regional GAPP program.

Pre-seed and seed-stage Ontario companies often hold strong technology and a clear market opportunity but need capital to transition between discovery grants and growth financing. BioCreate C8 will fund biotech projects that advance a product, platform or IP along the commercialization pathway, building R&D capacity within the company and positioning it to raise follow-on financing or drive revenue at project end. Projects will also lead to job creation, made-in-Ontario IP, and increased investment in Ontario's biotech sector to build economic resilience and global reputation in genomics innovation.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Support startup and spinout companies to accelerate the commercialization of new products, platforms or IP.
- Create benefit to companies and to Ontario, and support made-in-Ontario IP.
- Position early-stage Ontario companies to raise follow-on funding, generate revenue and find customers or strategic partners at project end.
- Position Ontario as a hub for the creation, growth and scaling of biotech innovation.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Creation of new IP held by Ontario companies.
- Validated prototypes, products or platforms progressing along the commercialization pipeline.
- Follow-on financing from private sources and/or revenue generation.
- Job creation, talent retention, and generation of new tax revenues.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Applicants must be a startup or spinout company that is incorporated, Canadian-owned (>50%), and based in Ontario.
- Pre-seed or seed stage company.
- The company must satisfy specific requirements as to ownership, control, and independence, detailed in Appendix A.

- The project is genomics- or engineering biology-based or enabled and supports the invention, development or commercialization of a biotech innovation with a clear market opportunity.
- The project has the potential to generate social and economic impacts and benefits to the company and to Ontario.
- Academic partners are not mandatory. Where an academic partner strengthens your application, we encourage you to include one. Additional funding is available from the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Security and Excellence (MCURES) to support academic partners on funded projects. See Appendix B.
- Final eligibility decisions rest with Ontario Genomics.

The program is not intended to fund:

- Market research.
- Commercial launches of already-developed technology.
- Patent enforcement or litigation.
  Projects, project components or service provision (e.g., routine analyses or certain types of clinical trials) that would normally be funded solely by the company.

AVAILABLE TERM AND FUNDING

- The project term is 2 years (24 months). No extension will be granted.
- Eight projects will be funded this year.
- Genome Canada will contribute up to one-third of the project budget.
- Project budget will be a minimum of $333,867:
    - $111,289 from Genome Canada (non-dilutive)
    - Minimum $172,578 from the company or private sector
    - $50,000 from Ontario Genomics (convertible debenture)
    - Optional $111,289 from MCURES for academic partners
- One hundred per cent of the co-funding for the project must be received or committed before funds can be released. Genome Canada and Ontario Genomics reserve the right to withdraw funding for any approved project that does not meet this requirement or if there is a change in a project's co-funding status.
- Company co-funding can be confirmed on a year-by-year basis. In this circumstance, co-funding for the first year must be secured and a well-developed, feasible plan for securing the remaining co-funding in place at the time of the release of funds to the project. Genome Canada and Ontario Genomics reserve the right to withdraw funding if company co-funding is not confirmed on an annual basis.
- Projects must begin on January 1, 2027.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

In addition to the eligible costs described in Genome Canada's Guidelines for Funding, the following also apply to Ontario Genomics' BioCreate C8 program:

- Project budgets can include individual equipment items that cost less than or equal to $20,000. Requests for more expensive equipment will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Such expenses will be considered eligible only if the equipment is specific to the project, crucial to its success, and cannot reasonably be funded by other sources or accessed by other means.

- The collective allocation of Genome Canada funds for equipment cannot exceed 10 per cent of the approved Genome Canada funding, regardless of the total value of equipment expenses allowed. Eligible equipment costs that exceed this limit must be covered by other approved funding sources.
- Project budgets may include services from others with a total cost less of than or equal to 25 per cent of the total budget. Requests for services from others beyond that amount will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Such services will be considered eligible only if they are specific to the project, crucial to its success, and cannot reasonably be completed by the project team.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process consists of five stages. At each stage, applications are evaluated, and only those that meet the required criteria progress to the next phase. Applications are screened out at any stage if they do not meet program requirements or demonstrate sufficient merit, ensuring only the strongest projects advance.

1) Intake form completion
2) Intake calls with Ontario Genomics
3) Written application completed.
4) Selected applications reviewed for technical strength and commercial pull.
5) Top companies will pitch their project to an external review panel for funding.

Companies are assessed on team and project strength, competitiveness, product market fit, commercialization plan and likelihood of success, benefits to the company and to Ontario, IP strategy, and IDEA considerations. Budgets, financial viability and co-funding plans will undergo financial review and be assessed for appropriateness for project plan.

TIMELINE

Date	Application Step
September 15, 2026	BioCreate C8 Program Launch
October 5, 2026	Intake form closes
October 7, 2026	Intake calls close
October 12, 2026	Full application deadline
October 19-26, 2026	External technical review
November 11-12, 2026	Pitch to external panel
January 1, 2027	Project start

CONTACT

Laura Riley, Director, Science & Program Innovation, lriley@ontariogenomics.ca

APPENDIX A. COMPANY ELIGIBILITY

Applicants will be required to attest that the following eligibility requirements have been met.

COMPANY OWNERSHIP

A company must be a private for-profit pre-seed or seed-stage company that is majority-owned by Canadians, defined as direct ownership of stock or equity in the company on a fully diluted basis (i.e., total shares or equity outstanding if all possible sources of conversion were to be exercised). This includes, but is not limited to, outstanding stock or equity (both common and preferred), warrants, options or other convertible securities. The majority (more than 50 per cent) of the company's equity must be directly owned by one of the following:

- One or more individuals who are citizens or permanent residents of Canada
- Other FPEs directly owned and controlled by individuals who are citizens or permanent residents of Canada
- Other publicly traded FPEs residing in Canada
- Any combination of the above

Examples of different ownership structures and eligibility outcomes are in Table A1.

COMPANY CONTROL

Company control must be exercised in Canada. Control is defined as the authority to make decisions regarding the company's management and policies.

Table A1: Examples of ownership share as a percentage of stock in a company that is a privately held FPE to determine eligibility for funding

Example	Individuals[i]	Canadian[ii] FPE #1	Canadian[ii] FPE #2	Canadian public institution[iii]	Foreign[iv] individuals or FPEs	% Canadian ownership	Eligible?
1	100					100%	Yes
2	50	50				100%	Yes
3	35	60		5		95%	Yes
4	10	40	20	10	20	70%	Yes
5		30	30	10	30	60%	Yes
6		40			60	40%	No
7		45		10	45	45%	No
8		50			50	50%	No
9	25			25	50	25%	No
10					100	0%	No

[i] Individuals are citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

[ii] A Canadian FPE (For Profit Enterprise) is a business, other than the company, that is directly owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

[iii] A Canadian public institution is a publicly funded, non-profit organization. Typically, it is a university that takes an equity position in a start-up company.

[iv] Foreign individuals are neither citizens nor permanent residents of Canada. Foreign FPEs are businesses that are not domiciled in Canada and/or not directly owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

APPENDIX B: FUNDING EXAMPLES

1) Project involves company only:

Genome Canada contribution	Ontario Genomics contribution*	Company contribution#	Total project
$111,289	$50,000	>$172,578	>$333,867

2) Project involves a company and an academic partner:

Genome Canada contribution	Ontario Genomics contribution*	Company contribution#	MCURES contribution^	Total project
$111,289	$50,000	>$172,578	$111,289	>$445,156

*The $50,000 Ontario Genomics contribution is in the form of a convertible debenture.
This can be cash or in-kind, directly from the company or from another private sector partner.
^ The MCURES contribution can only flow to a partnering academic institution. Access to this funding requires a separate application focused on the benefits of the project to Ontario.

APPENDIX C: INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE FOR CO-FUNDING COMMITMENT LETTER

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill in all the bolded sections with the requested information and remove any outstanding bolded text.
2. In the table provided, break down the co-funding support provided by the organization. The definitions for the columns are as follows:
    a. Component: Budget line item description. For examples, consult sections 4 and 5 in Genome Canada's Guidelines for Funding.
    b. Type: The types of co-funding that can be provided include unrestricted cash, restricted cash (as specified by funder), and in-kind contributions.
    c. Amount: Specify the amount of support for that specific budget line item.
    d. Reference: Provide a one-page document that supports the cost outlined for the line item (invoice, purchase order, proof of competitive salary cost, etc.).
3. In the **TOTAL AMOUNT** row at the bottom of the table, provide the total amount of co-funding support. This should be the same number quoted in the paragraph above the table.
4. The purpose of the "Reference" column is to link the justification for the valuation/cost in the reference provided as part of this letter. (Full details about acceptable documentation are in the Guidelines for Funding.)

TEMPLATE:

Co-funder contact name and address details

[Date]

Genome Canada contact name and address details:
Laurie Andresen
Genome Canada
150 Metcalfe Street
Suite 2100
Ottawa
ON K2P 1P1

Dear **[Genome Canada contact name]**,

I am writing to express our support for the research project titled **"[Project Title],"** led by **[Company Project Leader's name]** at **[company name] and [researcher (if applicable)]** at **[name of institution or organization]**.

Our organization, **[name of your institution or organization]**, is committed to contributing to the success of this project through co-funding support for a total of **[amount]**, as reflected in the table below.

Component	Type	Amount	Reference (1 page maximum)
TOTAL AMOUNT			

We believe this collaboration will not only enhance the project's outcomes but also foster a strong partnership between our institutions. We are confident that the combined expertise and resources of our teams will lead to significant advancements in **[research field]**.

Please feel free to contact me at **[your email address]** or **[your phone number]** if you require any further information or have any questions regarding our support. We look forward to the opportunity to work together on this important initiative.

Thank you for considering our contribution to this promising project.

Sincerely,

[Your name]
[Your title]
[Name of your institution or organization]