



# QUARTERLY REPORT

January-March 2026



Calgary Economic  
Development

Canada

Alberta



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## Our Mission

TalentED is a work-based learning initiative that connects employers with youth aged 18-24 (with a high school diploma) to strengthen workforce readiness and talent pipelines.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**TalentED Greater Calgary ("TalentED")** launched on January 22, 2026. Building on the success of the TalentED YYC pilot which ran from 2022 to 2025, the work-based learning (WBL) initiative received funding from the Province of Alberta, working in partnership with the Government of Canada, to help increase the employability of youth aged 18-24.

On February 26, 2026, TalentED deployed the **TalentED Matching Platform**, a technology resource designed to deliver stronger youth talent and employer matches through AI-powered features. Within one month, the platform welcomed over 100 users, posted 24 projects and placements, and created 36 openings for youth.

## Project Scope



### Geography

Calgary and surrounding municipalities



### Employers

SMEs and non-profits



### Youth

Aged 18-24 with a high school diploma



### Work-Based Learning

Placement and project opportunities

TalentED connects youth talent with industry experiences in the form of project and placement opportunities provided by employers.

**Projects** allow youth to apply job-ready skills to address a specific challenge or problem for an organization. Solutions can be developed individually or by a group.

**Placements** offer supervised, hands-on experience within an organization. They allow youth to apply and gain job-ready skills through different tasks and/or projects.

In partnership with Skills for Change, we delivered our inaugural **AI training** to employers and youth resulting in 45 certifications. The TalentED team is iterating on these initial sessions to scale impact and reach.

Metric	Current Period (Jan-Mar 2026)	Project to Date
Employers Engaged	153	171
Youth Engaged	430	430
WBL Opportunities Created	36	36
WBL Opportunities Filled	6	6



“ **New program aims to tackle youth unemployment by creating 2,000 opportunities for young workers.**”

- Calgary Herald

# EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

In Q1 2026, TalentED's Employer Engagement team focused on highlighting our services to employers through event attendance, strategic outreach to associations, and AI training.

Complimentary one-to-one consultations for employers has allowed TalentED to help alleviate hiring barriers for employers while improving brand awareness.

**1:1 consultations** were most frequently requested for:

- Identifying workforce needs and scoping project or placement opportunities
- Accessing funding information and referrals to explore wage subsidies

While some employers expressed interest in future engagement with TalentED, citing capacity and internal readiness as barriers, the provisioned services are improving employer engagement overall. A total of 36 industry experiences for youth were created over the past quarter which included a mix of technology, skilled trades, marketing, and other business roles.



## STRATEGIC OUTREACH

Employer engagement was strengthened through targeted outreach to local **Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)**—for example, the 17th Avenue BIA representing over 720 businesses. This engagement is expected to increase the number of local employers connecting with TalentED and creating WBL opportunities.

Calgary Economic Development (CED) leads several trade initiatives including the **Trade Accelerator Program (TAP)** which is now on its 50<sup>th</sup> cohort. TalentED was invited by CED's Trade team to connect with decision makers from 28 SMEs actively looking to scale their businesses.



## AI TRAINING FOR EMPLOYERS



Building Welcoming and Equitable Communities

TalentED, in partnership with Skills for Change, delivered hands-on AI training to 39 employers to build practical skills and increase confidence in applying AI within workplace settings. 94% of participants found the training relevant to their business needs, and 87% were likely or very likely to recommend the training.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TalentED actively identifies opportunities to collaborate with post-secondary institutions, employment agencies, and community organizations across the greater Calgary area to increase the employability of youth.

## Community Collaboration in Practice




Sharing TalentED initiatives with youth-facing organizations like SAIT, Ambrose University, and the City of Calgary's Youth Employment Centre (YEC).




Presentations to network organizations such as the Trade Accelerator Program (TAP), MCG Career College, and the Government of Alberta's Community Resources meeting.



TalentED leveraged contacts from Calgary Economic Development's (CED) hosting of the [Invest Greater Calgary](#) (IGC) initiative. The team connected with economic development officers and Chamber representatives from Cochrane, Airdrie, Okotoks, and High River to discuss TalentED's value proposition for the greater Calgary area and tangible ways to engage neighbouring municipalities. A key activation was TalentED's participation in the Cochrane Job Fair.

**430**   
Youth Engaged

**10+**   
Collaborators Engaged

*\*Data from Jan - Mar 2026*

## Notable Engagement Events:

- ▶ YEC Youth Hiring Fair
- ▶ TAP 50 Event
- ▶ IGC Board Meeting
- ▶ Booth at Ambrose University
- ▶ Tech Talent Tuesdays
- ▶ Ignite STEM Networking
- ▶ Calgary Catholic Immigration Society Networking for Success



# EMPOWERING FUTURE-READY YOUTH

## AI TRAINING FOR YOUTH

In partnership with Skills for Change, TalentED delivered AI training to 14 youth participants, strengthening digital skills through hands-on learning and application to real case studies.

Key outcomes included:

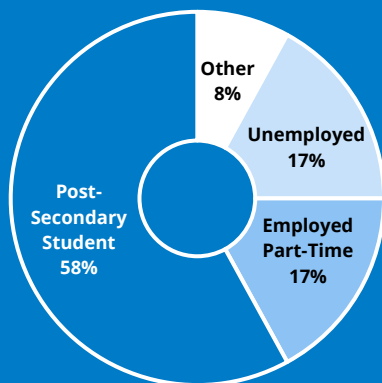
- Increased youth confidence and familiarity with AI tools
- Practical experience applying AI to real business and non-profit challenges; and
- A clear pathway from skills training into a work-based learning opportunity

# 80%

of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the training

“Overall, I believe this AI training program was very beneficial, especially for individuals who had never used AI before. For beginners, it was a strong and helpful introduction.”

### Youth AI Training: Participant Employment Status



## WORK-BASED LEARNING THROUGH AI CASE STUDIES

TalentED's AI training for youth immerses participants in real, employer case studies, such as projects for Network Innovations and Bridge to Oasis.

Youth applied AI tools to active business and operational challenges, such as improving customer support workflows and streamlining program communications and registration. Youth presented their solutions directly to the industry case providers.



Special thanks to the employers who provided case studies for the youth AI training:



### Case Details

Program marketing & awareness





AI for customer service


# TALENTED MATCHING PLATFORM

The TalentED Matching Platform connects employers with future-ready youth for placement and project opportunities that help meet business needs while alleviating the challenge of finding quality entry-level talent.

Launched on February 26, 2026, the platform is designed to reduce hiring barriers and improve access to WBL opportunities through skills-based matching. Demonstrable skills, strengths, and experience are prioritized to reduce the weighting of credentials and bias.

**100+**   
New Platform Users

**36**   
WBL Roles Created for Youth

**20+**   
Industries Represented

*\* Data from Jan - Mar 2026*

## HOW THE PLATFORM WORKS

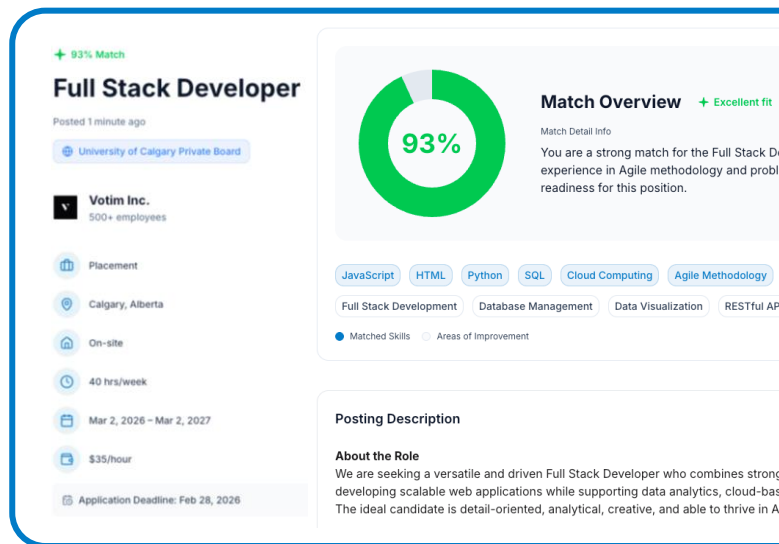
**Employers** use the TalentED Matching Platform to post work-based learning opportunities, including short-term projects and longer-term placements. Opportunities are reviewed by TalentED or community collaborators to ensure clarity and alignment with youth engagement goals.

**Youth** create profiles highlighting their skills, experience, and interests, and can apply directly to posted opportunities through a straightforward application process.



Leveraging an AI semantic reasoning model, the platform uses a skills-focused approach to recommend high-quality youth candidates to employers and WBL opportunities to youth. This approach helps employers efficiently review applicants while giving youth greater visibility into opportunities that align with their capabilities.

Both employers and youth can view skills-match scores, which identify alignment while maintaining employer choice in the hiring process.



## PLATFORM ADOPTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Following the launch of the platform, TalentED hosted lunch-and-learn demonstrations for employers and post-secondary representatives to introduce platform features and support adoption.

Early uptake included the creation of more than 30 employer and over 80 youth accounts, demonstrating initial interest across both audiences.

The most common industries represented include construction and engineering, social services, and food and beverage services.

# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

## SUCCESSFUL PROJECT LAUNCH

A major milestone this quarter was the public launch of the TalentED Greater Calgary (“TalentED”) initiative. The January 22, 2026 launch event generated **93 media items** across online, radio, and television channels within a week, significantly increasing awareness of TalentED’s mandate and services across the region.

Clear, consistent messaging highlighted TalentED’s value proposition of increasing youth employability by connecting employers with future-ready talent through work-based learning.

## MULTI-CHANNEL OUTREACH AND DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

TalentED engaged employers and community organizations through coordinated email, social media, and targeted digital outreach to promote AI training and the Matching Platform.

Email campaigns reached over 1,000 employer and community contacts per campaign, strengthening awareness across established networks.

Social media engagement, primarily through LinkedIn and supported by paid digital campaigns, extended reach, reinforced key messages, and raised awareness about TalentED’s service offerings.

93



Earned Media Mentions

1.4K



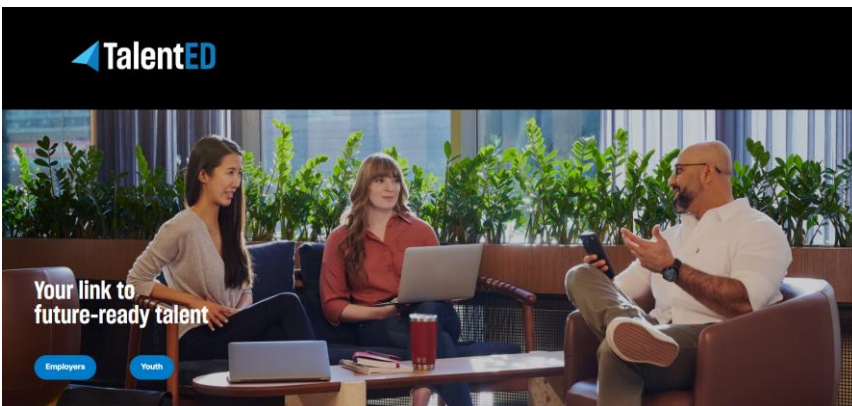
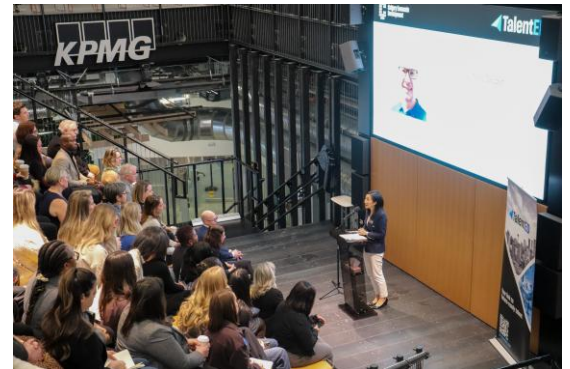
Newsletter Subscribers

2.9K



Website Engagements

\* Data from Jan – Mar 2026



# NEXT STEPS



## Driving Employer Engagement

TalentED will increase employer engagement through multi-channel outreach, including presentations, industry and community events, BIAs, Calgary Economic Development partnerships, paid advertising, and traditional media. Active WBL opportunities will be promoted through employer spotlights featured across digital channels, and pilot placements on Calgary Economic Development's newsroom will encourage employer participation and posting activity.

## Connecting with Youth

TalentED will continue to enhance its Matching Platform and AI training visibility to support youth accessing WBL opportunities. Ongoing platform updates, user feedback collection, and bi-weekly platform training sessions throughout 2026 will support sustained adoption and help translate youth and employer engagement into meaningful placements and projects.



## Scaling Collaboration

TalentED will deepen collaboration with chambers, municipalities, and post-secondary institutions through presentations, events, and early academic-term planning. These efforts will help create project champions and identify WBL opportunities within the Greater Calgary region.

# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

## AI Training Partner



## Project Funder



The Province of Alberta is working in partnership with the Government of Canada to provide employment support programs and services.