

# A Snapshot of Edmonton's Manufacturing Industry

INDUSTRY CONSULTATION RECAP | MAY 2025

# OUR RECOMMENDATIONS



## 1. STREAMLINE REGULATORY AND TRADE PROCESSES

- Remove interprovincial trade barriers in food manufacturing by requiring recognition between provincial health authorities.
- Improve access to government support on international trade compliance and tariff classifications to ensure compliance with new and emerging trade requirements.
- Allow more flexible advertising rules for tightly regulated industries like cannabis, with clear differences between messages for consumers and those for industry partners.



## 2. REINFORCE SKILLED TRADES EDUCATION AND LABOUR INCENTIVES

- Modify provincial post-secondary funding models to support trades education equitably.
- Reinstate or recreate programs like the Canada-Alberta Job Grant.
- Introduce tax credits or subsidies for employers offering skilled trade apprenticeships.



## 3. INVEST IN LOCAL ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

- Create a centralized economic development entity for Edmonton with dedicated manufacturing strategy capacity.
- Improve access to grant programs by establishing advisory services to assist manufacturers in navigating eligibility and application processes.
- Reintroduce investment-focused tax credits to encourage capital deployment into Alberta-based manufacturing scale-ups.
- Develop initiatives to improve international supply chain diversification and reduce U.S. dependency through trade facilitation tools and partnerships.

# SUMMARY

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce (ECC) hosted an industry consultation with local manufacturers in May 2025, bringing together key business leaders in the manufacturing sector from across the Edmonton region. The session provided a platform for participants to candidly share the challenges and opportunities shaping their operations in today's complex manufacturing landscape.

Attendees included representatives from advanced technological manufacturing, food production, cannabis processing, pharmaceuticals, and machinery. Discussions touched on a range of topics including regulatory burdens, workforce development, supply chain reliability, interprovincial trade barriers, and the underutilization of government programs. The consultation surfaced strong agreement around the need for better coordination, clearer policy guidance, and targeted investments to unlock growth in Edmonton's manufacturing economy.

**The consultation revealed that Edmonton's manufacturing ecosystem, while resilient, faces structural obstacles that limit its potential. Businesses are burdened by fragmented and sometimes contradictory regulatory requirements, from local inspection inconsistencies to national trade classification complexities. These issues create uncertainty and encourage companies to locate operations elsewhere.**



# DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS



## Reducing Regulatory Friction and Improving Market Access

Participants raised consistent concerns about overregulation, inconsistent enforcement, and limited access to domestic and export markets. From the inability to advertise cannabis products to overly complex interprovincial certifications for food producers, many described a web of obstacles that limit innovation and discourage expansion.

Concerns around tariffs, classification systems, and customs processes—especially for exporters—contributed to a broader sense of investment hesitancy. Several manufacturers emphasized the difficulty of obtaining support from government agencies, noting that inconsistent or delayed responses often lead to costly compliance issues.



# DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

## Strengthening Workforce Development and Industry Training

Workforce capacity emerged as a critical bottleneck. Employers voiced frustration over reduced availability of trades-focused post-secondary programs, noting the recent reduction in certificate offerings at institutions like NAIT. Participants observed that provincial funding models disincentivize more expensive but essential trades training, leading to labour shortages and under-preparation.

There was widespread agreement that governments and educators must rethink approaches and incentives to support labour development, especially for skilled trades and manufacturing roles. Additionally, many emphasized the lack of targeted support for scale-ups compared to startups, as it was shared that there appears to be more supports for startups but less incentives to continue to grow.



# DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

## Enabling Local Competitiveness through Economic Support and Supply Chain Resilience

Participants valued Alberta's entrepreneurial culture and cost advantages but expressed concern over the comparative disadvantages facing Edmonton's manufacturing sector. Chief among these were Edmonton's high non-residential tax rates, fewer local economic development tools than cities like Calgary, and low uptake of federal and provincial grant programs. Many businesses struggled to access funding—either due to eligibility constraints or insufficient internal capacity to navigate complex application processes. A recurring theme was the growing vulnerability of supply chains, particularly due to reliance on U.S.-based brokers and distributors, which increased costs and limited access to critical materials.

On the economic development side, attendees highlighted a lack of targeted, coordinated support in Edmonton compared to peer cities. While programs do exist, they are often poorly promoted and difficult to access—especially for niche or stigmatized industries like cannabis manufacturing. Participants emphasized the need for more visible, expert-led guidance, centralized application support, and local investment incentives to foster resilient, globally competitive firms.



## Thank you to our participants:

- Jason Pincock, Board Member / COO, LogiCan
- Kyle MacDonald, CFO, Argus Machine Co Ltd
- Grant Pilgrim, VP - HSE, Technical Training, Master Flo Valve Inc.
- Antoine Lavoie, Founder, Delavoye Chocolate Maker
- Nate Deboer, Owner, Akrivis Machine Inc.
- Andrew Freedman, CEO, Cannabis Tolling Solutions
- Galen Kjargaard, Owner, Sip Liquor Market
- Nick Scott, Alberta Food Security
- Bill Jaklin, Western Canada Sales Manager, Mazak Corporation Canada
- Swapnil Ballal, MSc, VP and Head of Manufacturing, Entos Pharmaceuticals
- Kevin Ramnarine, PrairiesCan

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce acknowledges that we conduct our business on Treaty 6 territory and the Métis Homeland, the ancestral lands of the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway, Saukteaux. Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others. These lands, known as ᑭᓯᐱᕐᔪᓴᐅᑦ/amiskwaciwâskahikan, have been a center of trade and innovation for Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

We honour the contributions of Indigenous entrepreneurs and are committed to fostering partnerships that recognize and respect Indigenous business practices. In the spirit of Reconciliation, we strive to include and empower Indigenous voices in our business community, building a strong and inclusive Edmonton together.

To reach out to our Policy and Government Relations team, please contact [policy@edmontonchamber.com](mailto:policy@edmontonchamber.com)