

2022 Starter Company Plus Grant Program

Guidelines and Eligibility

OVERVIEW

The Starter Company Plus grant program is made possible with funding from the Provincial government under the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade (MEDJCT).

The Starter Company Plus grant program is a non-repayable performance-based (some requirements need to be met before funds are reimbursed by transfer) funding of up to \$5,000 to support a new business development, the expansion of an existing business, or the purchase of a business.

The program includes components of training and mentoring (Program Requirements) that the approved applicants must complete over a specified time period before the program is deemed successfully completed by the Program Coordinator.

APPLICATION PERIOD

General Intake for the Starter Company Plus grant program will be open as a first come, first served program until all funds have been allocated. Please contact the Program Coordinator at any time for an update. All applicants must have a provincially registered business and located in the Small Business Centre catchment area of Hastings County, Prince Edward County, City of Quinte West, City of Belleville, Town of Deseronto, Tyendinaga Township, Tyendinaga Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.

PROGRAM INTENT

Applicants will demonstrate growth and/or sustainability, increased prosperity and job creation/sustainment through innovation, and will demonstrate research & development where possible.

Overall, it is the intent of Small Business Centre to carefully select recipients that:

- 1) Meet the eligibility criteria
- 2) Who have eligible costs approved based on the eligible costs listed below
- 3) Commit to participate in 10 hours of training and mentorship before receiving their non-repayable grant
- 4) Can demonstrate their ability to being a part of growing and strengthening our regional economy through personal business development.

While the Starter Company Plus Initiative is open to all eligible individuals, the core intent is to offer training and mentoring opportunities geared towards assisting those in need of business knowledge and support. Approval for the Starter Company Plus Initiative is competitive and all eligible applicants may not be accepted.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible recipients must be located in the Small Business Centre catchment area of Hastings County, Prince Edward County, City of Quinte West, City of Belleville, Town of Deseronto, Tyendinaga Township, Tyendinaga Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.:

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- Applicants **can** be described as:
 - Private, for-profit
 - Traditional SMEs who are in start-up phase (0 months – 2 years)
 - Expanding and growth stage (3+ years),
 - Purchasing a new business.
- Applicants **cannot** be described as:
 - Distributorships
 - Commissioned Sales
 - Not-for-Profit or charitable enterprises
 - Multi-level marketing ventures
 - Affiliate/pay per click only companies
 - 1-900 businesses
- 18 years of age or older at the time of application.
- Proposing a new business, expanding an existing business, or buying a business in Ontario.
- Not returning to school in any capacity.
- A resident of Ontario.
- Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
- Not enrolled in other provincial employment or self-employment related initiative and programs that include or do not include financial assistance.
- Not a previous recipient of this grant.
- Not currently enrolled concurrently in any self-employment or entrepreneurship training/financing initiative and programs offered by government funded organizations.

Priority Consideration will be given to applicants who:

- Are looking to expand their business
- Developing a new market(s) opportunity or product(s) to enhance competitiveness
- Will create new jobs in a part-time or full-time capacity

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

- Selected recipients will be required to prove a personal financial contribution to their business in the amount of 25% of the awarded amount (\$1,250 is 25% of \$5,000). Eligible expenses must be reasonably aligned with your business and eligible expenses must equal 25% before HST.
- Selected recipients must be prepared to participate in a **minimum of 10 hours of training and skills development** that may include participation in seminars, workshops, networking events (these activities can be completed in a group setting or one-on-one). The training and skills development plan may vary per approved participant at the discretion of the Small Business Centre Program Coordinator. The required training is to provide opportunities to enhance business knowledge and skills to support participants when starting, expanding, or purchasing a business.
- Selected recipients will be matched with a designated mentor and/or a group of mentors and will be required to meet with them **three separate times for a minimum of 1 hour each time.** Mentoring will provide business expertise and share business experience. Activities or discussions can include, but are not limited to, identifying challenges, working on problem solving strategies and development networking skills, expanding contact networks and providing overall guidance.

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ELIGIBLE COSTS

Applicants will need to demonstrate on the application that the grant will be spent on eligible costs (as approved by the Program Coordinator). All costs must be reasonable and well aligned with the needs of the business. Eligible costs for project activities may include:

- Expertise/Professional Fees
- New equipment purchases or upgrades (excluding vehicles/trucks)
- Marketing initiatives (such as radio ads, print ads, vehicle decals, NEW online websites etc...)
- Approved costs to start a new company, expand a business, or purchase a business.
- Membership in a professional body.
- Implementing e-commerce platforms or components
- New websites
- Training software or software specific to an industry.
- Incremental expenses deemed eligible by the Program Coordinator

INELIGIBLE COSTS

Ineligible/Unsupported costs include but not limited to the following:

- Computers, laptops, cell phones, printers, or any generic use electronics.
- Ongoing operational costs such as (but not limited to) regular maintenance, insurance, or wages.
- Cost incurred prior to the recipient approval date.
- Inventory
- Costs incurred after December 31, 2022 or prior to being awarded the grant.
- Acquisition of land, buildings, or vehicle purchase.
- Refinancing, depreciation or amortization expenses.
- Costs of intangible assets such as goodwill, whether capitalized or expensed.
- Hospitality or entertainment costs.
- Any part of a lease agreements (monthly rent or first and last to secure a location).
- Lease hold improvements. Any physical upgrade to a location not owned.
- Items not fully paid for or not yet shipped.
- Opportunities costs.
- Update of an existing website development or web hosting fees.
- Generic office furniture
- HST remittance.
- Generic office furniture or non-specific items unrelated to a specific an industry.
- Any cost not deemed ineligible or reasonable by the Program Coordinator.

PROGRAM REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grant recipients must provide and submit a copy of:

- Proof of business registration
- Proof of HST registration
- Proof of a business bank account
- Proof of current and valid business insurance
- Proof of approved grant spending and valid purchases with receipts

Grant recipients must be prepared to have the Program Coordinator

- Assess project progress;

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- Assess ongoing progress with the mentors
- Review training and skills development plan progress;
- Collect and review receipts against the projected expenditures;
- Post project completion monitoring;
- Evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of the grant contributions received;

HOW TO APPLY AND ACCEPTANCE PROCESS

NOTE: Submission – Applications open once the 2022 applications become available online and will continue to be accepted until all funds are allocated. Applications can be emailed or dropped off in person to luc@smallbusinessctr.com or at 284B Wallbridge Loyalist Road, Belleville, located on campus at Loyalist College in the Pioneer building.

1. Download the Application form at smallbusinessctr.com and complete. Submit **only four** documents:
 1. The application
 2. A signed copy of the Participant Agreement
 3. A signed copy of the Program Requirements
 4. A signed copy of the Guidelines and Eligibility document (this document)
2. No document attached to or supporting the application will be accepted as part of the application.
3. The Small Business Centre Program Coordinator will review all applications to ensure eligibilities are met before going to the Micro-Finance committee for final selection.
4. A Micro-Finance Committee will review all submitted applications and will make recommendation to the Board of Directors and the Small Business Centre Program Coordinator.
5. Project Selection – Decision is made by the Board of Directors and the Small Business Centre Program Coordinator (Accept or Decline).
 - Applicants will be notified of their application status shortly after the deadline for applications.
 - The grant is performance-based and funds will not be distributed until all program requirements are met. The applicant must complete the program requirements as outlined in the Participant Agreement of Requirements (Document E). No project is expected to extend past December 31, 2022.
 - Incomplete applications will not be considered.
 - Applicants are encouraged to contact the Small Business Centre Program Coordinator to discuss proposed projects prior to submitting the application:

Luc Fournier
Program Coordinator
Small Business Centre Business
613-961-0590
luc@smallbusinessctr.com

Name: _____

Signature: _____