



2020 Starter Company Plus- Grant and Training 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).

Supported projects (Recipients) are intended to strengthen competitiveness, productivity, business growth, process innovation, new market access, creation and retention of employment opportunities, incremental sales, and increased profitability and as a result transform our local communities and economy.

The Starter Company Plus grant program is non-repayable performance-based funding of up to \$5,000 to support small business development and expansion of an existing business, or the purchase a business. The program is designed to provide training and coaching to the approved applicants for a period of three consecutive months. (this intake will have priority given to existing businesses less than 5 years in business)

APPLICATION PERIOD

Submissions for the Starter Company Plus grant program will be accepted until July 24, 2020. Applications are to be received by 4:30 pm. All applicants must have a business in Lanark County, Smiths Falls or in the northern portion of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

PROGRAM INTENT

Applications will demonstrate sustainability, viability, and job creation,

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

- 1) Meet the eligible criteria (listed below)
- 2) Who have eligible expenses (as approved by the Program Manager)
- 3) That commit to participating in a 4-part Business Plan Boot Camp prior to pitching their business to a grant committee (via zoom). Successful grants recipients will participate in 6 biweekly business coaching sessions. (All training will be via zoom for this intake. The Boot Camp will run from 5 pm – 8:30 in the evening to accommodate the existing businesses)

While the Starter Company Plus Initiative is open to all eligible individuals, it is a training, support and coaching initiative 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 into the program as we can accept so many participants.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible recipients must be in the Small Business Advisory Centre catchment area of Lanark County, Smiths Falls and the northern portion of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

Applicants can be described as:

- Private, for-profit, traditional SMEs who are (5 years or less in business).
- 18 years of age or older at the time of application.
- Registered 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.

Applicants cannot be described as:

- Distributorships
- Commissioned Sales
- A franchise
- Not-for-Profit or charitable enterprises
- Multi-level marketing ventures
- Affiliate/pay per click only companies
- 1-900 businesses
- Not enrolled in other provincial employment or self-employment related program that includes or does not include financial assistance.
- Not a previous recipient of this grant or have been associated with the program as a coach, mentor, judge.
- Not currently enrolled concurrently in any self-employment or entrepreneurship training/financing initiative and programs offered by government funded organizations.
- Not be an employee or relative of an employee at the Small Business Advisory Centre.

Priority Consideration will be given to existing business applicants who:

- Are looking to expand their business
- Will be or have been developing new market opportunities
- Require a rework of physical space to grow their business
- Require additional marketing

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

- Selected recipients who are eligible for a non-repayable \$5,000 grant will require a minimum 25% percent personal financial contribution (\$1,250)
- Selected recipients must be prepared to participate in 3 months of training and skills development that will include participation a business plan bootcamp (10-12 hours total) webinars, coaching (these activities will be completed in a group setting. The purpose of this training is to provide opportunities to enhance business knowledge and skills to support approved participants when starting, expanding, or purchasing a business.
- Selected grant recipients will be required to take part in 6 biweekly group coaching sessions (7-9 hours). Coaches will provide business expertise and experience. Activities or discussions can include, but are not limited to, identifying challenges, working on problem solving strategies and sales development skills, expanding contact networks, and providing overall guidance.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

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

- Expertise/Professional Fees
- Equipment (excluding vehicles/trucks)
- Marketing initiatives (such as radio ads, print ads, vehicle decals, signage, NEW online websites etc...)
- Other approved costs expand or enhance a business

INELIGIBLE COSTS

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

- Ongoing operational costs such as but not limited to regular maintenance and insurance.
- Computers, laptops, cell phones, printers, or any generic use electronics.
- Cost incurred prior to the eligibility date.
- Acquisition of land, buildings, or vehicle purchase.
- Cost incurred prior to the recipient approval date.
- Refinancing, depreciation, or amortization expenses (payments to existing loans)
- Costs of intangible assets such as goodwill, whether capitalized or expensed.
- Hospitality or entertainment costs.
- Membership in a professional body.
- Any part of a lease agreements (monthly rent or first and last to secure a location)
- Inventory
- Items not fully paid for or not yet shipped.
- Non-incremental wages, owner(s) wages
- Regular websites updates for an existing site or hosting fees.
- HST remittance.
- Any cost not deemed eligible or reasonable by the Program Manager

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grant recipients must demonstrate that they are prepared to and have mechanisms in place to submit data, schedules, plans, and reports in sufficient detail for the Small Business Advisory Centre to:

- Business Registration (HST if registered)
- Assess ongoing project progress with the Centre
- Review participation in training and skills development plan progress.
- Collect and review receipts against the projected expenditures
- Post program completion monitoring.

HOW TO APPLY AND ACCEPTANCE PROCESS

NOTE: Submission - Deadline for applications is July 28th at 4:30 pm. Late applications will not be considered. Applications are to be emailed to cjames@smallbizcentre.ca

1 The Centre will conduct phone conversation with all applicants that submit completed applications and boot camp participants will be chosen.

2 Funding Selection – Decision is made by the Grant Committee and Small Business Advisory Centre after the pitches take place via zoom (Accept or Decline).

3 If a business is selected for support, Small Business Advisory Centre will provide a Micro-Financing

4 Applicants must complete the program requirements as outlined in the Program Agreement of Requirements.

5 Incomplete applications will not be considered.

6. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Small Business Centre Program Coordinator to discuss proposed projects prior to submitting the application.

Contact for any questions

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