

STARTER COMPANY PLUS PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Do you want to start your own business, get help to grow your existing business or buy a business?

If you've got a great idea for starting a new business, have a great business running and need assistance to grow it, or are looking at buying a business, you should consider applying to the Starter Company Plus Program.

Starter Company Plus is a great opportunity for enterprising people aged 18+ who want to start, grow or buy a small business. The program provides hands-on business coaching and training, as well as mentoring from local business leaders who will help make your business a reality.

The duration of the program is at least 3 months in which you will receive:

- Assistance with developing your business plan
- Seminars, workshops and training on all aspects of running a small business
- Ongoing support for running your business
- Coaching and mentoring
- Networking opportunities
- On-site support through a site visit
- Potential to apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 to run your business

How do I receive up to \$5000 to help start up or expand my business?

If your application and business plan is approved, you could be eligible receive up to \$5,000 in funding, provided that you can match the funding with a 25% contribution. The matching contribution may include cash or in-kind assets, assessed at fair market value, such as equipment or machinery required to run the business.

All applicants will be required to complete a thorough training program that will cover information on all aspects of running a business. As the applicant proceeds through the training, they will be provided with information required to fully develop their business plan. Once the training and business plan has been completed, applicants will then submit their business plan to be considered for an opportunity to present their business to an external Grant Committee, where they may receive up to \$5,000 to support their business. Approved applicants will receive an initial award of up to 75% of their requested grant to put towards the start-up or expansion costs and up to 25% upon successful completion of the program.

Where do I start?

Contact the Small Business Centre to register your interest in the program, confirm your eligibility and obtain the required application and business plan template. You can also take advantage of the business consulting services and resources available through the network of program providers.

Am I eligible for Starter Company Plus?

You are eligible for Starter Company if you are:

- An aspiring entrepreneur over the age of 18 at the time of program intake;
- Proposing a new company, expansion of an existing company or buying an existing business;
- Not a full time student and not returning to school full time;
- A resident of Ontario;
- A Canadian citizen or a permanent resident;
- Prepared to complete the business training components of the Starter Company Plus Program as prescribed by the Small Business Centre as the Program Provider;
- Prepared to commit to a minimum average of 35 hours a week running the business;
- Can demonstrate 25% matching funds in cash or in-kind assets
- Prepared to attend monthly meetings for at least 3 months after acceptance into the program;
- Not a previous recipient of a Starter Company grant in the past;
- Not enrolled in other provincial employment or self-employment related programs that include or do not include financial assistance; and
- Not concurrently enrolled in any self-employment or entrepreneurship training/financing programs offered by government funded organizations.

If you have any questions about your eligibility call the Small Business Centre.

WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS CAN I START?

Almost any type of business is eligible, as long as it is:

- A sole proprietorship or a corporation where the applicant will be the majority shareholder
- A partnership*
- An independent business venture
- Social enterprise
- Fits the Canada Revenue Agency definition of being self-employed
- Operates at arm's length from family business ventures
- Operates in Ontario
- Operates full-time as defined in the business plan
- Maintains its own books and records
- Maintains a separate business bank account
- Follows government rules and regulations for operating a business

*If only one partner is eligible for Starter Company Plus he/she must demonstrate 51% ownership of the company

Businesses **not eligible** for Starter Company Plus include:

- Distributorships
- Incorporated businesses that are controlled directly or indirectly by a person who would not be eligible for a Starter Company Award
- Commissioned sales or multi-level marketing ventures
- Not-for-profit or charitable enterprises
- Multi-level marketing ventures
- Single events such as a theatrical production, a DJ gig, a music concert, a dance/party event, a fundraiser, a sporting tournament, etc.
- Businesses that are strictly pay per click

HOW DO I APPLY FOR STARTER COMPANY PLUS?

To apply you must:

- **Contact** the Small Business Centre to register your interest in the program and obtain the required eligibility checklist and application.
- **Confirm** your eligibility and send in application to program provider. Program provider will contact you for an interview and then determine eligibility for you on training and business plan completion.
- **Complete** training and business plan as prescribed by the Small Business Centre
- **Submit** your completed documents to the Small Business Centre and business plan for presentation to grant committee

How does Starter Company Plus Work?

Your application will be reviewed and evaluated by the Small Business Centre. If selected to participate, applicants will provide an application fee of \$100 through cash or cheque directly to the program provider. Upon acceptance into the training program, you will be required to complete all sections of training within a specific time allotment. After the training component is complete, you will be required to submit a business plan developed with the assistance of Small Business Centre staff. Selected candidates will then have an opportunity to present your business to an external Grant Committee who will determine your approval of the requested grant.

After the presentation, if your application is approved by the Small Business Centre and Grant Committee, you will be required to:

- Sign an agreement with the program provider outlining each party's rights and responsibilities
- Agree to comply with the program guidelines and implement the business substantially in accordance with the business plan and cash flow included with your application
- Show your business name registration and any required licensing documents to your program provider for verification
- Open and operate a separate business bank account for the business
- If operating a partnership, provide copies of the partnership agreement and proof of joint signing authority on the business bank account
- Operate your business on a full-time basis, minimum average of 35 hours a week
- Meet with the Small Business Centre/mentors at least once per month for a minimum of 3 consecutive months and agree to one site visit by the program provider
- Maintain an activity journal, including time allocations, business tasks, operation and marketing activities
- Maintain appropriate business records of income and expenditures including receipts
- Participate in business training provided by the Small Business Centre
- Attend an exit interview with the Small Business Centre

You will receive up to 75% of total eligible funding upon approval. The remaining amount will be received when you achieve the mutually agreed upon milestones/targets laid out in your business plan and have successfully completed the program according to the program requirements.

Notes

1. Funds from Starter Company Plus award cannot be used for the purchase or lease of a vehicle.
2. Failure to successfully complete the program will result in default as specified in the Letter of Agreement.
3. Funding must be used to implement all components outlined in the business plan. Certain restrictions will apply.

Tax Treatment of Award

The Starter Company Plus grant is considered taxable under the Canada and Ontario Income Tax Acts. A T4A slip will be issued to the recipient of the Award.

Program Description

Starter Company Plus provides training, mentoring, and grant opportunities for eligible participants to start, expand or buy a small business.

The program, delivered by Small Business Enterprise Centres (SBEC), aims to address local and/or regional economic development needs, and where appropriate focuses on specific industries and sectors.

PROGRAM PROVIDER

Small Business Centre of Barrie, Simcoe County and Orillia

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