

Starter Company PLUS

Training + Mentoring + Funding Opportunities

Eligibility & Program Guidelines

Starter Company PLUS is a program offered through Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC) and is funded by the Province of Ontario. This program is designed to provide business training for entrepreneurs who are launching a new business or expanding an existing business that has been operating for five years or less. This program will have 3 intakes per year.

Program Objective

The Program will help to build a prosperous Ontario:

1. Serve entrepreneurship programming needs of Ontarians, aged 18 and older.
2. Align activities with local and/or regional needs and opportunities related to small business.
3. Generate economic results through business creation and expansion.
4. Support and strengthen main street business

About the Program

Through the Starter Company PLUS program you receive:

- Guidance and support from Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC) staff
- Business training through a custom online training platform that will walk you through how to design a business and write a business plan
- Interactive workshops on topics from financial literacy, operations, market research and financial forecasting
- Support in creating a formalized business plan
- Mentoring from local successful entrepreneurs
- Opportunity to submit a separate application for a grant of up to \$4000

Who is eligible?

- Anyone aged 18 and over
- Are proposing a new company, expansion of an existing company or buying an existing business
- Are not a full time student and not returning to school full time
- Are 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 ERC
- Are prepared to commit a minimum average of 35 hours a week running your business and operate full time year round showing revenue and or expenses in at least three quarters of the year
- Can provide proof of 25% matching funds in cash or in-kind assets (\$1000)

- Are prepared to attend mentorship sessions with ERC for six months if awarded the Starter Company PLUS grant.
- Have not received a Starter Company grant in the past
- Businesses fitting the following characteristics will be looked upon more favourably as they fall within the key strategies for economic growth and development with the County of Renfrew's economic development strategic action plan and include businesses in
 - Tourism, agri-business, manufacturing, innovative services & retail, wood products, aerospace and clean technology.
 - Showing a potential to expand including but not limited to staff, square footage, additional location, and product line(s) etc.
 - Potential to fill downtown commercial vacancies

The Program will focus on business in the initial start-up phase up to five years in operation.

Persons Not Eligible

- County of Renfrew employees and their spouses /partners are ineligible to participate in the funding application process
- Attending school or returning to school full-time
- Part-time or seasonal businesses
- Applications that involve concurrent funding from training or mentoring-based program (Futurpreneur Canada*)

*Futurpreneur Canada financing may be eligible as long as it is obtained prior to, or after the Starter Company granting period – not concurrent with

If you have any questions about your eligibility call us at 613-432-6848 ext 114 or 613-735-8224

What type of business can I start?

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

- Is a sole proprietorship or corporation where the applicant must own at least 50% of the shares; must be fully engaged in all business decisions, and genuinely running the business
- A partnership*
- Is an independent business venture
- Fits the Canada Revenue Agency definition of being self-employed in [Form RC 4110](#)
- 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 and must provide **proof** of certifications and licenses that are required for the specific business

*Only one partner is eligible for Starter Company PLUS; he/she must demonstrate 50% ownership of the company

NOTE: On-line businesses are acceptable, but there must be face-to-face opportunities to sell your product as well.

Business not eligible for Starter Company includes:

- Distributorships
- Franchises
- Commissioned sales
- Incorporated businesses that are controlled directly or indirectly by a person who would not be eligible for a Starter Company Plus Award
- 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, fundraiser, a sporting tournament, etc.
- Businesses that are strictly pay per click
- 1-900 businesses

Note: Enterprise Renfrew County at its sole discretion may determine that a particular business is inappropriate for the Starter Company program.

Starter Company PLUS Application Process

- A scheduled intake process operates on a four month cycle.
- Interested individuals submit an application inquiry form from Enterprise Renfrew County's website.
- The applicant is invited to attend a mandatory program information session
- Applicants with a desire to continue in the process are invited to complete a written application form that consists of the following:
 - entrepreneurial self-assessment
 - education and employment history
 - business concept overview
 - be prepared to provide their personal credit report & score
- A one-on-one interview takes place between Program staff and the applicant to discuss the following:
 - interest in Starter Company PLUS Program (reasons for applying to the Program)

- business idea / concept
 - participation commitments and responsibilities
 - program accommodations
 - previous experience in the sector/industry
 - management experience
 - training and mentorship needs
 - review of credit report & score
- Applicants accepted into the Program are invited for a follow-up meeting with Program staff to verify and determine:
 - business plan development timeline (training and timelines)
 - personal learning plan
 - Unsuccessful applicants are invited to use Enterprise Renfrew County's core services including:
 - business planning consultations
 - training and seminars
 - business networking and learning events
 - referrals to business planning information and/or community partners
 - potential re-application to the Starter Company Plus Program.

If your business plan is sound and meets the program's criteria, you may qualify for the next step. Selected candidates will be invited to present their business idea to a Grant Committee.

Grant Application Process and Disbursement

- Eligible Participants interested in applying for a grant must complete a separate application form
- Grant applications will be scored on the following:
 - Business plan, cash flow projections and grant application
 - personal contributions to the business
 - evidence of full-time employment as a result of the business
 - capability to create new employment
 - history of sales success to date if you are in operation over a year
 - demonstrable market knowledge
 - firm understanding of financial and cash flow
- Eligible applicants for a grant will then move on to pitch their business to the Grant Review Committee
- Provide proof of equity (\$1000)
- Prepare a 10 min presentation to give to the Grant Committee (with the assistance of ERC staff)

After the presentation, if your application is approved by the grant committee, you will be required to:

- Sign a Participant Letter of Agreement for the grant, outlining each party's rights and responsibilities for program participation and possible grant disbursement.
- 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
- Provide copies of business name registration, proof of business bank account and any required licensing documents to ERC 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 ERC and mentors as requested for a minimum of 6 consecutive months
- Agree to one site visit by the program provider
- Maintain appropriate business records of income and expenditures including receipts
- Participate in business training provided by the program provider
- Submit an exit interview on your business (learning outcomes and experience)
- Complete the anonymous participant survey at the end of program cycle (1, 2 and 3 year update)

You will receive up to 75% of total eligible funding upon approval (\$3000) to put towards the start-up or expansion costs. The remaining 25% (\$1000) 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 and spent within six months of receipt. Certain restrictions will apply.

Tax Treatment of Award

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