

STARTER COMPANY PLUS

Eligibility & Program Guidelines

Starter Company PLUS is a program offered through Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC) and is funded by the Province of Ontario. Starter Company Plus Program provides business training for entrepreneurs who are launching a new business, purchasing a business or expanding an existing business that has been operating for five years or less.

Program Objective

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.

What Participants Receive

Through the Starter Company PLUS program you receive:

- Guidance and support from Enterprise Renfrew County (ERC) staff.
- Interactive workshops on topics from business planning, market research and financial forecasting.
- Information session with a lawyer, accountant and insurance agent.
- Support in creating a formalized business plan and cash flow projections.
- Mentoring from local successful entrepreneurs as requested.
- Opportunity to compete for a grant of up to \$4000.

Persons Eligible

Individuals applying for the program must satisfy the following program eligibility requirements

- 18 years of age or older at the time of registration.
- Prepared to complete the business training components of the Starter Company PLUS Program as prescribed by ERC.
- Proposing a new company, expansion of an existing business or purchasing a business.
- A resident of the County of Renfrew and a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident.
- The business must be based in and operating within the County of Renfrew.

- 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.
- Provide proof of 25% matching funds in cash or in-kind assets based on the amount of the grant awarded.
- Must attend mentorship sessions with ERC if awarded the Starter Company PLUS grant.
- 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 vacant commercial and industrial spaces.

The Program will focus on business in the 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 (grant of up to \$4,000).
- Have received a Starter Company or Starter Company Plus grant in the past.
- Attending or returning to school full-time or currently working more than 24 hours in another job.
- Enrolled in other provincial employment or self-employment related programs that include or do not include financial assistance.
- Those receiving concurrent funding from training or financing programs may be eligible as long as financing was obtained prior to the Starter Company granting period but not concurrent with mentoring-based programs such as Futurpreneur Canada.

If you have any questions about your eligibility call [613-639-5853](tel:613-639-5853) or [613-735-8224](tel:613-735-8224)

What Type of Business Can I Start?

Almost any type of full time 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 operating the business.
- A partnership - only one partner is eligible for Starter Company PLUS; he/she must demonstrate 50% minimum ownership of the company.
- 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 and any other type of business ventures.
- Operates in the County of Renfrew.

- 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.

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, multi-level marketing ventures.
- Not-for-profit or charitable enterprises.
- 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 and/or 1-900 businesses.
- Incorporated businesses that are controlled directly or indirectly by a person who would not be eligible for a Starter Company Plus grant or is not a majority shareholder.

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

Starter Company PLUS Application Process:

- Interested individuals will visit: www.enterpriserenfrewcounty.com, select a date to attend an Information Session, and fill out an expression of interest, (you will be redirected to Zoom).
- The applicant attends a mandatory program information session.
- Submit an application form electronically to Enterprise Renfrew County.
- A one-on-one telephone 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.

Applicants Accepted into the Program will:

- Sign a learning contract.
- Participate in mandatory workshops.
- Participate in a legal/accounting/insurance session or other business related session/s scheduled by ERC.
- Submit their business plan and two-year cash flow projections drafts and final documents by the mandatory due dates.

- Have access to a reliable internet service, computer and compatible software in order to use Microsoft Word and Excel templates for the business plan and cash flow. *Participants are required to use the templates provided by ERC.
- Applicants who have completed all mandatory training and have submitted a business plan and two years cash flow projections are eligible to compete for a business grant worth up to \$4000.

Applicants Not Accepted into the Program:

Those applicants not accepted into Starter Company PLUS are encouraged to use Enterprise Renfrew County's business development services including:

- Business planning consultations.
- Referrals to business planning information and/or community partners.

Grant Application Process and Disbursement:

- Provide proof of equity of 25% based on the amount of the grant awarded.
- Provide evidence of an appropriate procurement for all expenses supported by the grant money.
- Prepare a 15-minute pitch presentation to give to the Grant Review Committee (with the assistance of ERC staff).
- Grant Review Committee presentations will be scored on the following:
 - Business plan, cash flow projections and the intended use of the grant monies. A separate cash-flow spreadsheet will be submitted outlining what start-up or expansion costs will be supported by the grant money.
 - Personal contributions to the business.
 - Evidence of full-time employment existing or which will be created by the business.
 - Demonstration of business growth potential over five years and/or potential to provide regional employment.
 - Consideration will be given to community contributions beyond business operational impacts.
 - History of sales success to date if you are in operation over a year.
 - Demonstrable market knowledge.
 - Firm understanding of financial and cash flow.

After the grant pitch presentation, if your application is approved by the Grant Review 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.

- Agree to additional training in accordance with the signed learning contract upon acceptance into the Program which includes:
 - Attendance in mentorship sessions with ERC for a two-month period upon approval of the grant.
 - Participating in networking opportunities as recommended by ERC staff.
 - Progress reports and reviews with ERC centre staff.
- Provide copies of business name registration, proof of a business bank account and any required licensing or certification documents to ERC for verification.
- If operating a partnership, provide copies of the partnership agreement and proof of joint signing authority on the businesses bank account.
- Operate your business on a full-time basis, minimum average of 35 hours a week.
- Starter Company PLUS grant recipients must provide annual revenues upon request by ERC.
- Agree to one business site visit by ERC staff.
- Acknowledge Enterprise Renfrew County and the Government of Ontario Starter Company PLUS program for their assistance in the start-up or expansion of their business in opening ceremonies and/or media stories.
- Maintain appropriate business records of income and expenditures including receipts.
- Complete a mandatory final report.

Notes

1. Funds from Starter Company PLUS grant cannot be used for:
 - a. The purchase or lease of a vehicle.
 - b. Rent.
 - c. Salaries for self or employees.
 - d. Personal reimbursement of funds already allocated to the business.
 - e. Leasehold improvements will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and funding may only be applied to a commercial/industrial property.
2. Failure to successfully complete all components of 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 and all receipts sent to the Business Consultant (organized and delivered all together in one bundle) within 90 days of receipt. Certain restrictions will apply.

Tax Treatment of Award

The Starter Company Plus grant is considered taxable under the Canada and Ontario Income Tax Acts. Please recognize that any grant received from ERC/County of Renfrew must be reported as business income to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).