

STARTER COMPANY PLUS PROGRAM

GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FORM

This program requires a minimum commitment of 3-4 months in which you will receive:

- Assistance with developing your business plan
- 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

At the conclusion of the 3-4 month training period, you may be eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$5000.00. The decision to allow you to apply for a grant is at the sole discretion of the Program Facilitator, and will be determined based on your efforts and commitment to participating in the training, and an assessment of your completed business plan. It is a competitive process. Not everyone who is approved for the program may be eligible to apply for the grant. There is no implied expectation that you will receive a grant if you complete the Starter Company Plus program. If approved for the grant, you will commit to an additional 3 months of participation in the program. (Further training, consultation, progress reports, and networking opportunities)

Am I eligible for Starter Company Plus?

You are eligible for Starter Company Plus if you are:

- 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 your Small Business Enterprise Centre Program Provider;
- Prepared to commit to a minimum average of 35 hours a week running the business or preparing to run the business
- If you are allowed to apply for the grant money, you must demonstrate 25% matching funds in cash or in-kind assets
- Prepared to attend all required training and mentorship meetings.
- Have not received a government business grant in the past

If you have any questions about your eligibility call your local program provider.

Muskoka Small Business Centre, 705-646-9021 or admin@muskokasmallbusiness.ca

WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS CAN I START?

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

- 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
- 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
- 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
- 1-900 businesses

HOW DOES STARTER COMPANY PLUS WORK? THERE ARE TWO PARTS.

Part 1: Complete the application and eligibility forms attached below. Submit them into the Muskoka Small Business Centre. Your application will be reviewed and evaluated by your local program provider.

If your application is sound and meets the program's eligibility criteria, you will be asked to schedule a consultation with the managing business consultant in order to talk through your business idea.

IF ACCEPTED INTO THE PROGRAM YOU MUST:

- Sign an agreement with your 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
- If operating a partnership, provide copies of the partnership agreement
- Operate your business on a full-time basis, minimum average of 35 hours a week
- Agree to one site visit by the program provider
- Hand in monthly progress reports; including time allocations, business tasks, operation and marketing activities
- Provide receipts for the spending of the grant money, in accordance to it's allocation in your financial forecasts
- Maintain appropriate business records of income and expenditures including receipts
- Participate in additional business training/networking activities
- Attend an exit interview with your program provider

Part 2: Once the training and mentoring is completed, and your business plan is complete, you may be invited to apply for the grant portion of the program by presenting your business idea to a Grant Committee. After the presentation, if your application is approved by the program provider and grant committee, you will be required to:

- Spend your grant money in accordance with your approved business plan, in a timeframe outlined by the Small Business Centre.
- Continue to provide progress reports for an additional 3 months, and as required thereafter for up to 3 years
(4 times a year - 1st year following receipt of grant)
(2 times a year - 2nd year following receipt of grant)
(1 time only in the 3rd year following receipt of grant)
- Hand in monthly progress reports; including time allocations, business tasks, operation and marketing activities
- Provide receipts for the spending of the grant money, in accordance to it's allocation in your financial forecasts
- Maintain appropriate business records of income and expenditures including receipts
- Participate in additional business training/networking activities
- Attend an exit interview with your program provider

Notes

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

STARTER COMPANY PLUS APPLICATION/ELIGIBILITY

| | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Proposing a new company, expansion of an existing company or buying an existing business? | YES | NO |
| Prepared to commit a minimum average of 35 hours a week running your business? | YES | NO |
| A Canadian citizen or permanent resident living in Ontario? | YES | NO |
| Have you received any kind of business training before? If yes, please specify _____ | YES | NO |
| Have you received another gov't grant before? If yes, please specify _____ | YES | NO |
| Do you plan to operate your business in Ontario? | YES | NO |
| Can you demonstrate 25% cash or equivalent commitment to the business? | YES | NO |
| Are you prepared to commit to mentorship requirements? | YES | NO |
| Are you prepared to commit to the business training | YES | NO |
| Do you accept and understand that a grant is not a guaranteed part of this program? | YES | NO |

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Last name

First name

Date of Birth YYYY/MM/DD / /

Gender: Male Female

Email Address

Phone Number

PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS

Street #

Apt #

Street Name

City

Province

Postal Code

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Business Name: _____

Mailing Address

Same as permanent mailing address: Yes No

If no, provide permanent mailing address below

Street #

Apt #

Street Name

City

Province

Postal Code

New Business – Yes No

Existing Business - Yes No Length of operation ___ Employees Y N Number of full time ___ part time ___

Sole Proprietorship Corporation Partnership*

*If business is a partnership, and only one applicant is eligible, the applicant must provide partnership agreement that reflects the applicant is in control of the venture with at least 51% ownership and decision making authority. Only the majority partner will be eligible to receive Starter Company Plus funding.

Business Sector

Agriculture

Construction

Hospitality/Foods

Import/Export

Manufacturing

Retail

Professional Services

Technology

Tourism

Wholesale/Distribution

Education

Arts/Recreation

Health

Other

Business Description: _____

Why are you applying for Starter Company Plus? _____

How have you prepared yourself for this business venture? _____

What is your greatest concern about starting/growing a business? How can the Centre help you address this concern?

How did you hear about the Starter Company Plus program?

- Small Business Enterprise Centre Website
- Newspaper Advertisement
- Social Media
- Other: _____
- Radio Advertisement
- Employment Counsellor
- Small Business Enterprise Centre Consultant
- Teacher
- Word of Mouth

REFERENCES

Provide two references (references must be over the age of 18):

1. Name: _____ Contact Number: _____
2. Name: _____ Contact Number: _____

MINI BIO

Provide a brief bio of yourself, this is used to pair you with a mentor. (Attach a separate sheet of paper).

1. Please tell us about your business or business idea.
2. Please list three strengths.
3. Please list three weaknesses.
4. What areas do you hope a mentor can help improve as they relate to your business?

SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR MENTORSHIP PAIRING

Category 1: Skills & Experience

Read each of the skills or abilities outlined below. Honestly assess your level of competence for each item where 1 indicated you have no ability or experience, a 2 indicates you have limited ability or experience, a 3 indicates you have some ability or experience, a 4 indicates you have good ability and experience, and 5 indicates you have a great deal or ability or experience with that skill.

Technical Skills

| | |
|--|-----------|
| <i>Professional dress and appearance</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Productivity without direct supervision – ability to work independently</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Successful teamwork experience</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Working with the media</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Public speaking experience</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Computer skills</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Analyzing numbers for management decision-making</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Hiring, training, motivating others</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Leadership experience</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Active in the community</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Business Skills

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Managing Money | |
| <i>Budgeting skills</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Experience asking for money (fundraising or asking to get paid)</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Preparing financial statements</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Knowledge of cash flow forecasts</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Payroll experience</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Reporting and paying taxes</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Arranging financing and credit</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Marketing | |
| <i>Marketing research</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Determining appropriate pricing strategies</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Developing promotional strategies</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Communicating with customers</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Sales experience</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Competitor analysis</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Using social media in a business setting</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Operations & Business Management | |
| <i>Negotiating and purchasing experience</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Managing inventory</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Experience working with suppliers</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Knowledge of federal, provincial and municipal rules/regulations affecting your business</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Entrepreneurial Experience | |
| <i>Experience in a similar industry to that of the intended/current business</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Previous experience starting or running a business</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |

This assessment helps you and the Centre better understand the skills and experience you have to date. If you scored two or less in any of these items, we can help you access resources, training, mentorship and support to help you build your experience and knowledge in these areas and ultimately grow as an entrepreneur.

Category 2: Personality / Characteristics

Read each statement below. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement between 1 and 5, where a 1 indicates you completely disagree with the statement, a 2 indicates you somewhat disagree with the statement, a 3 indicates you neither agree nor disagree with the statement, a 4 indicates you somewhat agree with the statement, and a 5 indicates you completely agree with the statement.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Passion | |
| <i>I believe I am in complete control of my own destiny in business</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I am goal oriented – once I set a goal it would take a team of wild horses to turn me away from achieving it</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I am thrilled with the prospect of being my own boss</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>When someone says something negative about me or my ideas, I don't usually take it personally</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Faith and Commitment | |
| <i>When I make a commitment, I keep it</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Other people's opinions usually don't influence the way I think or feel about something</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Tolerance of Risk and Uncertainty | |
| <i>I always believe that my business decisions are the best I can make with the information I have at the time</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I am not afraid to fail</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I know whatever happens in my business, I will be able to handle it</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Adaptability | |
| <i>I am completely comfortable when my plans for my day at work change suddenly</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>When I suffer a setback, I always bounce back right away</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I am excellent at improvising when faced with unanticipated obstacles</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>It is easy for me to switch gears and try a different approach to solving a problem</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Leadership | |
| <i>I particularly enjoy leading and motivating people</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I am completely comfortable delegating tasks to others to complete</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>Setting goals and helping others achieve those goals is something I really enjoy about business</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I think about my future career and devise plans to get to where I want to be</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I am a self-starter – I take charge and set my own path</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Drive and Determination | |
| <i>I always feel driven to complete every project I start</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>When I say I'm going to do something – I do it!</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I don't get discouraged easily</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I am very comfortable being a decision-maker</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Energy | |
| <i>I'll work as long as it takes to get the job done</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I take great satisfaction from working hard and getting a task done well</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |

The personality/characteristics assessment is intended to give you insight into your “entrepreneurial mindset”. When reviewing your results, focus on your strengths and don’t be discouraged by your weaknesses. Remember that even the most successful entrepreneurs have weaknesses. They succeed in spite of them because they work to develop these skills and competencies. Here are some key personality traits/characteristics of successful entrepreneurs:

- Entrepreneurs are passionate about their business - you will be more committed to the business the more passionate you feel about your idea
- Successful entrepreneurs can overcome obstacles and deal with challenges head-on, and are less likely to give up when things get difficult
- Entrepreneurs learn to live with risk and uncertainty. Learning to thrive in unpredictable and uncertain business conditions is critical.
- Starting and growing a successful business takes a lot of hard work and energy. Entrepreneurs work long hours and do what it takes to get the job done.
- Successful entrepreneurs possess an ability to keep going when the going gets tough, and are motivated to excel at what they do.

Category 3: Networks

Read each statement below. Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement between 1 and 5, where a 1 indicates you completely disagree with the statement, a 2 indicates you somewhat disagree with the statement, a 3 indicates you neither agree nor disagree with the statement, a 4 indicates you somewhat agree with the statement, and a 5 indicates you completely agree with the statement.

| Social/Family/Professional Networks | |
|--|-----------|
| <i>My friends/family are encouraging me to pursue small business ownership</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I have friends/family who will help me succeed in business</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I have friends/family that are entrepreneurs</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I have a large network of friends/family in this town who will introduce me to others</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I know a lot of people in this town, and most would be happy to do business with me</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I have an accountant or know of an accountant that I would deal with for my business</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I have a business insurance agent</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I have contacts who can advise me on web development and e-commerce</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| <i>I have suppliers in the industry in which I plan to launch my business</i> | 1 2 3 4 5 |

A score of three or less on any of the above statements suggests an area where you could work to develop your network. Networks are used by entrepreneurs particularly in the start-up phase of the business. If your networks are limited, make a plan of action. Set a goal of making new contacts in your business every day. Use social media, and local clubs and associations to help your networks grow.

RESUME IS ATTACHED

YES

NO

Please attach your resume with education and work history included.

I HAVE HAD A CONSULTATION WITH THE MANAGING BUSINESS CONSULTANT

YES

NO

I HAVE ATTACHED A COPY OF MY DRIVERS LICENSE OR OTHER VALID PERSONAL ID

YES

NO

I HAVE FILLED OUT THE SELF ASSESSMENT FOR MENTORSHIP PAIRING FORM

YES

NO

I HAVE ATTACHED A MINI BIO FOR MENTORSHIP PAIRING

YES

NO

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I hereby agree to the terms and conditions to the Starter Company Plus program as set out by the Muskoka Small Business Centre. I acknowledge that I will attend training sessions on: **dates provided** and any other training as deemed necessary by the program provider to complete the requirements of the program. I _____ understand in signing below that I am agreeing to full participation and commitment to the Starter Company Plus program as set out by the program provider.

I hereby certify that the statements and information in this application form are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I authorize the Small Business Enterprise Centre to investigate all statements or other information contained in this application form and any attachments submitted with it, unless I have stated in writing to the contrary. I understand and agree that any misrepresentation, falsification or material omission of information on this application may result in my failure to be accepted into the Starter Company Plus Program, or being asked to leave if discovered after acceptance.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Personal information on this form is collected in connection with the administration of counselling service to small businesses operating or proposing to operate as part of the Starter Company Plus Program in accordance with s.108 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, S.O. 2001, C.25. It may also be used to communicate with you on other initiatives, programs and services as the Small Business Enterprise Centre may make available from time to time. For more information on this collection please contact your local Small Business Enterprise Centre.