



Western Economic
Diversification Canada

Diversification de l'économie
de l'Ouest Canada

Business Services for You

Western Canada's Business Service Network



You're the **power** behind the Canadian economy.
Let's share the energy!

Partners in Prosperity

Western Economic Diversification Canada is proud to work with western Canadians to create a stronger, more innovative and sustainable future for the region.

Entrepreneurs are playing an essential role in that future. There are 40 per cent more small businesses in Western Canada than in the rest of the country, and these account for nearly 80 per cent of all new jobs throughout the West.

Western Economic Diversification Canada supports this invaluable driver of economic growth through our Western Canada Business Service Network. This Network is on the ground in your community delivering the advice and information small business owners need to start and run successful businesses. From creating business and marketing plans, to accessing financing or expanding into export and e-business markets, Network staff can help make it happen.

I invite you to read further to discover how the partners in our Business Service Network are making a difference in communities across the West. In building a stronger West, we're building a stronger Canada.



The Honourable Stephen Owen
Minister of Western Economic Diversification
and Minister of State (Sport)

Helping the West's Small Businesses Succeed

The pioneer spirit that built the West has found a new frontier – small business ownership. There are 40 per cent more small businesses per capita in the West than in the rest of Canada, and they account for nearly 80 per cent of all new jobs.

As the Government of Canada department established to help the western economy grow and diversify, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) supports small business through its Business Service Network. A unique partnership of several integrated organizations, the Network provides entrepreneurs with the products and services they need to establish a business or make it grow. With over 100 points of service across the West, the Business Service Network helps make small business ownership an option for all western Canadians.

If you own a small business you'd like to take to the next level, or if you're thinking of starting a new business, this guide will help you find what you need to succeed. WD is there, in your community, working with and for western Canadians to create new economic opportunity.

Western Economic Diversification Canada supports the willingness of entrepreneurs to take risks, devise new products and services, and create jobs and opportunity in communities across Western Canada. Last year, the Business Service Network partners responded to over 688,690 requests for information, provided 143,503 advisory services and trained nearly 42,000 clients. In addition, Web site visits for all partner sites, excluding Community Futures Development Corporations, totalled 2,329,310.

The partners in Western Economic Diversification Canada's Business Service Network are:

- **Canada Business Service Centres**
– **Aboriginal Business Service Network**
- **Women's Enterprise Initiative**
- **Francophone Economic Development Organizations**
- **Community Futures Development Corporations**

Canada

Canada Business Service Centres

Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs) are your gateway to information on government and non-government programs and services. They reduce the complexity of dealing with various levels of government by serving as a central resource for Canadian business information. CBSCs provide seminars, on-line business products and information guides on a wide range of business topics. Located in the West's major urban centres, a broad network of regional access sites extends services into rural, northern and Aboriginal communities.

Wherever you live, Canada Business Service Centres are there to answer your questions about starting a new business or improving an existing one.

Successful Manitoba inventor Phil Poetker has used the services of the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre for over 10 years to navigate the complexities of establishing a business. Most recently, they helped **Phil Poetker Designs** get a venture with podiatrist Dr. Lorne Canvin off on the right foot, designing a new orthotic device to reduce the foot problems and related injuries suffered by Canadian soldiers. The patented Bio-insole provides superior shock-absorbing qualities, and is available in more than 60 functional and fashionable designs from work boots to sandals.

When Rob Driscoll decided he wanted to start a new business magazine in Alberta, he knew where to turn for help with his business plan. The Calgary Business Information Centre helped Driscoll gather the very best in customized information about the Alberta market. Launched with partner Terry Inigo-Jones in October 2000, **Business Edge News Magazine** reached profitability within one year and doubled circulation within two. Today, the magazine has expanded into British Columbia and is delivered to over 87,000 businesses each week.



With help from the Calgary Business Information Centre, Rob Driscoll launched Business Edge News Magazine in 2000. Today, the magazine reaches over 87,000 Alberta and B.C. businesses each week.
PHOTO COURTESY OF BUSINESS EDGE

As mothers of young children, Paula Woodhouse and Tammie McCumber understand what parents are looking for. They started **The Giggle Factory** as a home-based business in Saskatoon, selling unique, fun items for children. When it came time to make the leap to a retail location, the pair sought advice and assistance from *business infosource* at the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre. One year after opening, The Giggle Factory has earned a loyal customer base from across the province, and is considering distribution and franchising opportunities.

Victoria's Marilee Atkinson saw a business opportunity when she noticed that beds aboard boats are not standardized, and bed sheets are usually too large or ill fitting. With the help of the Canada/British Columbia Business Services Society Web site, she started **Sheets Ahoy Boat Bedding Company**, which creates custom-fitted linens for onboard beds. In 2003, Atkinson was one of five winners of the Society's annual Business Plan Contest. Sheets Ahoy currently sells direct to consumers, but based on advice from the Business Services Society, Atkinson plans to start working with distributors to expand the company's reach.



Marilee Atkinson started Sheets Ahoy Boat Bedding Company to create custom-fitted linens for beds aboard boats.

Last year, the four western CBSCs facilitated about 178,000 officer-assisted interactions (telephone, walk-in, fax, mail, e-mail), 15,700 self-service interactions (fax-on-demand and automated telephone), and over 2 million CBSC Web site visits – 34 per cent of the entire national network.

In June, the national Network of Canada Business Service Centres received the 2004 United Nations Public Service Award in the category of "Improvement of Public Service Results." With ten recipients worldwide, Canada was one of only two in the geographic region covering Europe and North America.

www.cbsc.org

Canada/British Columbia Business Services Society
(604) 775-5525 Toll Free: 1-800-667-2272

The Business Link Business Service Centre (Alberta)
(780) 422-7722 Toll Free: 1-800-272-9675

Calgary Business Information Centre
(403) 221-7800

Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre
(306) 956-2323 Toll Free: 1-800-667-4374

Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre
(204) 984-2272 Toll Free: 1-800-665-2019

Aboriginal Business Service Network

Geographic isolation, lack of business networks and limited awareness of information sources continue to present barriers to the full economic participation of Aboriginal peoples. Building on the structure of existing Canada Business Service Centres, the Aboriginal Business Service Network helps to increase the ability of Aboriginal people to access capital, and to establish and grow their businesses. Customized business information and resources are provided through CBSCs across the West, by phone, e-mail and over the Internet.

The Aboriginal Business Service Network is increasing the number, size and market reach of Aboriginal businesses in the West by directing entrepreneurs to the resources that can help them succeed.

To fill a gap in bookkeeping programs for entrepreneurs, the Visions North Community Futures Development Corporation teamed up with the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre and the Aboriginal Business Service Network. The result is **Bookkeeping from a Shoebox**, a practical program for beginners. Sessions run three to four days and include intensive training in all aspects of financial business practices. To date, over 130 entrepreneurs have participated in the program.



Bookkeeping from a Shoebox, a practical bookkeeping program for beginners, makes no assumptions about knowledge or culture, making it an ideal tool to help Aboriginal entrepreneurs succeed.



Aboriginal entrepreneurs participate in a workshop on starting a business at The Business Link's first It's All About Opportunities conference in May 2003. Attracting 175 participants from 58 communities across Alberta, the overwhelming response led to a second conference, held October 25-26, 2004. The events feature workshops on growing a business, marketing and sales, money management, and legal and operational matters.

When Curtis Cloud of Waywayseecappo First Nation decided to strike out on his own, he contacted Aboriginal Business Services at the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre for start-up advice and financing information.

Clear Sky Environmental Services provides a wide range of specialized services – including conducting environmental assessments, cleaning up contaminated sites, environmental monitoring and emergency response – for a client list that includes federal, provincial and municipal governments.



Curtis Cloud, owner of Clear Sky Environmental Services, is optimistic that his company's success will create training and employment opportunities for youth on the reserve.

The Aboriginal Business Service Network is helping make small business ownership an option for all western Canadians.

Community Futures Development Corporations in the West are also very committed to creating new opportunities for Aboriginal peoples. Since April 1999, they have provided 862 loans totalling \$18.1 million to Aboriginal entrepreneurs, creating or maintaining 1,590 jobs.

www.cbsc.org/absn/

Toll-free: 1-877-699-5559

In Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, contact your local Canada Business Service Centre for referral to the nearest Aboriginal resource office, or explore the link above.

All British Columbia enquiries can be directed to the B.C. Aboriginal Business Services Network coordinator at (604) 685-2330, or visit www.firstbusiness.ca

Women's Enterprise Initiative

Despite the fact women lead more than 300,000 western Canadian businesses and are starting small businesses at twice the rate of their male counterparts, they continue to face unique challenges. The Women's Enterprise Initiative is working to remove the barriers by providing customized services to help women entrepreneurs succeed. The offices, located in each of the western provinces, provide business loans, advice and information, as well as networking and mentoring opportunities.

The Women's Enterprise Initiative is helping women across Western Canada realize their entrepreneurial dreams.

Edmontonian Rose Haugland started **Panache Ceramics Industries Ltd.** in 1994. The company designs and manufactures handmade ceramic, glass and metal tiles. Haugland originally approached Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) in January 1998, seeking financing to attend a major interior design tradeshow in Florida. Since 1998, Panache has worked with AWE on several other loans including equipment purchases. Today, over 80 per cent of company sales are driven by the U.S. market, and the company continues to access AWE's support. Panache Ceramics' handcrafted original designs can be seen in stylish restaurants, hotels and homes throughout Canada and the U.S.

Michelle Yates of Winnipeg started **MAD Creations, Inc.** as a home-based business, creating specialty design and illustration projects for the restaurant and hospitality industry. With assistance from the Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba (WEC) and the WD-sponsored Assiniboine Credit Union Micro Loan Program, the design house was able to move out of the basement and hire its first employee after one year. In year two, Yates again tapped WEC for advice and financing as she sought to expand her U.S. sales and hire additional staff. MAD Creations' client list now includes heavyweights like Kraft, Heinz, Nestle and Disney.



(L-R) MAD Creations' creative team Spencer Tymchak, Shirley Fehr, Michelle Yates and Jared Grimman (missing Tad Kojima), create specialty design and illustration projects for the restaurant and hospitality industry.

Janet Féirín began selling spelt-based baked goods at the East Vancouver Farmer's Market. An ancient cousin of wheat, spelt provides an organic, high protein alternative for those with wheat intolerance. When the time came to make the move from farmer's market to bakery, Féirín approached the Women's Enterprise Society of B.C. (WESBC) for financing. Today, **Arán Foods Inc.** is in its seventh successful year of business and has eight part-time employees. With annual sales of \$140,000, their products are carried in most organic grocery stores

across the Lower Mainland. Arán Foods is now returning to the WESBC for help expanding to other markets in Canada and the U.S.

In 2002, when Sue Panattoni and her husband, John Schachtel, wanted to start a lower-cost funeral home in Saskatoon, they found the banks unwilling to provide financing. A loan from the Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan filled the gap, enabling the pair to purchase equipment, furnishing and leasehold improvements. After only 19 months, **Mourning Glory Funeral Services** achieved its five-year target of 10 per cent of the local market. The business has created nine jobs in the community.



With the help of WESBC, Janet Féirín launched Arán Foods Inc., specializing in spelt-based baked goods that are carried in organic grocery stores across the Lower Mainland.

Last year, the Women's Enterprise Initiative approved 132 loans, totalling \$4.85 million, which created or maintained 346 jobs. Over the past ten years, they have provided more than 1,000 loans, totalling \$27.2 million, to women entrepreneurs in Western Canada, leveraging over \$33.1 million from other sources and creating or maintaining over 2,385 jobs.

An independent study conducted in 2002 estimated that WEI services and programs played a role in the creation of 3,111 full-time jobs and 9,889 part-time jobs. Moreover, the study estimated that WEI was involved in the retention of 6,704 full-time jobs and 18,999 part-time jobs.

Women's Enterprise Society of B.C.
(250) 868-3454 Toll Free: 1-800-643-7014
www.wes.bc.ca

Alberta Women Entrepreneurs
(403) 777-4250 or (780) 422-7784 Toll Free: 1-800-713-3558
www.awebusiness.ca

Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc.
(306) 477-7173 or (306) 359-9732 Toll Free: 1-800-879-6331
www.womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca

Women's Enterprise Centre of Manitoba
(204) 988-1860 Toll Free: 1-800-203-2343
www.wecm.ca

Francophone Economic Development Organizations

Francophone Economic Development Organizations (FEDOs) are independent non-profit organizations governed by volunteer Boards of Directors. Support from Western Economic Diversification Canada enables these four provincial organizations to provide enhanced services to Francophones – including training, business and community economic development, access to capital, information services, marketing advice, networking and mentoring.

Francophone Economic Development Organizations are enhancing the vitality of minority language communities in Western Canada and strengthening economic opportunities for Francophone businesses.

Louise and Cyrille Durand knew they had hatched a brilliant idea when they turned their part-time emu farm into a full-time agri-tourism business, now ranked as one of Manitoba's top attractions. Located just outside Île-des-Chênes, **Émeu Ville** offers visitors the chance to get up close and personal with these large Australian birds. The Durands worked closely with the Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM) on their business plan, product development, marketing, media relations, and the creation and accreditation of teaching tools for school tours.



Working with CDEM, Louise and Cyrille Durand turned their part-time emu farm into a full-time agri-tourism business, now ranked as one of Manitoba's top attractions.

When a motorcycle accident ended Dale Richard's 30-year career as a millwright, the Plamondon, Alberta resident toyed with the idea of opening a home business specializing in iron ornaments. La Chambre économique de l'Alberta provided assistance with his business and financial plan, and helped secure a loan through the Franco-Albertan Micro Loan Program. **D & A Ornamental Iron Ltd.** features intricate custom-crafted iron garden ornaments such as wrought-iron trellises, gazebos and flowerpots.



Former millwright Dale Richard now specializes in intricate custom-crafted iron ornaments, working from his home-based business, D & A Ornamental Iron Ltd., in Plamondon, Alberta.

When Jonathan Grant happened upon a diving shop while traveling in central Africa, he knew he'd found where he belonged. Since 2003, the 23-year-old has been the owner of **Rockfish Divers**, a multilingual scuba diving and underwater video/photography school in Brentwood Bay on Vancouver Island. The young entrepreneur visited the Société de Développement Économique de la Colombie-Britannique for help in building his business plan and to secure financing. Business is growing rapidly for Grant, who has now hired two full-time employees and a part-time divemaster.

Where others saw only an abandoned ski resort, Louise and Maurice Branger saw opportunity. Four months of hard work transformed the Bellvue facility into a huge outdoor theatre, and with business planning advice from Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan and a loan from the Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc., the pair made the journey from farmers to entrepreneurs. **Mission Hills Productions'** first play attracted more than 3,500 visitors over 10 days in 2003. Since that early success, the Brangers have hosted game show nights and dinner theatre productions in the renovated ski lodge that now doubles as a dining hall and office space.

In their first three years of operation as a western network, the four Francophone Economic Development Organizations served over 2,665 francophone entrepreneurs, and provided 21,871 information services and 2,194 training services.

Last year, the four Francophone Economic Development Organizations provided over 6,500 information services, 1,300 technical advisory services, and 750 training services. Their Web sites received over 32,000 visits during the year.

La Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique
(604) 732-3534 Toll Free: 1-877-732-3534
www.sdecb.com

La Chambre économique de l'Alberta
(780) 414-6125 Toll Free: 1-888-414-6123
www.lacea.ab.ca

Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan
(306) 566-6000 Toll Free: 1-800-670-0879
www.ccs-sk.ca

Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba
(204) 925-2320 Toll Free: 1-800-990-2332
www.cdem.com

Community Futures Development Corporations

Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) are volunteer-led, non-profit organizations that work to build stronger communities by creating local solutions to local challenges. The 90 western Community Futures organizations have helped bring more prosperity to communities outside of major urban centres by delivering services that include strategic economic planning, technical and advisory services, loans to small and medium-sized enterprises, and self-employment programs aimed at youth and entrepreneurs with disabilities.

Business by business, town by town, Western Canada's CFDCs are creating new opportunity, new hope and new prosperity.

In Scotch Creek, B.C., on the north shore of Shuswap Lake, Bob and Lynda Ross wanted to start a new business producing premium, sugar-free chocolates. Through the CFDC of the Shuswap in Salmon Arm, they participated in the Self-Employment Program that helped guide them through the process of building a business plan and marketing strategy. Later, as their success grew, they obtained a small loan from the CFDC to finance an expansion. Today, with **Ross Chocolates** available across Canada, the U.S., England and Europe, monthly sales will soon reach \$1 million.



After completing a Self-Employment Program and obtaining a loan from a local CFDC, Bob and Lynda Ross were ready to start Ross Chocolates. Today, their premium, sugar-free chocolates are sold around the world.



Started in 1998 by Gary Beaudette, Nuform Packaging Inc. is one of the world's few pulp moulding facilities and now employs 21 people in a town of 3,500.

It was welcome news for residents of Tisdale, Saskatchewan when Gary Beaudette started **Nuform Packaging Inc.** in 1998, creating 18 full-time jobs and three part-time positions in a town of 3,500 people. One of the world's few pulp moulding facilities, Nuform manufactures recyclable fruit trays for North America and Chile using pulp from recycled newspapers, corrugated cardboard and phonebooks. An initial loan obtained from the Newsask CFDC allowed Nuform to leverage additional financing from traditional sources. In 2002, another CFDC loan financed an expansion that increased the company's capacity from three million trays to over 10.5 million per year.

Tracy Abraham of Whitemouth, Manitoba left nothing to chance when she wanted to start her own business in 2002. Planning for success, Abraham participated in the Winnipeg River Brokenhead CFDC Self Employment Assistance Program. Then, with financing from the CFDC Youth Loan program, she purchased equipment and began marketing wild boar meat to regional restaurants and grocery stores. With 50 per cent less fat and cholesterol, wild boar offers a lean and delicious alternative to beef or pork. Already, **Off the Tusk Alternative Meat Selections** has successfully entered markets in the U.S. and Japan, and their products were showcased at the 2003 Montreal Food Expo.



Launched in 2002, Tracy Abraham's Off the Tusk Alternative Meat Selections already offers wild boar meat, a lean alternative to beef or pork, to markets in North America and Japan. Twenty-four-year-old Abraham is planning to expand her product line to include other exotic alternative meats, such as Ostrich and Bison.



With financing from their local CFDC, Jason and Hal Beck began Beck Technologies Inc. to market the LevelLadder™, a device the pair invented that will stabilize a ladder placed on an uneven base.

When a ladder collapsed in 1995, injuring Jason Beck, an idea was born. Jason and his father, Hal, decided to develop a device that would steady a ladder placed on uneven ground or stairs. The Camrose pair approached the East Central Alberta CFDC, which provided the financing that began **Beck Technologies Inc.** The Becks are now marketing the LevelLadder™ through several Canadian retail outlets, and won a 2004 Innovation Award from Alberta Occupational Health and Safety.

According to an independent study, the average Community Futures business service client generates revenues of about \$1.2 million in the first five years after receiving financial assistance.

The same study found that each dollar contributed by CFDCs, excluding loan capital, leveraged an additional \$88.35 in public and private sector project funding.

Last year, the 90 CFDCs in the West approved over 1,300 loans, totalling \$43.9 million, which will create or maintain an estimated 4,465 jobs. This includes 88 loans to Entrepreneurs with Disabilities, 118 loans to youth and 186 loans to Aboriginal clients.

www.communityfutures.ca

Community Futures Development Association of B.C.: (604) 685-2332

Community Futures Network Society of Alberta: (403) 851-9995

Community Futures Partners of Saskatchewan Inc.: (306) 260-2390

Community Futures Partners of Manitoba Inc.: (204) 943-2905, Toll Free 1-877-664-0166

Western Economic Diversification Canada

www.wd.gc.ca

Click on **Western Canada Business Service Network** to find more information about the services provided by the partners in Western Economic Diversification Canada's Business Service Network.

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| Toll Free: | 1-888-338-WEST (9378) |
| Vancouver | (604) 666-6256 |
| Edmonton | (780) 495-4164 |
| Calgary | (403) 292-5458 |
| Saskatoon | (306) 975-4373 |
| Regina | (306) 780-8080 |
| Winnipeg | (204) 983-4472 |