



# Staff Report to Council - for Information

**Title:** Small Business Enterprise Centre Program Expansion

**From:** Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

**Date:** May 2, 2024

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## Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

## Report Summary:

Bruce County recently received a one-year extension to continue to operate the Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) for the 2024/2025 fiscal year. Following the announcement of the Government of Ontario's 2024/2025 budget, the Summer Company and the Starter Company Plus programs have received additional funding.

## Background:

The Bruce County Economic Development operates the SBEC Program via Business to Bruce. The Province of Ontario has added one-time top up allocations for two programs namely Starter Company Plus and Summer Company that will be applicable over the next two fiscal years.

### Starter Company Plus Program

This program provides training, mentoring and grants of up to \$5,000 to approved participants to start, expand or buy a small business. The County will be delivering four key components of the Starter Company Plus Program including: Approved Participant Intake; Training and Skills Development; Mentorship; and Micro-Grants.

Bruce County SBEC will be assigned the following allocations for additional micro-grants and project delivery for this program:

Budget Line Item	2024-2025	2025-2026
Project Delivery	\$13,800.00	\$13,800.00
Micro Grants (3 SCP at \$5,000 each)	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
Total One Time Top-Up Funding	\$28,800.00	\$28,800.00

### Summer Company Program

This program provides training, mentoring and grants of up to \$3,000 to youth entrepreneurs who wish to start a full-time business over the summer. The program delivery includes promotion and marketing to the youth, determination of eligibility of potential applicants,

assistance in completing applications, assessing submitted applications to determine approved participants and training and mentoring of the approved participants and finally, grant funding upon completion of training and successful running of the summer business.

Bruce County SBEC will be assigned the following allocations for additional micro-grants and project delivery for this program:

<b>Budget Line Item</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
Project Delivery	\$2,800.00	\$2,800.00
Micro Grants (1 SC at \$3,000 each)	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Total One Time Top-Up Funding	\$5,800.00	\$5,800.00

The Business to Bruce in partnership, with Province of Ontario, look forward to helping and supporting more entrepreneurs with this additional funding.

An updated agreement will be provided to Bruce County with the new allocations for the 2024/2025 year. There are no anticipated issues with distribution of these additional grants as applicants for these programs have outpaced available funding for the previous two cycles.

Currently Bruce County does not have an agreement to deliver these programs in the 2025/2026 year. At the beginning of March, the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade notified the County that they would be undertaking a review of the SBEC program across the province. Economic Development Staff, with support from the Director of Government Relations, have been involved with Ministry staff in providing feedback and information for this review.

**Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:**

The Corporation of the County of Bruce is receiving a total of \$34,600 each year for 2024 and 2025 as a top-up funding to administer Starter Company Plus and Summer Company programs.

**Interdepartmental Consultation:**

The Director of Government Affairs has been consulted related to ongoing consultations with the Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade.

**Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:**

Growth and Innovation - Promote responsible growth

**Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:**

The SBEC supports the Business Development initiatives outlined by the Economic Development Strategic Plan.

**Report Author:**

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**Departmental Approval:**

Jeff Loney, Economic Development Manager

Claire Dodds, Commissioner of Community Development

**Approved for Submission:**

Claire Dodds, Commissioner Community Development