



## Business Advisory Services Voucher Program Details

The Business Advisory Services Voucher Program is designed to connect local entrepreneurs and business owners with education, training and consulting services to help their business build resiliency through this uncertain time.

The Business Resiliency Taskforce (BRT) - a joint committee between the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie and Grande Prairie and District Chamber of Commerce - will contract Community Futures (CF) to administer the program, manage business development plans, and track subcontracting Service Providers to offer technical training and consulting services as needed.

The program consists of two phases:

### Phase One: Business Guidance and Support

This phase is an initial review with the business, to develop a needs assessment and to ensure that the business is registered for all existing support programs from the provincial and federal government. Additionally, each business will complete a template on critical business operations and critical staff necessary to keep the business functioning.

*Services may include:*

- Needs assessment
- Guidance on templates and tools to assess business resiliency
- Set up all online applications for federal and provincial funding
- Overview of business cash flow and high-level plan to address.
- up to 2 sessions with a mental health professional
- Screen businesses for eligibility and need for more support, and develop a Business Resiliency Plan to apply for Phase Two
- Up to 4 hours of support in total, with a value of up to \$500

### *Phase One Eligibility*

Business must:

- be located within the City of Grande Prairie or County of Grande Prairie, including the towns and villages within the County's borders
- have been in operation for a minimum of 6 months

### Phase Two: Business Resiliency Plan

This phase provides guidance and coaching to businesses that require major changes to remain viable, are shifting their business delivery model or require other significant changes or intervention to remain open during the pandemic. Each business in Phase Two must have a Business Resiliency Plan prepared during Phase One and apply to the Business Resiliency Taskforce for approval. Eligible businesses will qualify for up to \$3,000 in Voucher Services.



### *Phase Two Eligibility*

Business must:

- Have completed Phase One
- be located within the City of Grande Prairie or County of Grande Prairie, including the towns and villages within the County's borders
- have been in operation for a minimum of 6 months
- Employ at least 1 person in addition to the business owner
- Demonstrate efforts to evolve business within the context of COVID-19

## Program Specifics

### Funding

- Up to \$50,000 is available through funding from the City of Grande Prairie (\$25,000) and the County of Grande Prairie (\$25,000)
- All funds will be managed by the Chamber of Commerce via the Business Resiliency Taskforce (BRT)

### Program Application

- Businesses must apply to the BRT Evaluation Committee through an online application answering the following questions:
  - Length of time in business
  - Number of employees prior to COVID-19 and currently
  - How has your business been impacted by COVID-19?
  - How have you pivoted or adjusted operations to adapt to the current environment?
  - What are you hoping to get out of this program?
- Applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis, by 5pm the next business day
- Successful applications that meet the minimum eligibility criteria will be referred to the Community Futures Business Advisory Team for an initial needs assessment and strategy development (a \$100-\$500 value)

### Program Process and Details

#### **1) Business Guidance and Support (Phase One)**

- Maximum 4 hours and \$500
- Needs assessment
- Business strategy development
- Establish key metrics for success
- Referral to approved vendors list with a maximum of three service areas identified
- Must be completed within one week of notification of approval

#### **2) Business Funding Application (Required to move to Phase Two)**

- Business must get a minimum of two quotes from each recommended service area on the approved vendors list
- Develop a business resiliency strategy with input from a Community Futures Business Advisor, identifying Service Providers from a maximum of three service areas on the approved vendors list
- Funding request to a maximum of \$3,000
- Funding applications will be evaluated by the BRT Evaluation Committee and approved to a maximum dollar value by 5pm the next business day

### **3) Business Resiliency Plan (Phase Two)**

- Maximum four weeks and \$3,000
- Business will complete the Business Resiliency Plan and redeem vouchers with each Service Provider as submitted with the funding application.
- Weekly check-ins with the BRT
- Participate in optional cohort-based group coaching sessions hosted by Community Futures
- Business will be responsible for any additional costs outside of the approved costs within the Business Resiliency Plan

### **4) Graduation Report**

- Upon completion of the Business Resiliency Plan period, the business will submit a graduation report to the BRT which includes:
  - A summary evaluation from each Service Provider
  - A needs assessment update
  - Next steps
  - A summary of what was achieved and how it will impact your business

### **5) Follow-up and Reporting**

- a. All businesses in the program will be followed up with each week by the BRT to ensure support services are in place and the activities are being undertaken as planned to ensure businesses are receiving the support required in a timely manner. This will also ensure that funding that is not being utilized can be reallocated for others.
- b. Businesses that complete Phase One and do not move to Phase Two will be considered complete and will be scheduled for a follow up with the BRT within one month to six months.

*The BRT will conduct weekly reviews of the applications and the follow-up reports to ensure the program is responsive to the needs of businesses and is keeping up with the changing business environment.*

*The program may change if required to ensure that the needs of businesses are being met.*



**NOTE:** *This program is about creating resiliency in the existing businesses in the region. It is an attempt to avoid a prolonged recovery period and position businesses to survive the COVID-19 Pandemic so people can get back to work as quickly as possible once the pandemic is over. The BRT Voucher Program is intended to provide access to critical advisors and business service professionals to provide businesses with advice and clear information on programs and services to help them remain resilient through this pandemic.*

**THIS PROGRAM IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A FINANCIAL BAILOUT OF BUSINESSES.**