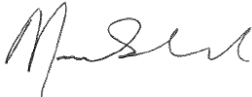




INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Open for Business Sub-Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	January 31, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Supports for Small Business (PED24037) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Kristin Huigenbos (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4110
SUBMITTED BY:	Norm Schleeahn Director, Economic Development Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable.

INFORMATION

Background

The Hamilton Business Centre, under the management of the City of Hamilton Economic Development Department and Ministry of Economic Development, Jobs Creation and Trade, continues to provide comprehensive assistance and resources to small businesses throughout Hamilton.

Observations and Issues

The City of Hamilton continues to see a growing demand for information, resources, and incentives to support small business. Through collaboration and partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development, Jobs Creation and Trade, the Hamilton Business Centre continues to provide essential small business supports to assist businesses as they start, grow, and navigate operations in Hamilton.

Operating on the ground-floor of City Hall, the Hamilton Business Centre facilitates more than 22,000 business inquiries on an annual basis. Through comprehensive

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

programming the Hamilton Business Centre assisted with 198 new businesses opening in Hamilton during 2023, sustaining 157 jobs and supported the creation of 422 new jobs in the small business sector.

Core programming and essential services, fostering and supporting small business start-up and expansion in Hamilton remain essential for economic vibrancy. Programs and free services delivered by the Hamilton Business Centre team, that foster economic growth include;

- Business Advisory Services, providing one-to-one business consultations;
- Access to Professional program, connecting small businesses with Accountants and Legal Professionals;
- Navigator Program connects Hamilton businesses with Federal, Provincial and Municipal partners to streamline business processes and expedite operations; minimizing regulatory delays;
- Networking and workshops, providing a forum for businesses to connect, learn and foster business to business opportunities at a local level;
- Business registration services for sole-proprietor, partnership, and incorporated businesses. The only in-person service counter in Hamilton;
- Launch Local – comprehensive mentoring and training for new and scaling small businesses;
- She Means Business – offering weekly one-to-one coaching and entrepreneurial community to support women entrepreneurs across Hamilton;
- Digital Main Street – training, business advisory and micro-grant of \$2500 to support businesses to digitally adapt. To date the Hamilton Business Centre has disbursed 732 grants, totally more than \$1.8 million dollars invested into Hamilton’s small businesses;
- Food Forge is the newest program, working with Hamilton’s food entrepreneurs to provide detailed coaching and information to support growth and scale-up;
- Starter Company Plus offers valuable training, mentorship, and micro-grants of \$5000 small businesses in Hamilton annually; and,
- Summer Company provides hands-on business experience for young entrepreneurs between the ages of 15 and 29. Offering training, mentorship, and a micro-grant of \$3000.

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Outcome

Through the provision of extensive programming and resources offered by the city Hamilton Business Centre, small businesses looking to start, grow and scale have access to free information and incentives to support their economic success. The leveraging of Provincial and Federal programs will continue to enhance and expand small business supports in Hamilton, delivered by the Hamilton Business Centre.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable.

KH/jrb