

SMARTstart

setting your business up for success

We provide a plan, a mentor and the tools to set your business up for success.



SMARTstart Highwood
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Your future-self will thank you.
www.smartstartyourbusiness.ca

WHY SMARTSTART?

**SMARTstart is an established entrepreneur training program offered by
Community Futures Highwood**

Small business plays a very important role in our local economy. In most Canadian cities, 99% of businesses are small businesses. But, the reality is, running a business can be tough. Studies show only 35% of new businesses survive in the first five years.

That's where the SMARTstart program can play an important role. It's proven. Business owners with education in entrepreneurship, or previous entrepreneur experience, have an 80-90% chance of success with a new start up business.

SMARTstart was designed by a group of local partners who understand small business. Its purpose is to provide real-world business skills, access to tailor-made advice and create a support network to increase the chance of new businesses surviving those first crucial years. Eligible participants have a business idea or are business owners within their first 3 years of operations.

Through online learning, in-person seminars and mentorship, SMARTstart gives entrepreneurs the tools to build a plan that sets their business up for success.



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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**SMARTstart is an established entrepreneur training program offered by
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SMARTstart is delivered over 8 months with an average monthly time commitment of 10 hours for participants. Entrepreneurs who are accepted into the program take part in the following:

1. Online learning via GoForth Institute

- 100 Essential Business Skills™ program
- Short video lessons to complete on your own time, plus downloadable e-book, worksheets and quizzes

2. Seminars

- In-person small group sessions
- Workshop sessions alternating between lunch & evening to accommodate work and personal schedules
- Topics include financing, marketing, taxation, networking and more
- Delivered by local experts
- Plus 2-3 interactive Peer-to-Peer sessions to share ideas with fellow participants and mentors in an informal setting

3. Mentoring

- Each entrepreneur is paired with an experienced business owner
- Mentors share their experiences and effective small business management practices
- Mentors provide guidance to entrepreneurs as they develop their plan



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PROGRAM SUCCESS

**SMARTstart is an established entrepreneur training program offered by
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Over 100 entrepreneurs have completed SMARTstart. These participants have opened businesses, grown their businesses, and improved their business practices.

Some participants in SMARTstart have determined that their idea is not viable or that they don't have what it takes to be an entrepreneur. This is also considered a success. SMARTstart is all about helping entrepreneurs realize their potential.

SMARTstart is represented in other ways in the local communities. Several SMARTstart participants have won or been nominated for local business awards.

SMARTstart began in Airdrie in 2013 and since then others have noticed that SMARTstart is a one-of-a-kind program. SMARTstart Airdrie has been recognized with the following awards:

- Alex Metcalfe Award–Best Community Economic Development Project from Economic Developers Alberta
- Innovation Award from Community Futures Network of Alberta
- Above & Beyond Award: Economic Sustainability from Alberta Urban Municipalities Association



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