

Business Link 2020-21 Annual Report: Message from the Chair:

This past year has proven to be one of the most challenging and disruptive years for many small business owners across Alberta. With the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, entrepreneurs have had to adapt and pivot their businesses in new ways to keep moving forward and stay open. Looking back on this past year and the unexpected challenges that came with it, we've been inspired by the resiliency and strength of Alberta small businesses. This coming year also marks the 25th anniversary of Business Link, an incredible milestone that we are thrilled to share with all of you.

Business Link has worked tirelessly to provide critical support for small business owners as they work through unprecedented times by developing new programs and resources with a strong focus on business recovery. Our board has supported the organization as it continues to adapt its offerings to the evolving needs of entrepreneurs, while maintaining its reputation for exceptional service delivery and strengthening its relationships with funders and key partners. Our governance continues to focus on keeping the organization financially sound while providing continued value to clients and funders.

Change will prove to be the new constant, and it will be important for us to continue to adapt and evolve our services to cater to the needs of small business owners in Alberta. Business Link will continue to expand its reach as the go-to resource for entrepreneurs and small business owners in the province, proudly serving so many diverse communities across Alberta. We will continue to offer specialized programming to our diverse client groups; both our Indigenous and immigrant programs saw incredible growth and success in 2020-21. For over 10 years, our Indigenous Services Team has provided personalized support to our Indigenous clients throughout the province, and since its inauguration in 2018 our Immigrant Entrepreneur Program continues to evolve and provide support to newcomers and immigrant entrepreneurs in Alberta.

We could not do the work we do without our funders, Western Economic Diversification, Government of Canada and Jobs, Economy and Innovation, Government of Alberta. They ensure that we have the support and insight we need to serve entrepreneurs, provide them with excellent resources, and grow our exceptional team of small business experts.

I would like to thank the hard-working staff at Business Link on behalf of the board. Your willingness and ability to shift with the changing times and evolving needs of entrepreneurs does not go unnoticed, and your commitment to going above and beyond is what has helped Business Link achieve such success in its 25 years.



I would also like to thank the dedication of our board. We are all volunteers with a wide range of interests and backgrounds as entrepreneurs, educators, financiers, and represent a group as diverse as the community the Business Link serves. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to Business Link and its mission.

As we celebrate 25 years at Business Link, we look forward to continuing to help Alberta businesses grow and build success in Alberta. Whether online or in person, we will continue to be here to help you in any way we can.

Here's to new challenges, continued success, and the next 25 years!

Sincerely,

Chad Saunders - Board Chair, Business Link

