



2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Business Link is a non-profit organization that helps Alberta's small businesses start and thrive.

We provide free one-on-one coaching and advice for entrepreneurs and small business owners, in-person and virtually. We help small business owners navigate the startup process, access market research, attend events and webinars, find online resources, and build a network. We also provide specialized support for Indigenous and immigrant entrepreneurs.

Business Link is proud to offer businesses free digital support through the Digital Economy Program, and the Canada Digital Adoption Program where businesses can receive up to \$2,400 to boost their online presence.

MISSION

Business Link helps Alberta small businesses start and thrive.

VISION

Every Alberta small business has access to a hub of resources, knowledge, and connections.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR, **MICHAEL OSHRY &**



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PAUL CATAFORD



For over 25 years, Business Link has been helping Albertans start and grow sustainable businesses that power our economy, provide jobs and deliver services and products that make Alberta such a great place to live. We are pleased to share our accomplishments and our vision for the future.

This year, Business Link supported over 7,000 small business owners and entrepreneurs by providing impactful support, programming and guidance.

Our board recently expanded in size and capacity, significantly enhancing our strategic abilities. Similarly, introducing new members to our leadership team further solidifies our readiness to address the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

We celebrated the launch of the Canada Digital Adoption Program, a powerful initiative offering grants to Alberta small business owners and internships to train younger people just starting their careers. This program empowers business owners to embrace e-commerce

technology, and we're committed to supporting this digital evolution in Alberta.

Looking ahead to 2024, our vision remains clear: to amplify our support for Alberta's entrepreneurs through growth, inclusivity, and innovation. We're confident that Business Link, led by our board, our strengthened leadership team, and our shared sense of purpose, will continue to empower Alberta's entrepreneurs and foster the vibrancy and resilience of our province's economy.

Business Link remains committed to inclusivity and diversity and offers specific expertise and resources to our Indigenous and immigrant communities.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated staff, valued clients, and supportive community. We remain committed to making a meaningful impact on Alberta's business community and approach 2024 with optimism and ambition. ▾

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Board Chair



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Board Member



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Board Member



RENEE FEHR
Board Member



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DREW TETZ
Treasurer, Chair Audit &
Finance Committee



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STEVE WHITTINGTON
Board Member



COLIN CHRISTENSEN
Board Observer



BEV THERRIEN
Board Observer,
Government Member
Representative



SCOTT BEEBY
Board Observer,
Government of Alberta

HOW WE SUPPORTED ALBERTA'S SMALL BUSINESS

OVERALL HIGHLIGHTS

- In the 2022-23 fiscal year we supported nearly **8,446** aspiring and established Alberta entrepreneurs
- Unique clients served through advisory services: **4702**
 - Communities reached: **235**
 - Client Satisfaction: **3.64/4**
- Market Research Support: **378** market research inquiries fulfilled
- **22,566** subscribers on our email marketing list
- **33,703** Website sessions
- **18,201** followers across all social media platforms



PROGRAMS

- **Peerpreneur:** 6 cohorts with **62** total participants.
- Overall satisfaction was **3.67/4**
- DIGITAL ECONOMY PROGRAM**
 - **2490** businesses served through Digital Service Squads across Alberta
 - **1,637** attendees for Level Up Webinar Series
 - We have **19** program delivery partners operating Digital Service Squads throughout Alberta

CANADA DIGITAL ADOPTION PROGRAM

- **2309** applications received
- **1,027** applications approved
- **\$467,006** funds approved



EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Business Link Education and Training

- **105** workshops and webinars
- **3,315** attendees



ON-DEMAND RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- Interactive Business Plan Builder Plans Started: **1,398**
- Resource Downloads: **7,137**
- Video Views: **29,533**



ORGANIZATIONS WE WORKED WITH

- Alberta Women Entrepreneurs
- Alberta Motor Association
- Africa Canadian Civic Engagement Council
- ATB Entrepreneur Centre
- ATCOenergy
- Digital Main Street



SPECIALIZED SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS:

APRIL 1, 2022 TO MARCH 31, 2023

Business Link strives toward diversity and inclusion in every aspect of the organization. Our Specialized Services team is made up of: Indigenous Business Development Services, Immigrant Entrepreneur Services, and the ANZA program servicing at-risk Black youth.

INDIGENOUS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

350



Unique clients served through advisory services

712



Indigenous training participants

699



Indigenous Newsletter subscribers

IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEUR SERVICES

479



Unique clients served through advisory services

333



Immigrant training participants

1118



Immigrant Newsletter subscribers

ANZA

ANZA Entrepreneurship Ecosystem is a collaborative model between the African Canadian Civic Engagement Council (ACCEC), Edmonton Police Service (EPS), Startup Edmonton, Business Link, TD Canada Trust, and other stakeholders with shared values to spark a new beginning for Alberta's Black youth interested in business.

This year we helped organize 2 cohorts with 37 participants.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS HAVE TO SAY

THEBRAGIRL

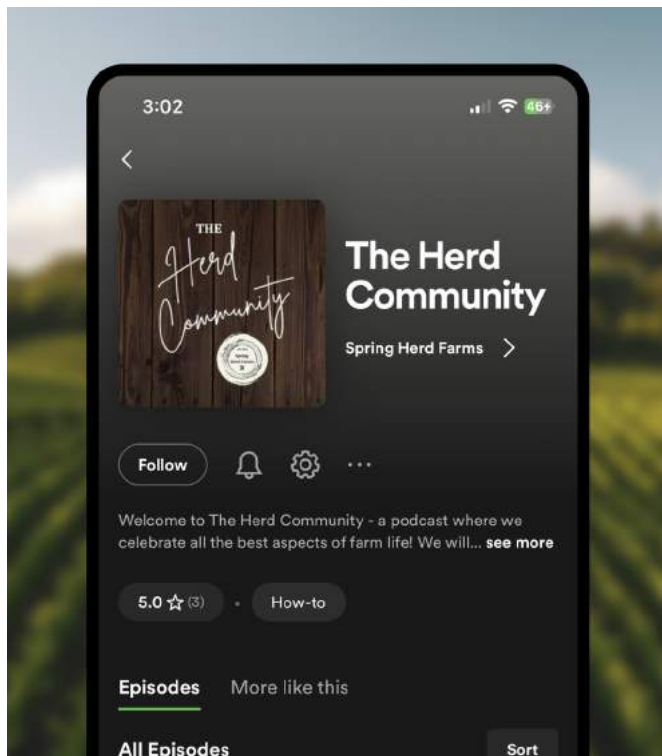
Business owner: Bukola Adedji

Bukola Adedji is the owner of TheBraGirl, located in The CORE Shopping Center downtown Calgary. Based on her previous experience as a dressmaker and having difficulties herself finding bras that fit, Bukola quickly discovered the demand for bras that support full-busted and full-figured women. Opening her first lingerie store in February 2018, demand for her services rapidly grew. Since then, her venture has grown to incorporate education on the importance of adequate bra support and body confidence at all stages in life.

“My highlight of working with Business Link was that they were kind, patient, and answering questions I wasn’t even asking yet.”

[READ THE BLOG](#)

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)



SPRING HERD FARMS

Business owner: Emily Herder

Emily and Logan Herder run Spring Herd Farms in central Alberta. Their farm includes sheep, cattle, and other livestock. Her mission is to share farm experiences with her community and allow other families to build their own positive farm experiences. They’ve expanded to offer education to producers and youth, and run their podcast The Herd Community.

“Business Link helped us develop our website and navigate social media. Any questions, we had, they were there to help and guide us.”

[READ THE BLOG](#)

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE BUSINESS LINK BUSINESS SERVICE CENTRE

Statement of Financial Position as at March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 2)	\$ 7,349,598	\$ 5,163,371
Accounts receivable	172,500	30,331
Goods and Services Tax recoverable	167,361	76,572
Prepaid expenses and deposits	11,741	22,041
	7,701,200	5,292,315
TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 3)	6,492	20,385
	\$ 7,707,692	\$ 5,312,700
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 4)	\$ 794,163	\$ 1,542,919
Deferred contributions (Note 5)	6,376,064	3,560,216
	7,170,227	5,103,135
NET ASSETS		
Invested in tangible capital assets	6,492	20,385
Unrestricted	530,973	189,180
	537,465	209,565
	\$ 7,707,692	\$ 5,312,700

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

THE BUSINESS LINK BUSINESS SERVICE CENTRE

Statement of Operations For the Year Ended March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
REVENUE		
Other grants (Note 7) (Schedule I - VI)	\$ 4,629,863	\$ 7,294,368
Federal government core funding	901,669	901,669
Provincial government core funding	850,000	850,000
Fees for services and materials	122,970	112,989
Sponsorships	25,500	5,238
Interest	23,804	4,613
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 6,553,806	\$ 9,168,877
EXPENSES		
Contracted services	2,679,058	2,946,859
Salaries and benefits	2,280,893	2,138,898
Grants paid out	539,207	3,765,607
Advertising and promotion	155,947	91,313
Rent	145,783	136,032
Office	75,617	45,328
Travel	73,078	3,824
Professional fees	58,750	42,393
Memberships	58,435	62,571
Equipment maintenance	42,951	32,611
Website and database support services	31,178	24,808
Telephone and internet	25,358	38,123
Training	15,167	42,893
Amortization	13,893	50,250
Client outreach	11,755	4,305
Insurance	10,210	7,978
Bad debts	5,486	300
Bank charges and interest	3,140	3,705
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 6,225,906	\$ 9,437,798
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ 327,900	\$ (268,921)

