



SMALL BUSINESS CENTRE

Barrie • Simcoe County • Orillia

The Small Business Centre's Guide to **STARTING A BUSINESS**



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CHECKLIST

Are you ready to start running your business?

Use the checklist to guide you through the process:

Startup Checklist		Find on Page...
Y	Have you completed a feasibility study of your business?	4
Y	Is your business plan written and reviewed by Small Business Centre staff?	5
Y	Have you chosen your legal business structure?	7
Y	Have you chosen your business name?	10
Y	Have you registered your business name with the Province of Ontario and received a Master Business License?	10
Y	Are any licenses or permits required for your business?	12
Y	Are your business activities compliant with municipal bylaws and/or zoning?	12
Y	Have you notified your home/auto insurer of your business operations?	13
Y	Have you secured commercial insurance for your business?	13
Y	Is your business banking account open?	15
Y	Did you register with Canada Revenue Agency for a Business Number?	16
Y	Is an HST number required for your business and have you registered for it?	16
Y	Have you connected with local resources and networking groups for your business success?	20/21

PREFACE

This business startup guide provides a wealth of information for entrepreneurs looking to start a business within Simcoe County and Ontario. This guide will detail the steps needed to legally start a business, as well as other resources to help your business succeed.

The Small Business Centre encourages and supports entrepreneurship in The City of Barrie, The City of Orillia, and all of Simcoe County by being a one-stop source for all your small business needs. The Small Business Centre is supported by the Province of Ontario, and the City of Barrie. It is a part of the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs and one of the 57 small business enterprise centres across Ontario.




Contact our office today to learn how we can help you start or grow your business.

Small Business Centre of Barrie, Simcoe County and Orillia

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THE SMALL BUSINESS CENTRE SERVICES

Our team can help you make the right decisions during your business start-up and assist you in developing your business as it grows.

The Small Business Centre provides free assistance to entrepreneurs during any stage of their entrepreneurial journey. Serving a majority of the geographical area of Simcoe County, the Small Business Centre encourages and supports entrepreneurs by being a one-stop source for all your small business needs. The Small Business Centre is supported by the Province of Ontario, the County of Simcoe and the City of Barrie.

Our client services include:

- Business feasibility and guidance
- Reliable information including one-on-one business plan consultation
- Advice on permits, licenses and regulatory requirements
- Coaching for a range of business challenges, managing cash flow and accounting, hiring and managing staff, marketing, social media, and more
- Training and networking opportunities
- Referrals to other business support and professional services, including business incubators, government programs, lawyers, accountants, bookkeepers and insurance experts.

1. BUSINESS PLANNING

Writing the Business Plan

The business plan is a vital step towards starting your own business. The odds of success are significantly higher when the business owner has developed a business plan, regardless of the business industry or stage of development.

Your business plan is a written document that gives clear details to your business goals, strategies, financial forecasts, and your target market. The business plan is also crucial to secure funding towards your business. To be considered for funding from financial institutions or investors you must demonstrate that you understand every aspect of your business and its ability to generate profit.

The business plan is commonly used as a roadmap or set of blueprints to operating your business. By developing the business plan early in the business startup process, you are able to use the business plan to measure progress, meet goals, and set new ambitions.

Prior to developing your formal business plan, you may also want to utilize a tool known as the business model canvas to create a leaner and abbreviated format of the business model. The business model canvas is a great tool to help you understand a business model in a straightforward, structured way. Using this canvas will lead to insights about the customers you serve, what value propositions are offered through what channels, and how your company makes money.

A range of easy-to-use business plan templates can be accessed through the Small Business Centre. In addition to the Small Business Centre regular services, the Small Business Consultant is available to perform brief business plan reviews at no cost to you. Contact the Small Business Centre to find out how to access the business plan templates and have your business plan reviewed prior to submitting it for funding from any organizations.

Employee or Self-Employed

When starting your business, you need to determine if you will be considered a self-employed contractor or an employee by the Canada Revenue Agency. This is determined by the nature of your business relationship with clients or customers. Typically, this scenario applies to anyone operating their business as a contractor, such as construction or consulting. This distinction between self-employed and employee must be established. This status will affect how you handle employment insurance and other legal obligations of your business.

There are four key factors used by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to determine whether you an employee or self-employed:

	Employee	Self-Employed
Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your client has the right to control activities Your client sets the salary or wage The client determines the time, place and how work is done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You decide when, how and where the work will be done You plan your own work You set your own hours and standards of work
Tools & Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The client provides any major equipment or large tools The client assumes risks and costs with replacing or repairing any tools or equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You supply your own major equipment or tools You assume risks and costs with replacing or repairing tools or equipment
Financial Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have no financial involvement in the business Your income from the client is not affected by the work The client covers any operating or overhead costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are financially involved in the business You create a profit or loss depending on the work (such as debt, equipment costs, delays) You cover operating costs
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your activities are integrated into the commercial activities of the client Employer is your only client No contract used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You integrate the client's activities into your commercial activity You service multiple clients A written contract is in place stating the business relationship

For more information about the difference between being an employee or a self-employed individual, visit the [Canada Revenue Agency's Employee or Self-employed webpage](#).

Determining Your Business Structure

When starting your business, you will need to choose the business structure that best suits your business. The business structure or legal form is how your business is defined according to the legal system. The three most common business structures are:

- Sole proprietorship
- General partnership
- Corporation

If you are unsure of which business structure is the right option for your business, you are encouraged to connect with an accountant or commercial lawyer to discuss advantages, disadvantages and potential liabilities in your business to determine an appropriate structure.

Sole proprietorship

With this type of business organization, the business is owned and operated by a single individual. You are the sole owner and fully responsible for all debts and liabilities incurred by your business. Because there is no legal distinction between you and your business, a creditor can make a claim against your personal assets as well as your business assets.

Advantages:

- Easy, quick and inexpensive to register
- Regulatory burden is generally light and minimal additional income tax forms
- You have direct control of decision making
- Relatively low cost to start your business
- Some tax advantages if your business is not doing well
- All profits go to you directly

Disadvantages:

- Unlimited liability - the business owner is personally responsible for the business debts and liabilities
 - Income is taxable at your personal rate and this could put you in a higher tax bracket if your business is profitable
 - Lack of continuity for your business if you are unavailable
 - Can be difficult to raise capital or funds on your own
 - Business name registration is not exclusive
-

Partnership

A partnership is a non-incorporated business that is created between two or more people. In a **general partnership**, each partner is equally share responsibility and liability. In a **limited partnership**, a person can contribute to the business without being involved in its operations, usually an investor. A **limited liability partnership** is usually only available to a group of professionals, such as lawyers, accountants or doctors.

Advantages:

- Fairly easy and inexpensive to form a partnership
- Start-up costs are shared equally with you and your partner
- Equal share in the management, profits and assets
- Tax advantage — if income from the partnership is low or loses money

Disadvantages:

- There is no legal difference between you and your business
- Unlimited liability - the business partners are personally responsible for the business debts and liabilities
- Can be difficult to find a suitable partner or possible development of conflict between you and your partner
- You are held financially responsible for business decisions made by your partner

When establishing a partnership, you should have a **partnership agreement** in place. This is important because it establishes the terms of the partnership and can help you avoid disputes later on. The agreement should demonstrate:

- Each partner's position, roles and responsibilities within the business
 - The financial or in-kind contributions invested by each partner
 - The pay/compensation per each partner or sharing of profits and losses
 - Contingency plan for changes to the partnership, the dissolving of the business, or in an event in which a partner cannot maintain their duties (death, life change, or permanent disability)
 - Restrictions on partner authority or limitations on expenses per partner
-

Corporation

A corporation is a business structured as a legal entity separate from its shareholders. Incorporation can be done at the federal or provincial/territorial level. Any shareholders of a corporation will not be personally liable for the debts, responsibilities or acts of the corporation. Any entrepreneurs who are debating registering as a corporation are strongly encouraged to seek professional advice prior to registration.

Advantages:

- Limited liability – personal liability is limited to the amount that is invested into the business and any further liability rests with the corporation
- Ownership is transferable to ensure the continuous existence of the business independently of the shareholders
- Separate legal entity
- Easier to raise capital by selling shares of the business
- Possible tax advantage as taxes may be lower for an incorporated business
- Incorporating under a name provides name exclusivity (within limitations)

Disadvantages:

- A corporation is closely regulated with extensive corporate records required, including documentation filed annually with the government
 - More expensive and time consuming to set up a corporation than other business forms
 - Possible conflict between shareholders and directors
 - Limited liability can be affected by the corporation's credit when trying to borrow money
-

Registering Your Business Name

Naming your business is a long-term decision that can be used as an effective advertising tool. The wrong name could be confusing, forgetful or may drive away customers. When deciding on a name for your business, consider these points:

- **Is this name being used by another business or competitor?** Try doing a search through free online search engines, local databases or social media to find other businesses with similar names and how it could affect you.
- **Does the name describe the product or service your business is providing?** If the name is not relatable to you or your business, customers may get confused on what your business is offering.
- **Are you legally allowed to use it?** There are formal searches that you can access to determine if the name is legally available. Through Service Ontario, you can search for names that have been registered as sole proprietorships or partnerships. For a corporate name search, you will have to perform a NUANS provincial or federal search through www.nuans.com.

Under Ontario's Business Names Act, you must register your business name with the Province if you are operating a business under a name other than the legal name of the owner of the business. The business name registration will provide you with a Master Business License, which lasts for five years. It is the responsibility of the business owner to maintain the Master Business License. Once the business structure and business name have been determined, you will register the business at the appropriate government body:

- **Registering a Sole Proprietorship or Partnership**
 - Ontario Business Registry website at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-business-registry>
 - By mailing an application to the address indicated on the form
- **Registering a Corporation**
 - **Provincially** - Contact the Companies and Personal Property Security Branch at 1-800-361-3223
 - **Federally** - Contact Corporations Canada at 1-866-333-5556

Name Protection, Trademarking and Intellectual Property

What is trademarking? A trademark is a combination of letters, words, sounds or designs that differentiates your business from others in the marketplace. By registering your trademark, you protect it under law from misuse by others, and you gain exclusive rights to use it throughout Canada for 10 years.

What is intellectual property? Intellectual property (IP) is the legal right to ideas, inventions and creations in a number of fields. It can also include symbols, names, images, and designs used in your business. Without realizing it, your business may be creating IP assets that should be protected.

How does this affect name protection? Any businesses that are registered with a Master Business License is legally allowed to operate and market with that name within the Province of Ontario. *This is not an exclusive right and there may be more than one business registered under the same name.* The only business structure that provides name protection is a provincial or federal corporation.

Some businesses are so successful with creating a strong brand using their business name that they choose to trademark this name. By trademarking a business name, this provides legal protection to stop others from imitating or duplicating your business name and brand.

All entrepreneurs are encouraged to seek professional legal assistance prior to the trademarking process. For more information on trademarking and IP, see the Canadian Intellectual Property Office website: www.cipo.gc.ca.

Municipal Bylaws & Zoning

It is your responsibility as a business owner to ensure that your business activities are permissible according to municipal by-laws and zoning. This should be done prior to registering your business. Municipal by-laws address topics such as billboards, fences, garbage disposal, noise, property standards, smoking, snow removal, and zoning. For more information on the City of Barrie Municipal Law Enforcement (MLEO) contact:

45 Cedar Pointe Drive
Phone: (705) 739-4241

Zoning is of particular importance to businesses as it is an integral part of the municipal land-use plan and dictates where commercial activities may and may not occur. To find additional information on City of Barrie zoning through Service Barrie, contact:

City Hall - 1st Floor, 70 Collier Street
Phone: (705) 726-4242
ServiceBarrie@barrie.ca

Is your business located outside the City of Barrie? Each municipality allows for its own set of bylaws and regulations. Be sure to confirm the municipality that your business will be operating in and connect with your local municipality office to determine what regulations you will need to follow.

Town of Bradford
(905) 775-5366
www.townofbwg.com

Township of Essa
(705) 424-9770
www.essatownship.on.ca

Town of Innisfil
(705) 436-3710
www.innisfil.ca

Town of Midland
(705) 526-4275
www.midland.ca

City of Orillia
(705) 325-2313
www.orillia.ca

Township of Oro-Medonte
(705) 487-2171
www.oro-medonte.ca

Township of Springwater
(705) 728-4784
www.springwater.ca

Township of Tay
(705) 534-7248
www.tay.ca

Town of New Tecumseth
(705) 435-6219
www.newtecumseth.ca

Township of Tiny
(705) 526-4204
www.tiny.ca

Insurance for Your Business

Your business will require some form of insurance to protect yourself, your assets and the business itself. You must notify any current insurance providers of your intention to start a business, especially if you will be using your home or vehicle for business purposes.

According to industry professions, it is standard business practice for business owners to obtain a minimum of \$2 million general liability insurance. In addition to general liability insurance, there are a number of additional types of insurance, and you may be required to get more than one form of insurance.

These are just a few of the types of insurance can help protect your business and you from potential risks:

- **Partnership insurance or buy-sell insurance** — If your business partner suddenly passes or is unable to fulfill their requirements, partnership insurance will allow you to purchase the shares and continue running the business.
- **Key person insurance** — If you rely on certain key people to help run your business, protect yourself against the immediate loss of these key employees.
- **Property insurance** — Property insurance will cover any property and buildings owned by your business in the event of damage or complete loss due to events such as fire or flood.
- **Contents insurance** — This covers assets that you store at your business premises, such as inventory or equipment.
- **Business interruption insurance** — If you need to shut down your business temporarily due to a fire or other event, business interruption insurance will cover your loss of revenue until you are back in business.
- **Commercial vehicle insurance** — You will need to insure any vehicles that your business owns. If you use personal vehicles for business purposes, be sure to advise your insurance company.
- **General liability** — Covers injury to clients or employees on your premises.
- **Product liability** — Provides protection in the event that your products are defective or cause serious harm to those using them.
- **Professional liability insurance** — Provides protection if you are sued by a client for errors, omissions or negligence, when performing professional services.
- **Cyber liability** — Protects in the event of a lawsuit stemming from an electronic security breach involving compromised personal or commercial information.

It is recommended you speak to your accountant to find out which of these insurances are considered deductible as business expenses and which ones you will need to pay for yourself as an individual.

Choosing a Business Location

There are typically two types of business locations to choose from: brick and mortar or home-based.

Home-based businesses operate out of the business owner's home which acts as the headquarters. Online businesses, small offices, or on-site businesses (contractors, painters, landscapers etc.) are the most common types of businesses to operate out of their home. While some online businesses may not have any requirement for a physical space, for example, if they do not have any inventory or large equipment, all businesses are required to have a mailing address under the Canada Revenue Agency guidelines.

There are many benefits of a home-based business, such as lower overhead costs and access between work and home for the business owner. The disadvantage of a home-based business is that it can be unattractive to customers if they need to visit your business or it can undermine your validity depending on your business industry and customers.

If you will be establishing a home-based business, you will need to look into:

- **Municipal Requirements** – As the business and homeowner, you will need to ensure (prior to your business activities) that your home is in compliance with any zoning regulations or bylaws as dictated by the municipality.
- **Home Insurance** – Your current home insurance will not cover any of your business activities, and you will need to contact your current insurer to ensure that your business will not contradict your current insurance policy. Your current home insurer may offer home-based business insurance as an extension of your policy.
- **Property Tax and Expenses** – By using your home as a place of work, you may be able to claim tax deductions such as portions of property taxes, utilities, repairs/maintenance, and even your home insurance.

The brick and mortar business structure refers to an actual physical location, such as a purchased or lease space. There are a number of benefits of a brick and mortar location, including easily accessible to customers and it also contributes to the legitimacy of your business. Brick and mortar locations often have a higher overhead cost and expenses will accumulate, regardless if your business is opened or closed.

When looking at your brick and mortar location options, remember to consider:

- **Leasing a Space** – The costs of a leased space can vary, but often require modification, utilities, signage, insurance, and additional expenses which should be negotiated and stated through a commercial lease agreement.
- **Inspection Requirements** – The location and your business type may need to pass an inspection, usually by the municipality (Fire Inspector, Building Inspector, Bylaw Officer) or by other organizations, such as the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

- **Accessibility Laws** – You must ensure that the location you have chosen fits all criteria of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Some buildings may have exemptions from certain regulations due to the age or structure of the building, but it is your responsibility to comply with all other aspects of the AODA throughout all of your business operations.
- **Municipal Licensing, Permits or Zoning** – Be aware of any additional licenses or permits that may be required from the municipality where your business will be located. The location you select will need to fit in within the current zoning bylaws or you may be able to receive an exemption or rezoning ruling from the municipality.

Depending on the type of business you are operating, using a coworking space is a viable option that can be cost effective and provide additional benefits to your business. Many coworking spaces can give freelancers, startups and micro-businesses the opportunity to work, collaborate and grow in a creative community focused atmosphere. Most coworking spaces provide a desk, basic equipment, boardrooms, networking opportunities, as well as the option for daily, weekly or monthly rentals.

Business Banking

Many business owners will need a business bank account which is in the business' name instead of their own. You will need to contact your bank to determine the account options and find one that works best for you and your business. To open a business bank account, you will need to provide documentation confirming your business, such as your Master Business License.

2. OPERATING A BUSINESS

Business Number with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

As a business owner, you are responsible for collecting, charging and remitting the right taxes when you operate your business in Ontario. The type of business you are operating, along with your location and legal structure, will determine which taxes you will have to pay and what you will need to submit. For tax purposes, you must contact CRA to register for a Business Number (BN). This is your account number for interacting with the federal and provincial government regarding taxes, payroll, Harmonized Sales Tax payments, and other items.

Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)

Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) is the 13% tax applied to most products and services on behalf of the provincial and federal government. You are not required to register for HST until your business has reached \$30,000 in gross revenue within four consecutive quarters (12 months) of operation. If your sales do not reach the \$30,000 threshold, there are other benefits to registering for HST early on. As a business registered for HST, you can get tax credits for any equipment and or business supplies you purchase. Depending on your source of clientele, such as other businesses, they may prefer that you are registered with the CRA. Once you register for HST, you must collect it and remit it to the government either monthly, quarterly, or annually. Reporting is required even if you have no sales.

To register for your BN and HST accounts, you can contact Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) directly by phone at 1-800-959-5525 or online at www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bn.

Municipal Taxes

Each municipality has a set of tax rates that may apply to your business, such as tax rates for commercial properties. Depending on the location and your type of business, there may be different municipal taxes that apply to your business. To determine if there are any local tax requirements that might affect your business, contact the municipal office of which your business is located.

Maintaining Tax Records & Income Tax

When you operate a business in Ontario, you need to keep track of your business income and report the information to the CRA. If your business is a sole proprietorship or a partnership, you are responsible for including your business income and expenses on your personal income tax return. You must report your business income on your T1-General income tax return. If your business is incorporated, you will have to file a separate corporate tax return.

Any money that you make through your business must be claimed on your tax return. Business expenses that you are claiming should also be included. Contact the Canada Revenue Agency for a complete list of the required forms, or for more information on claiming business income and expenses. As the business owner, you are responsible for keeping accurate tax records and making them available to CRA if requested.

Many businesses also incur tax deductible expenses. Items purchased on behalf of the business, such as advertising, equipment depreciation, property taxes or rent can be deducted from your income and may result in a reduction of taxable income.

Legal Obligations & Expenses for Employers

When your business is ready to hire its first employee, there are a number of legal obligations and expenses that are required to ensure both your business and your employees are protected. Prior to hiring a new employee, you must understand the mandatory and recommended duties as an employer. Some of these obligations include:

- Hiring and Termination Practices
- Workplace Health and Safety & Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)
- Employment Standards
- Pay Equity & Payroll Deductions
- Employment Reporting Requirements with CRA

To further understand your legal obligations as an employer, as well as access resources to recruit and train new employees, your local Employment Ontario facilitator can help you navigate through the process. Find a location and a full scope of their services here:

www.ontario.ca/page/employment-ontario

Import/Export Program

If your business imports or exports any products or goods, you will have to register for an Import/ Export Program Account before you start the importing or exporting process to avoid delays. You will need to ensure that you understand both the Canadian and the foreign government regulations that may apply. The Import/Export account is used to process information such as customs and simplify the transfer of goods over the Canadian border.

3. FUNDING & FINANCING YOUR BUSINESS

There are a wide variety of government, not-for-profit, and private sector organizations that can provide resources and support to your business. Many of these programs offer some form of mentorship, training, and/or financing to your business. This section lists many of the organizations and programs available to entrepreneurs in Ontario and Canada. Keep in mind that programs are constantly changing and that some will have specific application periods or may come to the end of their program completion. Throughout your search for funding, you may come across business programs that sound too good to be true. The Small Business Centre highly recommends that you research each program before submitting an application, and if you are unsure of a program's validity, please connect with the Small Business Centre to save yourself time, money and risk.

Below is a brief list of the local program resources available to business in Simcoe County. Each program has their own application process, requirements and timelines. The Small Business Centre can help you navigate through the different program options to determine which one may be the best option for your business model.

Futurpreneur Canada

Futurpreneur supports entrepreneurs aged 18-39 with up to \$45,000 in low interest financing, an expert business mentor for up to two years, and resources to help you plan, manage and grow your business.

Website: www.futurpreneur.ca

Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP)

IRAP provides advisory and funding services customized to your specific needs to help you accelerate the growth of your business through innovation and technology.

Website: www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/irap/

Canada Small Business Financing Program (CSBFP)

The Canada Small Business Financing Program makes it easier for small businesses to get loans from financial institutions by sharing the risk with lenders. If you are a small business or start-up operating in Canada, you could be eligible for this program.

Website: www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csbfp-pfpec.nsf/eng/home

Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE)

OCE is the pre-eminent research-to-commercialization vehicle in Ontario. By connecting the dots and bridging academia and industries, OCE invests in early-stage projects, where the probability of commercial success and potential total return on innovation are substantial.

Website: www.oce-ontario.org

Banks & Loans

One of the most common avenues for business financing is a bank or credit union. With good credit and other factors, you could receive a term bank loan or a line of credit for your business. A term bank loan is an amount of money loaned to you by the bank with certain terms attached such as interest rates and a repayment schedule.

A line of credit is an amount of money that you have access to draw upon as often as needed, as long as you do not exceed your limit. A line of credit usually has a minimum monthly payment with a variable interest rate. Before making any decisions about bank loans or lines of credit, you should talk to a commercial account advisor at your bank. Their job is to help steer you through the banking system and help you find the right products for your needs.

To find more information on government and non-governmental program grants, loans, and financing options, visit the Innovation Canada financing search engine at <https://innovation.ised-isde.canada.ca/s/?language=en>.

Local Resources

Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC)

Community Futures Development Corporations offer a variety of programs and support to community economic development and small business growth across Ontario. The CFDC provides entrepreneurs with access to capital for small- and medium-sized businesses and social enterprises, business information and planning services, support for community-based projects and strategic community planning and socio-economic development.

The CFDC serves the entrepreneurs of Simcoe County at three core locations:

- **Nottawasaga Futures:** 705-435-1540 | www.nottawasaga.com
- **Orillia Area CDC:** 705-325-4903 | www.orilliacdc.com
- **North Simcoe CFDC:** 705-526-1371 | www.nscfdc.on.ca

Starter Company Plus

If you are a resident of Ontario over the age of 18, you could receive mentorship and training to start, grow or buy a business. Those participants that complete the mentorship and training also have an opportunity to apply for a grant of up to \$5,000 through your local Small Business Enterprise Centre.

Website: www.ontario.ca/page/small-business-advice-support-services-regulations

Summer Company

If you are a student between the ages of 15-29, you could apply to receive mentorship, training and a grant of up to \$3,000 to start your own business during the summer holidays before returning to school in the fall semester.

Website: www.ontario.ca/page/start-summer-company-students

Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)

BDC helps to develop and create Canadian businesses through financing, consulting services and securitization. BDC offers entrepreneurs business loans for projects, specialized financing for small-medium sized independent finance or leasing companies as well as working capital to protect cash flow.

Website: www.bdc.ca

4. NETWORKING & SUPPORT OPTIONS

Local Networking Groups

What is networking? Business networking is a low-cost marketing strategy for building your business through making contacts and creating referrals. Networking can be face-to-face or by other contact methods such as phone and online.

Chambers of Commerce or Boards of Trade are business networks developed with the goal to further the interests of businesses through education, advocacy and networking. By connecting with your local area organization, you receive opportunities for networking with other business owners, access to membership benefits, and greater involvement with your local business community.

Alliston & District Chamber of Commerce: 705-435-7921 | adcc.ca

Barrie Chamber of Commerce: 705-721-5000 | barriechamber.com

Bradford Board of Trade: 905-778-8727 | bradfordboardoftrade.com

Cookstown & District Chamber of Commerce: 705-458-7007 | cookstown.ca

Greater Innisfil Chamber of Commerce: 705-431-4199 | innisfilchamber.com

Orillia District Chamber of Commerce: 705-326-4424 | orillia.com

Ramara Chamber of Commerce: 705-484-2141 | ramarachamber.com

Southern Georgian Bay Chamber of Commerce: 705-526-7884 | southerngeorgianbay.ca

Tottenham Beeton & District Chamber of Commerce: 905-936-4100 | tottenhamchamber.on.ca

Wasaga Beach Chamber of Commerce: 705-429-2247 | wasagainfo.com

Connecting with other local networking groups is a great way to benefit your business. You can join networking groups that are industry-specific or open to all businesses to take advantage of the many opportunities for referrals and connections.

Barrie Construction Association: 705-726-5864 | barrieca.com

Barrie Native Friendship Centre: 705-721-7689 | barrienativefriendshipcentre.com

BNI Central Ontario North: 705-730-6648 | bnicanada.ca

Downtown Barrie Business Association: 705-734-1414 | downtownbarrie.ca

Simcoe County Young Professionals Association: 705-734-3952 | scypa.ca

Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board: 705-725-1011 | labourtrends.ca

Small Business Connect Barrie: 705-739-4860 | smallbusinessconnect.ca

Business Resources & Mentorship

Throughout Barrie and Simcoe County, there are a number of organizations that you can reach out to during your business startup or growth stage to receive mentorship, education, training, and other valuable business resources. By connecting with the Small Business Centre, our Small Business Consultant can guide you through the different support services available based on your business model.

Barrie Public Library

The Barrie Public Library offers a wide variety of business resources to help you grow and strengthen your business. Their goal is to enhance community growth and promote local business success. The library offers Wi-Fi, accessible computers, printing, scanning, books, audiobooks, newspapers, magazines and more.

Website: www.barrielibrary.ca/community/business

FedDev Ontario - Small Business Services

Small Business Services (SBS) is part of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario. SBS's goal is to help Ontario entrepreneurs gain access to government business information. SBS provides a wealth of business information from startup to expansion to succession. You can connect with one of their business information officers or use their free secondary market research program to start or grow your business.

Website: www.sbs-spe.feddevontario.canada.ca

Henry Bernick Entrepreneurship Centre (HBEC)

HBEC, based out of Georgian College, helps new and growing entrepreneurs excel their businesses by providing mentorship, training, networking and funding assistance.

Website: www.georgiancollege.ca/community-alumni/entrepreneurship-centre/

ventureLAB

ventureLAB is a place for talented entrepreneurs to get help bringing their innovations to market. Through a unique combination of mentoring, partnering, and connecting ventureLAB helps pioneering entrepreneurs turn their great ideas into globally competitive businesses.

Website: www.venturelab.ca

Coworking Spaces in Simcoe County

Coworking is not just about the sharing of infrastructure and cost, it is about belonging to a community, accessibility, and sustainability. Coworking spaces are designed to provide a productive and collaborative environment for their dynamic inhabitants and created without corporate constraints on what is perceived to be an “office” environment offering flexible memberships to suit most needs.

Suite Works Inc | <https://www.suiteworks.ca/>

SuiteWorks offers flexible and furnished workspaces, co-working space, meeting rooms, private offices and virtual offices that grow with your business.

Suite Success | <http://www.suitesuccess.ca>

Suite Success offers professional, warm and inviting office spaces and event rooms. With two event rooms that can accommodate 6 - 60 people, Suite Success is the perfect space for events of all kinds - from professional business meetings, seminars, and workshops to bridal showers and birthday parties.

Regus | <http://www.regus.ca>

Regus is a world leader in global office provision. They have built an unparalleled network of office space, coworking areas, meeting rooms and virtual offices in over 3,000 locations worldwide.

The Creative Space & Canopy Coworking | <http://www.thecreativespace.ca/ourlocations>

With two locations in Simcoe County (Barrie and Springwater) this is a new generation coworking environment that gives freelancers, start-ups and micro-businesses the opportunity to work, collaborate and grow in a creative community focused atmosphere.

OfficeInc! Corp. | <https://growwithofficeinc.com/>

OfficeInc! Corp. plays an important role in the local business ecosystem, providing clients with licensed full-time and occasional access to professional, furnished offices of various sizes, well-appointed meeting and training rooms, an inviting co-working space, and virtual office support services such as mailboxes, printing and copying, reception and phone answering, administration.

[inn]space Executive Offices & Business Centre | <https://innspace.ca/>

[inn]space is an executive-level business centre located in the North-East end of Barrie, Ontario. A modern, fully furnished, and serviced facility focused on customer service, productivity and the latest technologies. A variety of workspaces are available, from private offices furnished with high-end, executive décor, to semi-private desks and pro-working in a curated environment.

5. SMALL BUSINESS CENTRES ONTARIO: E-LEARNING MODULES

Small Business Centres (SBC) Ontario offers free online small business courses for Ontario entrepreneurs. The e-learning sessions are mini-courses developed by SBC Ontario Expert Business Advisors – available to you anytime, anywhere.

There are 30 sessions available (Business Basics, Start-Up and Growth), each session is 30 minutes or less and available in French and English.

To get started, visit: <https://www.sbcontario.ca/e-learning/>