

MEDIA RELEASE

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Business Enterprise Centre of Sarnia-Lambton Invites Aspiring Entrepreneurs to Business Planning for Entrepreneurial Success Night Class

Sarnia, ON — Aspiring entrepreneurs in Sarnia-Lambton are invited to take advantage of a unique opportunity to help transform their business dreams into reality through a free business planning course, offered by the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership's (SLEP) Business Enterprise Centre (BEC). Designed by entrepreneurs for entrepreneurs, the Business Planning for Entrepreneurial Success night class provides foundational business knowledge and helps prepare participants for potential application to the Starter Company Plus grant program administered by the BEC on behalf of the Province of Ontario.

The next offering of this course will run on Monday evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., starting January 13 and continuing until March 3, 2025. Participants will receive training and coaching for creating a comprehensive business plan, with guidance from instructor, entrepreneur, and business growth advisor Chelsey Hart of Your Initiative Co., along with resources and support from SLEP staff. The course also provides a great opportunity to network with other entrepreneurially minded people.

“Programs like our Business Planning for Entrepreneurial Success Course are integral to our mission of fostering economic growth and supporting small businesses in Sarnia-Lambton,” said Matthew Slotwinski, CEO of Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership. “This course empowers local entrepreneurs to develop strong business foundations, contributing to the success of our region's economy. With small businesses being the foundation of a strong economic base, it is important that entrepreneurs have access to the knowledge and tools that will allow them to thrive from start-up.”

Limited to 20 spots, the program is designed to maximize learning and provide personalized feedback. Participants who complete the course will be well-prepared to build an application for Starter Company Plus, which offers eligible entrepreneurs access to grant funding and mentorship.

Kim Hitchman, artist, owner of Bitter Lemon, and a participant in last winter's course, credited the course for helping her successfully apply to Starter Company Plus. “At first, I was nervous to apply to participate in the course because I was doubting my business and my abilities to perform amongst other entrepreneurs. But I'm so glad I did, not only did it give me the courage to keep building it, but I also learned so many new tools, and met other business owners who are going through the same challenges or have already experienced them and can lend a hand,” she shared. Similarly, Kelly Gleeson, co-owner of All Hours Home Care and a participant in this fall's course, highlighted that “Attending this course has increased my confidence in the knowledge I bring to our business and has also assisted me in building a strong foundation on which to build and grow our business. It has been a benefit to be able to network and meet other small

business owners in the class and learn more about what a valuable resource SLEP is to small business owners in our community.”

According to Alison Minato, Manager of the Business Enterprise Centre, the program stands out due to its dynamic and practical approach, designed with the entrepreneur’s unique goals in mind. “We’re fortunate to have Chelsey Hart bring her experience and expertise to guide our participants. Her sessions are very engaging, and she ensures that every entrepreneur feels empowered to pursue their unique vision while providing them with actionable tools and steps to move forward.”

Interested individuals can learn more and apply for the course online at sarnialambton.on.ca/business-planning-w25. Due to limited space and the desire to align client and program expectations, registration requests will be reviewed by a BEC representative who will follow up to confirm placement or suggest alternative support options. The program is limited to 20 participants.

About the Business Enterprise Centre:

The Business Enterprise Centre (BEC) of Sarnia-Lambton is a joint venture of the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, The County of Lambton, and the Province of Ontario. The Business Enterprise Centre provides free, confidential business advisory services to aspiring entrepreneurs and existing small businesses in the Sarnia-Lambton area. The BEC also delivers the Summer Company and Starter Company Plus grant programs on behalf of the Province of Ontario. Operated by a team dedicated to the success of entrepreneurs and small businesses in Sarnia-Lambton, we offer guidance to businesses at every stage.

About the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership:

Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP) is the lead economic development agency for the Sarnia-Lambton area. Funded by the County of Lambton, we focus on promoting the distinct advantages Sarnia-Lambton proudly offers companies and residents. By coordinating community-based economic development initiatives and maintaining a commercially attractive environment, we foster new business creation, help ensure that established firms remain and grow here, and work to attract growing businesses to the Sarnia-Lambton area.

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