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WELCOME!

Welcome to Okotoks! Whether you're a seasoned entrepreneur or just starting out, we're thrilled to be your partner on this journey to success in our dynamic town.

In this guide, you'll discover a wealth of resources tailored to help you navigate the ins and outs of doing business in Okotoks. From understanding local regulations to leveraging the power of networking, we've got you covered. You will find what you need to know about essential topics like licensing, zoning and permits – all crucial elements for launching or growing your business in our active community.

Gain valuable insights into local demographics and statistical information. But beyond the paperwork, uncover the true essence of our town – the collaborative spirit of our business community.

Forge meaningful connections through networking events, business associations and support programs designed to fuel growth and innovation. Whether your dream involves opening a cozy café, pioneering the next big tech innovation, or expanding your retail empire, Okotoks welcomes you with open arms and endless possibilities.

Dive into this guide, and together, let's create a thriving future right here in Okotoks - let's make magic happen! And don't forget, Okotoks offers robust economic development support, making it easier than ever to start or grow your business. Explore the benefits of doing business in Okotoks, where opportunity awaits at every turn.

- Okotoks Economic Development

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Welcome to our all-inclusive guide crafted to help you launch and grow your business venture in Okotoks! Whether you're just starting out or looking to take your business to the next level, we've got your back every step of the way.

Inside this guide, you'll uncover valuable information on everything from essential business regulations to available support networks and resources. Consider it your roadmap to entrepreneurial success!

The support doesn't stop there. Head on over to our webpage at okotoks.ca/your-business for more handy information, tools and resources to fuel your business growth.

Already have a business up and running and thinking about expansion? Fantastic! We're here to lend a hand with personalized assistance during every phase of your journey. Just email us at ecdevokotoks@okotoks.ca or call 403-938-8052. Your success is our top priority, and we're here to help you achieve your business goals.

Okotoks

READY
TO LAUNCH
YOUR
BUSINESS?



okotoks.ca/Business-Process

Before your launch, make sure you're in the know about:

- ✓ **Licensing**
- ✓ **Zoning**
- ✓ **Permits** and more!

Give your business the best chance for success - be equipped with key information from the start!

Okotoks Economic Development
☎ 403-938-8052
✉ ecdevokotoks@okotoks.ca



OKOTOKS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Discover how we're driving growth and prosperity in Okotoks, benefitting both residents and business owners alike.

Meet our team at Okotoks Economic Development:



"Working with the community and helping businesses navigate the economic landscape is what drew me to economic development and what keeps me motivated day in and day out. No day is the same, and I love the opportunity to get to know my community, business owners and learn more about business overall."

– Josh Welz, Economic Development Specialist
jwelz@okotoks.ca



"I love the sense of purpose and fulfillment that comes with knowing that my work makes a real difference in people's lives. Overall, I would say that my favourite thing about working in economic development is the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to local businesses in my community."

– Lorie Watson, Economic Development Specialist
lwatson@okotoks.ca

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ABOUT HOW WE'RE SHAPING OKOTOKS
FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE.**



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CONNECT WITH US!

Share your business event online!

Add your event details to the Town's event calendar: okotoks.ca/events.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY:

Get on the Business Beat newsletter mailout list to stay connected and find out what is happening in local business news and more! okotoks.ca/newsletters.

BIDS AND TENDERS:

View open bid opportunities on the Town's website: okotoks.bidsandtenders.ca.

GET DISCOVERED:

The Town's business directory listing is free for local businesses: okotoks.ca/business-directory.

KEEP UPDATED & IN TOUCH!



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GETTING STARTED

Smart Business Advice For Every Business Owner!

Are you venturing into business for the first time, considering expanding, contemplating purchasing a business, or pondering a business relocation or change? If any of these scenarios resonate with you, it's crucial to be well-informed.

Before taking any significant steps such as signing a lease, purchasing property or a business, schedule an appointment with Okotoks Economic Development. Our one-on-one support guides entrepreneurs through the licensing and permitting process, ensuring a smooth and efficient journey.

By tapping into our expertise, you'll navigate these procedures with confidence, mitigating the risk of costly errors. Schedule your appointment today to set yourself up for success!

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CREATING A BUSINESS PLAN

Are you an aspiring entrepreneur in Okotoks, eager to turn your business dreams into reality?

The journey starts with a solid business plan tailored to our vibrant community. Whether you're envisioning a cozy café on Elizabeth Street or a tech startup in downtown, this guide will walk you through the essential steps to develop a robust business plan that aligns with the unique character of Okotoks.

A business plan is a crucial tool for businesses, offering a roadmap for success, facilitating strategic decision-making, securing funding, managing risks, communicating goals and monitoring performance.

NEED HELP?

Get in touch with Okotoks Economic Development to access a comprehensive range of resources tailored to assist you in crafting a business plan that aligns perfectly with your unique business needs.

RESOURCES

Business Link offers a free interactive business plan builder: <https://rb.gy/hxbxu8> (source: businesslink.ca).

Local Resource: Contact Community Futures Highwood for business planning support. highwood.albertacf.com



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- YOUTH PROGRAMS
- CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS
- COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

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BUSINESS STRUCTURE

Business Registration

Before registering your business with the Province, you need to decide the legal structure of your business. Choosing the right business structure impacts legal liability, taxation and operational flexibility. It's crucial to weigh the pros and cons of options like sole proprietorship, partnership, LLC, or corporation to ensure alignment with long-term goals and regulatory requirements.

CHARACTERISTICS	SOLE PROPRIETOR	PARTNERSHIP	CORPORATION
Ease of Formation	Easy and inexpensive to register	Easy and inexpensive to register	Extensive corporate documents required
Ownership	Owner (single)	Partners (two or more)	Shareholders (one or more)
Operated By	By owner	By the director(s) appointed by the partners	By the board of directors appointed from the shareholders
Profit Allocation	100% to the owner	Shared among partners	Shared among shareholders
Liability	Unlimited	Unlimited	Members may not be liable

CHOOSE A BUSINESS NAME

Before you register your business, you need to decide on a business name. Your business name is an important aspect of your brand identity and should reflect your business's values, products, or services.

In Alberta, registering a business name involves certain requirements and procedures. The Alberta government mandates that businesses operating under a name other than their legal name (e.g., a sole proprietorship or partnership using a name other than the owner's name) must register their business name. Learn more: alberta.ca/register-business-name

REGISTERING A TRADE NAME IN CANADA:

Check Availability: Ensure the desired trade name is available and not already in use by another business to avoid conflicts.

Go to: <https://rb.gy/3pfvsf>

BUILD YOUR PROFESSIONAL TEAM

A team of talented advisors who understand your goals and want to help you achieve your desired outcome for each project will help you grow.

Step 1: IDENTIFY AND UTILIZE YOUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST:

Identifying your economic development specialist is crucial for leveraging their expertise to propel your business towards success. They play a vital role in your professional team, offering tailored support and guidance to navigate local markets, access resources and foster growth opportunities. By recognizing their significance and actively involving them in your business strategies, you can harness their knowledge to enhance your competitiveness and achieve your entrepreneurial goals.

Step 2: BUILD YOUR LEGAL FOUNDATION:

Establish a solid legal framework for your business by enlisting the expertise of a seasoned lawyer. Navigate legal complexities, such as contract negotiations, compliance regulations and intellectual property protection, with confidence and clarity. Your lawyer will provide strategic counsel to safeguard your interests and ensure legal compliance, laying the groundwork for long-term success.

Step 3: MANAGE YOUR FINANCES:

Secure the services of an experienced accountant to effectively manage your finances and optimize fiscal performance. From bookkeeping and tax planning to financial analysis and budgeting, your accountant will provide invaluable guidance to streamline operations and maximize profitability. With their expertise, you can make informed financial decisions and maintain financial stability amidst evolving market conditions.

Step 3: PROTECT YOUR BUSINESS WITH INSURANCE:

Safeguard your business against unforeseen risks and liabilities by partnering with a trusted insurance provider. From general liability and property insurance to specialized coverage tailored to your industry, your insurance provider will help you mitigate risks and protect your assets. With comprehensive insurance coverage in place, you can operate with confidence, knowing that your business interests are adequately safeguarded against potential threats.

For more information: <https://rb.gy/u429xx>



LICENSING, PERMITTING AND REGULATIONS

What to Consider

If you're starting or expanding a business in Okotoks, it's crucial to understand the licensing and permitting requirements. The Town is here to help you navigate this process. We assist with business licensing, zoning regulations and permit applications to ensure you meet all the requirements. To make the process smooth and efficient, reach out to us early to clarify any questions.

To make it easier for businesses to navigate the startup or expansion process, here's what you need to know:

CONTACT THE TOWN EARLY

- Get in touch with Okotoks Economic Development as soon as you start planning. We are here to help troubleshoot and can answer most of your questions as well as help you navigate the various processes and connect you other departments to help move your business along.
- Reaching out early will help you avoid delays and ensure you're on the right track.

KNOW THE COSTS AND TIMELINES

- Be aware that there are costs associated with business licenses and various permits. Check the Town's website for a breakdown of these costs.
- Timelines for approvals can vary. While some reviews take just a few days, others can take weeks or even months,

depending on the complexity of your business or project. Planning ahead is key.

UNDERSTAND WHEN PERMITS ARE NEEDED

- All businesses need a licence to operate in Okotoks. If you are building, renovating, or changing the use of a property, you may need additional permits, such as development or building permits.
- Even if you aren't planning major renovations, certain changes might require permits. Contact us to understand your specific requirements.

VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

- The Town's website provides comprehensive information on licensing, permits and safety codes. You can find resources and guides to help you understand the process and what you need to do.
- Use the website to access application forms, fee schedules and other important documents to streamline your business planning.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For personalized guidance and support, reach out to Okotoks Economic Development. We will help you understand the entire process and connect you with the right departments as needed. Our goal is to make your business journey as smooth as possible.

- Phone: 403-938-8052
- Email: ecdevokotoks@okotoks.ca

NAVIGATING BUSINESS EXPANSION

Expanding your business is an exciting milestone,

signaling growth, innovation and increased opportunities. Whether you're considering opening a new location, adding to your team, or broadening your product line, Okotoks Economic Development is here to support you through every step of the process. Here's what you need to know about business growth and expansion in Okotoks.

WHY EXPAND IN OKOTOKS?

Okotoks offers a dynamic and supportive environment for business expansion. With a thriving economy, a growing population and a community that values local businesses, it's an ideal place to grow. The town's strategic location near major transportation routes also makes it easy to reach regional and national markets.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR BUSINESS EXPANSION

Okotoks Economic Development provides a range of services to help you navigate the complexities of business expansion. Our team is committed to helping you make informed decisions and connect with the right resources. Here's how we can support your growth journey:

1. BUSINESS CONSULTATION

Get expert advice on expansion planning, market analysis and strategic growth.

Discuss your business goals and explore opportunities for scaling your operations.

2. SITE SELECTION ASSISTANCE

Identify potential locations for expansion within Okotoks.

Receive guidance on zoning regulations, permits and infrastructure to ensure compliance.

3. ACCESS TO FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Learn about available grants, loans and other financial resources to support your expansion.

Get connected with business support organizations and industry experts who can offer additional assistance.

4. NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Join local business networks to build relationships with other entrepreneurs and potential partners.

Attend events and workshops to gain insights and share experiences with fellow business owners.

5. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Access resources for hiring and training new employees to meet your expansion needs.

Explore partnerships with local educational institutions to find skilled talent.

HOW TO GET STARTED

If you're ready to expand your business in Okotoks, start by reaching out to Okotoks Economic Development. We'll work with you to understand your expansion goals, identify key challenges and develop a customized plan to help you succeed. Contact us to schedule a consultation and begin your journey toward business growth in Okotoks.

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- T. Breymann, 2022*

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BUSINESS PROCESS

The Business Process in Okotoks - what to consider when starting or expanding your business after you've done the research!

The Town understands that every new business is unique - licensing and permitting requirements to safely operate that business are also unique. The Economic Development team is here to guide you through the process and connect you with other departments to help move your inquiry forward, including business licensing, zoning for your prospective location and what permits may be needed. **Reaching out early to get clarification on these requirements will help you successfully and quickly move through the process.** Our goal is to make this process as easy as possible for applicants. We are achieving this by making the license application shorter and easier to read, by centralizing our application intake and review and by improving access to information so that it's easier to find and interpret.

THE STARTUP OR EXPANSION PROCESS FOR BUSINESSES WITHIN OKOTOKS TYPICALLY HAS THESE STEPS:



BUSINESS LICENSING REVIEW

- ✓ Initial review of application for completeness, business type and location.
- ⚠ Typical timeline for completed application: 1-2 business days.
- ℹ Some businesses may only require a licence, so this may be the first step (or last) in opening your business.



PLANNING REVIEW

- ✓ Review of proposed business use and location. *Required anytime a business opens in a physical location in Okotoks.*
- ℹ Required anytime a business opens in a physical location in Okotoks.
- ⚠ Typical timeline can vary from 2 weeks to several months depending on completion and complexity of the application.

This step may require filling out a development permit application.



SAFETY CODES & PERMITTING REVIEW

- ✓ Review of use at proposed location and any requirements related to the structure.
- ℹ This review can happen even if no renovations are occurring, such as a changing property use.
- ⚠ Typical timeline for complete application: 15 days.

This step may require filling out a building and/or development permit application.

BUSINESS LICENSING

The Town requires all businesses that are operating, working, providing or selling a product or service within Okotoks corporate boundaries to possess a valid Town business licence. Businesses that do not have a permanent location within Okotoks but are conducting business within the Town are also required to have a business licence. Depending on the nature and location of the business, a licence may be the only requirement to operate within Okotoks. Business licensing is a centralized process, handled by the Okotoks Planning Department.

☎ 403-995-2760

✉ license@okotoks.ca

PLANNING

Our Planning Team coordinates and facilitates the creation, implementation and evaluation of Town development plans and policies such as the Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan.

We recommend that you reach out to Planning once you have a potential location in mind. It is best to reach out before you sign a lease, commence a new build or plan to redevelop a property to determine if your proposed location is zoned appropriately for your business type and activity.

☎ 403-995-2760

✉ planning@okotoks.ca

SAFETY CODES

This department plays a crucial role in ensuring the safety and well-being of the public by enforcing building, fire and other safety codes and regulations.

Even if business activity is allowed in the zone where your proposed business will be located, it doesn't mean your business licence application will automatically be approved. A number of considerations are taken into account when reviewing a proposed site, building and business usage.

You may need to make renovations even if you hadn't originally planned on it. The Town encourages businesses to consider hiring professional contractors and designers to assist them, especially for more complex projects.

☎ 403-995-6304

✉ permits@okotoks.ca

PERMITTING

A development or building permit is required for most development within Okotoks. The Town administers two types of permits:

- **Development Permit:** a document that is issued under the Land Use Bylaw and authorizes a development (the land use activity managed/reviewed by Planning);
- **Building Permit** (the building structure and its components): a certificate or document issued by a Safety Codes Officer in alignment with provincial legislation authorizing construction (managed/reviewed by Safety Codes).

These permits help ensure that what is built/renovated is safe, meets regulatory requirements and fits in with the surrounding community. Permits are needed if you are:

- Changing the type of business activity at the desired location (Change of Use). This process is often required when the current business use of the building is changing to a new business use. For example, if a restaurant was locating in a building that was previously occupied by a hobby store, a change of use permit would be required;
- Building a new space;
- Undertaking significant interior or exterior renovations to an existing space and/or;
- Installing or replacing a sign on or off the premises.

Applicants are encouraged to fill out applications early on in their business journey. It is important that applications are as complete as possible when submitted, this will help avoid any delays in the approval process.





UNLOCKING FUNDING POTENTIAL

Grants can serve as a critical source of non-repayable funding, allowing businesses to invest in innovation, expand operations, or develop new products without the burden of additional debt. Yet, finding and applying for these grants can be a complex process. As a business owner, it's essential to understand the eligibility criteria, application deadlines and the specific goals each grant aims to support.

To navigate this landscape effectively, consider exploring various sources. Government websites, local economic development offices and industry associations are excellent places to start. These resources often provide a wealth of information about available grants and funding programs, along with workshops and one-on-one consultations to guide you through the application process.

By staying informed and seeking expert guidance, you can unlock a range of funding opportunities that can help you achieve your business goals. From supporting new ventures to facilitating expansion, grants can play a pivotal role in fueling your business's growth and innovation.

In addition to these resources, Okotoks Economic Development is here to support you. Our team can offer personalized advice, help you understand which grants are most suitable for your business and increase your chances of securing funding. We also connect you with local opportunities and help you understand the unique benefits available to businesses in Okotoks.

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SUSTAINABILITY

Okotoks, renowned for its commitment to sustainability, stands as a beacon of eco-consciousness in Alberta.

The Town's sustainability practices are deeply ingrained in its ethos, fostering a harmonious relationship between economic growth and environmental stewardship. Businesses in Okotoks thrive within this framework, supported by initiatives that prioritize sustainable development.

Through incentives like grants for energy-efficient upgrades and waste reduction programs, Okotoks empowers businesses to adopt environmentally friendly practices without compromising profitability.

Moreover, the Town provides educational resources and workshops to help businesses integrate sustainability into their

operations seamlessly. By nurturing a culture of sustainability, Okotoks not only ensures the longevity of its environment but also bolsters the resilience and competitiveness of its business community in an increasingly green-conscious market.

Learn more about Okotoks sustainability rebates and incentives at okotoks.ca/rebates-incentives.



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-  Spray Park
-  Public Toilets
-  Bird Watching
-  Cemetery
-  Airport
-  Campground
RV Sani-Dump
-  Beach Volleyball
-  Day Use/Picnic Area

FACILITIES

-  Centennial Arenas & Foothills Centennial Centre
(arenas, walking track, event centre)
-  Recreation Centre
(arenas, pool, gym, fitness centre, curling)
-  Rotary Performing Arts Centre
-  Art Gallery / Visitor Information
-  Parking
-  Off-leash Park
-  Pathways
-  Seaman Stadium
-  Museum
-  Library
-  Urgent Care





HARNESSING LOCAL TALENT

Are you a business owner in Okotoks seeking to expand your team? Look no further! This guide is tailored to assist Okotoks entrepreneurs in accessing employment support options and discovering valuable information about hiring employees locally.

PROVINCIAL RESOURCES FOR HIRING IN ALBERTA

Tap into resources like the Alberta Job Bank and Alberta Works for valuable tools and guidance on hiring and workforce development.

By leveraging these resources effectively, Okotoks businesses can navigate the hiring process with confidence and contribute to the community's growth.

For essential information you need to know before hiring, visit the Alberta Employment Standards branch website: alberta.ca/employment-standards.

KNOW THE LABOUR LAWS

Before you start hiring, ensure you are compliant with Alberta's employment laws. The Alberta Employment Standards branch website offers essential information on hiring practices, wages,

overtime, vacation pay and more. Familiarize yourself with these standards to avoid legal pitfalls and create a positive workplace environment. Visit: alberta.ca/employment-standards.

From online job boards and provincial resources to understanding labour laws, our resources are curated to empower businesses in Okotoks to attract talented employees, maintain legal compliance and contribute to the community's growth. For additional guidance or support, Okotoks Economic Development is available to assist with accessing employment support options and addressing any questions or concerns related to hiring locally.

Looking for work? MCG Careers can help!

MCG Careers has been assisting Albertans since 1989. Our mission is to enable companies and individuals to achieve their full potential through innovative and individualized career and employment services.

In the Foothills (Okotoks and High River), we offer:

- Albertans age 18+ one-on-one career coaching and assistance with achieving and retaining meaningful employment opportunities.
- Local job seekers access to computers, printers, photocopiers, and current career and employment resources at our centres.
- Alberta employers free posting of job ads, opportunities to connect with local job seekers, access to labour market research and Employment Standards information.



MCG Careers Inc.
Career and Employment Centre
Bay 3, 87 Elizabeth Street
P.O. Box 1216, Okotoks, AB T1S 1B2
Ph: 403-995-4377; Fax: 403-995-3616
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EVENTS & NETWORKING

Embrace the spirit of collaboration and connection in the Town of Okotoks! Supported by local associations and partners, we proudly host an array of dynamic business networking opportunities and engaging community events. Whether you're eager to forge one-on-one connections with fellow business owners and entrepreneurs or participate in town-wide initiatives, there's no shortage of ways to immerse yourself in our vibrant community.

Don't miss out on the excitement! Check out our Community Events Calendar for all upcoming event information! okotoks.ca/events.

Sponsoring community events in Okotoks allows businesses to connect with residents and increase brand awareness while showing commitment to local culture and traditions. It's a great way to build loyalty, network with other businesses and position your company as a key part of the community. This engagement can lead to stronger customer relationships and new business opportunities.

For details on sponsorship opportunities in Okotoks, contact events@okotoks.ca.



We're on a mission to make Okotoks the most welcoming place for businesses. We're committed to using our existing resources and planning for the future to support businesses of all sizes. Our top priority is ensuring that every aspect of our policies and processes is designed with your success in mind, making it easy and inviting for you to grow and thrive here.



 <p><i>Pizza... Made to Perfection</i></p> <p>ESTABLISHED JUNE 1963</p> <p>TOM'S USES ONLY THE FINEST INGREDIENTS 100% Mozzarella & Canadian Cheddar Cheese Gluten-Free Crust Available. Unique Thin-Crust Pizza Baked on a Brick Hearth</p>	<p><i>John Henry's</i> PUB</p> <p>FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD PUB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Services and Prices • 10 Draught Taps • 8 HD TVs • 4 LUCKY VLT'S • All You Can Eat Pizza Smorg from Mon. - Fri. 11:30 AM - 2 PM 	 <p>10% OFF* ANY FOOD PURCHASE OVER \$30.00</p> <p><small>*Before GST, Dine-in only. Expires December 31, 2024. Cannot be combined with other offers or specials.</small></p>
<p>300, 235 Milligan Drive 403-995-4651</p> <p>Sun. & Mon.: Noon - 9 PM • Tues. - Thurs.: 11 AM - Midnight • Fri. & Sat.: 11 AM - 1 AM</p>		



LET'S CELEBRATE YOUR GRAND OPENING

Celebrate your milestone in style! To arrange an official ribbon cutting for your grand opening or business milestone with representation from the Town of Okotoks, contact Okotoks Economic Development. We can coordinate official Council attendance, provide ceremonial scissors and ribbon and guide you through any questions about your celebration. Our team will also take photos and share them on the Town's Economic Development social media channels and website, offering great exposure for your business.

Here are some key points to consider for your ribbon-cutting event:

- **Event Details:** Decide on the date, time, itinerary, catering and other logistics;
- **Invitations to the Mayor and Council:** Complete the application form at okotoks.ca/ribbon-cutting to request their attendance;
- **Invitations to the Community:** Add your grand opening to the Town's community events calendar at okotoks.ca/events to spread the word.

This is an excellent opportunity to engage with the community, celebrate your success and boost your business's visibility. If you need further assistance, contact Okotoks Economic Development for personalized support. Check out some grand openings here: okotoks.ca/grand-opening.



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BUSINESS SUCCESS STORIES

Showcasing Business Success

In June of 2023, the Economic Development Business Success Stories program in Okotoks received the Outstanding Single Community award for populations between 20,000-50,000 from Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI).



This prestigious award recognizes exceptional use of business retention and expansion strategies to grow and sustain small businesses, reinforcing the program's goal to raise awareness of local businesses.

To have a look at some local business success stories, learn more about the program and how to participate, visit: okotoks.ca/business-success.



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OKOTOKS ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

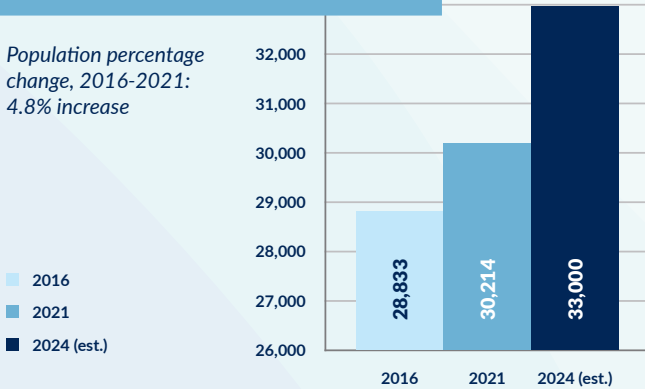


Statistics are evolving, collected from a variety of sources that are updated infrequently. For the most up-to-date stats on Okotoks, you can scan the code above, or visit - okotoks.ca/why-okotoks.

Sources: 2021 Canada Census, Alberta Economic Dashboard, Municipal Business Licensing Database

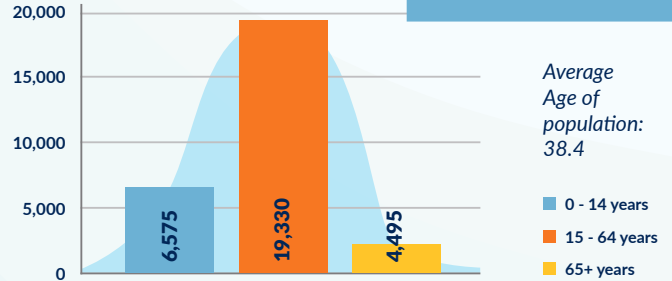
POPULATION

Population percentage change, 2016-2021: 4.8% increase



AGE RANGE

Average Age of population: 38.4



HOUSING

Total Private Dwellings: 10,666
 Median value of dwelling: \$452,000

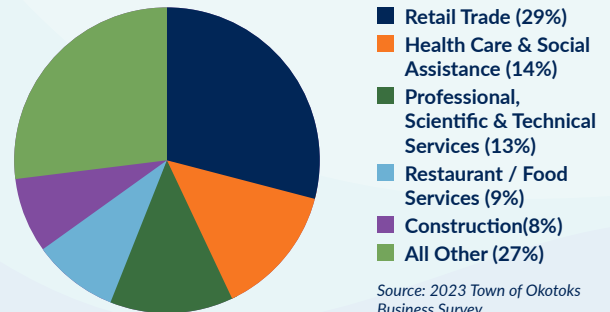
WORKFORCE

Total labour force: 15,850
 Self-employed: 2,655

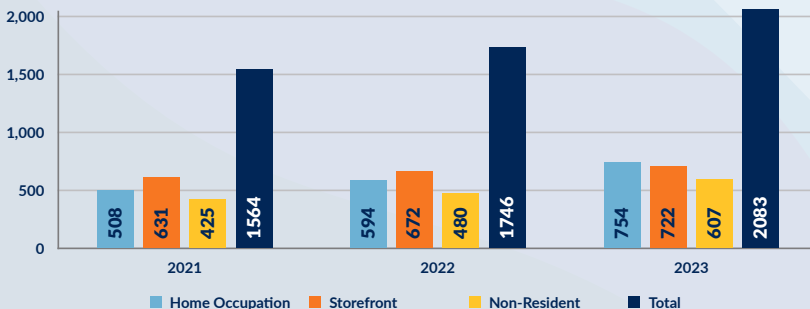
INCOME AND EDUCATION

Median after-tax income of families: \$110,000
 Population (25 to 64 years) with post-secondary education: 15,220

INDUSTRIES BY EMPLOYMENT



BUSINESS LICENCES



MUNICIPAL TAX RATES (2023)

Residential: 0.785000%

Example: \$300,000 (residential property assessment) x 0.785000/100=\$2,355 (property taxes).

Non-residential municipal mill rate 2022: 8.19%

(declining -0.63% from 8.25 in 2021)

For more statistical information on the Town of Okotoks go to: okotoks.ca/your-business



WE MEAN BUSINESS

Business Visitation Program:

Experience personalized support and guidance through our exclusive Business Visitation Program. The Town's dedicated Economic Development team is committed to understanding the specific needs and challenges of your business, and we're here to provide tailored solutions to help you thrive.

Interested businesses can register online on the Town's website or email ecdevokotoks@okotoks.ca to schedule a meeting with one of our Economic Development Specialists. During the business visitation, economic development staff and the business owner will have the opportunity to discuss:

- Business environment;
- Business information and resources;
- Future plans;
- Challenges;
- Opportunities for growth.

These discussions aim to facilitate a deeper understanding of the business's needs and goals, enabling economic development staff to provide targeted support and assistance.

Learn more: okotoks.ca/business-visitation



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THRIVING IN OKOTOKS

Local Business Resources in Okotoks

In Okotoks, local businesses have access to a wealth of resources and support networks that foster growth, innovation and community involvement. Whether you're a startup seeking guidance or an established business looking to expand, the following organizations are here to help you succeed:

1. OKOTOKS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



As a vital hub for business networking and advocacy, the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce provides valuable resources, events and opportunities for local businesses to connect and thrive. From networking mixers to business workshops, the Chamber offers a supportive environment for fostering growth and collaboration within the community. okotokschamber.ca

2. COMMUNITY FUTURES HIGHWOOD



Community Futures Highwood is committed to supporting local economic development by offering business loans, training and advisory services to entrepreneurs and small business owners. With a focus on fostering entrepreneurship and sustainable growth, they provide tailored solutions to help businesses succeed in Okotoks and beyond. highwood.alberta.ca

3. MCG CAREERS



MCG Careers specializes in workforce solutions, offering recruitment, staffing and human resource consulting services to businesses in Okotoks and the surrounding area. Whether you're looking to hire skilled talent or streamline your recruitment process, MCG Careers provides personalized solutions to meet your workforce needs. mcgcareers.com

4. OKOTOKS ARTS COUNCIL



The Okotoks Arts Council plays a vital role in promoting arts and culture within the community. Through various programs, events and initiatives, they support local artists and creative entrepreneurs, helping to cultivate a vibrant arts scene that enriches the cultural fabric of Okotoks. okotoksartscouncil.ca

5. BOW VALLEY COLLEGE



Bow Valley College offers a range of educational and training programs designed to support workforce development and skills enhancement. From professional development courses to certificate programs, Bow Valley College provides accessible learning opportunities to help individuals and businesses thrive in today's competitive market. bowvalleycollege.ca/schools/regional-campuses

6. INCLUSION FOOTHILLS



Inclusion Foothills is dedicated to creating inclusive communities where everyone can participate and belong. Through advocacy, education and support services, they promote diversity, equity and inclusion in Okotoks and the surrounding region, empowering businesses to create welcoming environments for all.

By tapping into these local resources, businesses in Okotoks can access the support, expertise and connections they need to succeed and contribute to the continued growth and prosperity of the community. Whether you're looking for networking opportunities, financial assistance, workforce solutions, or creative inspiration, Okotoks has a vibrant ecosystem of resources ready to support your business journey. inclusionfoothills.org

For all business resource information visit okotoks.ca/business-resources



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216 Stockton Avenue, Okotoks



Mission Thrift Store Okotoks was founded in 2009 in a small downtown location. Thrifting rapidly gained popularity, and a new, bigger 17,200 sq ft store was opened on Stockton Avenue in 2016.

The store is run by a volunteer board as a **not-for-profit** organization that works alongside 50 sister stores across Canada to support **Bible League Canada**, and their Canadian arm, **Converge Canada**. They specialize in adults' and children's literacy programs, prison and campus ministries, kids' camps, training pastoral staff, planting churches and the distribution of the Word of God.

Locally, we support more than **30 local agencies** such as Rowan House, The Mustard Seed, Inclusion Foothills, It Takes a Village, Foothills Community Immigrant Services and support services, various schools, churches, Indigenous communities, and the Okotoks Foodbank Protein Program.

To promote sustainability, we have created a large **Reduce Reuse Recycle** program. In the last five years, we have processed over **50,000 tons of donations**. At least 50 tons have moved through the **Okotoks Eco Centre**, more than 40 tons through **homeless programs**, over 30 tons to **African nations**, 50 tons+ of broken / old electronics to the **Alberta Recycling Initiative** and over 600 tons of product to the **Canadian Diabetes Association**.

We believe in the value of volunteerism, and as such we have **over 180 amazing volunteers supporting our store**. We provide a **safe and friendly environment** for **all ages and abilities** to come serve.



In 2023, over **650,000 items** were purchased by over **100,000 customers** in our store to support our causes! Truly amazing!

On behalf of the board, the staff and volunteers – as well as **millions of people worldwide** who you have helped in some way – we want to say a **big thank you** for supporting our mission.

We love to share our story! Come down and shop with us, bring a donation, or maybe volunteer with us in this exciting venture!



Save More Than Money



TESTIMONIALS

NIKOLAS CAVALHEIRO ZETOUNI, OWNER, NEXT GEN EDUCARE:

"When I started my business, Next Gen EduCare, in Okotoks, I was a bit lost. I was living in Calgary and didn't know much about the local market, and being a first-time entrepreneur, I knew I needed support. After reaching out to the Okotoks Economic Development team, I was blown away by their willingness to go above and beyond to help me set my business up for success.

"I couldn't be happier with how Okotoks Economic Development helped me get started, and I would recommend any new entrepreneur to reach out to them for guidance and support. Okotoks is a fantastic place to start a business, especially with this kind of backing...!"



JANET ARSENAULT & APRIL JORDAN, OWNERS, STORIFY THERAPY SERVICES:

"Starting a business is a challenging journey, and as the owners of Storify Therapy Services, we can confidently say that the Okotoks Economic Development team played a significant role in our success. Our vision was to create a safe, supportive space for people in the Foothills Region to explore their stories and find healing. From the start, the Okotoks team provided invaluable guidance and resources.

"We are incredibly grateful for their support and would highly recommend their services to any business, whether you're just starting or looking to grow. Their commitment to fostering a thriving business community in Okotoks is clear, and we're proud to be a part of it..."



ALEJANDRO CASTANON, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, BEARLINK:

"If you're looking to start a business or grow an existing one, I can't recommend Okotoks and its Economic Development team enough. They are dedicated to helping entrepreneurs succeed and make the process feel much less daunting. With their guidance, Bearlink has been able to establish a strong presence, and we look forward to continuing our growth with their support..."

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NEW BUSINESS CHECKLIST

Don't know where to start or have additional questions? The Town's Economic Development team can help!

GETTING YOUR BUSINESS STARTED

- Determine your business model (Home-based, Store front);
- Learn about local business services and supports;
- Do your market research;
- Talk to service professionals (lawyer/accountant/insurance);
- Attend business training;
- Develop a business plan;
- Determine your brand and develop a marketing plan;
- Register your business name with Service Alberta;
- Obtain your GST# with Revenue Canada;
- Set up a business bank account;
- Secure start up financing.

SETTING UP YOUR PLACE OF BUSINESS

- Ensure all permits and approvals required to operate your business have been obtained;
- Investigate Point of Sale systems;
- Search for your perfect location (site selection);
- Ensure the location/operation meets zoning requirements (talk to Planning);
- Get inspections - ensure no structural issues and determine cost to "fit up" new space;
- Review and negotiate lease terms/lease hold improvements
- Apply for building permit(s) (if required);
- Acquire an Okotoks Business Licence (required for all businesses);

- Confirm suppliers and place your orders;
- Set up your storefront or home business;
- Learn about garbage/recycling pickup services and schedules;
- Set up utilities;
- Apply for a sign permit;
- Apply for Town Community Improvement Grants;
- Set up your social media accounts and website (start marketing);
- Meet your fellow business owners and make connections;
- Hire staff (if needed);
- Determine opening date;
- Schedule your Grand Opening with Mayor and Council (store front only);
- Meet your fellow business owners.

GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Subscribe to the Business Beat and other Town newsletters to stay informed: okotoks.ca/newsletter;
- Check out upcoming events on the Town's event calendar: okotoks.ca/events;
- Consider sponsoring a local sports or local event;
- Explore/join a local service club or business organization;
- Consider joining a local board or committee.

Disclaimer:

Please be advised that this checklist is intended as a general guide for setting up a business and may not cover all specific requirements or regulations. It is recommended to seek professional advice and consult with relevant authorities to ensure full compliance and success in your business endeavours.

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IMPORTANT CONTACTS


MUNICIPAL CENTRE	403-938-4404
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	403-938-8052
PLANNING / BUSINESS LICENSING	403-995-2760
OPERATIONS CENTRE (PUBLIC WORKS)	403-938-8054
TAXES	403-938-8919
UTILITIES	403-938-8937

OKOTOKS MUNICIPAL ENFORCEMENT	403-938-8913
OKOTOKS FIRE & RESCUE*	403-938-4066
POLICE DEPARTMENT*	403-995-6400
(* NON-EMERGENCY LINES)	

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. BUSINESS LICENSING AND PERMITS

Q: What is the process for obtaining a business license in Okotoks?

A: The process involves submitting a completed application form, paying the required fee, and complying with local regulations. For detailed instructions, contact the Town of Okotoks Planning Office at 403-995-2760 or via email at licensing@okotoks.ca.

2. ZONING AND REGULATIONS

Q: How can I find out the zoning requirements for my business location?

A: Zoning requirements can be found in the Town of Okotoks Zoning Bylaws. Contact the Planning Department at 403-995-2760 for detailed information.

Q: What are the regulations for home-based businesses?

A: Home-based businesses must comply with specific zoning and bylaw requirements. Contact the Planning Office for more details. Call: 403-995-2760.

3. SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Q: What resources are available for new businesses in Okotoks?

A: New businesses can access support from the Town of Okotoks Economic Development Department. Phone: 403-938-8052.

4. SIGNAGE

Q: Who should I contact for more information or assistance with my sign permit application?

A: For more information or assistance, contact the Town of Okotoks Planning Department: Phone: 403-995-2760
Email: planning@okotoks.ca

5. EXPANSION AND RELOCATION

Q: What steps should I take if I want to expand my business?

A: Expanding your business may involve obtaining additional permits, complying with zoning regulations, and possibly reapplying for business licenses. Contact the Economic Development Office for guidance. Phone: 403-938-8082 or email: ecdevokotoks@okotoks.ca

6. GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: Who can I contact for general business inquiries?

A: For general business inquiries, contact the Town of Okotoks Economic Development Office at 403-938-8052 or via email at ecdevokotoks@okotoks.ca.



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