



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada.ca

Minister Valdez announces funding recipients of Canada's first-ever 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program

From: Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

News release

August 29, 2024 – Edmonton, Alberta

2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs are a core part of Canada's economy, with over 100,000 2SLGBTQI+-owned and -operated businesses in Canada employing over 435,000 Canadians and generating over \$22 billion in economic activity. Yet, these entrepreneurs continue to face systemic barriers in starting and growing their businesses. To address these challenges and build a more inclusive economy, the federal government created Canada's first-ever 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program.

Today, the Honourable Rechie Valdez, Minister of Small Business, the Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, and Darrell Schuurman, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC), announced the organizations selected to operate the 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program's Knowledge Hub and to deliver the program's Ecosystem Fund.

The \$8 million Ecosystem Fund supports non-profit ecosystem organizations serving 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs. The fund will help recipient organizations offer programs and resources to support these entrepreneurs, raise awareness of the challenges they face to improve support and services, and cultivate a more cohesive network of 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs and ecosystem organizations.

The CGLCC has selected the first 17 organizations to deliver the Ecosystem Fund across Canada:

- 2 Spirits in Motion Society (national)
- Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services, in partnership with UPlift Black (Ontario)
- Alberta LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce (Alberta)
- Banff Pride Society, in partnership with Bow Valley Chamber of Commerce (Alberta)
- Chroma NB, in partnership with Envision Saint John and Fusion Saint John (New Brunswick)
- Comité FrancoQueer de l'Ouest, in partnership with Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique, Parallèle Alberta, Chambre de commerce LGBT du Québec, and Les Chevronné.e.s. (Western Canada)
- Community Futures British Columbia, in partnership with myCEO (British Columbia)
- Evol, in partnership with Fondation Émergence (Quebec)
- FrancoQueer, in partnership with Impact ON, and Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario (Ontario)
- Les Chevronné.e.s (Quebec)
- Pictou County Partnership, in partnership with Pictou County Pride (Nova Scotia)
- QueerTech (national)

- SASKQUEER Entrepreneurs + Professionals (Saskatchewan)
- Social Entrepreneurship Enclave (Manitoba)
- Sovereign Seeds (national)
- Spindle Films Foundation (national)
- The Old School House Arts Centre, in partnership with Creative Coast BC, 4VI, and the Aunty Collective (British Columbia)

The organization selected to operate the Knowledge Hub is the Fyrefly Institute for Gender and Sexual Diversity, in partnership with the eHUB Entrepreneurship Centre, at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. The Fyrefly Institute will receive \$3 million to build a national research network focused on collecting data to create a clearer picture of the entrepreneurship landscape for the 2SLGBTQI+ community, and on developing best practices and tools to benefit 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs.

Building a more inclusive economy means building a stronger economy. The 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program builds on the federal government's inclusive entrepreneurship investments that already include targeted entrepreneurship programs for women, Black, youth and Indigenous business owners. Making sure that people from all backgrounds have the opportunity to pursue entrepreneurship is essential to building a competitive economy that will create good, middle-class jobs for Canadians across the country.

Quotes

“2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs make invaluable contributions to our economy, creating over 435,000 jobs in their local communities. Today’s announcement of the organizations that will be delivering the Ecosystem Fund and operating the Knowledge Hub represents a huge step forward in creating a more inclusive economy and society for 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs. Our government will continue working with Canada’s 2SLGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce to make sure that anyone in the 2SLGBTQI+ community who has a dream of entrepreneurship is empowered to achieve their goals and realize their business dreams.”

– The Honourable Rechie Valdez, Minister of Small Business

“As a former entrepreneur myself, I know that the 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program will help actualize the dreams of many Canadians. By improving resources on 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurship and providing entrepreneurs with tailored training, networks and mentorship, the Knowledge Hub and Ecosystem Fund will help our government advance our mission of combatting stigma and promoting equality for all Canadians.”

– The Honourable Randy Boissonnault, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages

“These announcements mark a significant milestone in our commitment to empower 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs. The Ecosystem Fund and the Knowledge Hub are not just about financial support; they are about creating the infrastructure and knowledge base that our community needs to thrive. There are still many barriers to 2SLGBTQI+-owned businesses’ full participation in the economic sector. The 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program aims to address these obstacles by building a strong and sustainable ecosystem and by developing and providing resources to enable 2SLGBTQI+ businesses to grow and succeed.”

– Darrell Schuurman, CGLCC Co-Founder and CEO

“As home to both the Fyrefly Institute and the eHUB Entrepreneurship Centre, the University of Alberta is uniquely positioned to lead the important work of the 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program’s Knowledge Hub alongside our national collaborators. We are grateful to the Government of Canada and the CGLCC for supporting emancipatory entrepreneurship and its transformative potential to remove barriers for a historically underemployed community.”

– Glynnis Lieb, Executive Director, Fyrefly Institute for Gender and Sexual Diversity, University of Alberta, and Michael Lounsbury, Academic Director, eHub Entrepreneurship Centre, University of Alberta

Quick facts

- There are more than 100,000 2SLGBTQI+-owned and -operated businesses in Canada. They generate over \$22 billion in economic activity and employ over 435,000 Canadians.
- The Knowledge Hub and Ecosystem Fund are two key components of the \$25 million 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program, which is funded by the federal government and administered by Canada's 2SLGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC).
- Recipient organizations of the Ecosystem Fund will deliver workshops, one-on-one coaching, and webinars to help 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs build their skills; networking and market events to better connect entrepreneurship communities; trade missions to help businesses export and expand into new markets; and educational workshops to help businesses prioritize inclusion and diversity and become Rainbow Registered. One project will also help aspiring Indigenous 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs enter the food and agriculture sectors.
- The 17 organizations announced today will receive \$5,189,174 of the \$8 million available through the Ecosystem Fund. The remaining funding will be delivered to organizations in regions where service gaps still remain to ensure there is equitable support across Canada; these organizations will be announced in the future.
- The CGLCC is a national non-profit organization with a vision to drive 2SLGBTQI+ social change through economic empowerment. Its core mission is to contribute to a thriving and inclusive Canadian economy by promoting economic growth and prosperity for 2SLGBTQI+

businesses, in particular through supplier diversity certification, capacity building and development opportunities, mentorship, and global trade opportunities.

- Launched on August 28, 2022, the Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan aims to advance rights and equality for Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people, as well as other sexually and gender diverse people, in Canada.
- The 2SLGBTQI+ Entrepreneurship Program is a \$25 million investment that includes the following:
 - The Business Scale-Up program will build the CGLCC's capacity to help 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurs across Canada start or grow their businesses through a national mentorship program, improving access to corporate procurement opportunities and helping entrepreneurs and businesses become export ready.
 - The Ecosystem Fund will provide funding to not-for-profit business-support organizations to deliver projects to help entrepreneurs develop their business-planning skills and access entrepreneurial tools and learning resources.
 - The Knowledge Hub will conduct research and collect data to create a clearer picture of the entrepreneurship landscape for the 2SLGBTQI+ community and of the challenges its members face.
- The Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) is a nearly \$7 billion investment that includes the following:
 - The Women Entrepreneurship Loan Fund is enabling existing women-focused loan programs to provide additional affordable microloans to women entrepreneurs.
 - The WES Inclusive Women Venture Capital Initiative seeks to broaden access to funding and build a more inclusive venture

capital environment for Canadian women.

- The WES Ecosystem Fund is helping remove barriers to the support networks and deliver the resources that women entrepreneurs need to start up, scale up and access new markets.
- The Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub has brought together 10 regional hubs, over 300 organizations and thousands of women entrepreneurs to create a more inclusive and supportive environment to grow women's entrepreneurship in Canada.
- The Black Entrepreneurship Program (BEP) is a partnership between the Government of Canada, Black-led business organizations, post-secondary or other accredited educational institutions, and financial institutions. It has three components:
 - The \$100 million BEP Ecosystem Fund provides funding to not-for-profit Black-led organizations across the country to deliver mentorship, business training and financial planning services to businesses. To date, it has funded 43 organizations.
 - The \$165 million Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund, delivered by the Federation of African Canadian Economics (FACE), provides loans of up to \$250,000 to Black business owners and entrepreneurs.
 - The \$5 million Black Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub conducts qualitative and quantitative research and collects data on the state of Black entrepreneurship in Canada to help identify Black entrepreneurs' barriers to success as well as opportunities for growth. Carleton University and the Dream Legacy Foundation have partnered to establish the Knowledge Hub.

Contacts

Callie Franson

Communications Advisor

Office of the Minister of Small Business

613-297-5766

callie.franson@ised-isde.gc.ca

Media Relations

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

media@ised-isde.gc.ca

Stay connected

Follow Canada Business on social media.

X (Twitter): [@canadabusiness](https://twitter.com/canadabusiness) | Facebook: [Canada Business](https://www.facebook.com/CanadaBusiness) |

Instagram: [@cdnbusiness](https://www.instagram.com/cdnbusiness)

Search for related information by keyword: [Economics and Industry](#) | [LGBTQ2 people](#) | [Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada](#) | [Canada](#) | [Business and industry](#) | [general public](#) | [news releases](#) | [Hon. Rechie Valdez](#)

Date modified:

2024-09-06