



**Rural Enterprise Assistance and Coaching Hostel (REACH)
PROJECT STATUS**

The Rural Enterprise Assistance and Coaching Hostel (REACH) Project was launched in Camrose in May 2015, and will continue for a year, working with entrepreneurs, ensuring that they have a strong foundation to establish and grow their businesses. The program benefits a number of emerging rural Alberta business start-ups by interpreting their unique business development needs and developing service solutions that supports their needs. These services are offered by a team of appropriately skilled business professionals, using state of the art communications technologies that from time-to-time will be augmented through “in-person” sessions. These services are not intended to be judgmental, rather focusing on nurturing the entrepreneurs participating in the pilot - thus the use of the term “hostel” in defining the pilot.

The Program

There are six elements to this program, that are offered throughout the year:

1. Taking the Plunge – Introductory Roundtable
2. Basic Elements – Three-day long course on the basic elements of business
3. Formalizing Business Plans
4. Business Plan Presentations
5. Coach Support – one-on-one support with coach and experts addressing various topics and issues impacting their enterprises
6. Maintaining the relationships – various activities, workshops, meetings, round tables, etc.

The Priorities

1. Decrease the number of new business start-up closures;
Increase and enhance entrepreneurship training and knowledge in rural Alberta;
2. Collaborate with stakeholders (such as CF, RABC, GOA etc.) to provide a well-rounded set of resources for new entrepreneurs in rural Alberta;
3. Provide a forum for learning and networking for new entrepreneurs;
4. Provide long-term support to new businesses;
5. Use this pilot to create a business case and expand this program further into the BRAED Region, and all rural areas in Alberta;
6. Align with local and Provincial programming.

Success to Date

- 11 individuals began the program
- 8 decided to continue through the whole program

- Several clients have opened their shops and are running their business with the guidance of our mentors
- Our financial partners and in kind support continues to support the program
- There are talks of expanding the program to provide a second offering in Camrose, as well as expanding to other communities in the BRAED Region
- We have gathered several notes and letters of gratitude and support from our clients, including this note:

"I just wanted to send you a quick note to say thank you for all of the help that you've been giving me. I really look forward to our meetings and so appreciate your feedback, insight, and support as I work through this process and move my business idea along. I feel I would still be very confused and uncertain about various aspects of this business without your knowledge and encouragement - thank you very much!"