

2023-7 Restore Business and Enterprise Development Support Services to Low Income Manitobans

Mover: SEED Winnipeg Inc.

Seconded: Manitoba Cooperative Association

The Province of Manitoba should provide additional grants to not-for-profit business and enterprise support services so that low-income people, including those living in rural communities, people with disabilities, and others can receive robust and timely services for accessible business, cooperative and social enterprise development training and consulting supports.

Because: There is a gap of business and enterprise support services for Manitobans that is most acutely felt by the self-employed and would-be entrepreneurs who live on low incomes and/or in rural Manitoba.

Because: Community-based agencies continue to deliver small business, cooperative, and enterprise support services; however, some services have ceased, or have been reduced to specific demographic groups due to funding cuts. Many community-based agencies are no longer able to reach the general population of low-income and rural Manitobans resulting in inadequate business and enterprise development supports for these Manitobans.

Because: Micro enterprises and small businesses, including cooperatives and social enterprises, increase household incomes, create employment and democratic workplaces, and reduce government expenditure on social services and income assistance programs. Low-income and rural Manitobans, as well as other groups facing barriers to full participation in the local economy, require tailored services to meet their business development needs. Community-based agencies have a history of demonstrated success in supporting these clients and communities to develop businesses, cooperatives, and social enterprises.

Because: Requests to community non-profit organizations for business and enterprise support services have increased since the reduction in services formerly provided by Entrepreneurship Manitoba, even though World Trade Centre Winnipeg does deliver some (but not all) of those services. Recent funding announcements (such as to Futurpreneur), do not include all low-income Manitobans and those facing additional barriers to participation in the local economy and often require customized supports.

Additionally, the Department of Families' Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) program continues to refer low-income individuals to SEED Winnipeg Inc. for EIA recipients who seek self-employment business support services and access to the Enhanced Income Assistance Program despite cutting business development services funding to SEED in 2016.

Because: Community based service providers with proven history of success and custom-tailored programs need to be included in funding strategies that can improve low-income individuals' participation in the local economy through self-employment endeavours and job creation.

The Department of Families' Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) program needs to change legislation regarding the Enhanced Income Assistance Program to allow other community-based organizations to administer the program and appropriately fund an organization(s) to do this work.

Because: The Province of Manitoba has a stated priority to provide economic development services, including cooperative and social enterprise development services to all Manitobans via the Department of Economic Development, Investment and Trade.

Because: This resolution fits into CCEDNET’s public policy roadmap theme areas of: a) ending poverty: through working with low-income Manitobans with regard to economic development and job creation, as well as b) local and fair economies: via cooperative and social enterprise development, launch and expansions. Micro enterprises and small businesses, including cooperatives and social enterprises, increase household incomes, create employment and democratic workplaces, and reduce government expenditure on social services and income assistance programs.

How this Resolution will be Advanced: SEED Winnipeg, Manitoba Cooperative Association, and Community Futures Manitoba are leading advocacy for this issue. CCEDNet Manitoba can support this resolution by including it in budget submissions and direct government relations on behalf of the Network. We Want to Work can include this resolution in the coalition’s advocacy for social enterprise support and inclusive workforce development strategies from the Province of Manitoba.