



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 28, 2020

New Local Funding for Business Available in St. Thomas/Elgin

COVID-19 Business Development Fund

In partnership with the Elgin/St. Thomas Small Business Enterprise Centre, the St. Thomas Downtown Development Board and the Elgin County Economic Development, the St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation is excited to announce that we will begin receiving applications on May 1st for a fund that will support businesses as they look to succeed in new ways as they continue to deal with this pandemic and the recovery to follow.

Through survey feedback and one on one appointments, many business owners have indicated they could use funding to help them with pivoting their business model. The intent is for this process to be as efficient as possible, with short turnaround times and quick answers so that interested companies may quickly make changes and allow them to generate revenue and, in some cases, retain or hire employees. The fund will provide businesses access up to \$2,000 each and will focus on activities and strategies that will encourage success in these difficult times.

Based on input from experts, this funding will provide companies with a solid kickstart towards being able to execute one or more of the following:

- Creating or developing a stronger online presence
- Creating or growing an e-commerce site
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) development
- Digital marketing

Although the focus has been on digital marketing and sales, it is not limited to this and all creative ideas will be considered for funding. The fund is not intended to cover loss of revenue as a result of COVID-19 or existing costs (such as utilities or rent).

Businesses can begin applying on May 1, 2020 with concepts being reviewed on a first come first serve basis. Total number of grants will depend on the full amount of funding and may change over time as additional funding is sought out.

Please contact Tara McCaulley at tmccaulley@sbecinnovation.ca or (226) 377-0064 for further information.