

WORK CENTRAL AB

Business Support Organizations

Who to Call for Coaching, Training, and Connections

A Career Resource from Work Central AB

Business Support Organizations in Central Alberta

Beyond funding, a strong network of organizations exists specifically to support entrepreneurs across Central Alberta with coaching, training, and connections. This guide covers who they are and how they can help.

1. Community Futures Central Alberta

Based in Red Deer, Community Futures Central Alberta provides business coaching, planning support, training programs, networking events, and flexible loans for entrepreneurs across the region - from startup through growth, expansion, franchising, or sale. Their advisory services are free and available to any entrepreneur, regardless of financing needs.

2. Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber curates business resources covering everything from starting a business to permits, financing, and growth support, and connects members with events, advocacy, and networking opportunities. See our Chamber of Commerce guide for more detail.

3. Regional Economic Development Organizations

Key Organizations

Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) - the region's economic development hub, supporting business attraction and growth across Central Alberta.

Central Alberta Access Prosperity - a not-for-profit economic development organization focused on promoting regional economic growth.

Red Deer D.R.I.V.E. Economic Development - the City of Red Deer's economic development arm, supporting business growth and investment attraction locally.

4. Sector and Specialty Support

- **Central Alberta Regional Innovation Network (CARIN)** - support specifically for technology and knowledge-based companies.
- **Alberta Chambers of Commerce** - the provincial advocate for Alberta business, connecting to a broader network beyond the local Chamber.
- **Rotary Clubs and similar service organizations** - offer networking and community connections that can indirectly support business relationships and visibility.

5. Making the Most of These Resources

Most of these organizations work together and regularly refer entrepreneurs to one another - starting with any one of them (Community Futures or the Chamber are natural first stops) will often connect you to the rest of the ecosystem relevant to your specific business and stage of growth.

6. Frequently Asked Questions

Common Questions

Where should I start if I don't know which organization fits my needs? Community Futures Central Alberta or the Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce are both strong first contacts and can point you toward more specialized resources.

Is there a cost to accessing these support organizations? Most coaching and advisory services are free; Chamber membership typically involves a fee, though many resources are publicly available regardless of membership.

Do these organizations only serve businesses based in Red Deer? No - most serve the broader Central Alberta region, including smaller surrounding communities.

6. Support at Different Business Stages

- **Idea stage** - Community Futures coaching can help validate and shape your concept before you invest significant capital.
- **Launch stage** - combine Community Futures financing with Chamber networking to build both capital and local visibility.
- **Growth stage** - BDC financing and CAEP's regional connections become more relevant as you scale beyond startup.
- **Innovation-focused ventures** - CARIN and Alberta Innovates offer more specialized support at any stage for technology-driven businesses.

7. First Steps for a New Entrepreneur

- Book an initial free coaching session with Community Futures Central Alberta to talk through your business idea before investing significant time or money.
- Attend one Chamber of Commerce event to start building local relationships early, even before you formally launch.
- Ask each organization you contact who else they'd recommend reaching out to - this ecosystem is well-connected, and referrals are common.

Business Support Organizations Checklist

- ✓ Connected with Community Futures Central Alberta for coaching support

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- ✓ Explored Chamber of Commerce membership and resources
 - ✓ Identified relevant regional economic development contacts
 - ✓ Checked whether CARIN or sector-specific supports apply to your business
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Build Your Business With Work Central AB

See our Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Resources guides for more detail on these organizations. Visit workcentralab.ca/resources.