

Comparison of TEDC and TPL Services to Small Business

The following provides more detailed information about the factors used to compare services to small business offered by TEDC and TPL.

Facilities

Enterprise Toronto has three offices: City Hall, North York Civic Centre, and Scarborough Civic Centre, which are open Monday to Friday 8:30 to 4:30 for a total of 40 hours per week. There is limited access to computers for client use. Computers provide Internet access and are not connected to a printer.

The Toronto Reference Library – Business, Science and Technology Department and the North York Central Library Business Department are each open 65.5 hours per week, plus Sundays. There are 18 computers available at the Toronto Reference Library – Business, Science and Technology Department, and there are 14 computers available at the North York Central Library Business Department. Additional computers are available throughout both buildings for users. Library computers provide access to the Library's website and catalogue, librarian-selected recommended websites, online business subscription databases, and the Internet.

It should be noted that networking among aspiring and established small business owners is encouraged in the Library's spaces. For example, Small Business Networking is an ongoing program offered at Toronto Reference Library. Aspiring Entrepreneurs and experienced business owners are given a space to meet regularly and to learn collaboratively from one another or from guest speakers. The attendance has grown from 10 to almost 30 in the last year at the Toronto Reference Library. As of April, the program is offered at three other Libraries – North York Central, Agincourt and Bloor/Gladstone. More broadly, library facilities, including meeting rooms and study spaces throughout the system are used informally by many people, including small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Enterprise Toronto does not provide formal networking events, but encourages the opportunity to network at its programs and workshops.

Collections

Each of the Enterprise Toronto offices has a small book and journal collection. The materials are for use in the office only and may not be borrowed. Enterprise Toronto provides no access to online subscription databases.

Enterprise Toronto staff have developed and maintain an extensive collection of flyers and guides on such topics as legal aspects of starting a business, funding, grants and hiring. These publications and the promotional material available from other organizations provide business information.

Both the Business, Science and Technology Department of Toronto Reference Library and the Business Department of North York Central Library provide large, extensive collections

with breadth and depth available for loan and in-library use. Multiple formats include print, periodicals, and electronic via access to the Library's suite of online databases. Selected materials are kept for historical interest and retrospective research.

Each department produces Research Guides for in-branch use and for posting on the Library's website. The content focuses on assisting researchers using library resources to answer informational needs; for example, sources for market research.

E-Newsletter

The 2 - 3 page Enterprise Toronto News is published bi-weekly, available online to subscribers. It covers business programs, initiatives and events offered by Enterprise Toronto as well as other organizations in Toronto, including TPL.

The 3 - 4 page Small Business at TPL newsletter is published monthly to promote additions to the collection and upcoming programs. It is distributed electronically to users and organizations to which the Library has delivered outreach visits.

Business Consultation and Referral

Enterprise Toronto Small Business Consultants deliver free 40-minute consultations to small business entrepreneurs. This key business advisory service requires a completed business plan as a prerequisite. If the marketing and customer research is not completed in the business plan, Enterprise Toronto will refer the customer to the Library. With access to business journals, company information, databases, CDs and DVDs, the business researcher has a wealth of resources available to him/her. Librarians are available to help with research and the evaluation of the information. Once the necessary research is completed, the aspiring entrepreneur is able to qualify for the Enterprise Toronto meeting.

Customers also get information from all Enterprise Toronto staff on a wide range of related topics such as licensing requirements, government assistance programs, self-employment programs, sources of business financing, business trends, market research techniques, cash flow analysis, marketing and advertising strategies. Business incubation, incorporation, licensing and registration help can be found at the City Departments with the help of Enterprise Toronto.

TPL staff do not give business advice, they point users to sources of reliable information. They show users how to do meaningful print and online searches and how to evaluate information.

The Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) program offered during Small Business Month provides library customers an opportunity to meet an established entrepreneur to review a business idea or business issue.

In 2013, the EIR met with all 43 applicants who requested a meeting, approximately 80% of these applicants were not yet at the business plan stage of entrepreneurship and needed help on refining their business idea, building business skills and evaluating self-employment as a

choice. These applicants did not have a completed business plan. This program is supported entirely by the Toronto Public Library Foundation Hinton Fund.

Programs and Seminars

Both Enterprise Toronto and the Toronto Reference Library and North York Central Library offer free programs and seminars year-round on a range of business topics.

The Library provides programming on business topics covering a wide-range of subjects and in many of its locations across Toronto. Programming related to the interests of small business customers is emphasized during Small Business Month in October and in the fall generally. Library programs often feature talks from authors who have recently released a new book or who are represented in the Library's collection. Books and other resources that are on topic are featured at the programs to highlight the range of resources available at Toronto Public Library.

Library staff also offers a broad range of hands-on workshops on basic computer skills as well as programs such as Excel, Linked In, and How Small Businesses Use Twitter and Facebook at 19 computer learning centres found in larger libraries.

Enterprise Toronto offers programs relevant to small business owners and entrepreneurs throughout the year and at each of its three locations. Specialized programs such as the Business Basics Bootcamp and How to Start a Food Business involves small business advisors and industry sector specialists from the City of Toronto.

Small Business Forum

Small Business Forum is organized and delivered by Enterprise Toronto. It is described as an event in the City that brings together the most (2,000) entrepreneurs and small business owners in one day and in one place (Toronto Convention Centre). Over 80 exhibitors participated in 2013. This is a cost-recovery program offered with the participation of sponsors.

TPL participates as an exhibitor at the Small Business Forum to promote small business resources and programs. TPL does not offer any event such as the Small Business Forum.

Business Incubation & Commercialization Program

The City of Toronto, through the Economic Development & Culture Division, collaborates with community partners to deliver a robust array of business incubation programs and services to support small business success. This includes, among others, private office / studio space, shared industrial equipment, business advisory / mentoring services, product development support, market testing, access to capital, and networking opportunities. TEDC has provided professional and financial support for business incubation activities in fashion, food, mobile, digital media, and other business activities.

As part of the Business Incubation & Commercialization Program, the City has established the Collaborative Innovation Network (COIN) aimed at bringing together people, programs and services focused on advancing entrepreneurship in Toronto.

COIN is intended to provide a platform for:

- Sharing information;
- Optimizing resources and opportunities;
- Raising awareness of business incubation opportunities / activities across the City;
- Showcasing business incubation opportunities to international investors.

TEDC maintains and posts an on-line list of entrepreneurial programs and services across Toronto offering office space, equipment and advisory support to start-up and early-stage companies. It has been identified that expansion of the Business Incubation Program will occur through partnerships in the community, including colleges, universities, not-for-profit organizations and Toronto Public Library. The TPL branches that have participated in the Business Inc. program, are included in this list.

The Library has supported City business incubation endeavours by having entered into a partnership with the Toronto Business Development Centre and TEDC to deliver an eight-week course that gives individuals with a valid business idea an opportunity to learn more about what is required to establish a small business or to address problematic areas for those who have already established a business. This unique partnership has benefitted the Library by developing capacity among its staff in business subject matter, has helped position the Library as a supporter of the local community and has raised awareness of the Library's business-related resources among local community agencies. The partnership assists TEDC in its goal of providing access to expertise outside of the downtown core.

Apart from the Business Inc. program, TPL does not offer any business incubation programs. The Business Inc. program is supported by the Toronto Public Library Foundation Hinton Fund.

Budget and Staff Resources

There are no staff dedicated to the provision of service to small business. From within the two departmental staff complements, approximately 3.25 FTEs are allocated to the provision of collections, programs and services to small business and entrepreneurs.

Collections Budget

As noted, materials relevant to the needs of the small business user cross many subject areas and therefore collection budget allocation lines. The collections budget information is offered as an estimate based on what has been allocated to purchase monograph materials in the two Research and Reference libraries in the most relevant subject areas - general business, marketing, and management - with an additional amount of 10% from budget lines allocated to the purchase of materials in economics, which includes industry and corporate information, business law, and accounting materials. Total print budget allocation is \$132,300 in 2014.

Online Resources – 25 online resources are available and could have relevant information to small business. Of these, six are of primary use to the small business user group. The cost for these databases is \$60,253 in 2014.