



## Intro

Through a Service Agreement, Valley Heartland provides regional economic development strategies and programming within Lanark County under the Lanark County Economic Development brand. Our partnership with Lanark County is built on a shared commitment to nurturing the economy, and labour market, supporting businesses, create and maintaining jobs. We achieve this through a collaboration that is open, ambitious and embraces innovation.

Lanark County Economic Development has been focused on evolving our approach to economic development in the midst of a rapidly changing economy, modernizing our service delivery and finding ways to innovate how we generate leads, engage with investors, and support business retention and expansion.

Instead of thinking of economic development as a function, we think of it as actions:

- Actions that can realistically and feasibly be completed
- Actions that leverage innovative thinking in response to modern challenges and opportunities
- Actions that support both urban and rural businesses
- And actions that can engage and effectively mobilize stakeholders

Working with modernization frameworks for Lead Generation and Business Retention + Attraction, developed by Valley Heartland, we will considerably evolve our execution of rural economic development.

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Opportunity. Innovation. Balance.



## About Valley Heartland

As a Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC), Valley Heartland supports local businesses by providing access to capital and support through localized financing, grant funding, learning and development and advisory. In addition, CFDCs are embedded in the business community, working with start-ups and expanding businesses daily on entrepreneurial strategy. This makes CFDC offices well positioned to deliver local economic development while bringing a comprehensive and unique understanding of business retention and expansion.

Valley Heartland CFDC also operates a 5000sq ft rural innovation centre located in Lanark County. The centre provides a one-stop-shop for accessing capital, advice, training, and a supportive environment for unconventional and actionable Economic Development projects.

The Valley Heartland Innovation Centre offers a modern, inviting, and comfortable space that promotes a sense of community and allows Valley Heartland CFDC to support today's businesses and develop tomorrow's entrepreneurs and workforce.



**Community Futures  
Development Corporation**

Valley Heartland

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## 2022 – 2024 Actions

### 2022/2023

#### **Lanark County EcDev Website Orientation + Training**

A series of virtual training and familiarization presentations for investlanarkcounty.ca launched in 2022 to the county council, lower-tier municipalities, and stakeholders as requested.

#### **Workforce Attraction Social Media Marketing**

Develop and implement ongoing content specific to workforce attraction through social media. The Facebook and Instagram accounts will promote the county as a place to live and work, directed at Millennials and Gen Zers who are at the forefront of and entering the workforce.

#### **Business Support Awareness Social Media Account**

The new awareness social media account will be solely dedicated to promoting resources, events and training designed to support business growth and development submitted through the Lanark County Economic Development website.

#### **Red Tape Reduction Virtual Forum**

Valley Heartland will work with municipal stakeholders to host a forum for businesses to better understand permits, fees, and processing times across the county, with individual community breakout rooms. The forum will include a facilitated interactive brainstorming session that businesses can participate in to put forth ideas on how municipalities can create pathways for express development processes, and identify improvements related to approvals and red tape reduction where possible. A graphic recording and summary of the brainstorming session will be provided to all stakeholders.

#### **Lanark County Eh! Podcast**

Launch a bi-monthly economic development podcast that features local community leaders engaged in honest conversations around relevant community development topics such as affordable housing, workforce development, business growth, rural innovation, downtown revitalization, and community reinvestment.

## **Starring Lanark County Project**

This project would be a one-time, year-long project designed to help businesses and lower-tiers navigate and capitalize on film and television production across the county. The project would include the development of templates, resources, training, and marketing materials for municipalities and businesses.

### **Training**

- Filming Location Readiness 101 seminar for *businesses*
- Filming Location Readiness 101 seminar for *municipalities*
- Film Tourism Marketing Seminar

### **Resource Templates**

- Municipal film policy template
- Business fact sheet/location scout media kit template

### **Web Resources**

- Location Image Library
- Preferred vendor list (accommodations, catering etc.)
- List of municipal contacts (location liaison)

### **Marketing/Promotion**

- Seasonal Promo Videos (Stories come to life in Lanark County)
- Local Scout Social Instagram Challenge

2023/2024

## **#NoFoodWasted Lanark County Challenge**

The #NoFoodWasted Challenge is a one-time, year-long initiative to educate and support businesses in reducing food waste in the foodservice industry. As a result, the restaurant can learn to reduce food waste, help the environment, and save the business money in the long run. The initiative will engage restaurants, bakeries, cafes, and other foodservice businesses. Participation is free and open to all foodservice businesses. Benefits include:

### **Zero WastED**

Includes incremental workshops followed by 1-to-1 support to learn different strategies and tools for monitoring and reducing food waste in the businesses. Topics include:

- Food Waste & Menu Audits
- Systems for forecasting, ordering and prepping
- Reducing Pre-Consumer Food Waste
- Reducing Post-Consumer Waste

\*Workshop will include downloadable workbook, tools, and templates

### **Consumer Awareness**

Participating business will be provided:

- Tabletop Signs
- Window Decals
- Digital Signage
- Social Media Posts
- Images and literature for their websites

County-wide awareness about the challenge will be promoted to consumers through radio ads, social media and press releases.

## **Webinar: How the County Buys**

In partnership with Lanark County, a pre-recorded webinar would be developed to help businesses understand how Lanark County makes purchases and improve their chances of becoming a local county supplier. The webinar would be available on the county and economic development website.

## **Annual Lanark County Funders Forum**

Valley Heartland will host the inaugural annual funders forum that will feature a variety of local, provincial, and national funders providing overviews on funding opportunities for businesses, municipalities and fourth pillar non-profits. The forum is an opportunity to learn how to apply for funding, what types of projects are being funded, and get tips on creating a successful funding proposal.



### **Municipal Council EcDev Orientation Workshop + 13 Ways Presentation**

Delivered by Doug Griffiths & the 13 Ways Team, A workshop for new or returning municipal councillors will walk participants through everything needed to know to represent electors competently and effectively and collaborate with the new cohort around the council table. And the 13 Ways to Kill Your Community presentation, based on the bestselling book 13 Ways to Kill Your Community, this presentation offers valuable lessons on what makes the difference between a prospering community and a failing one.

### **The EH Team Local Influencer Program**

The EH Team includes our core Economic Development staff, county councillors, and economic development stakeholders across the county. The team are champions for Lanark County; they promote the county as a *sweet* place for opportunity, innovation and balance and help our staff connect with businesses and potential investors. The program will include an online tool kit with economic facts + figures, key messages, and social media graphics.

Note: 2023 and 2024 action items are developed incrementally, allowing for more flexibility to pivot and respond to challenges and opportunities in a continuously and rapidly changing economic landscape.

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