

**Comparison of Small Business Services Offered by
Toronto Economic Development & Culture and Toronto
Public Library**

Date:	May 26, 2014
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

This report provides a comparison of services to small businesses provided by Toronto Public Library (TPL) and the City of Toronto Economic Development and Culture Division (TEDC), and the costs of the services provided.

The comparison focuses on the small business service offered by Enterprise Toronto (ET) and the business departments of the Toronto Reference Library and the North York Central Library as being the closest comparators within the wider context of TPL and TEDC services and the Toronto economy.

A summary comparison of the services is provided in table format in this report and a more detailed comparison is provided in Attachment 1. The Library’s focus on providing collections and assistance in using those collections compliments but does not duplicate the services offered by Enterprise Toronto, which focus on small business readiness and the provision of business plan information. Both the Library and Enterprise Toronto offer programming; however, on the part of the Library, a key focus is on collections and use of resources and on the part of Enterprise Toronto, a key emphasis is the provision of business support and referrals. Opportunities for increased collaboration have been identified through the process of preparing this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year’s budget.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

Staff provided an overview of library services to small businesses and entrepreneurs at the October 21, 2013 meeting of the Toronto Public Library Board. The Board adopted the following motion: “The Toronto Public Library Board:

1. receives the Small Business Support at Toronto Public Library verbal report for information; and
2. requests staff to develop a comparison of services provided by the Library and the City of Toronto Economic Development Division to small businesses in Toronto and costs of services provided.”

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto Public Library and the City of Toronto have long provided an array of services to support and address the general business and small business needs of the City and its citizens. However, the mandates of the two organizations are quite separate and distinct. Toronto Public Library works to address these needs by providing collections, staff subject expertise, programs and other services. Staff help users define their information needs and assist them in accessing and using library resources to meet the needs or alternatively refer the user to other organizations in the City that may be better able to assist. Library programs are offered on topics of interest and library services have evolved to address changing needs such as increased need for meeting space, provision of Wi-Fi and access to other technology and training in the use of electronic resources and the Internet as tools to meet an individual’s specific business or related research need.

This service is in keeping with the Library’s tradition of supporting the information needs of all citizens of the City of Toronto. It is encapsulated within its newly-revised mission that states the Library “... promotes universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas...making us all more resilient, more knowledgeable, more connected and more successful...” The Library’s current strategic plan supports services to small business through two priority areas:

Priority Area 2. Develop a City of Learners: Support lifelong learning as fundamental to economic prosperity, social cohesion, and civic engagement.

Priority Area 3. Connect a City of Creators: Position Torontonians to succeed in a global knowledge economy by Catalyzing & Connecting a City of Innovators.

TEDC provides extensive programs and services that support small, medium, and large businesses. As noted in the City of Toronto’s Collaborating for Competitiveness: a Strategic Plan for Accelerating Economic Growth and Job Creation in Toronto⁽¹⁾ there is a multi-faceted approach focused on four key strategies to accelerate economic growth and job creation, specifically:

1. Make Toronto the most competitive big city in North America for business;
2. Ensure adequate supply and availability of business input essentials (e.g. land / infrastructure / talent);
3. Encourage business investment and formation;
4. Boost business growth.

¹Collaborating for Competitiveness: a Strategic Plan for Accelerating Economic Growth and Job Creation in Toronto. City of Toronto, 2013 [http://www1.toronto.ca/economic development and culture/docs/Collaborating for Competitiveness FIN AL-v7.pdf](http://www1.toronto.ca/economic%20development%20and%20culture/docs/Collaborating%20for%20Competitiveness%20FIN%20AL-v7.pdf)

The website for TEDC states the following:

“...The Economic Development & Culture Division provides services that contribute to an economically strong, socially enjoyable and culturally vibrant city...” Our objective is to advance Toronto's prosperity, opportunity and livability by:

- Improving the business climate within the city to enable, accelerate and attract economic growth;
- Diversifying Toronto's international portfolio by substantially increasing economic activity with cities beyond North America with a focus on emerging markets;
- Anchoring and expanding strategic industry sectors through increased competition and collaboration;
- Enhancing and expanding Toronto's labour force and ensuring that all residents have equitable access to the benefits of Toronto's enhanced economic competitiveness and growth.”

To develop comparative information, Library staff visited the North York Civic Centre and Toronto City Hall offices of Enterprise Toronto and reviewed the websites of Enterprise Toronto and TEDC. Eva Lew and Greg Kelner met with Economic Development and Culture staff George Spezza, Acting Director Business Services and Karen Keskull, Small Business Consultant Enterprise Toronto. City staff reviewed a draft copy of the report to ensure that information about City services had been conveyed accurately.

COMMENTS

Context

The small business services offered by TPL and TEDC should be understood within the context of Toronto's employment climate and the challenges and strengths of its economy. The Collaborating for Competitiveness strategic plan provides some key contextual information. It quotes the 2012 Toronto Employment Survey, “...Toronto remains an attractive place for new start-ups and relocations from elsewhere... the 2012 Employment Survey identified more than 3,400 establishments that were new to the City over the past year ...”

“Today the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area has one of the highest unemployment rates

among the major Canadian economic regions... For the decade, 2001 to 2011, the unemployment rate for City of Toronto residents has ranged from 1% to 2% points higher than the national average unemployment rate...” “...within the city of Toronto the unemployment rate for youth (age 19-24 years) and recent immigrants (in Canada less than 10 years) are almost twice the general rate.”

Toronto’s workforce is a diverse group, “Toronto residents have come to our city from over 200 different countries of origin, speak most of the world’s languages and worship virtually every known religion.”

The importance of small business to the economy is underscored by the fact that in Toronto approximately 70% of all businesses employ fewer than 10 people.

Service Comparison

Overview

Toronto Public Library offers business services, programs, and collections through all of its branches and remotely. Services include access to computers, Wi-Fi, Service Ontario Kiosks in select branches, meeting space and study carrels. Programs are offered throughout the system and include computer-based user education. The Library’s collections are extensive and exist to address the varied interests and needs of a wide range of customers and are provided at different intellectual levels. The Library’s tiers of service model ensures that customers can access in-branch collections and staff expertise for up to 65.5 hours per week, excluding Sundays, depending on the location.

Neighbourhood libraries provide smaller collections at a general interest level, district libraries provide more extensive collections addressing a broader range of interests and needs and the two Business Departments in the Research and Reference division provide the most extensive range of resources focusing on serving the complete range of business information needs. Customers have access to online resources 24-7 through the Library’s website. There are 25 online business-related resources. Of these, six focus most specifically on small business.

In keeping with the tiers of service model, business librarians at North York Central Library and Toronto Reference Library act as a resource for the remaining 96 libraries and their customers by providing training, business blogs, information and responses to complex business questions. A broader range of business questions are answered, including all aspects of business such as: investing, company history, primary and secondary industries, products and small business. Also, related business questions are answered, including questions on careers, economics, statistics, computers, social media and technology.

The TEDC delivers services and programs through its five sections: Business Services; Cultural Services; Film, Television and Digital Media; Program Support; and Strategic Growth and Sector Development.

The Business Services section of the TEDC Division offers numerous services to business that are not offered by TPL. Some key services include:

- Site selection services;
- Company relocations and expansions;
- Industrial and commercial development / redevelopment support;
- Gold Star Service assigns a staff team to help businesses navigate the review and approval process;
- Corporate outreach program to office and industrial uses;
- Business license and permit information (BizPal);
- Administration and coordination of the Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation, Technology (IMIT) Grants Program (for targeted new commercial and industrial development);
- Business Improvement Area (BIA) development and support (includes Commercial Façade Improvement Program / Banner Mural Program);
- Business incubation.

Enterprise Toronto operates within the Business Services unit and is focused on the provision of small business services, especially at the business start-up stage, and the development of management capacity as a business venture begins to grow. The website identifies Enterprise Toronto as "...– the City's one-stop source to start and grow a business..."

"Enterprise Toronto...provides free assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses to help them succeed..." through the following services and programs:

- One-to-one business plan appointments with a small business consultant;
- Information on raising capital, managing cash flow and accounting to hiring and managing staff, marketing, social media and more;
- Unique learning and networking opportunities, including the annual Small Business Forum and weekly seminars featuring industry experts;
- Information on government programs and business incubation services;
- Resources including a subscription to Enterprise Toronto's Small Business Newsletter and access to the City's small business resource library;
- Specialized youth programs (15 - 29 years) through "My Summer Company" and "Starter Company" involving business development / entrepreneurship training, mentorship and potential grant funding upon completion of the program;
- Business registration, name searches and incorporation services (fees apply).

Additional business support delivered by TEDC and the City include: a business and investment Opportunities Bulletin Board, guidance to international markets, dedicated support for the film industry and the quarterly publication of Toronto Business News. Other City Divisions outside of TEDC also support business owners such as Municipal Licensing & Standards Division, City Building Division and Toronto Employment and Social Service. None of these services is offered by TPL.

Comparison of Services to Small Business

Discussions with TEDC and Enterprise Toronto staff confirmed the understanding from the review of mandates as indicated above that, based on the availability of staff expertise, individuals served, and range of services provided, the most appropriate comparators within TPL and TEDC would be the business departments of the Toronto Reference Library and the North York Central Library and the offices of Enterprise Toronto. For that reason, the comparison will focus on these services.

The table below provides a summary comparison of services; more detailed information and supporting documentation is available in the Attachment 1.

Small Business Service	TEDC Enterprise Toronto	TPL Research and Reference Departments
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three office locations • 40 hours per week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two highly specialized locations support network of 96 branches • 65.5 hours per week, plus Sundays • Computers, Wi-Fi, meeting space and study carrels
Collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small book and journal collection • Use in library only; may not be borrowed. • No online subscription databases. • Action Guides with business information developed by staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive collections, multiple formats • For loan and in-library use • 25 business related databases; six support small business • Selected materials kept for historical interest and retrospective research • Research Guides on how to use collections developed by staff
	Differences in Guides are delineated in samples provided in Attachment 2.1 and 2.2	
E-Newsletter	While Both Enterprise Toronto and TPL each produce a newsletter highlighting their activities and upcoming programs, Enterprise Toronto's bi-weekly newsletter includes small business offerings from other organizations, TPL's monthly newsletter focuses on TPL's resources, programs and services.	
Business Consultation and Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations with Small Business Consultants on completed business plans; free, booked in advance • Walk in / telephone / email / web business support from all staff • Summer Company Youth Program (15 - 29 yrs.) • Starter Company Youth Program (15 - 29 yrs.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library staff do not provide business plan consultations • Consultations with Entrepreneur in Residence offered during Small Business Month; review of business idea and where to access needed information; supported by the TPL Foundation

Programs & Seminars	<p>Both Enterprise Toronto and Toronto Reference Library and North York Central Library offer free programs and seminars year-round on a range of business topics.</p> <p>Enterprise Toronto provides outreach information sessions and seminars for select not-for-profit and community service organizations, and at select small business events or trade shows as resources permit.</p> <p>TPL programming is concentrated during Small Business Month.</p> <p>TPL offers staff-led computer-based training on using online resources for research and for small business needs. Enterprise Toronto does not.</p>	
Small Business Service	TEDC Enterprise Toronto	TPL Research and Reference Departments
Small Business Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized and delivered annually by Enterprise Toronto • Brings together entrepreneurs and small business owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPL participates as an exhibitor to promote small business resources and library programs • TPL does not offer any event such as the Small Business Forum
Business Incubation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial and professional support to targeted organizations to deliver programs and services to entrepreneurs (eg: Toronto Fashion Incubator / George Brown College Game Design & Digital Media Incubator / Toronto Business Development Centre) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEDC approached TPL to collaborate on a business incubation program that could be delivered in neighbourhoods and communities through local library branches. The Business Inc program is now successfully delivered at up to six library locations annually; supported by the TPL Foundation. This is a partnership among TPL, TEDC, and TBDC. • No other business incubation services are provided
Budget and Staff resources	<p>Last year Enterprise Toronto had nine FTE staff at three locations. Through a 2014 divisional reorganization the FTE complement will be reduced to eight plus a Manager that will also oversee other entrepreneurship initiatives.</p> <p>The Enterprise Toronto gross 2013 budget for staff / programs / collections was \$1,128,032 (incl. provincial funds / sponsorships / other revenue)</p> <p>The 2013 net budget was \$608,750</p> <p>There are no staff dedicated to small business service. An estimate of the time directed to this area is 3.25 FTE.</p> <p>Annual cost for staff, collections, including online resources and programs is \$491,198.</p> <p>Annual Foundation support is \$19,500 and \$50,000 for Business Inc.</p>	

CONCLUSION

The review of small business services offered by TEDC and TPL has proven to be a valuable exercise. It confirms that the two organizations offer services to support the myriad needs of small business and entrepreneurs in Toronto that compliment but do not duplicate. Discussion between the representative staff involved in small business service also identified a renewed interest in increased cooperation and collaboration.

Enterprise Toronto resources serve residents who want to launch their small business and businesses that want to scale and grow. Enterprise Toronto concentrates its substantial expertise in three locations that serve as entry points into the larger range of business support services provided by the City.

Library services are directed to providing help in identifying and using information resources to meet a particular small business need. The Library provides access to resources and advice on how to use and evaluate those resources to anyone at any stage in the process of studying, contemplating, developing or running a small business. Access to varying levels of information is made available online and through the branch network; the latter providing a local and welcoming aspect to the larger library system. Business information subject expertise is concentrated in two locations.

While both the Library and Enterprise Toronto offer programming, there are key differentiators in those programs. Library programming related to small business is concentrated in the fall emphasizing recognition of Small Business Month and takes place across TPL with TRL and NYCL offering the largest number of programs and hosting special events. The production of a resources and services guide through Foundation support emphasizes library collections, and programs featuring authors with recently released business topic books are a component of the programming. Programming themes are often at the entry-level to a topic. In contrast, Enterprise Toronto's series of workshops and seminars takes place at each of the three locations, are offered frequently throughout the year and the content offered typically is at a deeper level.

TPL and ET also offer programs that are unique to each organization. TPL offers a broad range of hands-on workshops on basic computer skills and social media relating to small business at 19 computer learning centres. Beyond these workshops, three new digital media spaces will be available to the public equipped with 3D printers and design software and hardware to help innovators and entrepreneurs to create, collaborate and build new skills. TPL participates in Enterprise Toronto's annual premiere program, the Small Business Forum, and does not have any programming at this large scale.

For many years, staff at Enterprise Toronto and the two business departments have had opportunity to collaborate. The North York Central Library and the North York office of Enterprise Toronto are adjacent. Staff at both locations have referred customers to each service based on their assessment of the customer's need, promotional materials have been shared and links to each other's web pages highlighting certain events have been posted in the past. TPL staff attend the Small Business Forum and have also attended other events

organized by Enterprise Toronto. The process of preparing this report has highlighted opportunities for future collaboration. Enterprise Toronto has an objective to increase awareness of its services and to extend its reach beyond its current locations. The Library's extensive branch network represents an opportunity for that to happen. Greater awareness of what each service provides will result in better referral of customers and both ET and TPL will put in place staff training opportunities to help effect this.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Comparison of TEDC and TPL Services to Small Business
- Attachment 2(a): TPL Guide to Accessing Business Information 24/7 Using Library Databases Attachment
- Attachment 2(b): Enterprise Toronto Regulatory Requirements