



# START-GROW

## SQUAMISH BUSINESS GUIDE

A guide for starting and growing your business in Squamish







## SQUAMISH HARDWIRED FOR BUSINESS



Young, entrepreneurial and fast-growing, Squamish is poised for big things. From our global reach to our supportive business community and competitive real estate rates, we're ready to do business with you.



## 5 REASONS TO DO BUSINESS IN SQUAMISH

1

### UNPARALLELED LIFESTYLE

A mecca for outdoor enthusiasts, Squamish offers a small-town vibe with all the conveniences you would expect from a big city.

2

### INTERNATIONAL ACCESS

Only 45 minutes from Vancouver and Whistler, Squamish is linked globally, connected to the world by rail, port, air, highway and its fibre optic network.

3

### STRONG GROWTH

From clean tech to apparel design, food and beverage processing, media, film and tourism, Squamish is home to a diverse and growing range of sectors.

4

### COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

Squamish's fast-growing, highly educated and young workforce locate here for the unique mountain-meets-ocean lifestyle opportunity.

5

### ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE

A growing population, and workforce, competitive real estate rates and incentives for development, make Squamish an attractive place to locate your business.



# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to provide you with a series of considerations when either starting or growing a business in Squamish.

Contained within this guide is general information on the business climate and workforce, as well as a practical checklist of relevant considerations to get you on your way.

Visit [investsquamish.ca/how-can-we-help/grow](https://investsquamish.ca/how-can-we-help/grow) to view this guide online and access clickable links to all resources.

## ABOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SQUAMISH

The District of Squamish Economic Development Department, supports the vibrancy of the existing business community while strategically positioning Squamish for future economic growth.

We work with local businesses to ease business constraints, provide expertise and tools, and liaise between business and government to support policy development and programs that lead to growth opportunities.

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## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Get in touch with Economic Development to find out more about starting or growing your business in Squamish.

**[economicdevelopment@squamish.ca](mailto:economicdevelopment@squamish.ca)**

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## 6 WAYS WE CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS

1. Navigate the business licensing and permitting process.
2. Provide business intelligence, tools and resources to support business plan development.
3. Provide information on local zoning and data to support site selection.
4. Share financing and funding options as well as workforce resources.
5. Share information on the District of Squamish Official Community Plan, District priorities and bylaws.
6. Share networking opportunities to introduce you to local, provincial and federal key contacts.

## START

Squamish is a hub for innovators, entrepreneurs, and creatives across a wide range of industries.

Check out our tools and resources library at **[investsquamish.ca](https://investsquamish.ca)** to help start your business today.





# START A BUSINESS

Whether your business idea is on the back of a cocktail napkin or you’re well on your way with a developed business plan, this checklist provides you with practical considerations and suggestions for starting your business in Squamish.

1. Evaluate your idea	<p>Is your idea feasible?</p> <p>Can you make money from it?</p> <p>Do you know who and where your target market is?</p> <p>Do you understand who your competitors are, what makes your product or service distinct?</p> <p>Test the viability of your idea by researching the market, industry and competition.</p>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Visit <a href="#">investsquamish.ca</a>, and access our handy tools and resources library to access information to help you start your business.</li><li>&gt; You will find articles, checklists, data and more to help you validate and research your idea.</li></ul>
2. Have a plan	<p>This is an essential step and critical for the planning and success of your business: the development of your business plan.</p> <p>Your target market, sales and distribution channels, financial plan, competitor analysis, timelines and marketing strategy are just some of the considerations that should be included within your plan.</p>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; <a href="#">Community Futures Howe Sound</a> offers free business advice as well as valuable resources such as their <a href="#">Business Plan Template</a> available for download on their website.</li><li>&gt; <a href="#">Development Canada</a> provides a proven template while <a href="#">Futurpreneur</a> offers an interactive planning tool.</li><li>&gt; Visit <a href="#">Investsquamish.ca</a> for business planning templates, support services, steps to launching your business, partnership programs and more.</li></ul>

# START A BUSINESS

3. Finance your business	<p>How will you finance your business?</p> <p>Banks and other lenders or investors will often require a written business plan which includes pro forma financial statements. In some cases, lenders may require you to personally guarantee your loan when you are starting out.</p> <p>While traditional bank financing may not be an option, consider venture capitalists, angel investors, family, and crowdfunding as potential sources for funding.</p> <p>Provincial and federal governments may have funding programs appropriate for your business, including research and development, innovation, industry-specific grants and tax credits.</p>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Visit <a href="#">Investsquamish.ca</a> for funding and finance options, services, grant opportunities and more.</li><li>&gt; For local funding sources, check out organizations such as <a href="#">Women’s Enterprise Centre</a>, and <a href="#">Community Futures Howe Sound</a> which offers small business loans up to \$150,000.</li></ul>
4. Choose a structure	<p>The structure of your business has implications on the flexibility, liability, taxation and reporting requirements of your business.</p> <p>Whether operating as Sole Proprietorship, in Partnership or as a Corporation, it is recommended that you get expert advice.</p>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Small Business BC offers expert advising business services. Visit <a href="#">smallbusinessbc.ca</a> to find out more about legal advice available to you when considering the structure of your business. Enter the coupon code <b>SQUAMISH</b> for 30% off Small Business BC education programs.</li></ul>





# DID YOU KNOW

only 70% of businesses that enter the marketplace survive two full years?

According to a recent Industry Canada study, the main reason for failure is inexperienced management – or rather poor planning.

Tip: Spend the time up front to properly research and validate your idea and plan conservatively.

# START A BUSINESS

## 5. Make it official

When getting ready to launch, make sure you’ve registered your business and have obtained the proper permits and licenses that are required to operate. The following registrations, permits and licenses resources may or may not be required depending on the level of sales, your industry and structure.

### Resources

- > To apply for a business name visit: [BC Registries](#)
- > Open a business bank account. **Tip:** Make sure you visit your local financial institution with a copy of your Business Registration Certificate.
- > Open accounts under your Business Number (BN) as required (e.g. GST/PST, payroll, import/export). The Province of BC offers a convenient one stop shop for registration: [BC One Stop Business Registry](#). **Tip:** GST accounts are required if gross annual revenue is greater than \$30,000. PST has no threshold for most businesses.
- > For more information on municipal requirements such as permits, business licenses, and sign permits, etc. email [economicdevelopment@squamish.ca](mailto:economicdevelopment@squamish.ca) or visit [investsquamish.ca](#).
- > Use [bcbizpal.ca](#) to determine whether any industry specific licenses and/or regulations apply to your business.

## 6. Protect yourself

Ensure your business is protected. Ensure you are protected. The Squamish Chamber of Commerce offers its members access to discounted health, disability and life insurance.

### Resources

- > Check out Squamish [Chamber of Commerce](#) or more information.
- > Visit the [Insurance Bureau of Canada](#) to learn what kind of coverage your business needs.



# Why SQUAMISH



# START A BUSINESS

**NAMED TOP ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY IN BC**

Canadian Federation of Independent Business



**244**  
NEW BUSINESSES  
INCORPORATED IN 2020

**69%**  
POST-SECONDARY  
CERTIFICATE, DEGREE OR DIPLOMA

6.5% higher than the rest of BC



ONE OF THE  
**TOP 10** FASTEST GROWING  
COMMUNITIES IN CANADA

**ACTIVE  
ADVENTURE  
LIFESTYLE**

**45**  
MINUTES

Drive to Whistler or  
Metro Vancouver



## 7. Find employees

Tap into local hiring resources for tips, information, training, programs and funding. The [District of Squamish](#), [Squamish Chamber of Commerce](#), [Tourism Squamish](#) and [WorkBC](#) are just some of the local organizations that work in collaboration to support workforce attraction and retention.

Visit [investsquamish.ca](https://investsquamish.ca) for articles, tools and research on workforce attraction and retention.

## Resources

- > Ensure you're aware of your requirements as an employer under the Employment Standards Act. Contact the BC Employment Standards Branch for more information [BC Employment Standards Branch](#)
- > Open a Payroll Deductions account under your existing Business Number (BN) or obtain a BN if you don't already have one. Get more information by visiting the [Canada Revenue Agency](#) website for information on the forms required, how to calculate the required deductions, and how to remit them to CRA.
- > Register for Workers Compensation coverage for your employees and yourself. Visit [WorkSafeBC's website](#) for more information. **Tip:** Self-employed individuals can obtain coverage through [Personal Optional Protection](#).

# OTHER TIPS

## Promote your business:

Develop a marketing plan to guide the promotion of your business.

Consider reserving a domain name for your company to establish your website.

Reserve your domain:  
(e.g. [www.yourwebsite.com](#)).

## Keep track of records:

Set up an orderly record and accounting system.

You are required to keep all your business records for six years.

Visit [smallbusinessbc.ca](https://smallbusinessbc.ca) to sign up for one-on-one expert advice.

## Create a network:

The Chamber of Commerce and local industry associations are great ways to make connections and take advantage of membership perks such as training, marketing and discounts.

See the Partner section for local contact information.

## KEY SECTORS

Clean Technologies and Environmental Services  
Craft Food and Beverage, and Agriculture  
Innovative Construction, Wood Products and Forestry  
Recreation Technology and Performance Apparel Design  
Creative Industries and Adventure-based Media and Film  
Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality



**TRANSPORTATION  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

Deep Sea Terminal and Port Facilities  
Extensive rail connections  
Charter air transportation  
Close proximity to international airport



**YOUNG AND  
GROWING WORKFORCE**

with 70.3% between the age  
of 15 and 64 and an

**ESTIMATED  
WORKFORCE OF 12,400**

Source: Statistics Canada Population Estimates,  
District of Squamish Estimates



**AVERAGE COMMERCIAL  
LEASE RATES**

**\$30.93**

PER SQUARE FOOT

Compared to \$37.89 per  
square foot in Abbotsford

Source: Realtor.ca commercial property search (2020)

**24,232**

2021 POPULATION\*

Source: Statistics Canada

**36,000**

PROJECTED  
POPULATION BY 2040\*\*



**COMPETITIVE  
TAX RATES**

Squamish Municipal Light Industry  
Tax Rate - 10.9%

vs.

BC Average Municipal Light Industry  
Tax Rate - 18.1%

vs.

Squamish Municipal Business Rate - 7.4%

vs.

BC Average Municipal Business  
Tax Rate - 10.9%



# GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Now that your business is well underway, consider the following opportunities to grow your business in Squamish

## GROW

Squamish is perfectly situated to help you grow your business through exporting, scaling, innovating or selling to government. Check out our website [investsquamish.ca](https://investsquamish.ca) for tools and resources to grow today.

### Boost Productivity



Find ways to boost productivity through innovation, training, and cost engineering.

- [Squamish Chamber of Commerce training events](#)
- Access financing from local organizations such as [Community Futures Howe Sound](#)
- [BC Employer Training Grant](#)

### GROW SALES



Develop new markets to start growing your sales. Consider expanding your distribution channels to new target markets within Canada, exporting to international markets abroad, or selling your products/services to government. Useful resources include:

- [Canada's Trade Commissioner Service](#) (export support)
- [Export Development Canada](#) (export financing support)
- [BC Bid](#) (sales to the Province of BC)
- [Do Business with the District of Squamish](#)
- [Buyandsell.gc.ca](#) (sales to the Government of Canada)



# GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Consider how new products and services can fuel your business growth. Useful resources for product and service development include:

Resources to explore:

## Innovate



Consider how new products and services can fuel your business growth. Useful resources for product and service development include:

Resources to explore:

- Research tools to support market research at [investsquamish.ca](https://investsquamish.ca)
- [Post-Secondary research offices](#) in neighbouring communities, such as UBC, SFU, and BCIT
- Funding support through the [Industrial Research Assistance Program](#), and/or [SR&ED Federal tax credit program](#).

## Access Funding



To accelerate growth, review the funding options that you can leverage to grow your business. There are a variety of funding options available through the Province of BC, Government of Canada and other agencies, including grants, tax credits, and subsidies.

- [Community Futures Howe Sound](#)
- [Women's Enterprise Centre](#)
- [BC Employer Training Grant](#)
- [Federal Canada Summer Jobs Grant](#)
- [BCIC Student Hiring Grant](#)
- [Mitacs Hiring Subsidies](#)
- [SR&ED Federal tax credit program](#)
- [Industrial Research Assistance Program](#)

# GROW YOUR BUSINESS

## Develop Talent



As you develop new products or grow your business into new markets, you'll need to ensure your hiring, training and development are accelerated to meet your new demand.

Resources to explore:

- WorkBC Sea to Sky services (Squamish job board, hiring support, and hiring subsidies)
- Squamish Hiring & Retention Guide
- BC Employer Training Grant
- Hiring grants, such as the Federal Canada Summer Jobs Grant
- Leadership courses through Squamish Public Library's subscription to Lynda.com
- Capilano University learning opportunities



# OUR PARTNERS

**Tourism Squamish**

101- 38551 Loggers Lane  
Squamish, B.C. V8B 0H2  
604.815.5084

[www.exploresquamish.com](http://www.exploresquamish.com)

**Squamish Chamber of Commerce**

102 - 38551 Loggers Lane  
Squamish, B.C. V8B 0H2  
604.815.4990

[www.squamishchamber.com](http://www.squamishchamber.com)

**Downtown Squamish  
Business Improvement Association**

[www.downtownsquamish.com](http://www.downtownsquamish.com)

**Community Futures Howe Sound Suite**

102 - 1909 Maple Drive  
Squamish, B.C. V8B 0T1  
604.892.5467

[www.cfhowesound.com](http://www.cfhowesound.com)

**Work BC Sea to Sky**

302 - 37989 Cleveland Avenue  
Squamish, B.C. V8B 0A8  
604.815.4550

<https://workbccentre-squamish.ca/>

**Sea to Sky Community Services**

38024 Fourth Ave. | Box 949  
Squamish, B.C. V8B 0A7  
604.892.5796

[community@sscs.ca](mailto:community@sscs.ca)







**District of Squamish**  
37955 Second Avenue | Squamish, BC  
[investsquamish.ca](http://investsquamish.ca)