

Are you considering self employment in Queens County? Here is a resource to help you get started

by Heidi Riley

Self Employment Support

“We have seen a sharp increase in the number of people applying for the **Self Employ PEI** program in Queens County,” says **Allison Ramsay**, Self Employment Coordinator. “We currently have more than double the number we had last year.”

Self Employ PEI is a program for people who want to start their own business. Through the program, eligible recipients receive financial support for a negotiated period of time during the first year of business. The program also offers individual business counselling and group workshops on such topics as:

- GST & PST • small business income tax
- bookkeeping & accounting • marketing & strategic planning • other topics important to entrepreneurs.

How do you get started?

1. Attend a Self Employ PEI information session. Sessions are held approximately every four weeks. The sessions provides information on creating your own business and what is necessary to become an entrepreneur if you qualify for the program.

2. At the information session, individuals will be given the name of an external service provider to contact and have a needs assessment completed. A case manager will assist in determining if self employment is a viable option.

3. Visit Allison Ramsay at PEI Business Development to talk about the business idea and to assess the project. “We will see if the proposal is viable,” says Allison. “The assessment is fairly intense. We cover the business idea, strategy, market research, tools, equipment, premises needed, income expected in the first year, start-up costs, financial backing, personal credit rating, qualifications needed, and many other questions.” Individuals seeking financial assistance will apply to SkillsPEI.



Allison Ramsay, Self Employment Coordinator, helps new Queens County entrepreneurs navigate their first year of business. The office has recently moved to 94 Euston Street, Charlottetown.

4. Through a series of business planning workshops, the applicant will develop a business plan. The applicant will also conduct market research, which may include asking potential clients if the service is needed and what they are willing to pay for it.

5. Show commitment. “To help support the business idea, applicants need to contribute about \$4,000 in cash or in kind, or 25 percent of what they expect to earn from the program during their first year of business,” says Allison.

Comparing self employment to working for someone else

“When you work for someone else, you are generally required to spend about 40 hours per week on the job,” says Allison. “Usually when you are self employed it takes many more hours.”

“When you are the owner, you need to consider many issues such as paying rent, bookkeeping, keeping up with paperwork, making sure there is money in the bank, tax regulations, organizing receipts, marketing, staffing, short- and long-term planning, zoning for the premises, and much more. Of course, when you are doing something you enjoy, the time will pass quickly!”

“We address these issues through the workshops as the applicant develops a business plan. This program will give you the skills to generate a source of income that will be sustainable for the long-term.”

What types of self employment are popular?

Construction: There are approximately 600 self employed people in the construction and trades industry on PEI. These include self employed general contractors, electricians, plumbers, dry wallers, roofers, carpenters, and other specialty areas of construction.

Technology: Allison works with people who have technology products or services and helps to bring them to the marketplace.

Service: Businesses in professional, personal, and consumer services including hair dressing, aesthetic services, cleaning, consulting, project management, and counselling.

Diversified manufacturing: Businesses including crafts, clothing, food, and other manufactured products.

To find out if you are eligible for this program and when the next information session will be held, contact **Melanie Johnston**, SkillsPEI at **368-6535** at Suite 212 of the Atlantic Technology Centre, Charlottetown. For more information, visit www.skillspei.com



In Queens County, contact **Allison Ramsay**, MBA, PEI Business Development, at **569-7797** or e-mail ajramsay@gov.pe.ca.