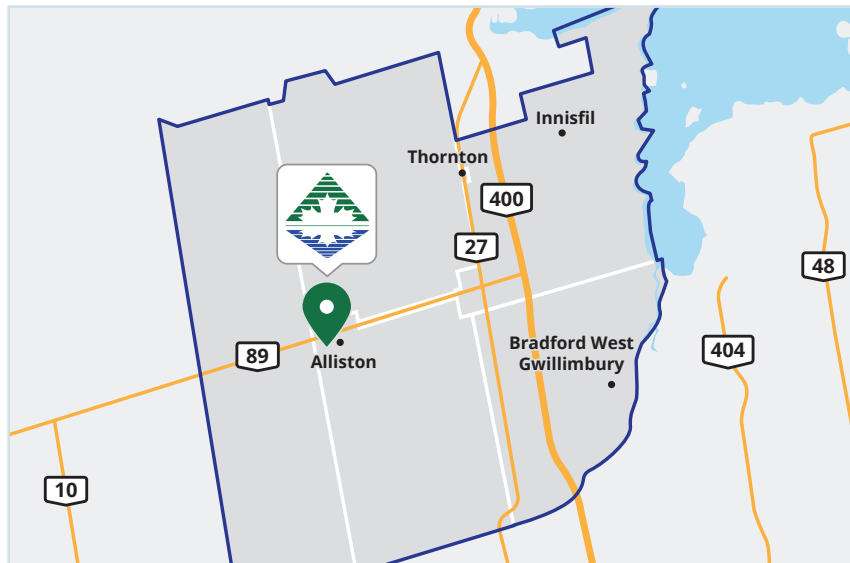


We partner with entrepreneurs to help them build successful businesses!

Our Service Area:

Adjala-Tosorontio, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Essa, Innisfil, and New Tecumseth



Nottawasaga Futures

39 Victoria St E, PO Box 184
Alliston, ON L9R 1V5

Phone: (705) 502-0311

Fax: (705) 502-0313

Email: ced@nottawasaga.com

Website: nottawasaga.com

Follow Us:

-  /NottawasagaFutures
-  nottawasagafutures
-  Nottawasaga Futures
-  Nottawasaga Futures
-  @NottawasagaNews



Nottawasaga Futures



**When Your
Business Succeeds,
So Do We!**

Adapting

Responding

Innovating

**ANNUAL
REPORT 2024**

ced@nottawasaga.com
nottawasaga.com

Table of Contents

Supporting Our Business Community3

Our Corporate Goals & Our Mission4

Our Goals. 4

Our Mission 5

Providing Choice and Opportunity. 6

2024 Our Year In Review7

The Community Investment Fund 7

Resource Centre. 9

Memories. 10

AI Bootcamp for Entrepreneurs 12

Business Consulting Program. 13

Hire 4 Talent 14

Fuelled by Females 15

Agricultural Action Plan 16

AgKnowledge Vendors Market 17

Small Business Roundtable with the Prime Minister 18

Youth Entrepreneurship Program 19

South Simcoe Film Production 20

Filmmaking Outside the Box. Disconnection and Disruption in Rural Ontario. . 21

South Simcoe Streams Network 22

Core Activities23

Building Community Capacity. 23

Looking Forward24

The Organization.....25

Our Dedicated Partners26

- ♦ Ontario Federation of Agriculture
- ♦ Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
- ♦ Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- ♦ Orillia and Area CDC
- ♦ PARO
- ♦ Sandbox Centre—Hub for Shared Innovation & Entrepreneurship
- ♦ ScouTrees
- ♦ Simcoe County District School Board
- ♦ Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture
- ♦ Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board
- ♦ Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board
- ♦ Small Business Centre of Barrie, Simcoe County and Orillia
- ♦ South Georgian Bay Media Association
- ♦ South Georgian Bay Small Business Enterprise Centre
- ♦ St. John's United Church
- ♦ St. Peter's Catholic HS
- ♦ The Learning Centre
- ♦ The Pestrin Group
- ♦ Tottenham, Beeton & District Chamber of Commerce
- ♦ Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Economic Development
- ♦ Town of Innisfil Economic Development
- ♦ Town of New Tecumseth
- ♦ Township of Adjala-Tosorontio
- ♦ Township of Essa
- ♦ Western Ontario Community Futures Development Corporation Assoc.

Our Dedicated Partners

- ♦ Agilec
- ♦ Angus & Area Chamber of Commerce
- ♦ Alliston & District Chamber of Commerce
- ♦ Alliston Business Improvement Association
- ♦ Alliston Lion's Club
- ♦ BDC
- ♦ Banting Memorial High School
- ♦ Beeton Tottenham Business Improvement Association
- ♦ Boyne River Public School
- ♦ Bradford Board of Trade
- ♦ Bradford Immigrant Services
- ♦ Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
- ♦ Citizen and Immigration Canada
- ♦ County of Simcoe
- ♦ Collingwood Small Business Centre
- ♦ DMZ Innisfil
- ♦ Environment Canada
- ♦ F&P Manufacturing
- ♦ Fairstone
- ♦ FOCUS Community Development Corporation
- ♦ Futurpreneur
- ♦ Georgian College—HBEC
- ♦ Girl Guides
- ♦ Holland Marsh Growers Association
- ♦ Honda of Canada Mfg.
- ♦ Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
- ♦ Nantyr Shores
- ♦ New Tecumseth Streams Committee
- ♦ North Simcoe Community Futures Development Corporation
- ♦ Nottawasaga Community Economic Development Corporation
- ♦ Nottawasaga Pines
- ♦ Nottawasaga Steelheaders
- ♦ Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
- ♦ NT Temps Inc.
- ♦ Ontario Creates

Supporting Our Business Community

Together with our valued partners, municipal, provincial, and federal governments, and community organizations, Nottawasaga Futures continues to establish strategic projects to provide economic opportunities for our residents and businesses in South Simcoe.

Through the development and implementation of 22 highly successful initiatives from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 Nottawasaga Futures has:

- ♦ Created and or maintained over **500 jobs**.
- ♦ Provided over **700 in-depth consulting sessions** to **over 500 South Simcoe businesses**.
- ♦ Provided **\$515,000** in loans from our Community Investment Fund to **9 local area businesses**.
- ♦ Hosted **16 Business Support Workshops** with **over 1,300 attendees**.
- ♦ Worked with **65 community partners**, and **over 700 volunteers**.

At Nottawasaga Futures, we recognize the crucial role that small businesses play in our economy. Throughout 2024-2025, we've focused on providing financial support and expert advice to entrepreneurs across South Simcoe, helping them adapt to economic fluctuations and new market realities.

Looking ahead, we will continue strengthening our collaborations with community partners to ensure that local businesses have the support they need to overcome challenges and seize opportunities for growth and success.

Our Corporate Goals & Our Mission

Our Goals

- ✓ Encourage community flexibility to respond to a changing environment through government liaison and human resource development.
- ✓ Increase availability of comprehensive resources to facilitate community interest-based growth through partnership development.
- ✓ Support and help community-based organizations through mentoring.
- ✓ Provide investment financing for start-up, growth, expansion, and reorganization of small businesses.
- ✓ Provide advice, counselling, and support to new and existing businesses.
- ✓ Demonstrate accountability to our funders and our community for the use of the Corporation's operating and investment funds.

The Organization

Board of Directors

- | | |
|--|--|
| ♦ Brandon Lapstra
<i>President</i> | ♦ Michael Disano
<i>Director</i> |
| ♦ Keisha-Ann Shaw Hill
<i>Vice President</i> | ♦ Robert Glozier
<i>Director</i> |
| ♦ Bob Marrs
<i>Treasurer</i> | ♦ Licinio Miguelo
<i>Director</i> |
| ♦ Barbara Huson
<i>Corporate Secretary</i> | ♦ Mary-Ellen O'Neill-Madeley
<i>Director</i> |

Staff

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| ♦ Robin Brown | ♦ Theresa Parent |
| ♦ Colleen Colby | ♦ Cailyn Stewart |
| ♦ Andie Cote | ♦ Marlene Walker |
| ♦ Martin Kuzma | |

Looking Forward

A Heartfelt Thanks

We are sincerely grateful to our staff, volunteers, and partner organizations for their invaluable support of Nottawasaga Futures this year. Our heartfelt thanks go to the staff for their dedication and hard work, and to the many organizations whose collaboration makes our progress possible.

A special thank you to our volunteers — your commitment to governance, strategic direction, and loan approvals is the foundation of our success. Your time, insight, and passion are deeply appreciated. Together, your contributions have made a meaningful impact, and we thank you for being part of our journey.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to supporting the South Simcoe community in the following ways:

- ♦ Expanding our reach and impact by delivering new and innovative programs and services.
- ♦ Strengthen community partnerships and increase collaborative opportunities.
- ♦ Continuing to invest in our staff and volunteers to ensure the highest level of expertise and support.

Our Mission

Nottawasaga Community Futures Development Corporation is a non-profit organization serving South Simcoe.

We were created in 2003 to identify, develop and coordinate initiatives to support the economic needs of our communities. Presently, we participate in or lead **22 community projects** and provide ongoing support to various community organizations. Our mission is to provide choice and opportunity to the businesses and residents of our region while responding to the challenges of our local economy.

Our organization has led or partnered on various community economic development projects focusing on entrepreneurship, youth, women, and the environment.



Providing Choice and Opportunity

Our Services:

Nottawasaga Futures serves as a Business Resource Centre, offering a lending library, business coaches, consultants, and an Investment Fund loans officer—***all provided at no cost to area businesses and organizations.***

Our Partners:

Over the past 21 years, Nottawasaga Futures has partnered with South Simcoe municipalities and community organizations to build community capacity, and support thriving socioeconomic environments.

Our partners include The Federal Development Agency for Southern Ontario, the County of Simcoe, several provincial ministries and the private sector.

Some of our successful projects include:

- ♦ The South Simcoe Business Excellence Awards
- ♦ The AgKnowledge Forum & Vendors Market
- ♦ The South Simcoe Streams Project
- ♦ Youth Entrepreneurship Program
- ♦ AI Bootcamp for Entrepreneurs

Core Activities

Building Community Capacity

Nottawasaga Futures provided support for:

- ♦ South Simcoe Streams Network
- ♦ Local Immigration Partnership
- ♦ Filmmaking Outside the Box. Disconnection and Disruption in Rural Ontario – Research Study
- ♦ BizLink Business Transition Program

Core Activities:

- ♦ Continue to develop the activities, tools, and resources available in our Business Excellence Resource Centre.
- ♦ Ensure access for local businesses to our Community Investment Fund.
- ♦ Continue to expand our youth programs.
- ♦ Partner with local municipalities, county, federal and provincial governments on various activities and special projects to retain our existing businesses and attract new investment.
- ♦ Maintain and update the online South Simcoe Business Directory.

South Simcoe Streams Network

The South Simcoe Streams Network (SSSN) is in its seventeenth year of operation.

The program continues to successfully restore streams and riparian habitats by engaging communities across South Simcoe County through partnerships with municipalities, businesses, service groups, and conservation authorities.

In 2024, the South Simcoe Streams Network showed strong community engagement with over **732 volunteers** participating in 22 stream restoration events. In the spring of 2024, the program hosted **16 tree-planting events** with the help of **627 volunteers** who contributed nearly **2,000 hours** to plant over **5,000 trees** and shrubs across sites in local watersheds. Considerable efforts were made to stabilize nearly one kilometer of stream banks through both in-stream restoration and tree planting activities with our partners. These volunteer events provided educational opportunities to emphasize the importance of **preserving aquatic & riparian ecosystems** through improving stream health, maintaining biodiversity, fostering environmental stewardship, and supporting overall watershed health.



2024 Our Year In Review

The Community Investment Fund

During the Fiscal year **April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025**, the Nottawasaga Futures Investment Fund Committee approved **9 loans**, injecting a total of **\$515,000** into the local community. This leveraged over **\$342,000** from third-party or owner investment, resulting in significant financial support for local businesses. Furthermore, the loans helped create or preserve over **37 jobs**, contributing to the overall economic growth of our community.



By the Numbers in 2024-25

9 Loans

The Nottawasaga Futures Investment Fund Committee approved 9 loans.

\$515K

Injected a total of \$515,000 into our local community.

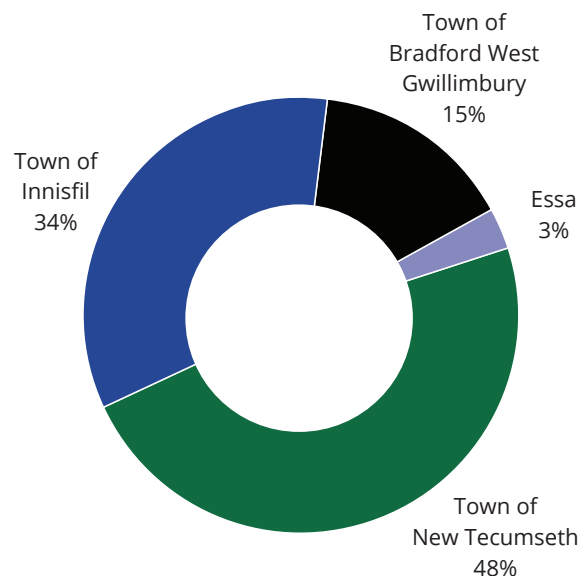
500+

South Simcoe businesses were assisted.

500+ Jobs

500+ jobs were impacted.

2024-25 Loan Disbursements By Municipality



Filmmaking Outside the Box. Disconnection and Disruption in Rural Ontario.

The study examines the impact of digital disruption on rural communities through the lens of independent filmmaking.

This study explores the current working models for independent Ontario film productions and seeks to identify relationships between physically disconnected producers from outside the GTA and the role that limited access to a major production centre has in pioneering new ways of filmmaking. The study findings offer insight into identifying the strengths and challenges of a disruptive film producer and how these relate to unique skills building, production success and industry growth in rural regions outside the GTA.



South Simcoe Film Production

Nottawasaga Futures coordinates and facilitates filming in South Simcoe on behalf of the municipalities of Adjala-Tosorontio, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Essa, Innisfil, New Tecumseth, and the County of Simcoe. The goal of the program is to liaise between local host communities, residents, film production companies and other stakeholders to ensure a positive, streamlined experience for all.

Results for April 1, 2024—March 31, 2025:

- ♦ 8 film shoots
- ♦ 14 filming days
- ♦ Over \$28,000 worth of community impact



Women Entrepreneurs

Nottawasaga Futures is pleased to report that as well as our traditional loan products, we continue to deliver a loan product targeted specifically to women entrepreneurs through our partnership with the PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise.

Resource Centre

Along with lending and coaching, the Business Excellence Resource Centre hosted **16 business information workshops** to support networking and information sharing.

Special events included:

- ♦ Fuel Your Brand – Marketing Strategies for SMEs
- ♦ Financial Savvy and Business Systems for Entrepreneurs
- ♦ Mastering Business Insurance



Memories



South Simcoe Streams Volunteers install revetments along Sheldon Creek as part of the Nottawasaga River Restoration Program



Supporting the community at Fuelled by Females



CTV News at the Fuelled by Females Event supporting women entrepreneurship

Youth Entrepreneurship Program

*Nottawasaga Futures, in partnership with Focus Community Development Corporation, is proud to assist in the introduction of entrepreneurship as a viable career option to South Simcoe Youth through the **Becoming the Boss Program**.*

This project leverages the partnerships, tools, and resources developed by Nottawasaga Futures to impart knowledge, skills, and support to local area youth. The program aims to guide youth in developing and operating successful businesses through one-on-one counseling, mentorship, and group sessions. Nottawasaga Futures remains committed to providing ongoing assistance to participants beyond the scope and duration of the program.

In 2024, *five participants* successfully completed the **Becoming The Boss Program**.

Becoming the Boss

Entrepreneurship Skills Training

Take what you learn to start your own business

Work with business experts

Create a business plan

Starts December 11th, 2023

\$16.55/hr (14 weeks, full-time)

with FOCUS Employment Services

Hybrid program running at 46 Wellington Street West, Alliston

Apply now!

youthatwork@focuscdfc.on.ca

Text or call: 705-716-5595

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada.

Canada

www.focuscdfc.on.ca

Small Business Roundtable with the Prime Minister

In April Nottawasaga Futures hosted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Minister Filomena Tassi of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, and Minister François-Philippe Champagne of Science, Innovation and Technology.

The roundtable discussion took place at Alliston Flooring, and focused on daily operational challenges, the current economic climate, and the need for tailored governmental support.

We delved into the challenges faced by local businesses, assessed current support mechanisms, and explored ways to collaborate further for regional economic growth.

We thank Prime Minister Trudeau and the Ministers for engaging with our community and addressing the unique challenges we face.



*Full house at the
AgKnowledge Forum*



*A sampling of purchases
from the Vendors Market*



2024 South Simcoe Business Excellence Awards

AI Bootcamp for Entrepreneurs

In Partnership with the DMZ Innisfil and funded by the County of Simcoe.

The AI for Small Business Bootcamp is designed to equip local small business owners with the skills and support needed to leverage AI tools, **boosting productivity**, enhancing customer experiences, and increasing market competitiveness. By driving digital transformation, the initiative aims to future-proof Simcoe County's economy. The series has attracted over **200 participants**.



AgKnowledge Vendors Market

The 2025 AgKnowledge Vendors Market celebrated local agriculture with a vibrant marketplace, engaging conversations, and a delicious tasting experience.

Attendees explored regional farm products, sampled unique local flavors, and connected with growers and producers. From fresh produce to specialty meats, the event offered a rich showcase of innovation and community spirit, making it a perfect gathering for farmers, food lovers, and supporters of local food systems in South Simcoe.



Agricultural Action Plan

The 2025 AgKnowledge Forum, held at the Gibson Centre in Alliston, brought together the agricultural community for a day of learning and connections.

Local farmers shared inspiring stories of innovation, resilience, and value-added success. Attendees explored practical strategies to diversify farm offerings, boost profitability, and **strengthen rural enterprises**, making it a must-attend event for anyone passionate about the future of farming in South Simcoe.



Business Consulting Program

In collaboration with the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio, Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury, Town of Innisfil, and the Town of New Tecumseth.

Nottawasaga Futures offers a range of business services, including personalized counseling sessions designed to support entrepreneurs in establishing new ventures or guiding existing businesses, seeking assistance in marketing, acquisitions, exporting, business planning, financial forecasting, succession planning, and funding opportunities. Our coaches and mentors are well-versed in the local market dynamics and have a deep understanding of the challenges that businesses confront.

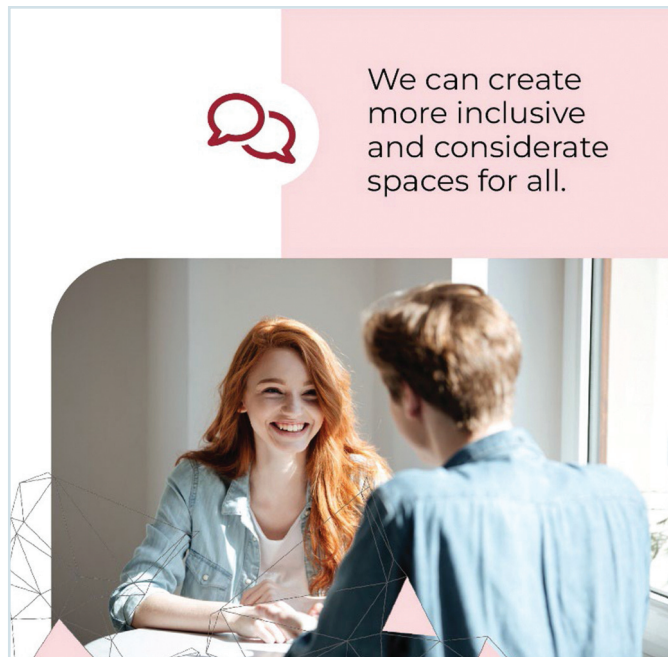


Hire 4 Talent

Hire 4 Talent, a national awareness campaign, aims to boost employer confidence in hiring people with disabilities and offers resources to help them access this skilled talent pool.

The Hire 4 Talent program is designed to foster inclusivity in the workforce by engaging employers in activities aimed at understanding and improving the hiring process for individuals with disabilities. By participating in this program, organizations have contributed to the advancement of inclusive employment practices.

Through this program, over **30 businesses** across South Simcoe have enhanced their skills.



Fuelled by Females

Fuelled by Females, in partnership with Nottawasaga Futures, proudly hosted a Celebration of International Women's Day, bringing together women from all walks of life for an inspiring and empowering day of connection, recognition, and celebration.

Held in the spirit of International Women's Day, the event spotlighted the diverse talents, achievements, and stories of local women who are making an impact in their communities and beyond. Guests enjoyed a day filled with engaging conversations, uplifting showcases, and opportunities to network with trailblazing women and allies across a range of industries.

With a warm and welcoming atmosphere, the celebration truly embodied this year's theme of unity, empowerment, and progress. Attendees left feeling inspired, supported, and proud to be part of a community that uplifts and champions women every day.

