

Alberta**17.3.9**

The Alberta Opportunity Company (AOC) is a Crown agency created to promote economic growth by stimulating the establishment of new businesses and aiding in the expansion of existing enterprises. AOC gives priority to Albertans and Alberta-owned enterprises, small businesses, centres of small population, job-creating projects, research and development projects, promotion of marketing and export potential, enhancement of tourist potential, provision of employment and business experience for Alberta students, encouragement of local development groups and promotion of pollution control projects.

To qualify for assistance, a business may be a proprietorship, partnership, cooperative, or corporate body, must be a business operating for gain or profit, must be located in Alberta and must provide assurance that any assistance provided will be utilized exclusively in Alberta. Eligible types of business include manufacturing, processing and assembly operations, service industries, commercial wholesale and retail trade, recreational facilities, tourist establishments, local development organizations, student business enterprises, and new industries which are unique and valuable additions to the province. The program is not designed to apply to finance companies, suppliers of residential accommodation other than tourist facilities, public utilities including power generation and distribution, or resource-based industries such as mining and oil and gas production.

Assistance may be provided for establishing new businesses, acquiring fixed assets — land, buildings and equipment — expanding existing facilities, strengthening working capital, financing raw material or finished inventories for manufacturers, and research and development projects.

Financial assistance is made available directly or by guarantee in various forms: capital loans; working capital loans; inventory financing for manufacturers for stockpiling either the raw materials used in manufacturing or finished products resulting from that process (in actual operation AOC will purchase the inventory from the manufacturer under a buy/sell agreement at established prices to a level of 80% of "laid-in" cost or wholesale price, as the case may be); research and development loans up to 50% (maximum \$50,000) of the total cost of an approved project undertaken by a commercial enterprise. Such projects are restricted to applied research and development programs which contribute to improvements in one or more of the following areas: technological advances to products or development of new products, technological advances to production facilities, adoption of improved management techniques, and development of new markets.

Business management counselling services may be provided without charge by AOC professional consultants and include management advice and guidance on financial, technical and marketing matters for small- and intermediate-size Alberta businesses which are not in a financial position to obtain this type of assistance elsewhere. Services are provided through the company's head office in Ponoka and its branch offices in Calgary, Lethbridge, Grand Prairie and Edmonton.

British Columbia**17.3.10**

The Department of Economic Development provides research, statistical information and support services to encourage and assist in the orderly development and growth of British Columbia's economy. The Business and Industrial Development Branch sponsors market development, promotional programs, and direct aid to British Columbia firms. It has sponsored trade missions to Asia, Europe, South America, Africa and Australia, in order to assist participating firms in securing export markets.

The Incoming Buyers Program works on the premise that one of the best showrooms for British Columbia products is British Columbia itself. Buyers from a variety of countries have inspected forest industry equipment, food products,