

industry. Financial aid for product design or quality improvement is available through a product development program. Product testing and prototype or special process development may also qualify under this plan.

Industries using management consultants can receive help through a management development program which offers grants up to 50% of consultation fees. This program provides financial assistance to industrial managers attending approved courses and the department also organizes and finances management seminars. A Saskatchewan mainstreet development program supplies consultant services and grants to help with storefront renovations in central business districts. The department provides counselling to business people through eight regional offices and two urban offices.

Jobs for the disadvantaged are provided through an economic development program for disadvantaged persons. By a federal-provincial special agreement under the Agricultural and Rural Development Act (ARDA), grants are made to projects employing native people.

An aid to trade program, through cost-sharing with the department, helps Saskatchewan manufacturers introduce new products and expand marketing territories. The department provides promotional opportunities for companies to expand their product market, and expertise for market analysis studies. It also produces a Saskatchewan foreign investment guide which outlines investment opportunities.

The Saskatchewan Economic Development Corp. (SEDCO), a Crown corporation, provides money for business enterprises. SEDCO was established in 1963 to provide loans for establishing or expanding manufacturing enterprises. In August 1972, its terms of reference were broadened to permit funding for virtually all types of businesses, including retail, wholesale and service enterprises. The most common form of SEDCO assistance is a first mortgage loan over a medium term. Security for such loans consists of pledges of land, buildings or equipment; support of individuals in the business is normally pledged as well. Repayment is designed to suit the income pattern of the enterprise, and may include step-payments, seasonal payments or similar arrangements. Terms vary from a few months to 20 years and amounts from a few thousands to many millions of dollars. The term is determined by the estimated life of security pledged and the earnings of the business. Equipment-based loans would be for 5 to 8 years, while building and equipment loans might be 8 to 12 years, and real estate alone as security would warrant a loan up to 20 years. Working capital loans would range from one month to two years.

In all cases, the corporation expects that owners of the borrowing company will have a reasonable equity in the enterprise. In certain instances, the corporation may take an equity investment in its own right if required to maintain a reasonable balance between debt and equity. The corporation also has industrial sites and buildings to lease to eligible businesses. Lease, lease-purchase or outright sale of such properties can be considered and, in certain circumstances, the corporation will construct a facility for sale or lease to a client.

Alberta

17.3.9

The Alberta Opportunity Co. (AOC) is a Crown agency created to promote economic growth by stimulating new businesses and aiding existing enterprises. AOC gives priority to Albertans and Alberta-owned enterprises, small businesses and centres of small population.

To qualify for assistance, a business may be a proprietorship, partnership, co-operative or corporate body, must operate for gain or profit, must be in Alberta and must provide assurance that any aid given will be used exclusively in Alberta. Eligible businesses 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 for 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.