



NEWS RELEASE

FROM EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES WEST

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES WEST WILL HELP ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES BUILD THEIR BUSINESS FUTURE

March 15, 2018 – Winnipeg, Manitoba

As of April 1, 2018, Manitobans living in Winnipeg who have a disability will find help in starting or maintaining their businesses through the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP) delivered by Equal Opportunities West (EOW). Funding available through Western Economic Diversification Canada will support this initiative in Winnipeg for the next three years.

Project support of \$450,000 will allow Equal Opportunities West to help entrepreneurs with disabilities by offering business information, formal business training, loans referral pathfinding, an extensive partner network, as well as incubation support for three years.

“In delivering the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program, we are committed to empowering individuals and assisting them to be as independent as possible. Starting a business can be a challenge for individuals with disabilities and Equal Opportunities West can play a positive role in minimizing these challenges,” said Susan Morgan, Executive Director.

“Our Government believes that Canadians with disabilities should have the opportunity to start and grow businesses, earn a living, and build the lives they want for themselves and their families. Entrepreneurship can be an effective way for people with disabilities to be active in the economy.



The services provided by Equal Opportunities West in Winnipeg will support people as they take these important steps,” said the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Minister responsible for Western Economic Diversification Canada.

The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program is a Western Economic Diversification Canada program dedicated to supporting new and existing entrepreneurs with disabilities through organizations in Western Canada delivering business services to persons with disabilities.

Working from a central downtown location, EOW will deliver the program to a diverse group of motivated entrepreneurs with disabilities. EOW will actively recruit participants for this program from all segments of the disabled community including women and indigenous persons.

ABOUT EQUAL OPPORTUNITES WEST

Established in 1979 as a non-profit organization, Equal Opportunities West (EOW) provides persons with disabilities individualized supportive services to help secure competitive employment.

Under the leadership of Executive Director Susan Morgan, EOW grew within 8 years from a marginal player into a respected agency with a staff of 27 and an operating budget of \$ 1.75 million. The agency supports persons with physical and mental disabilities and serves 90 day program participants and 54 supported employment clients.

EOW's is an inclusive agency and welcomes participants from all ethnic, cultural and gender backgrounds. The agency actively identifies and serves women, indigenous clients and deaf clients. Currently about half of the multicultural staff and half of the clients are women. Five staff members



are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), an additional 10 are currently receiving training in ASL and there are 9 deaf participants in the program.

While EOW's original mandate to help find employment for participants still plays a key role in the day-to-day operation, overall programming intends to proactively change the culture and perceived value of individuals with disabilities. EOW empowers individuals through choice and goal setting in their careers and personal life.

For more information, please contact Executive Director Susan Morgan at 204.888.5422 .

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