



For Immediate Release

News Release

Rural Renewal Stream Update

Edson, Alberta, March 5, 2025 – The Town of Edson is refining the Rural Renewal Stream (RRS) program to emphasize **retention** over attraction, ensuring that businesses in the community have access to a stable and reliable workforce.

After a robust debate, and much feedback from the community, Edson Town Council defeated a motion to cancel the program at their March 4, 2025, meeting, choosing to refine the program instead. The following adjustments have been made for the RRS Program in Edson.

Key Updates to the RRS Program:

Retention Focus: Applicants must have lived and worked in Edson for a minimum of six months before applying. This reinforces the program's goal of supporting existing residents rather than recruiting new workers from outside the region.

Housing Requirement: Applicants must provide housing information within their application, ensuring that individuals accessing the program have stable accommodations in Edson.

Wage Alignment: The wage requirement will be adjusted to align with the Government of Alberta's guidelines, providing businesses with greater flexibility while ensuring fair compensation for workers.

Business Support: Employers will benefit from a structured pathway to retain skilled employees, reducing hiring challenges and turnover rates.

Program Limits: Businesses can only fill up to 25% of their workforce through the RRS program, ensuring that the majority of jobs remain accessible to the existing labor market.

Proof of Hiring Challenges: Businesses must demonstrate that they have faced difficulties in recruiting for open positions before accessing the RRS program, ensuring that the program remains a tool for genuine workforce needs.

The purpose of these adjustments is to ensure a fair and transparent system for all involved, focussing on retention of current program participants and those that are already members of our community. This balances the needs of the business community with the concerns raised by other members of the public.



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Impact on Local Businesses

A strong and stable workforce is essential for the success of local businesses, particularly in rural communities where attracting new workers can be challenging. By refining the RRS program, businesses will experience:

Increased workforce stability, ensuring smoother operations and business continuity.

Reduced recruitment costs, as the program prioritizes workers who are already contributing to Edson's economy.

Sustained economic resilience, as retaining skilled employees leads to stronger businesses and a thriving community.

The Town of Edson is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment through community engagement initiatives, education, and ongoing collaboration with local businesses to support workforce retention. By focusing on keeping Edson's current workforce in place, the RRS program will serve as a key tool in ensuring long-term economic sustainability for the town.

For more information on the Rural Renewal Stream Program, please call our dedicated phone line at 1-587-742-8722. The informational website will launch on Friday afternoon at www.rrsedson.ca. Application forms on the site will go live on Monday, March 10, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.

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