



SSFPA News

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Venture-Capital Ready: Introduction

From Project Manager Sandy Mark

The SSFPA's Women's Program, supported by Women and Gender Equality Canada, identified a serious issue: **women food entrepreneurs have a great deal of difficulty attracting financing for their business.**

It's no secret that women entrepreneurs face challenges getting financing, regardless of the type of business. Food processors must overcome additional business requirements and government regulations, and these problems can make it even more difficult for women to scale up to commercially viable businesses.

In 2022, the SSFPA partnered with existing entrepreneurship organizations [PARO](#) and [WeBC](#) to take steps to address this. As such, a partnership model was launched to ensure that food entrepreneur clients could bolster their basic entrepreneurship training program by adding food systems trainers. In the future, more partnerships are planned and new lending programs for women will be added to create an important opportunity.

But, finding a proven way in the marketplace for women's food businesses to grow required opening the door for them to gain investment capital. Going through the loan process for food businesses is challenging, but evidence shows that women have an even more difficult time attempting to find an investment partner.

This is a well understood fact, but has only recently become an issue that government and impact investment organizations want to solve. In 2021, the Women's Enterprise Strategy, launched by the ISED Ministry, called for proposals and the SSFPA jumped in and was chosen to offer a training program to assist women food entrepreneurs to learn how to navigate the investment process. **This program, [Venture-Capital Ready: Investment Training for Women Entrepreneurs](#), is now accepting applications!**



Since then, the SSFPA engaged Dr. Ellen Farrell's [Investoready® training program](#) and created partnerships with training organizations across the country to reach out to women and provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the investment world (see our entire partner network [here](#)).

Additionally, [Movement51](#) and [SVX](#) came on board as investment partners to reach out to investors interested in making an impact on the state of the food system in Canada. Working together, they will engage investors to participate in the training program.

The SSFPA continues to mobilize these resources and work with partners to give women food entrepreneurs a much better chance to find an investor that is ready to work with them to grow their businesses and relate to them with knowledge and confidence.

Learn more about Venture-Capital Ready [here](#).

Community Highlight

Highlighting the members and partners of the SSFPA

This month, the SSFPA is highlighting our partner, **[Movement 51](#)**.

Movement51 is the non-profit arm of [The51](#), designed to erase gender disparity in financial knowledge. M51 works to address financial inequities for women entrepreneurs through educational programs, community events, and strategic partnerships with like-minded Canadian organizations.

In collaboration with the SSFPA's Venture-Capital Ready, M51 is launching their webinar series **Unlocking Impact: Early Stage Investing in Canadian Food and Agriculture**. This 4-part series, designed for investors or those interested in the impact investment, will equip participants with an "inclusive, women and gender-diverse perspective, essential for today's investment landscape." Register for the series [here](#). Registration ends November 17, and sessions begin November 22.



Unlock impact.

Become an early-stage investor in Canadian food and agriculture.



The Scoop

Monthly musings from the SSFPA Executive

Kitchens. That's a topic germane to all processors! It's not easy finding and keeping a rental kitchen. Let me tell you of my journey through five of them over eleven years. My first constraint was the location of the kitchen – it had to be in the Lower Mainland, closer to North Van was the best. The second constraint was it had to be gluten-free. That wiped away most possibilities.



The first kitchen in North Van was just great! I sub-contracted space from a large snack-maker, and sort of served an apprenticeship. That is, I helped them sometimes, thereby learning the ropes, and they advised me on everything! Then – the landlord sold the building and we tenants, including a brewery, were told to get out. Next kitchen was in Delta. Lovely large bright kitchen, and I stayed there for three years. Then – a new landlord took over and we tenants were told to vamoose. Next kitchen was in Burnaby, and it was for sale. After six good months with awesome equipment including a walk-in oven, back out on the street. Back to North Van and a very good kitchen – in my time there, there were three new landlords; luckily all kept me on as a tenant. I got very good at moving! And changing my labels.

Finally, when new people were trying out operating my business, we moved to another kitchen in North Van. The journey through all those kitchens opened my eyes to the pros and cons of each – the configuration, the equipment, methods of sharing space. I met scores of processors and saw their businesses up close. Devotion and optimism reigned. It was inspiring. Moving kitchens is not so bad!

–Pam Baxter, SSFPA President

Note from the Editor: The SSFPA's Women's Initiative has identified the need for food system infrastructure; manufacturing kitchens to assist food entrepreneurs to Scale UP to meet demand. Watch for more on this topic!

