

Small Business

Introduction to the Sector

Small businesses form the crux of economic activity in rural communities across Canada, which holds true in Rural Oxford as well. Specifically, across the five member municipalities, there are 1,453 businesses with 1-9 employees and 4,810 sole proprietor businesses, accounting for 94.9% of businesses in Rural Oxford. These small businesses employ a large share of the private labour force, are responsible for a significant portion of local growth, and lead to more money spent locally. Altogether, Rural Oxford small businesses are a primary source of employment, income and revenues, directly influencing the stability of household incomes and local labour markets.

Beyond jobs, small businesses generate significant economic value for Rural Oxford's member municipalities through spillover local spending, industry exports and supplier networks. Notably, consistent reporting and academic analyses show that a substantially larger share of each dollar spent at a local business stays in the local economy compared with purchases made at larger, non-local firms. That "local multiplier" increases demand for local suppliers, supports local wages, and helps fund municipal services via local business property and sales activity. For the Rural Oxford EDC and its member municipalities, supporting small business is therefore a direct investment in community resiliency, services and place-making.



Blandford-Blenheim

Blandford-Blenheim is home to 207 small businesses (1-9 employees) and 691 “indeterminate” sole proprietorships. These businesses account for a combined 95.6% (22.0% 1-9 employee businesses) of all businesses in the community.

The most common sectors for small businesses in the community are:

- Farms.
- Residential building construction.
- General freight trucking.

Table 1: Small Business Counts, Blandford-Blenheim, 2024.

2024 Blandford-Blenheim Business Counts				
Sector	1-4 Employees	5-9 Employees	Indeterminate	Total
Farms	37	11	193	241
Residential building construction	11	3	19	33
General freight trucking	5	2	19	26
Other financial investment activities	1	0	24	25
Support activities for farms	2	0	20	22
Offices of real estate agents and brokers	2	0	20	22
Building finishing contractors	7	0	12	19
Management, scientific and technical consulting services	3	0	15	18
Building equipment contractors	5	4	7	16
Other specialty trade contractors	4	1	10	15

Source: Canadian Business Counts, June 2024.

East Zorra-Tavistock

East Zorra-Tavistock is home to 289 small businesses (1-9 employees) and 881 “indeterminate” sole proprietorships. These businesses account for a combined 95.4% (23.6% 1-9 employee businesses) of all businesses in the community.

The most common sectors for small businesses in the community are:

- Farms.
- General freight trucking.
- Other financial investment activities (businesses tasked with managing portfolios, providing investment advice, or managing trusts/fiduciary/custody services).

Table 2: Small Business Counts, East Zorra-Tavistock, 2024.

2024 East-Zorra Tavistock Business Counts				
Sector	1-4 Employees	5-9 Employees	Indeterminate	Total
Farms	54	17	250	321
General freight trucking	15	1	37	53
Other financial investment activities	2	1	44	47
Building equipment contractors	12	8	12	32
Residential building construction	8	2	19	29
Building finishing contractors	10	3	12	25
Support activities for farms	1	1	23	25
Offices of real estate agents and brokers	2	0	22	24
Foundation, structure, and building exterior contractors	7	5	7	19
Management, scientific and technical consulting services	2	0	15	17

Source: Canadian Business Counts, June 2024.

Norwich

Norwich is home to 383 small businesses (1-9 employees) and 1,380 “indeterminate” sole proprietorships. These businesses account for a combined 92.9% (20.2% 1-9 employee businesses) of all businesses in the community.

The most common sectors for small businesses in the community are:

- Farms.
- Residential building construction.
- General freight trucking.

Table 3: Small Business Counts, Norwich, 2024.

2024 Norwich Business Counts				
Sector	1-4 Employees	5-9 Employees	Indeterminate	Total
Farms	63	28	421	512
Residential building construction	10	6	39	55
General freight trucking	9	1	43	53
Building equipment contractors	15	7	21	43
Foundation, structure, and building exterior contractors	6	7	24	37
Other financial investment activities	3	0	34	37
Building finishing contractors	14	2	16	32
Services to buildings and dwellings	8	6	15	29
Other specialty trade contractors	7	5	15	27
Support activities for farms	2	1	21	24

Source: Canadian Business Counts, June 2024.

South-West Oxford

South-West Oxford is home to 242 small businesses (1-9 employees) and 763 “indeterminate” sole proprietorships. These businesses account for a combined 94.7% (22.8% 1-9 employee businesses) of all businesses in the community.

The most common sectors for small businesses in the community are:

- Farms
- Residential building construction
- Other financial investment activities (see above note for a description of these businesses).

Table 4: Small Business Counts, South-West Oxford, 2024.

2024 South-West Oxford Business Counts				
Sector	1-4 Employees	5-9 Employees	Indeterminate	Total
Farms	63	20	264	347
Residential building construction	15	3	17	35
Other financial investment activities	3	0	26	29
Building finishing contractors	9	0	18	27
General freight trucking	6	0	15	21
Support activities for farms	3	1	16	20
Offices of real estate agents and brokers	2	0	15	17
Foundation, structure, and building exterior contractors	6	5	6	17
Building equipment contractors	6	5	6	17
Management, scientific and technical consulting services	2	0	14	16

Source: Canadian Business Counts, June 2024.

Zorra

Zorra is home to 332 small businesses (1-9 employees) and 1,095 “indeterminate” sole proprietorships. These businesses account for a combined 96.5% (22.5% 1-9 employee businesses) of all businesses in the community.

The most common sectors for small businesses in the community are:

- Farms
- General freight trucking
- Other financial investment activities (see above note for a description of these businesses).

Table 5: Small Business Counts, Zorra, 2024.

2024 Zorra Business Counts				
Sector	1-4 Employees	5-9 Employees	Indeterminate	Total
Farms	87	26	415	528
General freight trucking	33	1	29	63
Other financial investment activities	1	0	35	36
Support activities for farms	1	0	27	28
Automotive repair and maintenance	9	3	15	27
Residential building construction	5	2	18	25
Building equipment contractors	10	3	11	24
Management, scientific and technical consulting services	4	0	17	21
Building finishing contractors	7	0	12	19
Other specialty trade contractors	5	0	12	17

Source: Canadian Business Counts, June 2024.