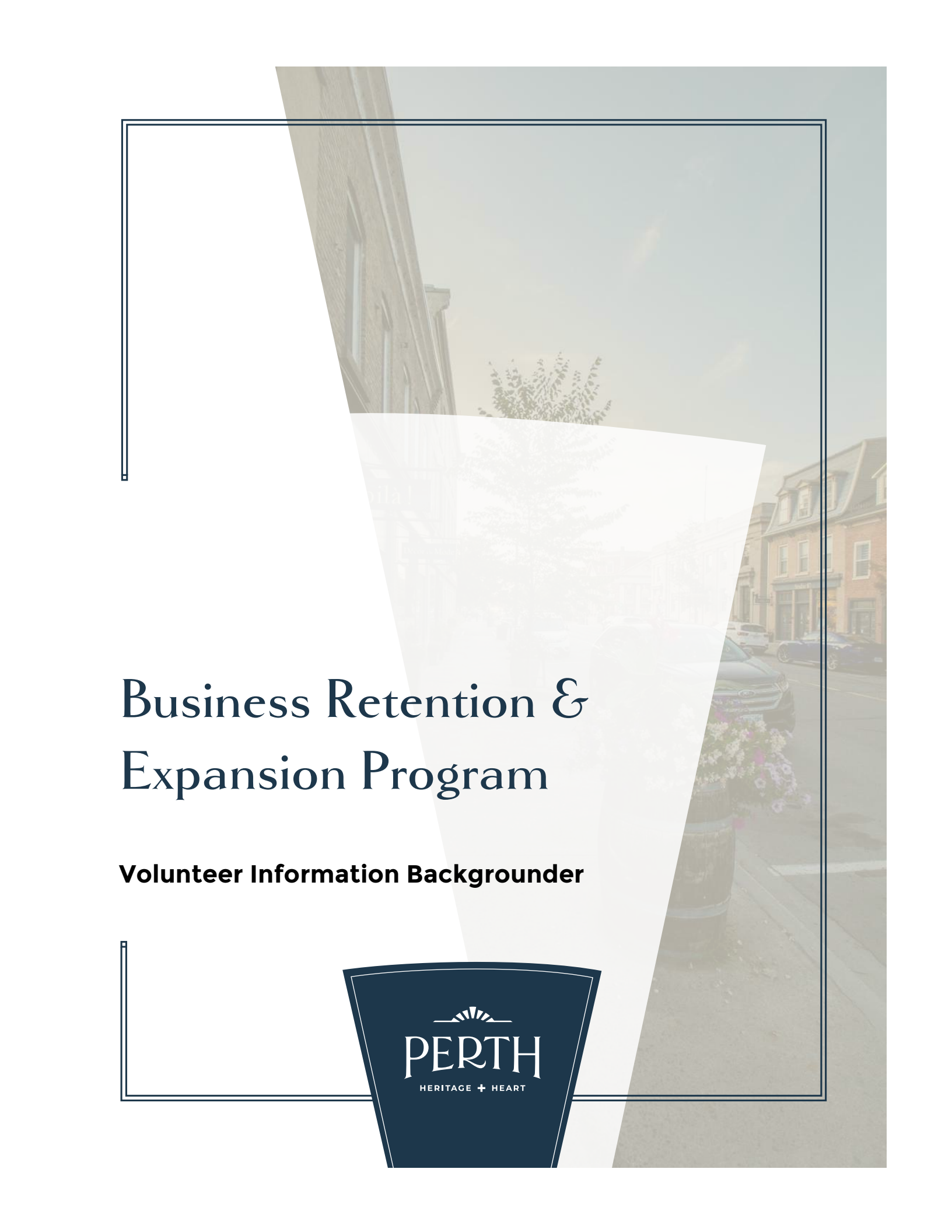




Business Retention & Expansion Program

Volunteer Information Backgrounder



Supporting Local Business. Strengthening Our Community.

WHAT IS BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BR+E)?

Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) is an economic development program used by municipalities across Ontario to connect with local businesses and better understand their needs.

Through confidential interviews and surveys, businesses can share their experiences, challenges, opportunities, and future plans. The information gathered helps identify priorities and opportunities that can support future economic development planning and business success in Perth.

As part of this project, the Town of Perth will gather feedback from local business owners and operators about:

- Opportunities for growth and expansion
- Workforce and labour needs
- Challenges affecting business success
- Infrastructure and service priorities
- Potential partnerships and collaborations
- Ways the Town and community partners can better support local businesses

HOW THE BR+E PROCESS WORKS

As guided by the Ministry of Rural Affairs, the BR+E project will follow a four-stage process:

1. PREPARATION

The Town recruits volunteers, develops project materials, and prepares business outreach and survey tools.

2. BUSINESS INTERVIEWS AND INFORMATION GATHERING

Trained volunteer teams conduct confidential interviews with local businesses to better understand their experiences, needs, concerns, and opportunities.



3. DATA ANALYSIS AND PLANNING

Survey information is analyzed to identify trends, opportunities, and key issues affecting businesses in Perth.

The Town of Perth, project partners, businesses, and community members will then work together to develop a final report and action plan.

4. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The final BR+E report and action plan will help guide future economic development initiatives, partnerships, and community priorities.

The Town of Perth and project partners will continue monitoring progress and implementing actions that support a stronger and more resilient business community.

WHY VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION MATTERS

Volunteers play an important role in the success of the BR+E project! The conversations they help facilitate provide valuable insight into the experiences, opportunities, and challenges facing Perth's business community.

Volunteer participation helps:

- Ensure businesses feel heard and valued
- Build stronger relationships within the community
- Gather meaningful local insight
- Identify opportunities and challenges facing local businesses
- Support practical solutions and future planning
- Create a stronger, more vibrant Perth for businesses and residents alike.

The information gathered through this process will help inform future actions that support businesses, encourage investment, and strengthen Perth's economy.



WHAT VOLUNTEERS WILL DO

Volunteers will:

- Participate in BR+E training
- Conduct confidential business visits/interviews in teams of two
- Help create a positive and welcoming interview experience for participating businesses
- Record feedback and observations professionally
- Maintain strict confidentiality
- Help identify opportunities and concerns within the local business community

TIME COMMITMENT

Most volunteers can expect to contribute approximately 8-14 hours throughout the project, including:

- One volunteer training session (2-3 hours)
- Approximately 3-5 business interviews (1-2 hours each)
- Scheduling and follow-up activities as needed

WHAT SUPPORT WILL BE PROVIDED?

All volunteers will receive:

- BR+E volunteer training
- Survey materials and interview guides
- Ongoing support from the BR+E Coordinator
- Information on confidentiality and interview best practices
- Team pairing with another volunteer

WHO SHOULD VOLUNTEER?

We are looking for community-minded individuals who are:

- Professional and respectful
- Interested in supporting local businesses
- Good listeners and communicators
- Comfortable speaking with business owners
- Committed to confidentiality

We welcome volunteers from a variety of backgrounds, including business owners, retirees, educators, professionals, community leaders, and residents who are interested in supporting Perth's business community.



WHY VOLUNTEER?

As a BR+E volunteer, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Learn more about Perth's local business community
- Contribute to a project that will help shape future economic development priorities
- Build connections with local business owners and community members
- Develop communication and interview skills
- Support the long-term success of local businesses
- Make a meaningful contribution to your community

We can't wait to work with you on this project!

CONTACT

BARBARA KING

BR+E Coordinator – Town of Perth

Email: bking@perth.ca

Phone: 613-267-3311 ext. 2226



VOLUNTEER FAQ

WHAT IS BR+E?

Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) is a community-based economic development initiative focused on supporting existing businesses through confidential interviews and business outreach.

WHY IS PERTH DOING THIS PROJECT?

Existing businesses are the foundation of Perth's economy. They create employment opportunities, invest in the community, and help shape the character of our town. The Town of Perth wants to better understand the needs of local businesses, identify opportunities for growth, and support long-term economic success within the community.

WHAT WILL VOLUNTEERS DO?

Volunteers will conduct confidential interviews with local businesses using a structured survey. Working in teams of two, volunteers will help gather information about business opportunities, challenges, and future plans.

DO I NEED BUSINESS EXPERIENCE?

No. Training and support will be provided. We are looking for people who are professional, respectful, organized, and good communicators.

HOW MUCH TIME IS INVOLVED?

Most volunteers will spend roughly 8-14 hours committed to the project. This includes attending one training session, and conducting approximately 3-5 business visits.

WILL I VOLUNTEER ALONE?

No. Volunteers will work in pairs for all business visits.

IS THE INFORMATION CONFIDENTIAL?

Yes. Confidentiality is one of the most important parts of the BR+E process. All volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement before participating.

WHAT IF A BUSINESS ASKS ME FOR HELP OR RAISES CONCERNS?

Volunteers are not expected to provide advice or solve business concerns. Your role is to listen, record information accurately, and share any significant concerns or opportunities with the BR+E Coordinator for follow-up.



WHAT ARE “GREEN FLAG” AND “RED FLAG” ISSUES?

Green Flag: A business opportunity such as expansion or investment potential

Red Flag: A serious concern such as possible closure, relocation, or layoffs

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SURVEYS ARE COMPLETED?

Survey information will be analyzed anonymously to identify common themes, opportunities, and priorities. Findings will help guide future economic development planning and actions.