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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Greater Impact through Collaboration: Building a more inclusive and efficient entrepreneurial ecosystem for Alberta Women**

EDMONTON, AB – Recognizing the opportunity to leverage the combined strength of entrepreneurial services, resources, and expertise across Alberta, Alberta Women Entrepreneurs and 68 entrepreneurial service organizations took a collective impact approach to better address the barriers and opportunities for women entrepreneurs through the Strengthening Partnerships Initiative. Today, the initiative releases its *Action for Impact Report – Leveraging Economic Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in Alberta* outlining the work done and the recommendations to move forward.

“Through this work, we better understand the actions that need to happen to bring about lasting change that will benefit all Albertans,” says Marcela Mandeville, CEO, Alberta Women Entrepreneurs.

Launched in January 2020, the individuals and organizations involved in Strengthening Partnerships shared the common agenda of identifying the challenges for women entrepreneurs and solving them using a structured form of collaboration. After consulting with diverse stakeholders, including women entrepreneurs across Alberta, a steering committee from diverse organizations was formed to undertake high-level visioning, set the strategic direction, and provide the leadership required to ensure success.

“This journey took our team to many areas of this province and into many communities. This process of community engagement connected many passionate people who want to make a difference for women entrepreneurs,” says Bev Latter, Strengthening Partnerships Lead.

Through the work and research, the steering committee identified five key themes for the success of women entrepreneurs. Those themes include:

- defining and articulating a **collective return on investment** from women entrepreneurs and service organizations supporting women entrepreneurs;
- **gender-based bias training** to tackle social issues, barriers to success, and unconscious bias;
- **purposeful connections** to elevate partner collaboration to assist women entrepreneurs in all stages of their entrepreneurship journey;
- utilizing **technology** to better serve women entrepreneurs, see more women using and adopting technology and developing technology businesses; and
- **financial knowledge empowerment** for women entrepreneurs.



The work that followed dug deeper into each of the key barriers and led to the development of the Strengthening Partnerships Strategic Frameworks with specific recommendations. While these frameworks provide incredible value regarding the next steps and a potential road map, this initiative established a practiced approach for collaboration that built trust among partners, shifted perspectives, established communication, and has an ongoing commitment from the partners. And now there is needed for a greater commitment from leaders.

“With the work done, we have the opportunity to fully address the barriers and unlock the full potential of women entrepreneurs,” said Mandeville. “We know we are on the right path, and we will continue to work together to build a powerful future with the support of leaders from across Alberta.”

Along with the Strengthening Partnerships initiative, AWE has worked with thousands of entrepreneurs through coaching, mentorship, leadership development, business advising, access to capital, and access to networks over the last 26 years. To learn more about the work done by AWE and read the entire Action for Impact Report, visit:

<https://www.awebusiness.com/strengthening-partnerships>.

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