

Industry Sector Profile

Professional
Services





Snapshot of Sylvan Lake

The town of Sylvan Lake is situated on the southeast edge of Sylvan Lake, a 15-kilometre-long freshwater lake in Red Deer County. Sylvan Lake is more than just a picturesque destination; it's a thriving community that combines lakeside charm with vibrant economic opportunities.



Location

The town of Sylvan Lake is centrally located within the Calgary-Edmonton Corridor, just 18 km west of Red Deer, the third largest city in the province, with access to all major highways, rail lines and airports, connecting it with national and international markets. The town has easy access to an immediate trading area of over 313,000 people and because of its close proximity to the QEII highway, is positioned to access a market of over 2.7 million.

About the Sector

The professional services sector encompasses a wide range of businesses that provide specialized expertise and support to individuals, organizations, and government agencies. Key subsectors within Sylvan Lake include legal services, accounting and financial advisory, and marketing and communications services.

The sector is characterized by highly skilled labour, knowledge-based work, and a focus on client-driven solutions, making it essential to both the private and public economies.

Regional Approach

Central Alberta is home to a diverse and growing economy with a highly skilled workforce across a range of industries. The region's talent pool brings technical proficiency, adaptability, and a strong work ethic, and a diverse blend of urban/rural experiences.

The region offers a strong foundation for investors focused on stability, innovation, and success. This robust economic landscape draws businesses, supports job creation, and fosters steady population growth.



Local Competitive Advantage

Sylvan Lake is more than just a picturesque destination; it's a thriving community that combines lakeside charm with vibrant economic opportunities. Located in the heart of Alberta, Sylvan Lake provides businesses the opportunity to locate within a tight-knit rural community, with access to urban centres and services.

The municipality consistently ranks highly in terms of business friendliness, with local entrepreneurs noting a business-first mentality and ease of connection with municipal staff. Local businesses also rank available labour and their current labour force highly, suggesting the town is home to a highly skilled workforce.

Specific to the professional services sector, investors have frequently noted businesses prefer communities with a strong quality of life. Professional service employees are typically well educated with sizable discretionary incomes and the flexibility to move to smaller communities (especially as work-from-home expands). Sylvan Lake's value proposition with respect to business and employee attraction is therefore quite strong.

Demographic Advantage

The town of Sylvan Lake is situated on the southeast edge of Sylvan Lake, a 15-kilometre-long freshwater lake in Red Deer County.

Sylvan Lake's economy is thriving, having experienced remarkable growth since the early 2000s, with growth rates of 21.1% (from 2006 to 2011), 19.9% (2011-2016) and 7.9% (2016-2021) over the previous three Census periods. More recently, the town has had a growth rate of 13.4% over the past five years, one of the highest rates in Alberta. This rapid growth supports a forward-looking economy, with a diverse population seeking employment across a host of sectors.

The quality of life in Sylvan Lake is unmatched along the Calgary-Edmonton Corridor. Whether you're looking to invest, grow your business, or enjoy lakeside living, Sylvan Lake is ready to welcome you.



Business Supports

Bringing your business to our community offers a unique opportunity to tap into a vibrant ecosystem of support, collaboration, and innovation.



Red Deer Polytechnic plays a pivotal role in developing a skilled workforce to support the professional services sector in Central Alberta. The Donald School of Business offers a comprehensive suite of programs, while the Legal Assistant Diploma and Advanced Accounting programs cater to specialized fields within professional services. Through RDP, businesses can access custom training, internships, and work-integrated learning programs to meet labour needs and reduce recruitment costs.

Additionally, RDP's emphasis on work-integrated learning ensures that students gain practical experience through internships, co-op placements, and community projects. This approach ensures businesses within the central Alberta area have access to the next generation workforce and can connect directly with soon-to-be-graduates.



Community Futures Central Alberta offers a suite of business support programs designed to strengthen entrepreneurship and succession across the region. With respect to professional services, programs such as the [Kickstart Youth Loan program](#) and [Launchpad](#) are designed for early-stage and youth entrepreneurs/small business owners, offering mentorship, training, coaching, financing, and workspace supports to accelerate business development and sustainability. While the [Exit Navigator program](#) (funded by PrairiesCan) supports established business owners in planning for succession or sale, helping to preserve local jobs and keep businesses operating within the community.

Together, these initiatives foster a strong entrepreneurial support network for Sylvan Lake organizations to make use of while starting or growing their business.

Invest Sylvan Lake

[Invest Sylvan Lake](#) is a comprehensive online platform designed to support business owners, entrepreneurs, and site selectors with the tools and insights needed to thrive in Sylvan Lake. For those in the professional services sector—including legal, financial, consulting, and technical services—the platform offers a centralized hub for accessing critical data, community profiles, and business development resources.

The site features up-to-date demographic and economic data, helping professionals understand market trends, workforce characteristics, and client potential. It also provides step-by-step guidance for business startup and expansion, including licensing, zoning, and local contacts. Professional service providers can explore training opportunities, connect with local networks, and access programs that support innovation and growth.

Whether you're launching a new firm, expanding your practice, or relocating to Sylvan Lake, the platform simplifies decision-making and accelerates success. With its user-friendly design and curated content, Invest Sylvan Lake empowers professionals to make informed choices and tap into the town's vibrant, growing economy.



The **Sylvan Lake Chamber of Commerce** is a key driver of local business success, offering members valuable tools for growth, visibility, and connection. Through networking events, promotional opportunities, and advocacy, the Chamber helps businesses build strong community ties and navigate challenges. Members benefit from exclusive discounts, access to regional and national programs, and visibility through directories, social media, and sponsorships.



Business Link is a government-funded, non-profit organization that helps Alberta's small businesses start and succeed. They provide free one-on-one advice and programs in areas including starting a business, marketing, and finance. Business Link offers free access to webinars, online resources, and valuable networking opportunities to support entrepreneurs, and provide support for Indigenous and immigrant entrepreneurs.



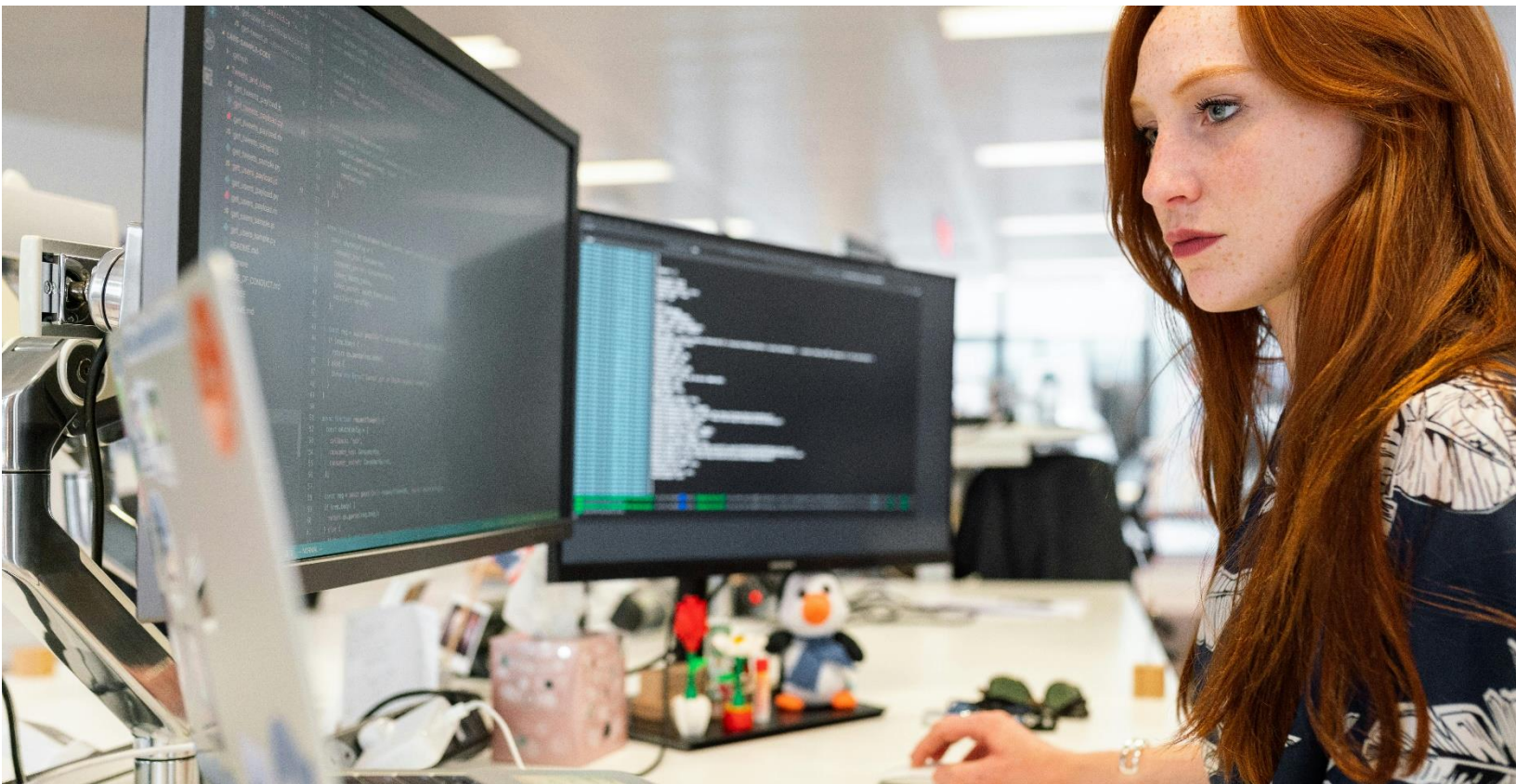
Cando (Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers) is a federally registered, non-profit society that is Indigenous controlled, community based, and membership driven. Cando is directed by a national regionally represented volunteer board of elected EDOs representing every region of Canada.

Cando has been instrumental in facilitating partnerships with EDOs, academics, Indigenous leaders and senior corporate and government representatives. Cando is unique because it is the only national organization that focuses on education and professional development for EDOs working in Indigenous communities or organizations.



Alberta Innovates – Entrepreneur Support Programs: Funding and advisory services for technology-driven professional service firms, including those in IT, data, and engineering.

Canada-Alberta Job Grant: Employers receive up to two-thirds of training costs reimbursed for employee skill development, including management, technical, and professional skills upgrading.



Industry Data

Sylvan Lake Business Counts

	1-9 Employees	10-49	50+	Sole Proprietor	Total
Dec 2013	11	4	0	34	49
Dec 2024	9	9	0	62	80

Sylvan Lake Exports and Sales*

Exports from Professional Services Businesses, 2016 :

\$38.7 million

Exports from Professional Services Businesses, 2022 :

\$78.1 million

2022 Professional Services Sales : **\$79.9 million**

* Export and sales figures represent the sum of all subsector activity within this field. Exports are community-based; they reflect any dollars spent from outside Sylvan Lake. All economic impact data is from Lightcast Analyst 2024.3.

Wages

Average Professional Services Wages

Alberta
\$78,274

Sylvan Lake
\$65,249

¹ Sylvan Lake, Red Deer, Red Deer County, Lacombe, Lacombe County.

² A location quotient (LQ) measures how concentrated an industry or activity is in a region compared to a larger reference area (like a province or country). An LQ above 1.0 means the industry is more concentrated locally (a local strength or specialization), while below 1.0 means it's less concentrated.

Job Counts

516

Sylvan Lake Job Count
(14% growth in the last decade)

7,712

Labour Recruitment Area Job Count¹



Sylvan Lake Location Quotient²

0.74



Value Proposition



Professional services businesses require strong support from local businesses and residents to thrive. These organizations rely on connections within the community to generate business in a way that other more tangible sectors (e.g., manufacturers) do not. Fortunately for those in Sylvan Lake, this was repeatedly discussed as an area of considerable strength for the community.

In surveys with the local business community, business-to-business relationships and resident support for small businesses were frequently mentioned as clear strengths. A thriving support network allows for a “rising-tides-lifts-all-boats” approach to small business success in town.

Professional service businesses also typically seek an inviting main street/downtown core, and a growing business community. On both fronts, the town stands out positively. A 2022 business survey noted that:

- 1) The town is also home to a growing business community, with over half of local businesses noting their plans to expand (54%); and
- 2) Sylvan Lake’s downtown was reviewed positively, with businesses rating the “overall attractiveness and experience” highly and flagging the downtown as accessible, close to beneficial services, and easy access to the beach and tourist areas.

Financial Data

Growth in the professional and business-to-business services sector has largely been driven by rising corporate demand for specialized third-party expertise. This trend aligns well with Sylvan Lake's value proposition, as the community is close enough to Red Deer to easily access and service the larger urban business network, while offering the benefits of small-town living, amenities, and lifestyle.

On the consumer side, increasing per-capita disposable income has supported demand for professional services. At the same time, the rapid adoption of cloud technologies, mobile platforms and artificial intelligence has led both businesses and individuals to rely more heavily on external specialists. IBISWorld sector data notes that Canadian firms are increasingly engaging outside IT and technical consultants to manage evolving digital needs and complexity.

The accelerating pace of technological change continues to drive demand for these business-to-business and technical service providers. Meanwhile, higher educational attainment among Canadians has expanded the pool of qualified professionals able to meet this demand. Looking to the next decade, within the broad professional services sector, strong financial sector performance and sustained public investment are expected to support ongoing growth in third-party professional services, as rising corporate budgets and shifting workplace technology reinforce the need for specialized consulting.

From an investment attraction perspective, this professional workforce often prioritizes quality-of-life when deciding where to locate. Communities aiming to grow this sector benefit from enhancing liveability—supporting active transportation, ensuring adequate and affordable housing options, maintaining family-friendly amenities, and fostering a vibrant community culture. Sylvan Lake is once again well-positioned in this regard, offering affordability relative to major Alberta cities while delivering a high-quality, nature-based small-town lifestyle attractive to both professionals and the businesses that employ them.

“The municipality is incredibly business friendly. We always know who we can go to for support.”



Living in Sylvan Lake

Sylvan Lake offers an exceptional quality of life, blending small-town charm with modern amenities and year-round outdoor recreation.

A Lifestyle That Balances Work and Play

In the heart of Central Alberta, Sylvan Lake glows with crisp skies, golden leaves, and plenty to explore. Stroll the trails, browse local shops, or cozy up on a patio, experience the small town charm, lakeside leisure and big-time adventures.

The NexSource Centre provides state-of-the-art facilities, including NHL-sized arenas, an aquatic center, and spaces for community events. The town features excellent healthcare services, strong public and Catholic schools, and a vibrant arts and culture scene. Residents and visitors enjoy summer activities like boating and paddleboarding, while winter brings ice fishing and hockey. The revitalized waterfront and affordable housing make Sylvan Lake a premier destination for living and recreation.



consider yourself
invited

Amanda Mercer
Economic Development Officer (EDO)

T: 1.403.887.1185 Ext. 226

F: 1.403.887.3660

E: amercer@sylvanlake.ca

W: invest.sylvanlake.ca

Invest
Sylvan Lake

Town of Sylvan Lake
Municipal Government Building
5012 48 Avenue
Sylvan Lake, Alberta, Canada
T4S 1G6



© 2025 Town of Sylvan Lake

Information in this document is subject to change without notice. Although all data is believed to be the most accurate and up-to-date, the reader is advised to verify all data before making any decisions based upon the information contained in this document.

sylvanlake.ca
MUNICIPAL

invest.sylvanlake.ca
EC DEV

visitsylvanlake.ca
TOURISM

engage.sylvanlake.ca
PARTICIPATION