
UNDER EMBARGO

Digital Main Street Launches Grant Program

Province of Ontario partners with OBIAA to provide grants to help Ontario's "main street" businesses go online.

October 15, 2018: Ottawa, Ontario. Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the Ontario BIA Association (OBIAA) announced today the official launch of Digital Main Street's exciting Grants Program across Ontario at Shopify's Ottawa headquarters.

Coinciding with Canada's Small Business Month, the event kicks off the availability of Digital Main Street Grants Program, which provides funding to qualifying small "main street" businesses and community business groups to enhance online promotion, selling and operations.

"Our government is making Ontario open for business and strengthening rural communities, and the Digital Main Street program will do just that. In partnership with the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association, this program helps local small business embrace new technology that will expand their digital capabilities and make them more competitive."

-Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

There are two types of grants that will be available:

1. Digital Transformation Grant: There will be 2,000 grants of \$2,500 each available to qualifying small "main street" businesses to help them adopt new digital technologies.
2. Digital Service Squad Grant: There will be 300 grants of \$10,000 each available to qualifying municipal or business groups to develop and implement local squads of digital vendors and experts to directly help small businesses.

Applicants will access the grant process through the Grant Program Portal, which will be available on October 15 on the Digital Main Street website at www.digitalmainstreet.ca/grants

"With today's launch of the Grants Program and the Grant Program Portal, we are making Digital Main Street very real. These grants will enable Ontario's qualifying small "main street" businesses to adopt digital technologies while also learning how to promote, sell and operate online for greater success. Digital Main Street will put Ontario's small businesses on the 'digital map.'" said Kay Matthews, Executive Director of OBIAA.

Part of the Province of Ontario's *Main Street Enhancement Initiative*, Digital Main Street helps improve how small businesses use digital tools and techniques to become more successful. Today's digital economy is vital to small businesses, and DMS will help enable them to adopt new digital technologies from e-commerce and social media to back-office systems such as payroll and inventory.



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ABOUT OBIAA:

OBIAA is the network that represents unique and vibrant BIAs across Ontario. The Association, incorporated in 2001, supports and advocates on behalf of its members through the building and nurturing of strong relationships and partnerships. OBIAA is a leader in the development and sharing of information, tools, resources and best practices, and is the ONE voice on common issues. www.obiaa.com

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