



PRESS RELEASE

Ontario Driving Economic Growth in Rural Communities

Belleville, Ontario, Sept. 10, 2024 – The Ontario government is investing more than \$5.7 million in 85 projects that are helping create jobs and boost economic development in rural communities across the province. The funding through the recent intake of the Rural Economic Development (RED) program supports projects that diversify and grow local economies, build community capacity and address barriers to economic development and labour force challenges.

“Our government values rural communities throughout the province and this program provides municipalities, Indigenous communities, and not-for-profits with essential funding for projects that contribute to local economic vitality,” said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs. “The Rural Economic Development program is another example of how our government is ensuring small towns and communities across Ontario continue to share in the province’s growth and economic prosperity.”

In Belleville, the Belleville Downtown District Business Improvement Association (BIA) is receiving up to \$57,427 to launch a new program that will support the business community in the downtown area.

The BIA will develop an in-person Membership Care Program (MCP) that will work with member businesses to connect them to services such as the Welcoming Streets Program to address local challenges and provide training to businesses and their staff. The BIA will also hold town hall meetings to help manage communication between business and residents. This project will support the community by



addressing labour force challenges and help attract and retain investment and businesses.

The Corporation of Prince Edward County is also receiving \$65,000 through the RED program for their Workforce Development Training for Community Benefit project. The funding will support the development of a community benefits framework to address the need for a skilled local workforce and provide employment opportunities in the region. The project will involve developing and piloting the framework and rolling out the full training programs to residents based on the lessons learned from the pilot. The project will help create a pipeline of skilled workers through local training and skills development.

“Our government recognizes the need to prepare rural Ontario for expansion through the Rural Economic Development Program,” said Steve Pinsonneault, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Rural Affairs. “We are committed to supporting projects that continue to benefit rural communities. The projects we are investing in will incorporate the right tools necessary to help build the best possible future for the entire province.”

“Our project would not have been possible without the generous support of the provincial government and we extend our deepest thanks for their commitment to rural community revitalization,” said Danielle Hanoman, Executive Director, Belleville Downtown District BIA. “This is just the beginning of a renewed chapter for downtown Belleville, and I am confident that together, we will create a vibrant and thriving community that we can all be proud of.”



The RED program provides cost-share funding support towards activities that create strong rural communities. This includes funding assistance to build local capacity and improve job prospects. The program aligns with the government's priorities of removing barriers to investment, opening doors to rural economic development, and creating good jobs across the province.

Quick Facts

- The latest intake of the RED program closed on February 21, 2024.
- Since 2019, the RED program has committed more than \$27.4 million to fund 473 projects that are helping to attract investment, create jobs, and boost economic development in rural communities across the province.
- The Ontario government is holding public consultations that will ultimately inform the development of the new Rural Economic Development Strategy. Please visit our [website](#) to have your say.

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