

# Resource Materials for Community Economic Development:

## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

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September 1, 2010

Funded by:  
The Community Adjustment Fund (CAF)  
Industry Canada

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following individuals for participating in interviews and providing valuable insight, without which this document would not be possible:

Barb Burgess – Economic Development Consultant, OMAFRA  
Paul Nichol – Economic Development Manager, Huron Business Centre  
Norman Ragetlie – Director, Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, Rural Ontario Institute  
Andrew Redden - Economic Development Manager, Hastings County

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This Report provides an overview of the different Provincial and Federal programs and initiatives designed to assist Community Economic Development (CED) across Ontario and the agencies responsible for administering them. Community Economic Development is defined by Markley et al (2005) as 'a process by which communities can initiate and generate their own solutions to common economic problems and thereby build long term community capacity and foster the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives.' The following have been identified as the principle leading rural programs and initiatives through a survey of all programs available, review of government policy, and key informant interviews with individuals across the Province who work in the field.

The report concludes with a discussion on the overarching attributes and principles that contribute to a program's success at the rural level, including the characteristics of those government Ministries and agencies responsible for administration. The programs and initiatives discussed include:

### Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

- Rural Economic Development (RED) Program
- Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E)
- First Impressions Community Exchange
- Rural Connections Broadband Program
- Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO)
- Community Economic Analysis

### Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

- Ontario Labour Market Partnerships

### Ministry of Culture

- Ontario Trillium Foundation

### Rural Secretariat

- Community Development Program

### Industry Canada

- Community Futures Development Corporations
- Northern Ontario Development Program
- Eastern Ontario Development Program
- Southern Ontario Development Program

The selection of the program and initiatives discussed is driven primarily by the responses received from the interviewees. Aboriginal communities were outside the scope of this report, information on Provincial and Federal Aboriginal CED programs can be found through the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

## Economic, Social and Political Background

With a total area of 1,076,395 km<sup>2</sup> (just over 10% of Canada) and three distinct Ecozones (Mixed Wood Plains, Boreal Shield & Hudson Plains), there is no one distinct 'rural' Ontario. Economically, Rural Ontario has traditionally focused on a variety of sectors to support itself including agriculture, natural resources, manufacturing and tourism.

With regards to Economic Development, both the Provincial and Federal Governments have typically developed programs that target a specific region or sector within the Province in order to ensure that the program addresses the specific socio-economic context. These regions are identified as north-western, north-eastern, eastern, central and southwestern Ontario (Figure 1). For the purpose of this review, north-western and north-eastern Ontario have been combined given their similar socio-economic characteristics.



Figure 1 - <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page747.aspx>

## Demographics

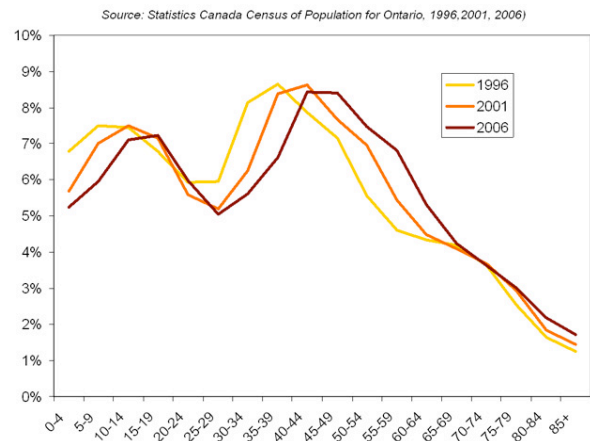
Throughout rural Ontario, there have been a number of overarching demographic trends that have shaped the Province. Urban to rural population ratio has essentially flipped over the last century and a half. In 1851, the ratio was 14% urban to 86% rural

and as of 2006, the ratio has shifted to 85% urban to 15% rural. Or to look at it from another perspective, the population of urban Ontario has grown from 133,463 to 10,351,135 between 1851-2006 – an increase of 7,655%; whereas, the population of rural Ontario has grown from 818,541 to 1,809,147, an increase of 'only' 121%.

(Statistics Canada, 2006a)

Over the past few decades, Ontario's rural population has grown older as a result of the baby boom, declining birth rates and a failure to attract immigrants. As illustrated in Table 2, the baby boom generation (making up approximately 32% of the population) is entering retirement age.

Rural Ontario Population by age groups in percentage 1996, 2001, 2006



Meanwhile, rural Ontario faces an increase in the out-migration of youth to mitigate the impact of the baby boomers retiring. The Ministry of Finance projecting that rural and Northern Ontario will have significantly fewer children by 2036 (Ministry of Finance, 2010).

Recently the Ontario Rural Council, in partnership with the University of Guelph's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development and the Monieson Centre at Queen's University, engaged community and organizational representatives through a number of discovery workshops held across Southern Ontario to identify research needs (Caldwell, 2010). The top issues distilled from these discovery workshops as well as a review of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan are:

- Agriculture/Farm Revitalization
- Broadband
- Economic Diversification

- Efficient, Cooperative Government
- Employment Opportunities
- Environmental Sustainability
- Financial Sustainability (at a community level)
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure
- Regional Strategies & Collaboration
- Skills Training/Education/Literacy
- Sustainable Economic Development
- Transportation Improvement
- Youth Retention

### Western Ontario

Significant European settlement began in Western Ontario during the early 1800s as lands were cleared for agriculture and trade routes were established. Due to the area's rich soils and warm climate, agriculture has long been a central economic sector in the region. The manufacturing sector grew dramatically in Western Ontario through the mid-twentieth century as trade increased with the United States through the Toronto-Detroit corridor. In 2006, the region had a population of 1,530,000 with 385,500 or 25% living in rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2006b).

This region accounts for almost one-quarter of employment within Ontario with manufacturing, retail trade and health care accounting for almost 50% of all employment (Southwest Economic Alliance Report, 2008). In agriculture, the region accounts for a majority of farming in Ontario but for less than one-third of agri-food manufacturing and processing. Influencing rural areas, employment in agriculture has decreased approximately 9% and the tourism/culture activity has seen a one-third decline in visitors since 2001 (SWEA Report, 2008).



### Central Ontario

Central Ontario is home to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Canada's largest metropolitan area and home to close to half of Ontario's entire population. The region is largely urbanized and only 566,331 or 7.2% of the total population lives in rural areas.

Rural communities in the region are heavily influenced by the Greater Toronto Area, which continues to grow both in terms of geographic area and population. By 2036, the Ministry of Finance projects that Central Ontario (including the GTA) will grow by approximately 4 million people. In 2005, to control urban sprawl and loss of Prime Agriculture Lands in the Region, the Province enacted the *Greenbelt Act*. This legislation establishes policies and regulations to limit expansion of urban areas and preserve agricultural and natural heritage lands over 7,300 km<sup>2</sup> of rural land surrounding the GTA

### Eastern Ontario

Based on the 2006 census, Eastern Ontario has a population of 1.6 million people, with 27.8% considered rural (Statistic Canada, 2006). The region's population and economic activity is primarily driven along the motorways connecting the Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal metropolitan areas. While a significant portion of the region is part of the Canadian Shield, agriculture has an important presence with 973,602 hectares of land being actively farmed (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2008). However, similar to Western Ontario, manufacturing, retail trade, health care and public administration represent approximately 45% of employment in the region. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting represents only 1.8% of total employment (Ontario East Economic Development Commission, 2010).

### Northern Ontario

Northern Ontario covers a span of 800,000 km<sup>2</sup> and contains 90% of Ontario's land mass. The region had a population of 808,448 in 2006, including a significant portion of Ontario's Aboriginal (40%) and Francophone (26%) population. Of the four regions, Northern Ontario also has the highest percentage of its population living in rural areas at 31.9%.

The North's economy has strong roots in the resource-based sectors, particularly forestry, mining and agriculture, which collectively make up about 7.6% of the regional economy, compared to 1.9% of the provincial economy (Government of Ontario, 2009). The reliance on resource-based industries led to a significant economic and population decline through the 1990s as the sector struggled. As a result, all three levels of government have developed strategies and policies to encourage diversification of the regional economy (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2008).

In 2009, the Province released a draft 25-year Growth Plan for Northern Ontario that identifies economic sectors and strategic goals to improve the Region. The plan indicates that, "Northern Ontario is positioned to become a knowledge-based economy, building on its traditional strengths and expanding in areas of innovation and collaboration. In mining and forestry, there will be greater emphasis on new technologies, value-added products and services, and sustainable resource management practices" (Government of Ontario, 2009).

An economic strategy to emerge from the plan is the establishment of regional economic zones across the region that will serve as an inclusive, collaborative mechanism for long-term economic development, labour market development, cultural and population planning.

## **Rural Development Initiatives and Programs at the Provincial and Federal Level**

Out of the many government programs out there, the following have been identified by professionals working at all three levels of government as the programs that empower Community Economic Development (CED) at the Provincial and Federal level. While the objectives, number of dollars invested and official program evaluations are key indicators of a program's focus and impact, the reflections provided by those responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of these programs offer insight into what makes a CED program truly successful. The importance of program design and a community's preparedness should also be noted as contributing factors that are crucial to a program's success.

A description of Provincial and Federal funding opportunities and eligibility requirements, including many that are not discussed below, is attached as an appendix to this Report.

### **Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)**

The Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is the only Provincial Ministry that focuses solely on rural issues and is established to support the agri-food sector, enforce and improve food safety and strengthen Ontario's rural communities.

A significant share of the Ministry's staff and resources are focused towards building stronger rural communities through the CED programs discussed below. To ensure that there is a presence across rural Ontario to research, administer and facilitate these programs, OMAFRA has eight regional teams located across the Province to work closely with rural communities. Each team consists of a Business Development

## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

Consultant, a Rural Business Consultant, an Economic Development Consultant and a Provincial Broadband Coordinator. The locations of these teams as well as other rural OMAFRA offices are illustrated in Figure 2.

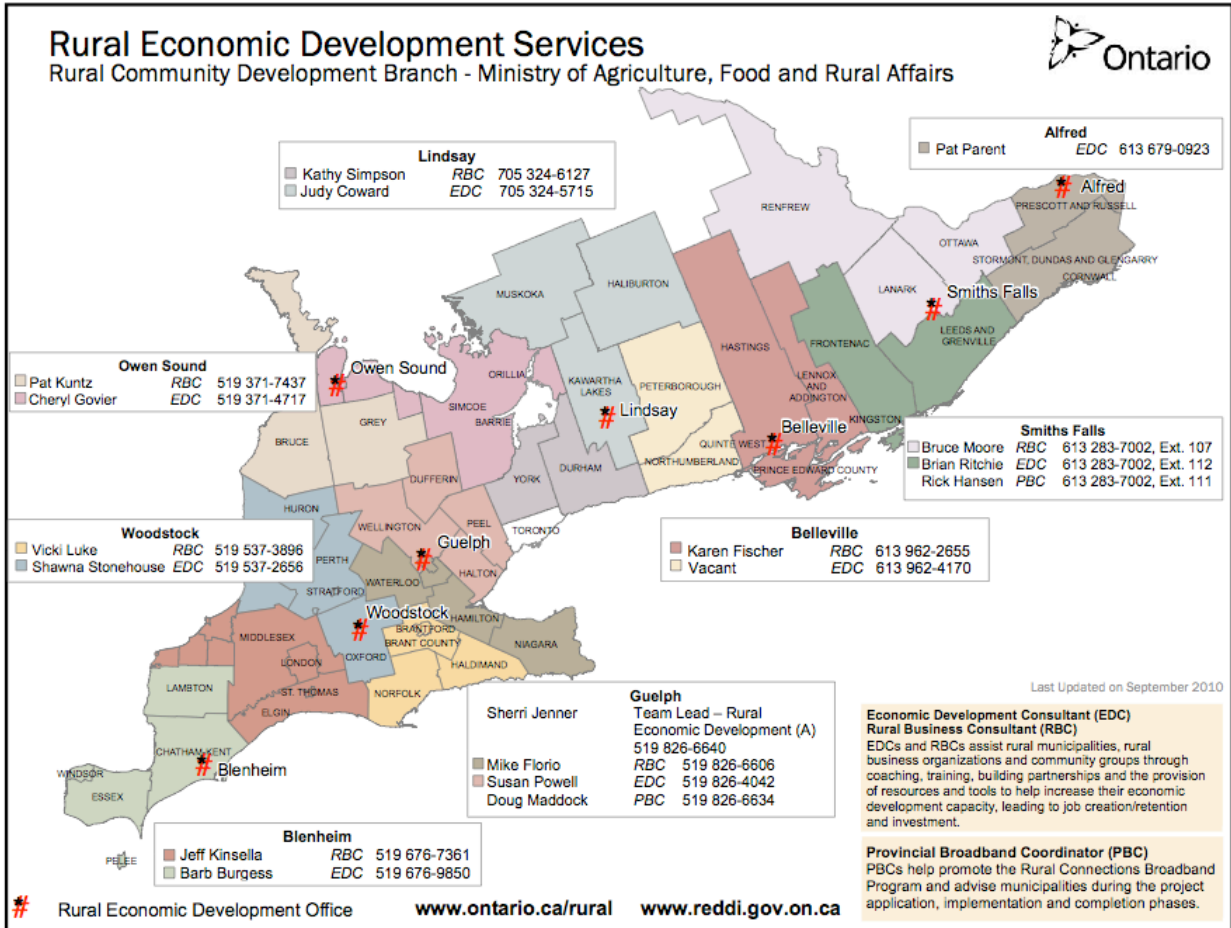


Figure 2: OMAFRA Offices

### *Rural Economic Development (RED) Program*

The Rural Economic Development (RED) program is widely recognized as OMAFRA's main CED program. The program is available to local groups, businesses and municipalities (located outside the Greater Toronto Area and eight other large urban areas) that form partnerships/strategic alliances towards new initiatives that aim to strengthen rural communities. The RED Program currently has three priorities:

- Support for the Food Processing Sector
- Community Revitalization
- Improve Access to Skills Training and Enhancement

Funding through the program is provided by the Province on a matching 50-50 basis and is one of the few Provincial funding programs that does not set a maximum funding amount.

Since October 2003, the Province has co-invested in over 300 projects through the RED Program. This has resulted in approximately \$940 million in new economic activity. (Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Rural Affairs Rural Development Policy Unit, 2010b). Because of its popularity among rural communities, the RED program is oversubscribed.

### *Business Retention + Expansion (BR+E)*

A component of OMAFRA's RED Program, Business Retention + Expansion (BR+E) is a community economic development strategy with a focus on supporting businesses that already exist in the community. Depending on the characteristics of the community's economy, anywhere from 40% to 90% of new jobs come from existing businesses (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2009)

Tied to individual funding applications through the RED Program, OMAFRA requires that the applicant undertake a BR+E evaluation to identify the economic development barrier(s) that it must overcome.

For rural municipalities that do not have the capacity to implement a BR+E strategy, OMAFRA provides the tools necessary to undertake the collaboration and engagement necessary for an effective strategy. These tools include customized surveys, databases, and implementation manuals, promotional and training resources. The structured business survey is utilized as a means of beginning a dialogue with local businesses with the intent of identifying issues, concerns and potential opportunities as well as taking action.

Since the BR+E program was launched by OMAFRA in 1997, there have been over 200 community BR+E projects launched in Rural Ontario (Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Rural Affairs Rural Development Policy Unit, 2010b)

### *First Impressions Community Exchange*

Originally developed in Wisconsin, the First Impressions Community Exchange is a structured process designed to reveal what first impression a community conveys to outsiders. The controlled approach allows each community to better understand its own strengths and weaknesses, while providing guidance on downtown revitalization, tourism development, investment attraction, quality service improvement, or broader community strategic planning efforts. To ensure objectivity, the 'visiting team' arrives in the community unannounced and *incognito*, recording their observations and providing constructive feedback that is then summarized into a report and presented back to community leaders.

As of 2009, 137 community exchange projects have taken place. (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Rural Policy Development Unit, 2010b). OMAFRA

staff assists by providing exchange facilitators, resources and by participating in the development of the report back to the host community.

### *Community Economic Analysis Tool*

The Community Economic Analysis Tools program provides organizations engaged in rural economic development with access to reliable local economic data and technical guidance for incorporating economic analysis into strategy development and implementation. The tools are used by a community to understand:

- 1) businesses sectors that are the main sources of wealth creation;
- 2) businesses that the community or region offers a competitive advantage given its attributes, infrastructure and location;
- 3) structure of jobs in the economy;
- 4) skill base of the employed labour force; and
- 5) change occurring in the character of work in the economy.

The knowledge gained from interpreting the analytical information provides the foundation for informed local economic development strategies aimed at attracting new investment, retaining and expanding existing businesses, and strengthening local labour forces (Government of Ontario, 2009).

### *Rural Connections Broadband Program*

Recognizing the importance of broadband to the digital economy and service delivery, the Rural Connections program was launched in 2008. Led by OMAFRA in partnership with the Ministries of Government Services and Economic Development and Trade, the Provincial Government committed \$30 million over four years towards the development of a modern, efficient and reliable telecommunications system across rural Ontario.

The program provides up to one-third of eligible costs (including capital costs), to a maximum of \$1 million per application to rural municipalities that have demonstrated a

need to expand and improve their broadband coverage. While applications are led by municipalities, local partnerships are encouraged with local businesses, First Nations communities, utilities, school boards and any other community organizations that are able to contribute to, and will benefit from, expanded broadband capacity.

### *Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO)*

Immigrant attraction and retention to rural Ontario is essential to support long term Community Economic Development as it is projected that by 2026, all population growth will come from immigration and, between 1997-2006, only 4% of new immigrants settled in rural areas (Rural Economic Development & Intelligence, 2009).

Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO) is an initiative led by OMAFRA, in conjunction with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry (MNDMF.) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. CIRRO, launched in three case study communities (North Bay, Brockville/Leeds, and Chatham-Kent), provides support to rural communities in their effort to attract, integrate and retain newcomers both economically and socially.

CIRRO has the following strategic approaches:

- Select, consult and advise case study communities on strategies to build their attraction and retention capacity
- Create local awareness to build a welcoming community for both immigrants and youth
- Share the case study experiences with other communities



The project was launched in each community with representatives from local organizations, businesses, cultural organizations and immigration service providers attending and participating in a kick-off workshop. Each community was assigned an intern with experience working in different countries to assist in the initiative and act as a steward for community economic development.

### **Ministry of Tourism**

The Ministry of Tourism supports the development of tourism and recreational opportunities to Ontarians and visitors outside of Ontario. Unlike OMAFRA, the Ministry does not have a specific rural focus; however, it has established the Tourism Development Fund that has been successfully utilized by rural communities.

The fund aims to:

- Support the creation or revitalization of tourism attractions, sites and experiences;
- Support innovative product development for emerging sectors that have demonstrated market potential;
- Enhance the quality of tourism services, businesses and practices through training; and
- Assist with tourism planning and capacity support to ensure that the tourism industry is well positioned to make future strategic decisions, address issues and opportunities, and improve its image as an economic driver for the Province (Ministry of Tourism, 2006).

## **Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities**

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) directs and shapes Ontario's postsecondary education, employment and training systems. The Ministry is responsible for directing new funding to rural education and training programs. Recently, five e-learning centres were opened in Eastern and Southern Ontario to provide access to college and university programs for up to 400 learners in rural communities.

### *Ontario Labour Market Partnerships*

The Labour Market Partnerships program supports partnerships among employers, employer/employee associations, and community organizations. The program is itself a partnership between the MTCU and the Federal Department of Human Resources and Skills Development that was developed to reduce duplication and overlap of labour market programs. The Labour Market Partnership is intended to help partners to:

- Promote the creation of broad industry/community partnerships necessary to address labour market issues;
- Assist local communities with the development of innovative strategies to prepare for future skills;
- Plan for effective utilization of local human resources; and
- Develop and promote labour market intelligence and its use in labour market development (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2010).

## **Ontario Trillium Foundation**

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency within the Ministry of Culture that is governed by a volunteer board of directors. Created in 1982, the Foundation's vision is to be a catalyst that enables Ontarians to work together to enhance the quality of life in

their communities. The Foundation provides grants to charities, not-for-profit organizations and small municipalities (less than 20,000) under the following granting principles:

- The voluntary sector plays a critical role in building healthy and vibrant communities. OTF will work to achieve its mission by supporting the work and enhancing the long-term capacity of organizations in the sector.
- OTF grants will support organizations in the arts and culture, environment, human and social services and sports and recreation sectors.
- In small communities with a limited voluntary sector, OTF may support the work of municipalities or libraries in order to achieve its mission, specifically in the arts and culture and the sports and recreation sectors.
- Respect for diversity, inclusion and volunteerism are fundamental to the work of OTF.
- OTF offers three types of time-limited grants: operating, project and capital.

In 2008 alone, the OTF approved 1,561 grants to charitable, not-for-profit and small municipalities totaling \$100,306,100, of which:

- \$43.5 million was contributed to the human and social service sector;
- \$22 million was contributed to the sports and recreation sector;
- \$22 million was provided to the arts and culture sector; and
- \$12.3 million was contributed to the not-for-profit environment sector (Ontario Trillium Foundation, 2008).

### **Community Futures Development Corporations**

The Community Futures Development Program is a Government of Canada initiative that supports 61 Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) across

Ontario. The Federal Economic Development Agency for Ontario (FedDev) supports 37 CFDCs in rural Eastern and Southern Ontario and the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor) supports the 24 CFDCs located in Northern Ontario. Both FedDev and FedNor are responsible for:

- Facilitating and coordinating partnerships and networks
- Providing non-financial support to CFDCs and Communities
- Providing Funding to CFDCs and their Network

CFDCs are incorporated, non-profit organizations governed by a local volunteer board of directors that represents various community interests. While primarily funded through the Federal Government, each local CFDC pursues its own priorities and strategies for development by creating and implementing a strategic community plan in cooperation with its partners. The role that each CFDC has in CED varies depending on the community. In rural municipalities that do not have an Economic Development Officer, the CFDC often acts as the principle development resource for residents. Individual CFDCs have also taken steps to partner and pool resources with local governments, universities and other agencies in providing expanded support to rural communities.

CFDCs provide advice, information and referral service to local businesses and entrepreneurs and access to capital for small business financing by operating locally governed investment funds that can provide loans, loan guarantees or equity investments for business start-up, expansion or stabilization.

Across Ontario, local CFDCs have been vital in providing access to capital and other resources to small businesses and social enterprises that help maintain or create jobs. For rural communities with stable or declining populations, CFDCs provide an alternative to traditional lending institutions that may be reluctant to support businesses or organizations in economically depressed areas.

CFDCs across Ontario received a boost of \$30 million from the Community Adjustment Fund (CAF), a component of the Federal Government's Economic Stimulus Plan.

### **Rural Secretariat**

Located within the department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the Rural Secretariat (RS) was launched in 1998 to respond to rural and remote issues and develop initiatives that support innovative and competitive communities. The RS also serves rural communities by acting as a facilitator between rural stakeholders and the Federal government.

Based out of Ottawa, the RS also has a rural advisory team located in Guelph, Ontario. Currently, the RS implements the Community Development Program. The RS also implemented a Rural Partnership Development Program designed to support rural workshops and conferences, partnership development and reinforcing capacities and building knowledge; however, the final deadline for new applications occurred in 2008.

### *Community Development Program*

The Community Development Program is a contribution program that offers a limited amount of funding to assist rural and Northern regions to obtain information and access/develop the expertise, tools and processes needed:

- To respond to rural and Northern challenges and opportunities; and
- To become more competitive by collaborating regionally, building on local assets and developing unused potential (Government of Canada, 2009).

The Program is available to local governments, non-profit organizations, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations.

## **FedDev and FedNor Development Programs**

In addition to supporting CFDCs, both the FedDev and FedNor development agency implement funding programs to support CED. FedDev is further divided into two separate development programs for Eastern and Western Ontario.

### *Northern Ontario Development Program*

The Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario (FedNor) was established in 1987 to promote business development and economic diversification in Northern Ontario (Industry Canada, 2008a). In 1995, FedNor was given the responsibility for the direct delivery of the Community Future Programs in Northern and Southern Ontario.

Although the Northern Ontario Development Program (NODP) and other programs overlap, there is a mechanism in place to ensure collaboration occurs and to avoid duplication across funding sources. FedNor typically acts as a lead agency to coordinate the involvement of the proponent and other funding organizations. In 2008, the NODP had an annual budget of \$36 million (Industry Canada, 2008a).

### *Eastern Ontario Development Program*

FedDev's Eastern Ontario Development Program (EODP) promotes socio-economic development in Eastern Ontario by creating, building and developing the necessary conditions to increase business and employment opportunities in the area. The EODP assists economic renewal in five priority areas:

- business and community development;
- skills development;

- access to capital;
- retention and attraction of youth; and
- technological enhancements.

In addition, the Provincial Ministry of Economic Development and Trade supports Eastern Ontario through the Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF). Similar to the EODP, the \$80 million Fund supports local economic development initiatives as well as provides direct grants to small and medium sized businesses to help improve their competitive advantage (Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, 2010)

### *Southern Ontario Development Program*

The Southern Ontario Development Program (SODP) is a business led program established in 2009 as part of the Federal Government's Economic Stimulus Plan and is based out of Kitchener. Unlike the Eastern and Northern Ontario programs, SODP economic development approach is more sector driven. Between 2009-2010, approximately \$100 million has been allocated to the program, including:

- nearly \$63 million through a general intake process;
- up to \$20 million through an intake for the food and beverage processing sector;
- \$15.75 million for the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters' (CME) SMART Program to fund an estimated 300 projects that will help small- and medium-sized manufacturers increase their productivity and competitiveness in the global economy; and
- \$1.6 million for the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's Export Market Access Program to help Southern Ontario businesses that would like to increase their sales internationally (Industry Canada, 2009).

With all Federal stimulus programs set to end in 2012, it is not known whether the Federal Government will continue the SODP in its current form. In addition, unlike the

OMAFRA's RED Program and programs available through the Rural Secretariat, this funding is available to both urban and rural areas, resulting in increased competition for rural communities to access the Federal funds.



## **Discussion – Best Practices at the Provincial Level**

### *Local Presence*

Due to Ontario's immense geographic area, diffusion of Government responsibilities for economic development and heavily urban population, a disconnect can exist between rural communities and the upper levels of government overseeing Community Economic Development.

OMAFRA's field offices and economic development teams are vital links to rural communities as they provide a reliable human contact from the Province. For small rural communities that do not have the capacity to effectively apply to Provincial programs, the OMAFRA field agent acts as consultant with the skills to take community leaders through what is sometimes a confusing or time-consuming process. OMAFRA field agents also act as facilitators between the community and other government agencies that do not have staff in the area.

This presence is also beneficial to the Province. By nature, Provincial and Federal Funding programs need to evolve consistent with emerging trends and best practices in CED. Having staff on the ground, engaged with the community, assists this process as they are able to report directly to policy makers on what is working and why.

### *Community Economic Development Approach*

The Provincial and Federal Government funding approaches generally to target specific economic sectors, capital improvements to infrastructure or take a human capital approach (training and education) to economic revitalization. Government programs that support CED can be overlooked as CED, by definition, falls in-between these

approaches and seeks to encourage small businesses and community organizations across a wide range of sectors.

The Province can get into a pattern of trying to pick the winning sectors and providing a substantial proportion of public funding to large corporations in the hopes of a large return in employment, as opposed to assisting multiple small businesses (between 5-10 employees) get a new idea off the ground.

The effectiveness of OMAFRA's Business Retention and Expansion program, Community Futures Development Corporations and community based funding agencies (e.g. Ontario Trillium Foundation) lies in their ability to promote and support a diverse range of community initiatives at once. For example, the Huron Business Centre (CFDC) received an additional \$500,000 from the Federal Government as part of the Economic Stimulus Plan that they were able to turn into 600 new jobs through investment in a wide range of local businesses. At the same time, a single manufacturing company in the area received a \$650,000 grant from the Federal Government for an expansion that resulted in 100 new jobs.

### *Competition with Urban Areas*

In Ontario, there are few programs available at either the Provincial or the Federal level that specifically target rural communities. Programs that do support rural Ontario, most notably OMAFRA's RED program, are very popular and often oversubscribed as the demand exceeds the resources available.

Rural communities that pursue government programs that are also available to larger urban centres can face a distinct disadvantage. As noted earlier, rural communities are less likely to have the capacity to research and apply for assistance under Provincial programs. With less money available for community economic development, the quality

of a rural community's application may pale in comparison to a larger community that has full-time grant writers or economic development consultants on retainer. Timing also plays a role in how successful rural communities are in participating in government programs. If a Province-wide call goes out for funding applications associated with a new program or initiative, rural communities may be a) less likely to hear about it in time and b) unable to put together the necessary information to submit a quality proposal in time.

### **Conclusions**

As the proportion of Ontario's population living in urban areas opposed to rural areas increases and outmigration from rural communities continues, the Provincial and Federal government's role in developing programs, initiatives and policies to assist struggling rural communities is needed. Likely because of Ontario's immense size, diverse natural resources and distinct challenges, both the Provincial and Federal government have generally developed assistance programs that target specific rural regions or economic sectors, implemented by a range of different government agencies.

The success of these government programs and incentives is not based solely on the number of dollars committed, but rather on a combination of dollars and resources. Also of importance is the government's presence and ability to connect with rural CED partners, their willingness to allow flexibility and creativity in how the programs are implemented, and the recognition that rural communities have unique challenges to overcome.

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## **Appendix 1 – Federal and Provincial Funding Opportunities**

Different Provincial and Federal community economic development programs are listed and briefly described in the tables below. Before undertaking any new program or project, it is vital that all possible funding opportunities are first explored. Not only can these funding opportunities get your idea off the ground, but also they can work to drastically increase the capacity and scope of the undertaking, opening up new partnerships and benefits. Not included in the tables are funding opportunities from private organizations and Community Futures Development Corporations.

For more information please visit the government websites that contain details about the application process, eligibility criteria and additional program requirements. An excellent resource to get started with is the Federal Government's Canada Business website ([www.canadabusiness.ca](http://www.canadabusiness.ca)) and toll free number (1-888-576-4444), providing a funding search engine and guidance to organizations undertaking CED initiatives across Canada.

Some of the listed programs have closing dates, and there will continue to be new funding opportunities launched, so it is critical to keep an eye on what's out there. Due to its established 2011 end-date, government funding programs launched as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan ([www.plandaction.gc.ca](http://www.plandaction.gc.ca)) were not included.



## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

### PROVINCIAL FUNDING PROGRAMS

Agency	Program	Whose Eligible	Description	Funding	Website
OMAFRA	Rural Economic Development (RED) Program	Alliances outside large urban centres between:  - Individuals, - businesses, - NGO's - Municipalities.	This program assists partnerships that aim to breathe new life into rural communities, make more opportunities to develop skills, and improve access to health care.  The objectives of the RED program are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create diversified business climates in rural Ontario</li> <li>- The creation and retention of long-term jobs</li> <li>- A strategic and coordinated local and regional approach to economic development</li> <li>- The creation of alliances and partnerships</li> <li>- The development of information, tools and resources to enhance rural economic development</li> </ul>	Up to 50% of the project's eligible costs in most cases.	<a href="http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/red/">http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/red/</a>
OMAFRA	Sector Initiatives Fund (SIF)	Trade and professional associations, representative employer groups, and unions.	This is a funding program designed to help industry sectors and organizations to develop training programs, materials and standards for their workforces. For example, the program covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sector-focused curriculum development</li> <li>- Development of occupational standards</li> <li>- Development of innovative training materials</li> <li>- Development of certification, testing, accreditation programs/materials</li> <li>- Pilot testing of materials/programs</li> </ul>	Up to 50% of eligible project costs not exceeding \$250,000	<a href="http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/industry/sector-initiative-fund.htm">www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/industry/sector-initiative-fund.htm</a>
OMAFRA	Growing Forward	Initiatives generally targets agricultural producers	Under the Growing Forward initiative, the federal and provincial governments provide grants and cost-sharing opportunities for projects in agricultural best practices, innovation and science. The best practices component helps improve performance in four key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environment and Climate Change</li> <li>- Food Safety and Traceability</li> <li>- Business Development</li> <li>- Biosecurity</li> </ul> <p>The Innovation and Science component includes a variety of initiatives including a Farm Innovation Program that provides funding innovation in new on-farm technologies</p>	Grants and cost-sharing opportunities varies depending on the project	<a href="http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/growingforward/index.htm">www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/growingforward/index.htm</a>
OMAFRA	Ontario Market Investment Fund (OMIF)	Strategic Partnerships between:  - Individuals	A 4-year \$12 million provincial initiative launched to promote consumer awareness of Ontario-produced foods and encourage Ontarians to buy locally. The fund assists with a number of expenditures including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Market research designed to increase understanding of consumer and trade channel demands and sector capabilities</li> </ul>	Up to 50% of eligible project costs not exceeding \$100,000	<a href="http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/domestic/omif/omif.html">www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/domestic/omif/omif.html</a>

## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses</li> <li>- NGO's</li> <li>- Municipalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advertising and promotional materials</li> <li>- Project management costs related to the delivery of the project</li> </ul>		
OMAFRA	Alternative Renewable Fuels 'Plus' Research and Development Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Municipalities</li> <li>- Community Organizations</li> </ul>	<p>The objectives of the Alternative Renewable Fuels 'Plus' Research and Development Fund are to fund research that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure continuous improvement in the alternative renewable fuels industry products and processes and manufacturing, using Ontario agriculture-based feedstocks Promote agricultural value-added opportunities in the bioproducts and alternative renewable fuels industry in Ontario;</li> <li>- assist Ontario alternative renewable fuels facilities to be major participants in the worldwide alternative renewable fuels and biobased industries.</li> </ul>	<p>Maximum funding for a single project is \$200,000 with no more than \$100,000 paid in any year.</p> <p>These amounts include a maximum allowable overhead charge of 40%</p>	<a href="http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/research/arfuels/overview.htm">http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/research/arfuels/overview.htm</a>
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)	Northern Ontario Entrepreneur Program	Residents in Northern Ontario who plan to start their own business	The NOHFC's Northern Ontario Entrepreneur Program aims to mobilize motive entrepreneurs and community builders in Northern Ontario to secure a prosperous economy and foster long term job growth. The funding provided can go towards such costs as purchasing furniture, fixtures and equipment to get the business going.	Conditional grant up to 50% of eligible costs, not exceeding \$125,000	<a href="http://mndm.gov.on.ca/nohfc/programs/noep_e.asp">mndm.gov.on.ca/nohfc/programs/noep_e.asp</a>
NOHFC	Enterprises North Job Creation Program	Small and medium sized businesses in Northern Ontario that are positioned to succeed	The NOHFC's Enterprises North Job Creation Program supports initiatives aimed at creating jobs and positioning small and medium-sized businesses for success. The program focuses on businesses related to agriculture, telecommunications, manufacturing, technology etc. with funds available for marketing, land servicing, new equipment and capital construction costs.	Conditional grants and loans up to 50% of eligible costs not exceeding \$1 million. The grant cannot exceed one-half of the total funding	<a href="http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/nohfc/programs/enjcp_e.asp">http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/nohfc/programs/enjcp_e.asp</a>
NOHFC	Northern Energy Program	Northern businesses and non-profit organizations	<p>The NOHFC's Northern Energy Program is designated to help northern organizations to capitalize on energy opportunities, pursue clean alternative and reduce their demand on external energy sources. The program has four distinct elements</p> <p>Renewable Energy Planning – funding technical studies required to secure financing for renewable energy projects</p> <p>Renewable Energy Capital Cost-Differential Assistance – funding the extra capital costs associated with developing renewable energy in Northern Ontario versus other parts of Ontario</p>	<p>Renewable Energy Planning – 50% of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$100,000.</p> <p>Renewable Energy Capital Assistance - 50% of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$1 million.</p>	<a href="http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/nohfc/programs/nep_e.asp">http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/nohfc/programs/nep_e.asp</a>

## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

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			<p>New Internal Energy Generation Projects – funding projects that generate energy internally and reduce demand on external energy sources</p> <p>Energy Conservation Pilot Projects – funding businesses and non-profit organizations that promote conservation efforts that can improve energy conservation</p>	<p>New Internal Energy Generation Projects – 50% of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$250,000.</p> <p>Energy Conservation Pilot Projects - 50% of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$500,000</p>	
Government of Ontario	Community Power Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not-for profits</li> <li>- co-operatives</li> <li>- First Nations</li> </ul>	<p>The Community Power Fund is administered arms-length from the Provincial Government and supports project development activities of Ontario-based community organizations pursuing local wind, solar PV, solar thermal, biogas, small-hydro and geo-thermal renewable energy projects. The Fund is divided between grants for feasibility studies (small) and project implementation (large).</p>	<p>Pre-Feasibility Study – up to a \$5,000 grant</p> <p>Feasibility Study – Up to a \$25,000 grant</p> <p>Project Implementation – Maximum grant varies by renewable technology (\$50,000 to \$300,000)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.cpfund.ca/">http://www.cpfund.ca/</a></p>

## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

Ontario Trillium Foundation	Community Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not-for-profits</li> <li>- charitable organization</li> <li>- First Nation</li> <li>- Small municipalities (&lt;20,000)</li> </ul>	<p>The Ontario Trillium Foundation provides funding to projects and programs that enhance the quality of life in communities. The OTF accepts grant applications in the following four broad sectors:</p> <p>Arts and Culture – Initiatives that expand community access and involvement, building community capacity to support activities in arts and culture and recognize the role this sector plays in stimulating economic activity</p> <p>Environment – Initiatives that protect and restore the environment or that increases awareness of our vital relationship with the ecosystem</p> <p>Human and Social Services – Initiatives that encourage civic participation, recognize diversity and promote healthy and safe communities</p> <p>Sports and Recreation – Initiatives that support a wide range of sports, leisure and recreation programs so that people of all ages and abilities can participate in community activities</p>	<p>There are three types of grants available:</p> <p>Operating grants – to a maximum of five years per application</p> <p>Project grants – to a maximum of five years per application</p> <p>Capital grants – one grant per application</p> <p>Total amount of grants vary on type of application and type of grant. See website for more information</p>	<a href="http://www.trilliumfoundation.org/">www.trilliumfoundation.org/</a>
Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure	Community Energy Partnership Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residents</li> <li>- charitable organizations</li> <li>- Not-for-profits</li> <li>- co-ops</li> </ul>	<p>Launched in step with the <i>Green Energy Act</i> and managed through the Ontario Power Authority, the Community Energy Partnership program provides on-time grants to support with the 'soft' costs associated with initiating a renewable energy project. Examples of eligible 'soft' costs under the program would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Site Control and site survey studies</li> <li>- Resource assessment studies</li> <li>- Environmental and engineering studies</li> </ul>	<p>A one-time grant up to \$200,000 per project.</p>	<a href="http://www.powersauthority.on.ca/">http://www.powersauthority.on.ca/</a>
Ministry of Tourism	Tourism Development Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Municipalities</li> <li>- First Nations</li> <li>- Other organizations established by</li> </ul>	<p>The Ministry of Tourism and Culture supports investment attraction, product and experience development and industry capacity building. The Tourism Development Fund aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support the creation or revitalization of tourism attractions, sites and experiences</li> </ul>	<p>The funding level is determined on a case-by-case basis</p>	<a href="http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/IDO/tdf.htm">http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/IDO/tdf.htm</a>

## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

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		legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Support innovative product development for emerging sectors that have demonstrated market potential</li><li>- Enhance the quality of tourism services, businesses and practices through training</li><li>- Assist with tourism planning and capacity support to ensure that the tourism industry is well positioned to make future strategic decisions, address issues and opportunities, and improve its image as an economic driver for the province</li><li>- Assist communities with investment readiness, investor relations, investment attraction and communications.</li></ul>		
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## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

### FEDERAL FUNDING PROGRAMS

Agency	Program	Whose Eligible	Description	Funds Available	Website
Rural Secretariat	Community Development Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NGO's</li> <li>- Educational Institutions</li> <li>- Co-op's</li> <li>- Local and Provincial Government</li> </ul>	<p>This program aims to develop collaborative activities that enhance developmental capacity in rural communities and regions. It funds three types of rural community projects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partnerships - The development of new regional partnerships</li> <li>2. Knowledge Building - Increasing awareness, availability and accessibility of information, expertise, tools and processes</li> <li>3. Workshops – Engaging and mobilizing community and regional stakeholders together on CED initiatives</li> </ol>	<p>Partnerships – Grants up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$75,000 per project</p> <p>Knowledge Building - Grants up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$200,000 per project</p> <p>Workshops - Grants up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$15,000 per project</p> <p><i>*Funding increases for projects North of 50</i></p>	<a href="http://www.rural.gc.ca/rural/">www.rural.gc.ca/rural/</a>
Co-operative Secretariat	Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing Co-ops</li> <li>- Educational Institutions</li> <li>- Municipalities</li> <li>- NGOs</li> <li>- Individuals</li> </ul>	<p>The Co-operative Development Initiative is designed to enhance the contributions of co-operatives to meeting the economic and social needs of Canadians. There are three interrelated components to the CDI program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Advisory Services</i> through a network of co-operative development expertise to provide technical and professional services needed to launch or strengthen a co-operative</li> <li>2. <i>Innovative Co-operative Projects</i> will fund innovative projects that address public policy priority challenges and that will generate best practices and lessons learned.</li> <li>3. <i>Research and Knowledge Development</i> will undertake and encourage policy research and applied research that will advance co-operative development and growth</li> </ol>	Funding ranges between \$5,000 and \$75,000 per-project per-year	<a href="http://cccm.coopscanada.coop/en">http://cccm.coopscanada.coop/en</a>

## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)	Green Municipal Fund (GMF)	Municipalities and private-sector companies that partner in municipal projects	<p>The GMF provides grants and low interest loans to municipal led efforts that support the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brownfield remediation,</li> <li>- Sustainable transportation</li> <li>- Energy conservation and sustainability</li> <li>- Waste diversion</li> <li>- Wastewater quality and efficiency.</li> </ul> <p>Funding is available through the GMF towards conducting studies, community plans and capital projects that support initiatives within the five categories above.</p>	<p>Feasibility Studies – Grants up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$350,000</p> <p>Community Plans – Grants up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$350,000</p> <p>Capital Projects – Financing up to 80% of costs to a maximum of 4 million in loans combined with \$400,000 in grants</p>	<a href="http://www.gmf.fcm.ca">www.gmf.fcm.ca</a>
Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev)	Southern Ontario Development Program (SODP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small &amp; Medium Businesses</li> <li>- non profit organizations</li> <li>- educational institutions</li> <li>- municipalities</li> <li>- Aboriginal organizations</li> </ul>	<p>Announced in Canada’s Economic Action Plan, the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) was established to deliver federal economic development programs to support the priorities of workers, businesses and communities in Southern Ontario. Budget 2009 allocated \$1 billion over five years for the new Agency.</p> <p>The Southern Ontario Development Program (SODP), will be a multi-year funding program to support productivity, innovation, commercialization, community economic development and diversification in Southern Ontario.</p> <p>The program will support a variety of CED projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- expand capacity;</li> <li>- improve technology or equipment;</li> <li>- improve the productivity and competitiveness of a business;</li> <li>- provide access to new markets;</li> <li>- innovate products or services;</li> <li>- promote the commercialization of innovations; and</li> <li>- improve community-owned tourism facilities (e.g., conference centres, exhibition halls).</li> </ul>	<p>Financial assistance awarded under this program is provided in the form of contributions, which must have a leveraging effect and a direct economic impact on the region and must comply with the provisions of the Treasury Board’s Policy on Transfer Payments.</p> <p>The contribution may be repayable, depending on the nature of the project and the requested financial assistance. Generally, contributions to commercial enterprises are repayable.</p>	<a href="http://southernontario.gc.ca/eng/home">http://southernontario.gc.ca/eng/home</a>

## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

Industry Canada	Economic Development Initiative (EDI)	Francophone or bilingual organizations that provide programs or services in French to the Francophone community	The Economic Development Initiative seeks to address the specific economic challenges and facilitate sustainable growth in Official Language Minority Communities (OLMC). Eligible activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic and community planning</li> <li>- Feasibility studies</li> <li>- Integrating Francophone immigrants into the business and economic development community</li> <li>- Promoting Francophone youth internships and entrepreneur initiatives</li> </ul>	Can provide up to \$100,000 (normally to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs)	<a href="http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/fednor.nsf/eng/h_fn03152.html">http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/fednor.nsf/eng/h_fn03152.html</a>
Industry Canada	Canada Small Business Financing Program (CSBF)	- Small Businesses (< \$5 million in revenue)	The program's main objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To help new businesses get started and established firms make improvements and expand</li> <li>- To improve access to loans that would not otherwise be available to small businesses</li> <li>- To stimulate economic growth and create jobs for Canadians</li> </ul>	Up to a maximum of \$500,000 for any one business, of which no more than \$350,000 can be used for purchasing leasehold improvements or improving leased property and purchasing or improving new or used equipment.	<a href="http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csbf-pfpec.nsf/eng/h_la02855.html">http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/csbf-pfpec.nsf/eng/h_la02855.html</a>
Canada Heritage	Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage (BCAH)	- Community Organizations (e.g. BIA's) - Aboriginal Organizations	To engage citizens in their communities through festivals, events, and activities that promote the performing and visual arts, as well as through the expression, celebration, and preservation of local historical heritage.	Funding is disbursed either as a grant or as a contribution, depending on the dollar amount approved. Grants are only available for up to \$50,000, while contributions generally apply to amounts of \$50,000 or more.	<a href="http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/dc-ap-bcah/finApp-eng.cfm">http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/dc-ap-bcah/finApp-eng.cfm</a>
Service Canada	Labour Market Partnership Program	- businesses - Non-profit organizations - Aboriginal organizations - Educational Institutions - Public Health	Administered through the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Labour Market Partnerships (LMP) Program funds projects that encourage and support employers, employee/employer associations and communities <i>in developing and implementing strategies for dealing with labour force adjustments and meeting human resource requirements.</i>  There is a wide range of projects related to research, planning, promotion and coordination through the LMP; however, they must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support activities which address a labour market need</li> <li>- Involve a partnership</li> <li>- Be finite (i.e. project-specific)</li> </ul>	There is no pre-set funding amount and applications requesting over \$100,000 are reviewed through a RFP process.	<a href="http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/grants/llmp/desc_llmp.shtml">http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/sid/cia/grants/llmp/desc_llmp.shtml</a>



## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>institutions</li> <li>- Municipalities</li> <li>- Crown Corporations</li> </ul>			
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Advanced Payments Program	- Businesses	The Advance Payments Program (APP) is a financial loan guarantee program that gives producers easier access to credit through cash advances. Coverage includes livestock and a variety of crops.	The limit on cash advances is \$400,000 with the first \$100,000 interest free	<a href="http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1247082294164&amp;lang=eng">http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1247082294164&amp;lang=eng</a>
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program (ACAAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses</li> <li>- Individuals</li> <li>- Not for Profits</li> <li>- Educational Institutions</li> <li>- Aboriginal Organizations</li> </ul>	<p>The Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) program is a five-year, \$240 million program aimed at positioning Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector at the leading edge to seize new opportunities.</p> <p>Projects are delivered using an innovative industry-led approach at both the national and regional levels.</p>	Maximum funding amount is not established	<a href="http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1182366508375&amp;lang=eng">http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1182366508375&amp;lang=eng</a>
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Agriculture Flexibility Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Businesses</li> <li>- Individuals</li> <li>- Not for Profits</li> </ul>	Its objective is to facilitate the implementation of new initiatives, both federally and in partnership with provinces, territories and industry that will improve the sector's competitiveness and will help the sector adapt to pressures through non-business risk-management measures that will reduce costs of production, improve environmental sustainability, promote innovation and respond to market challenges.	Funding provided to for-profit organizations will normally be in the form of repayable contributions. Funding provided to not-for-profit organizations will be non-repayable	<a href="http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1247082294164&amp;lang=eng">http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1247082294164&amp;lang=eng</a>
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individuals</li> <li>- Businesses</li> <li>- Not for Profits</li> </ul>	The Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP) is a five-year (2009-2014), \$163 million program with the objective of facilitating the agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based products sector's ability to seize opportunities, to respond to new and emerging issues, and to pathfind and pilot solutions to	The funding level is determined on a case-by-case basis	<a href="http://www.adaptcouncil.org">www.adaptcouncil.org</a>

## Rural Development Initiatives and Programs in Ontario

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperatives</li> <li>- Community Organizations</li> <li>- Aboriginal Groups</li> </ul>	<p>new and ongoing issues in order to help it adapt and remain competitive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seizing opportunities is meant to take advantage of a situation or circumstance to develop a new idea, product, niche, or market opportunity to the benefit of the sector.</li> <li>- Responding to new and emerging issues is meant to address issues that were not of concern previously, or were not known about at all. Issues vary considerably throughout Canada because of soil conditions, climate and the level of development of the sector.</li> <li>- Pathfinding and piloting solutions to new and ongoing issues is meant to test ways of dealing with new issues, or find new ways to deal with existing issues.</li> </ul>		
Natural Resources Canada	ecoENERGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individuals</li> <li>- Businesses</li> <li>- Municipalities</li> <li>- Community Organizations</li> </ul>	<p>ecoENERGY program provides financial support to homeowners, small and medium-sized businesses, public institutions and industrial facilities to help them implement energy saving projects that reduce energy-related greenhouse gases and air pollution, thereby contributing to a cleaner environment for all Canadians. The program has two components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- purchasing solar heating systems in the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors</li> <li>- Financial Incentives for homes, buildings and industrial processes</li> </ul>	Up to \$10 per gigajoule of estimated energy savings, 25% of eligible project costs or \$50,000 per project	<a href="http://www.ecoaction.gc.ca/">http://www.ecoaction.gc.ca/</a>