

What is a Digital Transformation Grant?

The Digital Main Street Program funded by the Province of Ontario in partnership with the Ontario BIA Association seeks to help small main street businesses across Ontario improve their adoption of technologies to better promote themselves online, sell online and even run back-office processes online. Every business that wants to participate in the grant must first take an online assessment of their current technology use. Based on the assessment, the business will then develop a Digital Transformation Plan based on a template that will be provided which will detail their goals and what technologies they need to achieve those goals. To help put the plan into action, the business can then apply for a one-time grant of \$2,500 to help with the costs of adopting the required technology.

Who is eligible for the grant?

A Digital Transformation grant is open to businesses who meet the following requirements:

- Must be a main street business that:
 - Pays commercial property tax (commercially assessed), either directly or through commercial rent.
 - Has 1-99 employees.
 - Is within a BIA or located within a defined central business district or downtown by a municipality's OP / ZBL.
 - Must be a registered business in Ontario and/or incorporated.
- Owned by someone 18 years of age or older at the time of application.
- Owned by someone who is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
- Owned by an Ontario resident or operating a business in Ontario.
- Has completed the Digital Transformation for Main Street training program.
- Has completed the Digital Transformation Assessment.
- Has developed a Digital Transformation Plan.

What can the grant be spent on?

While some of the details are still being finalized, generally the eligible costs that can be offset by the grant are digital technology contract/salaries, website design and development software, hardware and training. More specifically:

- Digital Marketing
 - Hiring a consultant/agency/person to execute Digital Marketing initiatives
- Website
 - Redesign, Improvement of existing website
 - Development of new website
- Software
 - Graphic design software
 - Productivity Software (LastPass, Hootsuite, Dropbox, etc.)
 - Social Media Software (Hootsuite, Buffer, etc.)

Digital Transformation Grant FAQs

- Security Software
- Other software as evidenced in the DTP
- Digital Training
 - Ongoing Digital Training courses (in-person & online)
- Hardware
 - Hardware must be deemed necessary

What costs are not eligible?

Costs that are ineligible include:

- Unnecessary or excessive equipment (or equipment you already have and want to upgrade)
- Owners' salaries or salaries of existing employees
- Repayment of other loans or past debts
- Repair of existing equipment

How do I apply?

Applications for Digital Transformation Grants will be live October 15, 2018 (application criteria will be finalized at that point). The process for businesses applying for a DTG has two main stages. NOTE: businesses **MUST** have completed their assessment, their online training and their Digital Transformation Plan **BEFORE** applying for a grant.

Apply:

1. Fill in and submit a grant application at www.digitalmainstreet.ca to include detailed information on the Digital Transformation Plan along with a detailed budget
2. Submit a copy of their articles of incorporation

Review and granting:

1. The application will be reviewed by OBIAA and once approved the business will receive the grant agreement to be executed by both the business owner and OBIAA.
2. Upon receipt of the signed grant agreement, OBIAA will release the \$2,500 grant to the business for use to implement the Digital Transformation Plan.

How can I learn more?

Visit www.digitalmainstreet.ca for more information on timing and instructions for applying for Digital Service Squad Program grants.