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Ontario Small Businesses Start Qualification Process for \$2,500 Digital Main Street Transformation Grant

Digital Transformation Grant Program Interest Ramps Up Fast

January 8, 2019: Mississauga, Ontario. The Ontario BIA Association (OBIAA) with the Government of Ontario announced today that more than 1,000 Ontario small main street businesses have started the qualification process for a Digital Transformation Grant.

The Digital Main Street initiative is awarding 2,000 Digital Transformation Grants of \$2,500 each until March 2020 to qualifying main street small businesses to help them invest in digital technologies and training to compete and grow.

"I'm pleased that so many businesses have begun the process to enhance their online capabilities," said Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "The Digital Transformation Grants will help ensure that Ontario is open for business by helping small businesses to increase their knowledge of today's digital economy. They can learn to build an online presence, use social media effectively, or use a mobile app to increase business."

The Digital Transformation Grant program launch was held October 15, 2018 in Ottawa at the headquarters of Shopify, a partner in the Digital Main Street Program originally initiated by the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas. The subsequent rapid uptake by businesses starting the qualification process shows that Ontario's small business community sees high value in adopting digital technologies.

"With over 1,000 businesses starting the qualification process, we're seeing the beginning of a tidal wave of interest in Digital Main Street across Ontario," said Kay Matthews, Executive Director of OBIAA. "Our small main street businesses are a critical contributor to Ontario's economy, social and cultural health, and it's vital that we work together to ensure their success. The Digital Transformation Grant will help them compete in an increasingly digital world."

Part of the Government of Ontario's *Main Street Enhancement Initiative*, Digital Main Street helps to 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 digital technologies from e-commerce and social media to back-office systems such as payroll and inventory.

Applicants can begin the grant process through the Grant Program Portal at digitalmainstreet.ca/Ontario



ONTARIO BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA ASSOCIATION

201-92 Lakeshore Road East
Mississauga, ON L5G 4S2
Toll-free 866.807.2227

dms@obiaa.com | www.obiaa.com

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. For more information, visit obiaa.com.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Kay Matthews
Executive Director, Ontario BIA Association
Email: Kay.Matthews@obiaa.com
Mobile: 647-521-5341

Tollfree: 1-866-807-2227 | Office: 905-271-7222 | dms@obiaa.com