

NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Bolsters Support to Get Small Businesses Online

Digital Service Squads are now available through the Digital Main Street program

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[Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade](#)

TORONTO — The Ontario government is helping more small businesses online through the renewal of the [Digital Main Street](#) program, including [Digital Service Squads](#), which have helped thousands of businesses with one-on-one technology support. In the 2021 Fall Economic Statement, the province committed to an increased investment of \$40 million over two years to help Ontario businesses better compete at home and abroad.

“Main street small businesses are the economic foundation of communities across Ontario,” said Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. “Our government is supporting them in reaching new customers and new markets through Digital Main Street. To date, we have helped more than 41,000 Ontario businesses, and expect this funding will give 36,000 more businesses the boost they need to raise their digital profile.”

Digital Service Squads are composed of recent graduates and students with strong technology and marketing backgrounds that communities can access to provide to their business members. The squads provide one-on-one technical help with digital assessments, website creation, social media advertising, and e-commerce platforms.

The Digital Main Street program offers three resources to small businesses:

- **Digital Service Squads** provide one-on-one help and technical training. Small business owners will receive targeted support to get started, grow their digital presence, and grow their business. Applications for this resource are now open
- **ShopHERE** supports the creation of online stores via e-commerce platforms
- **Digital Transformation Grants** of up to \$2,500 to fund the implementation of digital strategies for small businesses. Applications will be open in the coming months

“Ontario’s small businesses are key to the strength of our economy,” said Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. “Through Digital Main Street, we’re giving business owners and operators the tools they need to strengthen their online presence and enhance their technical skills, so they can better supply their customers, contribute to our economic stability and create jobs.”

“As we continue to build back our communities, it is more important now than ever that we continue supporting our small businesses as they adjust to a new normal and changing consumer behaviours, said John Kiru, Executive Director, TABIA & Founder, Digital Main Street. “Ensuring they have access to digital adoption support will be imperative to their continued revitalization and success. We look forward to continuing our work with our project partners and increasing our capacity to support small businesses across the province.”

“Small businesses are innovative and entrepreneurial, but often lack the resources to respond to change, be resilient, yet flexible,” said Kay Matthews, Executive Director, OBIAA. “The Digital Main Street Ontario Grants Program for Ontario’s small businesses has helped them embrace digital transformation to ensure their future sustainability. OBIAA is delighted to once again work alongside the Digital Main Street team with renewed funding from the province. The Digital Main Street program’s resources, grants, training and Digital Service Squad assistance provide the means for more small businesses to adopt innovative ways, create new revenue streams, expand their markets and face the future with optimism and confidence.”

Quick Facts

- Since the program launched, over 41,000 businesses have received support from combined federal and provincial funding.
- In the last year, Digital Main Street has supported over 20,000 businesses, of which, almost 15,000 accessed assistance through 64 Digital Service Squads.

- The [Fewer Fees, Better Services Act](#), passed on March 3, will make it simpler for businesses to access government services.
- The Government of Ontario has renewed its commitment to young entrepreneurs, aged 18 – 39, with the support of a \$1 million investment in [Futurpreneur Canada](#). Futurpreneur is a non-profit organization that helps Canadians become business owners with loan financing, mentoring and business resources.
- Ontario is investing \$5 million over two years in a targeted program for Indigenous, Black and other racialized entrepreneurs to start or grow their business. The [Racialized and Indigenous Supports for Entrepreneurs](#) (RAISE) grant helps to remove systemic barriers by providing funding, training, and culturally relevant services to entrepreneurs. RAISE is administered through the Digital Main Street program.

Additional Resources

- [Ontario.ca/business](#)
- [Toronto Area Business Improvement Association](#) (TABIA)
- [Ontario Business Improvement Area Association](#) (OBIAA)

Related Topics

Business and Economy

Information about Ontario's economy and how to do business here. Includes economic development opportunities, research funding, tax credits for business and the Ontario Budget. [Learn more](#)

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