

Unlocking Funding Opportunities for BIAs

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Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming

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Land Acknowledgment

Personal Background

- Current role as Regional Development Advisor (RTO 7 region).
- Former Executive Director of the Downtown Barrie BIA— understanding the challenges of running a downtown firsthand.
- Professional background in regional economic development.



Downtown Economic Trends

Ontario's Food & Beverage Sector

- Sales grew **3.4%** in December 2024, hitting \$3.4 billion
- Limited-service restaurants (fast food, takeout, cafés) up **8%**
- Special food services (catering, event-based dining) up **5%**
- Drinking places (bars, pubs, breweries) up **1%**

Ontario's Job Market - Tourism

- Total employment in Ontario grew **2%**
- Tourism-related jobs surged to **9%**
- Travel Services **+72%**
- Arts, Entertainment & Recreation **+18%**
- Food & Beverage **+11%**

Key Challenges for Downtowns

•Public Realm Investment:

Need for upgrades to sidewalks, lighting, and public areas.

•**Business Retention:** Rising costs and shifting consumer habits impact small businesses.

•Tourism Development:

Ongoing investment in events and marketing is crucial to attracting visitors.



Accessing Ontario Government Funding

Transfer Payment Ontario

Transfer Payment Ontario

Manage your funding from the Ontario government



Notice: We've changed the way you access Transfer Payment Ontario

As of December 16, 2024, the new website address (URL) for Transfer Payment Ontario is <https://www.tpon.gov.on.ca/tpon/psLogin>

I don't have a My Ontario Account

- Create a My Ontario Account
 - **IMPORTANT:** Existing Transfer Payment Ontario users with a ONe-key or GO Secure ID - migrate your profile by creating a My Ontario Account using your **Transfer Payment Ontario email address**

Create account

I have a My Ontario Account

- Sign in with your My Ontario Account email and password.

Sign in

Public Realm Investment

- **Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF)**
- **Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP)**
- **Building Ontario Fund**
- **Ontario Trillium Foundation's Capital Grants**
- **Rural Economic Development (RED) Program**
- **Ontario Arts Council (OAC)**



Business Retention

- **RAISE Grant Program**
- **Digital Main Street**
- **Summer Employment Opportunities (SEO)**
- **Canada-Ontario Job Grant**



Tourism Development

- **Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) Funding**
- **Festivals and Events Ontario (FEO) Funding**
- **Destination Ontario Partnership Opportunities**
- **Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund**
- **Experience Ontario Program**

ONTARIO
Yours to discover

Pro-Tip

Crafting a Strong Grant Application

Crafting a Strong Grant Application

- 1. Start with a Clear Vision**
- 2. Align with Government Priorities**
- 3. Use Data to Strengthen Your Case**
- 4. Demonstrate Community Support**
- 5. Showcase Sustainability**
- 6. Provide a Detailed Budget**

Pro-Tip

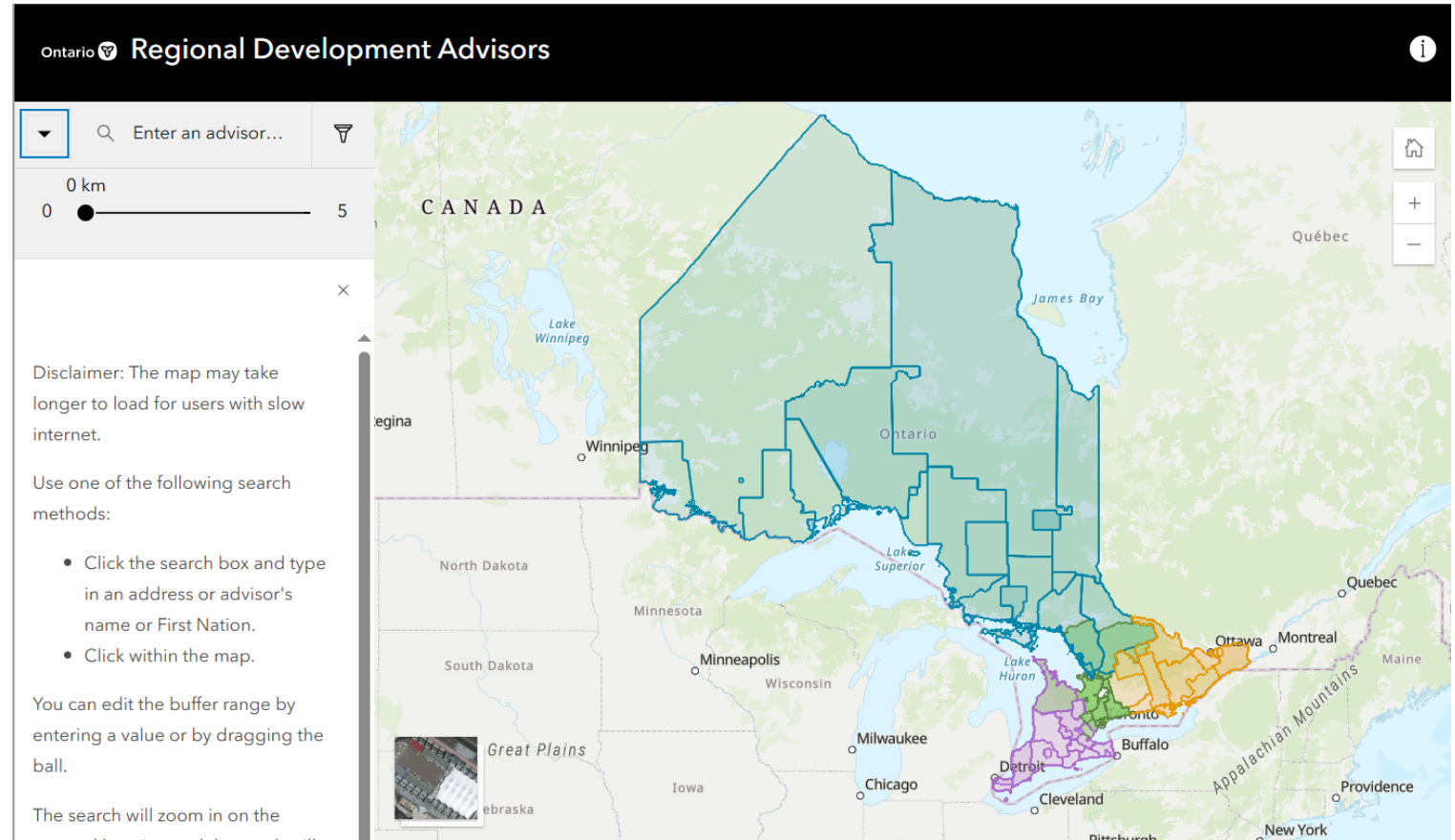
Top Mistakes to Avoid in Grant Applications

Top Mistakes to Avoid in Grant Applications

- 1. Vague Objectives**
- 2. Ignoring the Guidelines**
- 3. Weak Budgeting**
- 4. Lack of Measurable Outcomes**
- 5. Missing Deadlines**
- 6. Using AI for Grant Applications**

Regional Development Advisor Map

- Project Planning
- Funding Opportunities
- Partnerships
- Training and Capacity Building



Activity: Exploring Your BIA Funding

Table Group Discussion

Discuss:

What funding opportunities has your BIA accessed? What projects have you used funding for—beautification, events, business retention, infrastructure?

Share:

What worked well in securing and managing that funding? What challenges did you face?

Report Back:

Each table will share one key takeaway or best practice with the larger group.

Questions



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Session Evaluation Forms

