

Government Funding for Rural Ontario Businesses

Mentor Works Ltd. is dedicated to accelerating small businesses' growth through government funding support. We create and implement customized funding strategies and assist with the application process to maximize each company's funding potential. Through government funding, we extend cash flow to serve your top strategic initiatives.

Note: For all project-based grants and loans, please do not begin your project spend until you are approved for funding.

Southwestern Ontario Development Fund/Eastern Ontario Development Fund

Up to 15% Funding for High-Growth Expansion Projects

The Business Stream supports high potential growth in [select Ontario regions](#) to invest in new facilities and equipment that leads to job creation, revenue growth, (domestic & abroad), productivity improvements, innovation, and broad regional economic impact. Repayable loan: Up to 15% of project costs to a maximum of \$5,000,000. (Up to 30% to a max of \$500,000 of the loan may be forgiven if company meets project impacts). Grant funding for rural businesses: Up to 15% to a maximum of \$500,000.

Eligibility: For profit businesses incorporated 3+ years in eligible SWODF/EODF regions. Advanced manufacturing, life sciences, and processing industries. Minimum project budget of \$500k+ OR \$200k+ in rural regions for SMEs.

Timeline: Applications are currently open from until April 21, 2022.

Project Themes: Eligible project costs include materials, equipment and machinery, R&D labour, training and talent, etc.

CanExport: Up to 50% of Eligible Costs to a Maximum of \$50,000 per Grant

Virtual Trade Shows, Marketing/SEO & Translation Costs

CanExport provides direct grant support to Canadian businesses seeking to develop new export opportunities and markets, particularly high-growth priority markets and sectors, by covering a portion of eligible sales and marketing activities.

Eligibility: Incorporated Canadian for-profit businesses with <500 FTE employees and \$100,000-\$100M in Canadian annual revenue. Target markets must represent <\$100,000 or 10% of total sales.

Timeline: Applications are currently being accepted. Applicants must be approved before incurring expenses. Verdicts take up to 60 business days. Applicants can have one active application at a time.

Project Themes: Virtual trade shows, digital advertising, SEO, marketing materials creation, consultant costs for expert advice (i.e. business, tax, legal, e-commerce), and market research. Funding for activities requiring physical presence, such as in-person trade shows are potential opportunities.

Community Economic Development and Diversification: Up to \$5M/50% Repayable Funding

Foster Economic Diversification & Transformation

FedDev Ontario's CEDD Stream, Business Supporting Resilient Communities, will support projects committed to improving productivity, capacity, and competitiveness of businesses to increase employment and growth opportunities, as well as enhancing the resilience of communities. 0% interest repayable funding for a 5-year term.

Eligibility: Profitable legally incorporated businesses with operations in rural areas of [Eastern](#) and [Western](#) Ontario.

Timelines: Ongoing intake. Project must be completed by December 31, 2023.

Project Themes: Projects that foster economic development and diversification through increase competitiveness and employment opportunities in small and rural communities in Southern Ontario.

Ontario Manufacturing Training Program (OMTP): Up to 25-50% to a Max \$100,000 Grant

Training for Innovative Software, Equipment, & Processes

Supports training employees on areas that spur innovation and help achieve a competitive advantage. Training should increase operational efficiency and enhance export sales.

Eligibility: Ontario manufacturer with 10-1000 employees, incorporated for ≥ 3 years, and exporting or with the intentions to export due to the training benefits. Past applications may affect ability to re-apply, in which case other training grants may be better options.

Timelines: Training can take place over a 12-month period unless otherwise specified by the active intake period. Training can begin after the application has been fully approved.

Project Themes: High-skill training on ERP, CAD software, equipment, processes, and other software tools to improve productivity and promote exporting.

Sector-Focus Hiring Grants: Max \$12,000-\$15,000 or 50% Grant

Hiring a Youth Post-Secondary Graduate

Full-time work placement, minimum of 3 or 4 months, but must end on or before the end of February/March depending on the sector. Sector specific funding includes funding for food/beverage companies. If you have a candidate, please ensure they are not on payroll before you are accepted for funding.

Note: Availability of funding is subject to change throughout the year based on awarded applications.

Eligibility: Graduate must have a post-secondary diploma, be between 15-30 years old, Canadian citizen/resident, out of school, and work minimum of 30 hours per week.

Timeline: Internships must be 3 or 4+ months. Funding launches Q2 of each year.

Candidate Focus: Must provide relevant work experience to the candidate, related to their post-secondary area of study. Some program variants require specific position types (ie. web developer).

R&D Project Hiring Grants Program: Up to 50% Grant

Hiring a Research Intern for R&D or Data Analysis

Assists innovative businesses to connect with academic researchers (**Internship:** college and university students, Masters graduates; **Fellowship:** PhD graduates, post-doctoral fellows) in support of practical research and development projects. Funding reduces the cost of a researcher's wages over a 4-24 month period.

Eligibility: Ontario-based businesses with a research-oriented projects where the results can be commercialized to benefit both the applicant and Government of Ontario. Current active stream available to automotive sector only.

Timelines: Continuous intake for both streams. Internships can be used in 4-month increments (up to \$10,000 in funding/period), while fellowships must use 12-month increments (up to \$35,000 in funding/period).

Project Themes: Solving an internal technical challenge, developing technology, or conducting advanced research.

Canadian Agricultural Partnership - Ontario Processors: Up to 25-50%/\$20k-\$250k

Funding for Processors of Agri-Food or Beverages

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) is a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. Its funding stream directly supporting Ontario food and beverage processors funds competitiveness-building projects which improve products, processes, and services. Projects should secure/strengthen a long-term competitive advantage.

Eligibility: Ontario manufacturers directly transforming agricultural commodities, food, beverage or agri-based bio-products. Max. 200 employees at project's facility.

Timeline: Rolling intake dates until 2023 or until funding is committed. Approval takes approximately 3 months.

Project Themes: ERP implementation; Ingredient and waste monitoring and improvement; Productivity improvements; Projects focused on new product development, testing, and marketing costs; Domestic/international market expansion plans; Development of business assessments, audits, or plans by a third party.

Canadian Agricultural Partnership - Ontario Producers: Up to 30-50%/\$2,500-\$100k

Funding for Producers of Agricultural Products

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) is a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. Its funding stream directly supporting Ontario food and beverage producers funds competitiveness-building projects which improve products, processes, and services. Projects should secure/strengthen a long-term competitive advantage.

Eligibility: Ontario farms filing income/loss taxes in Ontario. Must have a valid Farm Business Registration Number (FBRN), unless exempted.

Timeline: Rolling intake dates until 2023 or until funding is committed. Approval takes approximately 3 months.

Project Themes: Business planning and improvements; Equipment; Safety and Traceability; Farm improvements; Research and development of new product or processes.

Ontario Automotive Modernization Program (O-AMP): Up to \$150,000/50% Grant

Technology Adoption for Manufacturing Productivity Enhancement

Helps automotive suppliers improve productivity through technology adoption projects. This program focuses on projects involving both hardware and software adoption, such as innovative equipment that reduces costs and expands manufacturing capabilities, while integrating with modern software tools.

Eligibility: Ontario automotive manufacturing businesses with <500 employees in Ontario and <\$1B annual revenue globally. At least 50% of revenue must come from the automotive supply sector, selling to OEMs (not aftermarket parts). 2+ years of financial statements. Must not have any current projects with O-AMP funding. **Please note:** Past recipients of O-AMP funding must complete their project and related reporting before applying again.

Timelines: This program's latest intake opens November 15, 2021 and closes January 4, 2022.

Project Themes: Industry 4.0 technology adoption (including hardware/software), new product development, and Lean manufacturing projects that improve operational efficiency and competitiveness.

SONAMI Ontario: Up to 50% Grant

Technology in Industry 4.0, Automation, and Green Product Manufacturing via Post-Secondary Collaboration
FedDev Ontario provided another \$14M to SONAMI in 2019 to support 240 businesses in Burlington, Niagara, Halton, London, Sarnia, Lambton, and Middlesex counties. SONAMI's funding will support another 240 businesses, while creating and maintaining 640 permanent jobs and providing training to up to 360 students and researchers. Business applicants must partner with one of nine eligible academic institutions within Ontario.

Eligibility: Ontario manufacturers in focus regions (see above), adopting Industry 4.0 technologies. Partnering academic institutions include McMaster, Mohawk, Lambton, Fanshawe, Conestoga, Sheridan, and Niagara.
Timelines: The length of the project will vary depending upon the level and type of assistance requested.
Project Themes: Must focus on new product development with intentions to commercialize. The product may be at any stage of development and the funding will support research costs, while the business partner is expected to contribute materials, supplies, and cash to support the project's expenses.

Greenhouse Competitiveness and Innovation Initiative (GCII): Up to 50% Grant

Ontario-based greenhouse businesses to invest in projects that will increase competitiveness

The Ontario government has announced a new intake for a funding program that helps Ontario greenhouses maintain the competitiveness in global markets. The Greenhouse Competitiveness and Innovation Initiative (GCII) Phase 2 provides funding support to Ontario's commercial greenhouse sector to bolster production & market development, biosecurity, and environmental sustainability.

Eligibility: Organizations: Not-for-profit, Ontario-based, legally recognized entity representing the commercial greenhouse industry. Partnerships: Two or more entities that have an arm's length relationship can apply. Partnerships can include for-profit, not-for-profit, academic research institutions, etc.
Timeline: Application deadline is June 19, 2020. Project completion should be November 30, 2022.
Projects: Energy efficiency, input reduction, production improvement, biosecurity, waste management, food safety, labour production efficiency, business planning, marketing, and environmental sustainability.

Get Started - Book a Funding Discovery Session:

Click the name of your region's contact to book your free funding discovery session.

- Southwestern Ontario: [Jeff Dumart](#), jeffd@mentorworks.ca, 1-888-599-3111 x115
- Southwestern Ontario & Toronto: [Mustafa Aydin](#), mustafa@mentorworks.ca, 1-888-599-3111 x140
- Toronto & Eastern Ontario: [Sara Hipson](#), sara@mentorworks.ca, 1-888-599-3111 x141
- Southwestern Ontario: [Bernadeen McLeod](#), bernadeen@mentorworks.ca, 1-888-599-3111 x98