

Ontario Introducing Changes to Improve Blue Box Program

TORONTO — The Ontario government is proposing legislative and regulatory changes that would improve transparency, strengthen accountability and help bring down costs for producers of packaging and paper products, while building a stronger recycling system for all Ontario residents. In the face of economic uncertainty from U.S. tariffs, the government continues to take actions to protect Ontario by cutting costs and unnecessary burden on businesses to ensure the province remains the most competitive place to invest, do business and create good-paying jobs.

“Our government is committed to a Blue Box system that ensures Ontario’s small- and medium-sized businesses have the tools they need to forecast and manage their costs more effectively,” said Todd McCarthy, Minister of the Environment, Conservation

and Parks. “By bringing greater transparency and accountability to the program, these measures will help deliver more predictability and more sustainability for the long term — while ensuring that producers, and not taxpayers, remain responsible for the waste they create.”

Ontario has transitioned to a provincewide Blue Box program that is funded and run by producers, including multiple producer responsibility organizations (PROs) that compete to deliver collection and recycling services for producers. The system is facing rising costs during a time of economic uncertainty and action is needed to drive greater transparency, accountability and efficiency to help contain costs and support the system’s long-term sustainability. Proposed legislative changes to the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, if passed, would give the province the ability to regulate contract terms between PROs and producers, including the fees paid by producers for the collection and processing of recyclable materials, to ensure stable and predictable producer fees, consistent and fair contract terms and clear and trans-

parent insight into the Blue Box operations and costs. This will ensure that producers pay their fair share of Blue Box costs while avoiding surprise fees, costs or changes that could impact their business.

The ministry will also be consulting with recycling sector stakeholders, including producers and PROs, and the public on proposed regulatory changes that would help producers better plan for the future and help PROs find ways to streamline operations and contain costs by:

- creating stronger transparency requirements so PROs provide clearer reporting on producer fees and the costs of running the provincewide recycling system
- setting service requirements, including the allocation of recycling carts and bins, to improve resident accessibility and operational efficiency
- exploring the future collection of hard-to-recycle flexible plastic materials and other opportunities to make collection services more efficient

The ministry is also exploring future governance changes to strengthen accountability and minimize any potential conflict of

interest, including replacing the current administrator with a new independent administrator.

These proposed changes build on actions taken in September 2025 to stabilize Blue Box program costs and reduce administrative burden for businesses, including a practical decision to gradually phase in recovery targets for flexible plastics.

Ontario’s blue box program provides recycling to more than 5 million households across the province.

Producers, such as brand-holders, importers and retailers, are responsible for funding and operating blue box services.

Residents can now recycle a standardized list of paper, packaging and single-use items in all communities that have blue box services.

“Ontario’s competitiveness depends on creating an environment where businesses can invest, grow and create jobs. By reducing red tape and helping to lower unnecessary costs, we are building the most competitive, resilient and self-reliant economy in the G7.”

- Andrea Khanjin
Minister of Red Tape Reduction



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Trent Ranked #1 in Ontario for Scholarships and Bursaries

Trent University has been named Ontario's top mid-sized university for scholarships and bursaries in the Maclean's 2027 University Rankings, placing first in Ontario and fourth in Canada in the category, reinforcing the University's longstanding commitment to ensuring students are supported and set up for success.

"The Maclean's results demonstrate that as more students are choosing Trent University, we remain a leader in providing the supports students need to succeed," said Dr. Cathy Bruce, president and vice-chancellor of Trent University. "For more than a decade, we've expanded our programs, research, and career opportunities for students while preserving the personalized, supportive learning environment that defines the Trent experience. We continue to invest in scholarships, supports, and campus communities that help students thrive from the moment they arrive on campus and through the legacies they create."

The Maclean's rankings look different in 2027 as the magazine introduced a new size-based classification system. Trent is now ranked among Canada's mid-sized universities, becoming one of only two institutions to ascend from the group previously categorized as Primarily Undergraduate (now called "Small") to move into the new Mid-Sized category. This move up is a result of sustained growth in enrolment, graduate education, and research activity at Trent.

Strong Results Across Key Measures

In addition to the University's top ranking for scholarships and bursaries in the province, Trent earned strong results across several key measures among Canada's mid-sized universities, including:

- #2 in Ontario and #3 in Canada for Student Services
- #2 in Ontario for Research Volume
- #3 in Ontario for Faculty Awards

These results reflect Trent's continued investment in the student experience at a time when affordability, well-being, and access to support services are increasingly important considerations for students and families choosing a university. Through enhanced renewable entrance scholarships, including full first-year tuition for students with 95 per cent or higher entrance grade averages, academic supports, career development opportunities, wellness resources, and experiential learning opportunities, Trent continues to prioritize student success both inside and outside the classroom. This ranking does not include donor-funded scholarships and bursaries available to students, which totaled almost \$2 million in 2025.

The student experience behind these rankings is reflected in the most recent National Survey of Student Engagement results. First-year students reported significantly higher quality interactions with academic advisors and faculty than their peers at other Ontario universities, while also indicating that Trent places greater emphasis on academic and student well-being supports. Students were also significantly more likely to say they feel comfortable being themselves at Trent. Trent's move into the new mid-sized university category reflects more than a decade of strategic growth across its academic, research, and graduate education offerings. During that time, the University has expanded sought-after undergraduate and graduate programs, and strengthened its research enterprise, including welcoming new Canada Research Chairs and two Eddie Goldenberg Research Chairs.

The growing number of students seeking an engaged and personalized educational experience is recognized by the province, most recently through a \$38-million investment from Ontario's Priority Growth Fund, which will support 1,504 additional student spaces in programs preparing graduates for in-demand careers in healthcare, education, and STEM fields. The investment will expand capacity in programs such as Health, Nursing, Kinesiology, Education, and Social Work, helping meet workforce needs while creating new opportunities for students.

As universities across Canada respond to increasing enrolment and evolving student expectations, Trent's performance in the Maclean's 2027 University Rankings demonstrates that growth and personalized learning are complementary strengths that support student and institutional success.



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