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Letter from the Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs / Lettre de l'honorable Lisa Thompson, ministre des Affaires rurales

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From Minister MRA <minister.mra@ontario.ca>

Date Tue 6/24/2025 3:55 PM

To Isbnolalu@live.com <Isbnolalu@live.com>

Ministry of Rural Affairs

Ministère des Affaires rurales

Office of the Minister

Bureau du ministre

777 Bay, 28th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3  
Tel: 647-329-1485

777, rue Bay, 28<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 2J3  
Tél. : 647-329-1485



Tuesday, June 24, 2025

Sherri Halverson  
Secretary  
The Local Services Board of Nolalu  
Isbnolalu@live.com

<Voir version française ci-après>

Dear Sherri Halverson:

As the Minister of Rural Affairs, I am pleased to announce that the newly expanded [Rural Ontario Development \(ROD\)](#) program is now accepting applications.

This enhanced program is part of [Enabling Opportunity: Ontario's Rural Economic Development Strategy](#), our government's blueprint for protecting rural Ontario and helping rural communities and businesses to grow and thrive.

Ontario is investing \$20 million, doubling the funding over two years, to support rural municipalities, not-for-profits, Indigenous communities, local service boards and rural small businesses to attract investment and create new jobs and opportunities for rural workers.

The ROD program introduces four new enhanced funding streams and expands program eligibility to include more rural communities and rural small businesses:

**Economic Diversification, Competitiveness and Capacity Building**  
Projects that support communities with building economic development capacity and implementing strategies to increase competitiveness and

retain businesses, attract investment and enhance growth. There are three sub-streams for applicants to explore:

- Strategies and plans – Up to \$50,000 (50 per cent cost share)
- Economic diversification and competitiveness – Up to \$150,000 (50 per cent cost share)
- Capacity building events – Up to \$10,000 (35 per cent cost share)

### **Workforce Development, Attraction and Retention**

Projects that support communities to implement strategies and/or undertake initiatives for attracting and retaining workers. Applicants can apply for up to \$150,000 (50 per cent in cost share).

### **Community Infrastructure Enhancements**

Projects that update or transform community assets that have been identified as important to the community's economy. Applicants can apply for up to \$25,000 (35 per cent cost share) for small projects or up to \$250,000 (35 per cent cost share) for large projects.

### **Business Development**

Projects that support small brick-and-mortar businesses in rural Ontario with between one to 20 employees. Applicants can apply for up to \$10,000 (35 per cent cost share).

Whether you're an applicant or a connector in your community, we hope you will help us spread the word about this program and its expanded eligibility. Applicants can find full program details, instructions and applications at [www.ontario.ca/RODprogram](http://www.ontario.ca/RODprogram).

Applications will be accepted until September 24, 2025, at 5 p.m. On the ROD program homepage, applicants can register for a free information session, stay up to date on future program intakes and learn more about opportunities for applicant support. To learn more about Ministry of Rural Affairs programs and to stay connected, please visit this page and follow the Ministry of Rural Affairs on LinkedIn, Facebook or X.

Our government is committed to protecting Ontario's rural communities, enabling them to take advantage of economic development opportunities, address workforce challenges and encourage business attraction and investment.

Please accept my best wishes as you explore the opportunities that are possible through the Rural Ontario Development program.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

Lisa M. Thompson  
Minister of Rural Affairs

c: Hannah Anderson, Chief of Staff  
Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister  
Laurie Miller, Assistant Deputy Minister, Rural Affairs Division

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