

Ideas being sought for 2018 Ontario budget

The Provincial government launched Budget Talks last week, an online consultation that allows the public to help shape policies and programs that will be part of Ontario's future.

The government will provide up to \$5 million to fund up to five proposals identified and voted on by the public as part of its 2018 Budget.

Finance Minister Charles Sousa and his Parliamentary assistant Yvan Baker made the announcement last week in Toronto.

This is the fourth year in a row the government has engaged the public in the development of the Ontario budget through Budget Talks, and the second year that funding will be allocated directly to citizen-led proposals.

Through Ontario.ca/budgettalks, people are invited to share ideas on five focus areas, including child care, seniors, small business, students and healthy living.

To be eligible, proposals must be submitted online by midnight Nov. 3; be for a new fund, pilot project, study, event or digital service; fall within the scope of the Ontario government to deliver; help support one of the five focus areas outlined on Budget Talks; require a one-time investment of no more than \$1 million; and show progress or completion by spring 2019.

Engaging the people of Ontario in the budget process is part of the government's plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives.

In 2017, people submitted 404 ideas, wrote 923 comments and casted 19,229 votes as part of Budget Talks. Reducing and preventing food waste, improving digital services for libraries and accessing digitized health data were the three ideas that received the most public votes and were included in the 2017 Budget.