

Ontario Expands Eligibility for Main Street Relief Grant

The Ontario government is expanding the number of small businesses that can apply for the Main Street Relief Grant to help offset the costs of purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) to cautiously and gradually reopen in parts of the province.

Small businesses with 2 to 19 employees in all eligible sectors - expanded from 2 to 9 employees - including those in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector, can now apply for up to \$1,000 in financial support.

The expansion is being made as more parts of the province enter the strengthened COVID-19 Response Framework, which allows for the gradual and safe reopening of in-store shopping at non-essential retail stores.

"This funding will help even more main street businesses stay safe, keep people employed, and continue contributing to our communities," said Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. "By expanding the accessibility to the Main Street Relief Grant our government will provide up to 60,000 small businesses with support to help them cover the cost of PPE and protective supplies. We continue to encourage businesses to apply and learn more at ontario.ca/COVIDsupport."

This one-time grant reimburses main street businesses for up to \$1,000 in PPE costs incurred since March 17, 2020.

Eligible businesses for the Main Street Relief Grant now include those with 2 to 19 employees in the following sectors:

retail trade;

accommodation and food services;

repair and maintenance;

personal and laundry services;

gyms and yoga studios; and

arts, entertainment, and recreation.

"Expanding eligible sectors for the PPE grant that have been significantly affected by COVID-19 is another way we can support our small business community," said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. "These businesses often require frequent, in-person contact with coworkers and they have the least space to accommodate physical distancing. They need a steady supply of PPE to function in a sustainable way."

The grant can be used to help cover the costs of a variety of PPE, including installing plexiglass or purchasing gloves and masks. Eligible businesses can apply for this grant and other COVID-19 financial supports - like the Ontario Small Business Support Grant and property tax or energy cost rebates - through a simple online application.

"Ontario's heritage, sport, tourism and culture industries were hit first, hardest, and will take the longest to recover post-pandemic," said Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. "Expanding eligibility of the Main Street Relief Grant to include more business-owners within these sectors will cover added costs and help us explore all that our province has to offer when it's safe to do so."