



# Tourism Recovery and Innovation Program TRIP – Capital Projects

**JANUARY 2021**

OHTO gratefully acknowledges the generous support from Ottawa Tourism in the development of this program, along with the collaboration of our six county partners: Haliburton County, Lanark County, Renfrew County, Hastings County, Lennox & Addington and Frontenac County.

## Tourism Recovery and Innovation Program TRIP – Capital Projects

The Ontario's Highlands' *Tourism Recovery & Innovation Program (TRIP) – Capital Projects* is an application-based funding program available to support small- to medium-sized tourism businesses as they adapt their operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, this program supports modifications and retrofits to operations and facilities to offer safer visitor experiences.

### **OVERVIEW**

The *TRIP – Capital Projects* is an additional and separate funding stream within the TRIP program that provides tourism-dependent small- to medium-sized businesses with non-repayable funding to offset up to 80% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$20,000, related to one-time modifications and/or re-opening costs, including the implementation of health and safety protocols and digitization measures.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Tourism business operations have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only has our sector experienced losses in terms of tourism revenues, but many have had to and will continue to incur additional costs to modify their operations in order to safely serve the general public. The *TRIP – Capital Projects* funding will support small businesses as they adapt to the public health guidelines and requirements. It will:

- Assist tourism businesses to adapt their visitor experiences to meet health and safety reopening protocols
- Regain consumer confidence that public health and safety is a priority for the industry
- Allow continued operations whenever possible in response to public health restrictions
- Mitigate the financial burden COVID-19 continues to place on local tourism-dependent businesses

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#### **LOCATION**

The *TRIP – Capital Projects* funding is available to businesses who operate within the Ontario's Highlands (RTO11) region. The eligible communities within our boundaries include: Haliburton County, Renfrew County, Lanark County and the Townships of North and Central Hastings County, Township of Addington Highlands, and Townships of North and Central Frontenac Counties. **See Map**

#### **ELIGIBILITY PERIOD**

The *TRIP – Capital Projects* funding can be applied to any eligible costs incurred between June 1, 2020 and December 31, 2021.

#### **WHEN CAN I APPLY?**

The application portal will be launched January 15, 2021. There is a set amount of funds available for this program. As such, applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis with priority given to submissions received by January 31, 2021.

#### **WHO CAN APPLY?**

Businesses who rely on visitor revenues to sustain their business can apply for this funding. A visitor is considered anyone who travels greater than 40 km to specifically transact at your establishment for tourism purposes. Below is a list of the types of businesses for which this funding is intended, however this list is not exhaustive. Business owners who do not see their operations below, but can demonstrate they are tourism dependent, are still encouraged to apply.

- Accommodations: Commercial Bed & Breakfasts, Inns, Resorts, Lodges, Hotels, Motels;
- Transportation: Motorcoach, Rental Cars, Charter Boats;
- Attractions: Museums, Cultural Centres, Art Galleries, Theme Parks, Outdoor Adventure opportunities;
- Tour Operators: Outdoor or Culinary Adventure, Cruise and Fishing Tour Operators, Local Sightseeing Tour Companies;
- Corporate Event Spaces: Halls, Convention Centres, etc.;
- Food and Drink Operators: Restaurants, Breweries, Wineries, Cideries, Cafés; and,
- Independent Retailers

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**WHAT KINDS OF EXPENSES ARE ELIGIBLE?**

Eligible expenses would include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Reconfiguration of space and/or of business offering and/or processes to adhere to re-opening guidelines while maintaining a quality visitor experience. This includes any alterations, temporary or permanent, made to the applicant's business specifically to reduce the risk of customers or staff contracting COVID-19.
- Investment in the digitization of experiences such as any of the following:
  - » Virtual queues;
  - » Timed entry ticketing; and
  - » E-Commerce tools aimed at contactless purchase of tourism experiences

Claims can be made retroactively on eligible costs or planned purchases within the eligibility period.

**WHAT EXPENSES ARE NOT ELIGIBLE?**

Ineligible expenses include any of the following:

- Expenses already claimed through other government support programs.
  - » Inventory costs
  - » Employee wages
  - » Existing operating costs
- Renovations and/or purchases not required to comply with COVID-19 requirements
  - » Office furniture
  - » Third party delivery transaction fees
- Expenses not exclusive to a businesses' needs arising from the pandemic such as:
  - » Social media advertising, posts, marketing, etc.
  - » E-commerce tools for online stores
  - » Items purchased for resale
  - » Recurring subscription fees/services implemented pre-COVID-19
  - » General cleaning services
  - » Costs of land, building or vehicle purchase
- » Cost of electronic hardware (such as a laptops, computers, headphones, printers, cables, etc...)
- » Taxes
- » Consulting fees
- » Business plans/strategic plans/feasibility studies/strategies, etc.

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**EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS**

**1. Reconfiguration of Space/Alterations:**

Dave owns a restaurant in Renfrew County and when the pandemic struck he quickly created a patio to allow him to serve customers outdoors. Dave applies for the *TRIP – Capital Projects* funding to allow him to create a more permanent outdoor dining area to continue to serve customers in 2021 and beyond. Dave's project will include third-party expenses for the construction of the outdoor patio area (interlocking or decking, and built-in seating), a canopy to allow him to operate even in inclement weather, and outdoor patio heaters to allow him to expand operations outdoors in the shoulder months. He also installs a new door between the building and the patio to limit close contact between staff entering and exiting the building to serve customers.

**2. Digitization Enhancements:**

Samantha operates a local theatre group in Haliburton Highlands which offers outdoor theatrical performances during the summer months. Samantha would like to continue offering this experience but COVID-19 restrictions on the amount of people who can safely gather means she must track who attends her events and also how many people are present during a performance. Samantha applies for the *TRIP – Capital Projects* funding to invest in digitization that will allow her to track attendance through virtual ticketing and registration.

**3. Purchase of PPE:**

Todd offers guided bicycle tours for customers in Hastings County which allows customers to either bring their own bikes or rent a bicycle and helmet through the tour. Given the urgent needs for bicycle rentals, Todd would like to continue to offer this service for customers but is concerned about the cleaning requirements for bicycle and helmet rentals. Todd applies for the *TRIP – Capital Projects* funding to purchase chemical disinfectant that will allow him to quickly and safely sterilize rented equipment and continue to rent to customers.



## How to Apply

To apply to the Ontario's Highlands *Tourism Recovery and Innovation Program (TRIP) – Capital Projects*, applicants must complete an application through our online portal **here**. The application process is designed to be straight forward to minimize the time required by businesses to determine their eligibility and access this funding.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO HAVE READY BEFORE YOU APPLY**

- Your business number, HST number and Incorporation date (if applicable)
- A copy of your 2019 Financials
- A copy of your commercial general liability insurance indicating coverage of at least \$2,000,000
- Copies of all receipts, invoices and/or quotes you are looking to submit for reimbursement
- A brief 500-word summary drafted of how the requested funds are to be used, including a synopsis of how the project helped to protect jobs and the visitor experience

### **CONTACT**

We are anticipating a high volume of applications and have designed our portal to provide you with a very straight forward way to provide you with feedback on your eligibility. Additionally, we have created an FAQ document that will be updated regularly to answer any questions you may have about the program.

We encourage you to read through the FAQs and even if you are uncertain about your eligibility, please proceed with your application. If your questions are not covered by the application process or our FAQs, please send an email to OHTO **here**. We aim to respond within 2 to 5 business days.

For a comprehensive list of FAQs please click **here**.

**APPLY NOW**

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