

As COVID-19 requires businesses to go digital, a multi-million dollar investment by governments makes this transition possible for Ontario businesses

\$7.7 million agreement makes the Recovery Activation Program free and province-wide

TORONTO, ON, June 11, 2020 – COVID-19 has changed everything, requiring telecommuting, on-demand delivery and services, supply chain resiliency and virtual collaborations. The pandemic has heightened the urgency for businesses to digitize to survive. A partnership between the Toronto Region Board of Trade, Government of Canada and Government of Ontario is addressing this change. The [Recovery Activation Program](#) (RAP), launched just a few weeks ago, is now free and province-wide.

RAP offers businesses the know-how, blueprint and partners to address the conditions that COVID-19 has created by implementing digital solutions to their front, middle and back-offices. It will not only equip them to come through COVID-19 intact, but to thrive.

Creating business support programs like RAP is a product of the Board's recently announced [Reimagining Recovery](#) framework. The framework is rooted in expert insights, designed in collaboration with government and industry leaders and organized around six priority work tracks essential to recovering from this pandemic and preparing for future economic shocks. RAP, run by the [Scale-Up Institute Toronto](#) through the Toronto Region Board of Trade, is the result of Work Track 5: Business Recovery Programs.

"The Recovery Activation Program is a direct response to what we're hearing from our members and the business community at large: digital tools and services are crucial to success, but challenging to implement," said Jan De Silva, President and CEO of the Toronto Region Board of Trade. "The governments' investment in this program will result in the digital transformation of thousands of businesses who will now be in a position to shore up their current business offerings, create new businesses opportunities and explore new markets."

Recognizing the importance digital capacity has in today's world of social distancing and disrupted operations, the Government of Canada (through FedDev Ontario) and Government of Ontario (through the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade) have contributed \$7.5 million and \$200,000, respectively. The federal investment is part of a larger [\\$50 million initiative](#) to support over 22,900 businesses adapt to a more digital world.

"These businesses are the backbone of our economy, a source of local jobs – and local pride," said the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Canada's Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages. "Thanks to this major investment, they'll be able to expand their offerings and seize the many opportunities presented by online commerce."

The [provincial investment](#) will also enable the Board to use its extensive network of chambers of commerce, industry associations and other partners to make sure at least half of RAP participants are based outside of the Greater Toronto Area – including small and medium-sized businesses in Northern Ontario.



“Ontario’s small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and their recovery is critical to Ontario’s recovery,” said Prabmeet Sarkaria, Ontario’s Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. “As thousands of small businesses across the province closed their doors and halted business during the COVID-19 outbreak, many struggled to shift sales or services online. I am very pleased, that together with Minister Joly and our federal partners, we are providing small businesses with the tools they need to recover and flourish as Ontario reopens.”

With recruitment currently open, the first RAP cohort will run through July 2020. Interested businesses can apply [here](#).

ABOUT THE TORONTO REGION BOARD OF TRADE

The Toronto Region Board of Trade is one of the largest and most influential chambers of commerce in North America and is a catalyst for the region’s economic growth agenda. Backed by more than 13,500 members, we pursue policy change to drive the growth and competitiveness of the Toronto region, and facilitate market opportunities with programs, partnerships and connections to help our members succeed – domestically and internationally. We want Toronto to be recognized as one of the most competitive and sought-after business regions in the world, and believe this reputation starts with our businesses. Follow us at [@TorontoRBOT](#).

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