Growing the Economy and Creating Jobs for Tomorrow

The government’s number-one priority is growing the economy and creating jobs. Ontario’s plan is reducing business costs, keeping tax rates competitive, building strategic partnerships, helping businesses go global, strengthening the financial services sector, and investing in training and education. The Province is also investing in a low-carbon economy and developing new strategies to guide its approach to the sharing economy and social enterprises.

More than 600,000 jobs have been created since the recessionary low in June 2009. Ontario is projected to create more than 300,000 jobs by the end of 2019, which would bring the total to more than 900,000 net new jobs over a 10-year period.

The government is making the largest investment in Ontario’s history in priority public infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, public transit, hospitals and schools — about $160 billion over 12 years, starting in 2014–15. These planned investments are expected to support more than 110,000 jobs, on average, each year.

The 10-year, $2.7 billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund is helping create and retain more than 16,000 jobs and attracting more than $1 billion in investments. Fund commitments include:

- More than $50 million to help Guelph car components maker Linamar create more than 1,200 jobs and retain more than 6,800 jobs. Ontario’s contribution builds on an investment of more than $500 million by Linamar.

- More than $19 million to support up to 50 young life sciences companies involved with JLABS @ Toronto, a collaboration of Johnson & Johnson, University of Toronto and MaRS Discovery District.

- More than $22 million to leverage a total investment of almost $55 million by Ontario Centres of Excellence and IBM Canada to support up to 500 startups and other early-stage companies.

- $5 million to leverage a total investment of $40 million by P&H Milling Group in a new Hamilton flour mill and storage equipment, creating 16 jobs while retaining 200 jobs.
Fostering a More Dynamic and Innovative Business Environment

The Business Growth Initiative will commit $400 million over the next five years to modernize business regulations, lower business costs and make more Ontario firms into global industry leaders. Commitments include:

- Investing $50 million at the Perimeter Institute, providing funding through 2020–21; its research will help foster the next generation of information technology advancements in areas such as quantum computing.

- Helping traditional manufacturers transform into more innovative, dynamic and productive companies through a five-year, $35 million investment in the Advanced Manufacturing Consortium, including three Ontario universities — McMaster, Waterloo and Western.

- Establishing a three-year, $20 million fund that connects colleges and private-sector employers on applied innovation projects that result in breakthrough products and services for sale at home and abroad.

- Launching the Red Tape Challenge, an online consultation tool designed to identify and eliminate duplication, lessen compliance burdens, shorten response times and make it easier for businesses to interact with the government. It will engage with the public, businesses and stakeholders in addressing regulatory challenges and identifying opportunities to reshape Ontario’s economy.

- To build upon the government’s strategic partnerships with the private sector, the Province will create a Strategic Investments Office to serve as a one-window point of entry to provide improved investment attraction services for major investment projects, licensing and permit coordination, facilitation of workforce training and site-selection supports. The Province will also launch an online portal to help firms easily find and navigate the programs and initiatives it provides across government.

The Green Investment Fund’s commitment of $325 million in 2015–16 will create jobs in Ontario’s clean energy industries, spur innovation and lower greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs:

- $100 million for homeowners to conduct audits and retrofits;

- $92 million for social housing unit retrofits;

- $74 million for large industrial emitters to develop technological innovations;

- $26 million for small and medium-sized businesses and manufacturers to make energy-efficiency investments;

- $20 million for more public charging stations for electric vehicles; and

- $13 million for climate change activities in Indigenous communities.

Ontario’s Going Global Export Strategy will invest an initial $30 million over three years to help firms expand their exports and become more productive.
Approximately 1,850 Ontario jobs are expected to be created through the more than 100 agreements and memoranda of understanding that Premier Kathleen Wynne and business delegates signed on Ontario trade missions to China in November and to India earlier this year. The estimated value of the agreements totals approximately $2.8 billion.

Both Bruce Power and Ontario Power Generation are refurbishing their nuclear reactors at Bruce and Darlington, respectively. The refurbishments are estimated to create about 17,000 jobs and economic benefits of between about $2.9 billion and $3.5 billion annually province-wide over the peak years.

Supporting growth in the Province’s financial services sector that accounts for 390,000 jobs across Ontario, by advancing a modern and flexible approach to regulation, strengthening consumer and investor protection, and promoting Toronto as a global financial hub. This includes continuing to fund the Toronto Financial Services Alliance, in partnership with the private sector, to help increase sector jobs and investments.

Ontario’s strategic approach to the sharing economy will position the province to maximize this emerging sector’s potential for economic growth, innovation and productivity. PricewaterhouseCoopers projects sharing economy revenues will grow to $335 billion US by 2025 from $15 billion US today.

**Private-Sector Leaders**

Ontario’s competitive tax system, highly skilled and trained workforce, and stable financial markets are attracting global companies to set up or expand in the province. Recent examples include:

- Toyota invested $421 million to upgrade and expand capacity at its motor vehicle assembly plants in Cambridge and Woodstock, creating and retaining more than 8,000 jobs.
- Google Canada expanded its Waterloo workforce to 400 workers, up from four workers 10 years ago; the facility has capacity for 1,000 employees.
- DataWind announced a new Netbook for the Indian market during Premier Wynne’s recent trade mission to India, designed at the wireless web developer’s Mississauga headquarters.

Ontario’s regional development and community funds encourage local firms to be more innovative and productive, and to create employment. Recent examples include:

- Southwestern Ontario Development Fund: Guelph electronics maker Hammond received $1.5 million to upgrade its manufacturing process and make it more environmentally friendly. The funding leverages more than $15 million in private investment and helps create 55 new jobs and increase exports.
- Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation: Sault Ste. Marie’s Envirotek Sealing and Fibreglassing received $1 million for a $2 million expansion of its heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and custom design metal facility, creating seven new jobs.
- Eastern Ontario Development Fund: Brockville’s 3M Canada received $549,000 to develop and commercialize a new disruptive carbon-filled cartridge technology with wide application for health care, highway safety, office and optical film products. This support will help create 10 new highly skilled jobs.
• Community Loans Fund: This $4 million fund is providing low-interest commercial loans to businesses that commit to hiring people with disabilities. It is expected to create up to 1,100 jobs through 550 loans.

• Social Enterprise Demonstration Fund: This $4 million fund that supports innovative social finance pilot projects created more than 50 jobs during its first six months.

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) has taken significant steps to reduce costs and improve its finances. These actions protect worker benefits and support employers. Employer premiums have not increased for three years and the WSIB is projecting an average premium rate reduction of about 40 per cent, assuming it reaches full funding by 2022. The average premium rate would decline from $2.46 per $100 of payroll to $1.40 to $1.50 in 2015 dollars. Ontario would then be one of the most competitive provinces in terms of workplace insurance costs, while retaining the lowest allowed lost-time injury rates.

The government is eliminating the debt retirement charge (DRC) for non-residential uses as of April 1, 2018 — nine months earlier than previously estimated. Large industrials using 3,000 megawatt-hours per month could save $21,000 monthly, while a small business using 20,000 kilowatt-hours per month could save $140 monthly.

Creating Tomorrow’s Workforce

The government’s investments in education and training play a critical role in preparing Ontarians for the workforce of tomorrow while generating long-term prosperity.

• Creating a high-quality and accessible child care system and a world-class education system that allows each student to reach their full potential.

• Investing to help school boards, especially those in northern and remote communities, gain access to affordable high-speed connectivity.

• Transforming student assistance to make average college and university tuition free for students with financial need from families with incomes of $50,000 or less, and making tuition more affordable for middle-class families.

• Renewing the Ontario Youth Jobs Strategy to provide employment and skills development opportunities for up to 150,000 youth.

• Providing intensive support and training to more than 27,000 young people with multiple barriers to employment through the Youth Job Connection program.

• Investing approximately $176 million in programs that support apprentices, employers and training providers.

• Implementing the Canada–Ontario Job Grant, supporting more than 46,000 training opportunities for more than 35,000 employees.

• Launching the new Ontario Centre for Workforce Innovation to provide leadership and support research in the employment and training sectors.