

**Remarks for Greg Rickford, Minister of Energy,
Northern Development and Mines**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

September 28, 2020

“Hello everyone, thank you for joining me.

As we continue to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak and kick-start economic recovery, investing in businesses and entrepreneurs in Northern Ontario will be critical to our long-term success and prosperity.

Now more than ever, we are committed to making targeted investments that support the hardworking people and business owners across the north.

That is why it’s my pleasure today to announce our government’s new Northern Ontario Recovery Program to support northern businesses impacted by COVID-19.

Administered through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, this new program will provide targeted funding so businesses can install the upgrades necessary to adapt to the challenges of COVID-19.

Applications will open this week on October 1, 2020 and close on December 31, 2020.

Companies can apply for assistance with projects such as, but not limited to, building renovations and new constructions to support physical distancing and other safety measures; customer and employee safety installations, such as plexiglass shields and sneeze guards; equipment purchases, including personal protective equipment; marketing for new business initiatives and restructuring of business operations.

This has been a challenging period for many of us, but it is our true northern resiliency that has carried us through and I know that Northern Ontario will return from this crisis stronger than before.

I commend the businesses across the north who have adapted and overcome the unprecedented challenges of the past seven months.

And while we are here to discuss support for northern businesses, I’d like to address the future of the NOHFC.

We have listened to the feedback from northerners from every region.

We hear your concerns and that is why I am proud we will be launching a new and improved NOHFC program in the new year.

In collaboration with northern partners, and my fellow northern colleagues, we are developing a streamlined NOHFC program that will make it easier for more people and businesses to apply; support more projects in rural northern communities; target both existing and emerging market opportunities; provide more opportunities for Indigenous people; address the skilled labour shortage in the north; ...and aid the continued recovery from COVID-19.

To do this, on September 30, we will wind down all NOHFC existing programs to focus exclusively on the Northern Ontario Recovery Program.

Our immediate attention must focus on addressing the urgent and immediate impacts of COVID-19.

And I look forward to joining you all in the new year as we launch an updated NOHFC program that works for the people of Northern Ontario.

Today's announcement is another example of our government's commitment to get our northern economy back on track and deliver economic prosperity to hardworking northerners.

Thank you for joining me today, and I look forward to sharing the Northern Ontario Recovery Program success stories over the coming months."

Media Contacts

Alex Puddifant, Minister's Office
647-201-8821
alex.puddifant@ontario.ca

Media Desk, Communications Branch
416-314-6275
mediadesk.ndm@ontario.ca

[Ontario.ca/ENDM-news](https://ontario.ca/ENDM-news)

Disponible en français