

RURAL ONTARIO

SUMMIT • 2018

Main Street Revitalization Initiative

What is the Main Street Revitalization Initiative?

Ontario is helping rural communities attract investment and tourism, create jobs and enhance regional economic growth, by supporting the revitalization of downtown and main streets across the province through the Main Street Revitalization Initiative (MSRI).

Vibrant main streets help attract visitors, create jobs and increase the competitiveness of small businesses, and are the backbone of small, rural communities. That's why the province is helping municipalities enhance and revitalize their downtown and main streets.

Ontario is investing up to \$26 million in the MSRI, which will be administered by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and its rural arm, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association.

Communities can use the funding for improvements such as the installation of pedestrian crosswalks or landscaping. Municipalities can also direct funding to local businesses to improve the appearance of their storefronts by installing lighting or new signage.

The MSRI is part of a \$40 million investment over three years in the Main Street Enhancement Initiative, which will help strengthen small businesses in downtown and main street areas and enhance the digital presence and capabilities of small businesses through increased access to digital tools like e-commerce.

The revitalization initiative expands upon and complements the Downtown Revitalization Program that supports main street revitalization in rural areas.



For more information on the Main Street Revitalization Initiative, please contact: Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300.

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The Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund

The Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund (OCIF) is helping connect communities, create jobs and boost economic growth by increasing support for communities to improve roads, bridges, water systems and other local infrastructure.

The government is tripling investments through OCIF to \$300 million in 2019. This includes \$200 million in predictable, formula-based funding and an additional \$100 million in application-based funding.

These strategic investments will help spur local economic activity and create more job opportunities for rural Ontarians. They will also allow producers and processors to get their products to market faster, on more reliable roads, highways and bridges.

OCIF supports projects in municipalities with a population of less than 100,000 as of the 2011 census, as well as municipalities that are located in northern or rural Ontario.

Ontario is making the largest infrastructure investment in hospitals, schools, public transit, roads and bridges in the province's history. To learn more about what's happening in your community, go to: Ontario.ca/BuildON.

The following projects have been announced through the OCIF:

- The Township of St. Joseph will receive up to \$474,075 to rehabilitate its sewage pumping and treatment system.
- The Town of Tecumseh will receive up to \$806,149 to renew and rehabilitate their sanitary sewer collection system.
- The Towns of Bracebridge and Huntsville received up to \$1,176,229 to replace the Stephenson Road 1 Bridge.

For more information on the OCIF program, please email ocif@ontario.ca



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The Rural Economic Development Program

Ontario's Rural Economic Development (RED) program helps rural communities remove barriers to community economic development. With the support of the program, rural communities are better positioned to attract investment, grow our economy, and create jobs and opportunity across Ontario.

The RED program supports the government's plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives by:

- Helping remove barriers to economic development for rural communities, Indigenous communities and organizations, and not-for-profit organizations.
- Helping rural communities identify their economic strengths and develop strategies to attract business and investment which will help retain and create jobs.
- Helping rural communities and partners to be in a more competitive economic position so that they can diversify and grow their local economies - making economic growth more inclusive so that Ontario's growing economy delivers real benefits to rural Ontario.

The following projects have been announced through the RED program:

- The Municipality of Brockton will receive up to \$44,575 to complete a community-focused Business Retention and Expansion plan to understand local business issues and trends and help local businesses become more competitive;
- The Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association will receive up to \$30,000 to implement project activities to support the Arts and Culture Sector Development Framework to position the region as a centre for artistic excellence.
- The County of Bruce will receive up to \$40,000 to develop a framework for the collection and analysis of tourism data.

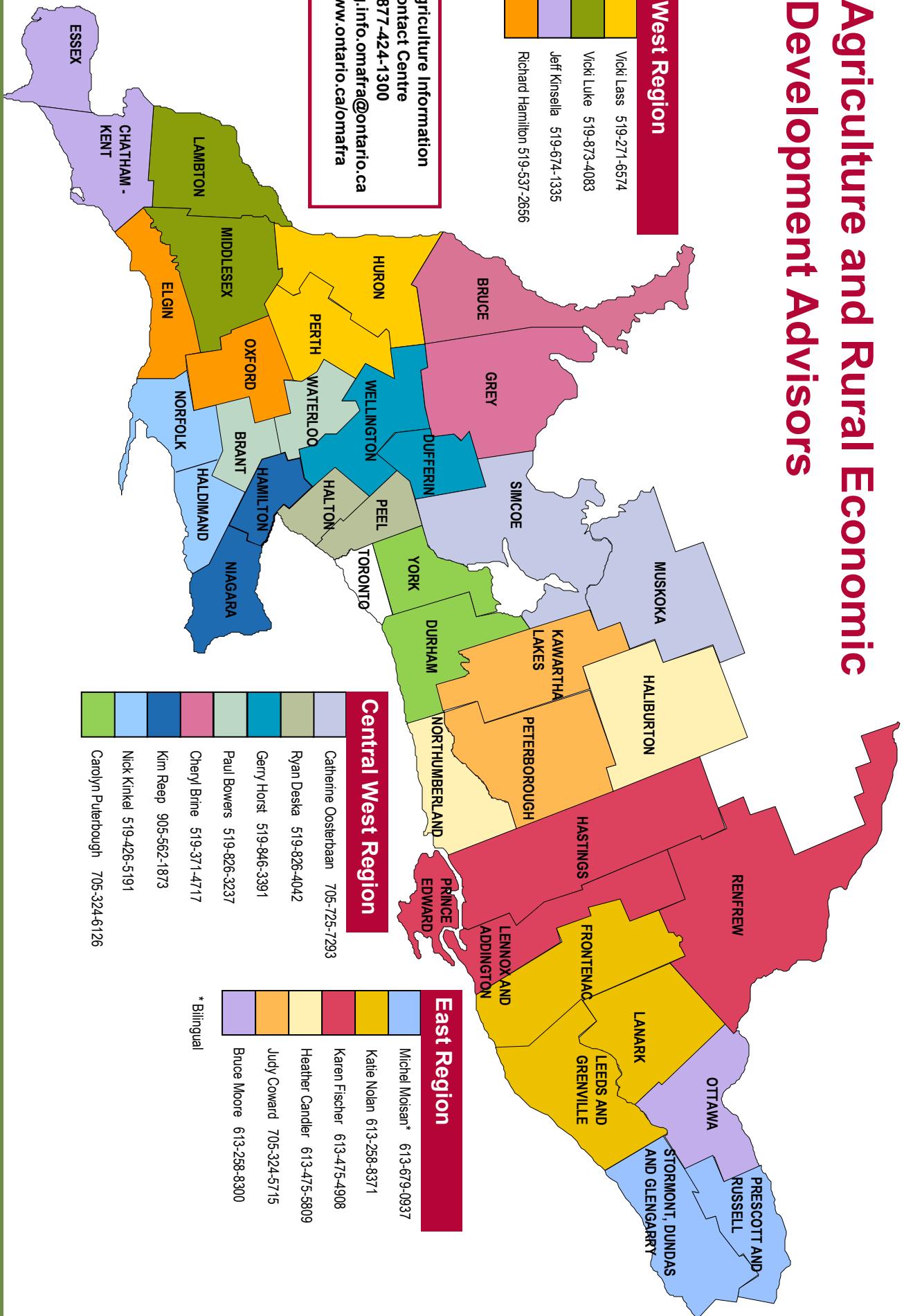
For more information on the RED program, please contact: Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300 or RED@ontario.ca



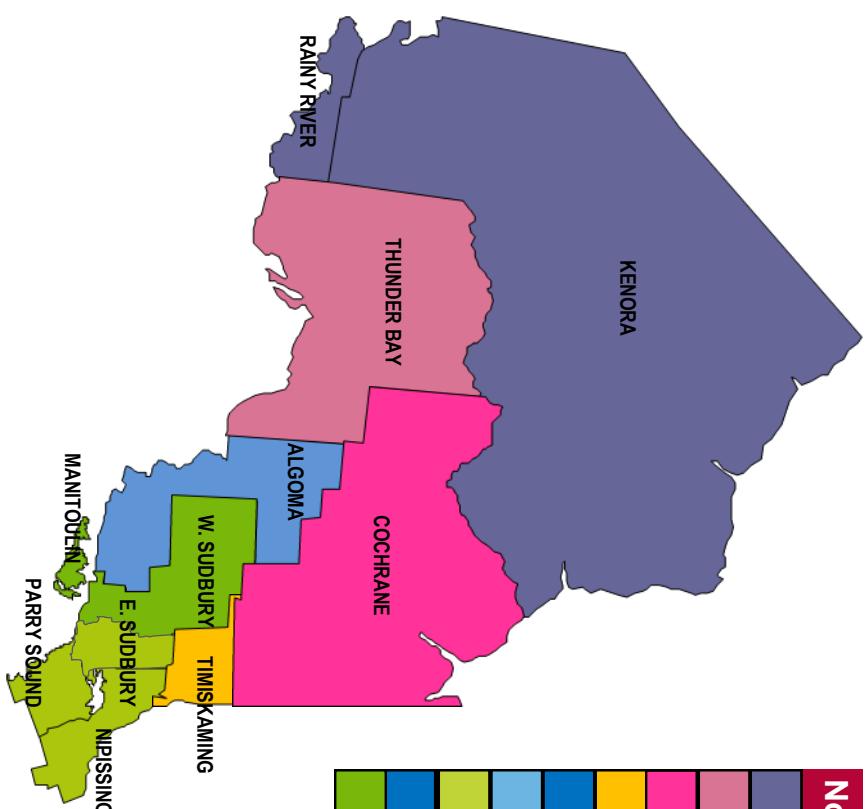
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Economic Development Analysis

Using data to inform your economic development decisions

Why use data to support economic development?

Data can be used by economic development organizations to research, analyze, and utilize information that can give them an edge up in their community. By using data to inform decisions, communities can better position themselves to develop compatible and realistic strategies for economic development and growth.

In addition, as the need to demonstrate success in terms of new job creation and economic growth, leaders are increasingly demanding that development professionals provide analyses based on objective statistical data to help determine whether their investments are having the desired impact.

Resources

Analyst

Analyst is a web-based tool that provides data on regional economies and workforces. It was developed to help economic development professionals better understand their region so they can make informed decisions about how to strengthen their economy.

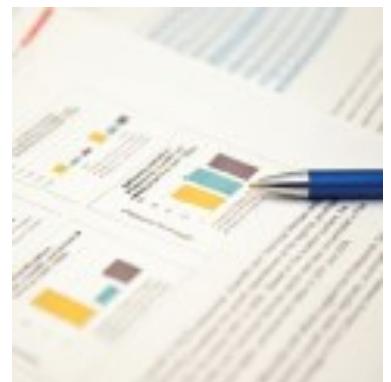
Foundations for Regional Economic Analysis Training

The purpose of the training is to improve participants' ability to use regional economic analysis to highlight what is unique to their region. This training can enable the basis for future economic growth. It can also determine what will likely be most useful strategies when creating future opportunities for job and income growth.

Regional Economic Development Branch Advisors

OMAFRA Advisors are available to fulfill simple data requests for your organization, using Analyst. This is helpful if you have a spontaneous need for data. Advisors can also provide guidance concerning when and how to use Analyst and work with your organization to help with the analysis of your region's economy and incorporating economic analysis into strategy development.

For more information on Economic Development Analysis contact your Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor at: ontario.ca/bxb3 or call 1-877-424-1300.



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Business Retention + Expansion

Does your community need assistance retaining jobs and expanding business?

Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) is a structured action-oriented, community-based approach to business and economic development. It promotes job growth by helping communities learn about issues as well as opportunities for local businesses, and sets priorities for projects to address these needs. It is important to recognize that few communities can do everything they would like to do to support their existing businesses. The BR+E process helps communities to prioritize their efforts.

A BR+E project consists of trained volunteers who visit businesses and conduct confidential interviews with senior level management, owners or managers. Data analysis and action planning is then undertaken to address issues and opportunities facing businesses.

Specific BR+E project goals may vary from community to community, and could include:

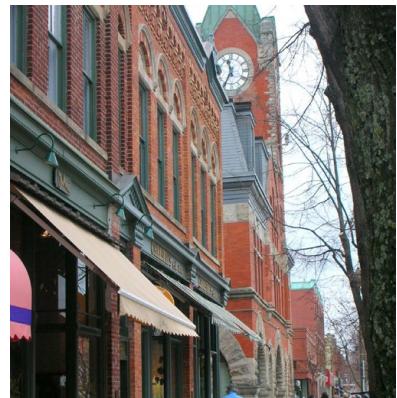
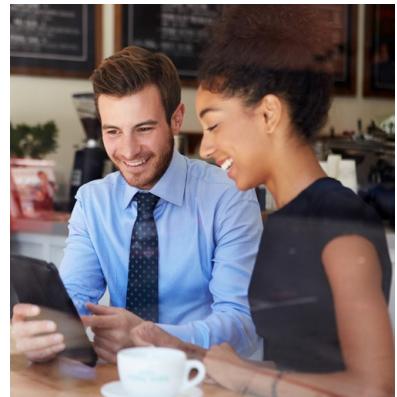
Short-term goals of BR+E

- Build and improve relations with existing businesses.
- Build capacity within the community and strengthen relationships between organizations.
- Identify the positive and negative attributes of the community as a place to do business.
- Identify and address immediate concerns and issues of individual businesses through an assessment and referral process.
- Let existing businesses know how much they are valued in the community.
- Collect business and market data to support economic development planning.
- Establish and implement a strategic action plan to support existing businesses.

Long-term goals for BR+E

- Increase the competitiveness of existing businesses.
- Enable business development, investment and job creation.
- Foster and enhance the environment for business development.

For more information on Business Retention and Expansion contact your Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor at: ontario.ca/bxb3 or call 1-877-424-1300.



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Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario

Want to know how to attract newcomers to your community?

The Community Immigrant Retention in Rural Ontario (CIRRO) program addresses the economic aspects for changing demographics of rural communities. It provides strategies and analytical tools to help communities attract and retain newcomers in support of economic development initiatives such as succession planning, skills attractions and business growth.

The CIRRO program is a strategic planning process designed to assist communities to develop and implement a newcomer attraction and retention strategy. The program is designed for use by economic development officers, municipal officers and anyone involved in community economic development.

The program helps communities balance a changing demographic and address the need for an educated workforce to sustain or grow their economy.

Want to Attract Newcomers and Youth?

The **Newcomer and Youth Community Indicators** is an analytical tool that provides information to help communities assess their attractiveness related to newcomers and youth. Communities of all sizes need factual and comparative data to support planning efforts and decision making to assist in the creation of strategies for attracting newcomers and retaining youth.

The tool allows communities to benchmark themselves against similar communities located across the Ontario. Using this tool, communities can understand how to build on their strengths and overcome barriers to successfully recruit and retain newcomers and youth, thereby increasing innovation and productivity in the local economy.

For more information on CIRRO contact your Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor at: ontario.ca/bxb3 or call 1-877-424-1300.



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Downtown Revitalization

Would revitalization help improve your downtown?

Downtown Revitalization (DR) is a process of improving the economic, management, physical and social well-being of a community's traditional town centre by:

- Strengthening local businesses and encouraging investment from building and property owners
- Creating enjoyable public spaces animated by a variety of creative and civic activities
- Providing work and living opportunities for residents

Each downtown has its own unique architecture, culture, traditions, heritage, workforce, and assets to build on when undertaking a DR. A successful DR project focuses not only on a community's built form but also its demographics, overall attractiveness to investors and the impression a community gives to visitors.

There are many beneficiaries of a revitalized downtown including:
merchants, property
owners, residents, community organizations and local government.

Will DR work in our community?

If your answer to the following questions is yes, then DR may be the solution for your downtown.

1. Are there at least 50 commercial enterprises or 70 structures/storefronts in the downtown?
2. Is the population under 100,000?
3. Does the community have the resources to support a long-term project?
4. Has the community completed one or more related programs such as First Impressions Community Exchange and/or Business Retention + Expansion?

For more information on Downtown Revitalization contact your Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor at: ontario.ca/bxb3 or call 1-877-424-1300.



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First Impressions Community Exchange

Get to know your community's strengths and challenges

First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) is a structured and cost-effective process that reveals the first impression a community makes to potential visitors, investors, and new residents. FICE helps communities learn about their strengths and challenges as seen through the eyes of first-time visitors. The knowledge gained through a FICE can be the basis for developing a positive and effective community action plan.

Depending on the interest of the community, a FICE can focus on one of three areas; full picture (the whole community), downtown or tourism.

How FICE works

Communities interested in participating in a FICE are paired with another community based on similarities like size, and area of interest. Once paired, volunteer community teams are assembled to visit their exchange community. The teams make an unannounced visit to their exchange community. They make observations, take supporting photos and notes (guided by a series of questions) and provide constructive feedback in order to objectively identify strengths and challenges within the community.

Benefits of FICE

The exchange is beneficial to communities that are developing strategic plans by providing a fresh perspective to the community.

The benefits can include:

- new ideas that can improve community competitiveness
- identifying the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- elaborating on a community action plan or strategic plan
- fostering community linkages

For more information on FICE contact your Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor at: ontario.ca/bxb3 or call 1-877-424-1300.

