



FOR RELEASE

New Digital Main Street Report Reveals Program Impact Grants, training, support help 27,000 Ontario small businesses survive the pandemic

Toronto, November 29, 2022 – The Ontario BIA Association (OBIAA), in partnership with the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA), today released its Digital Main Street progress report [**Digital Main Street: E-volving Opportunities for Small Business**](#). The report showcases the impact of Digital Main Street (DMS) and its Ontario Grants Program (OGP) on the ability of Ontario small businesses to weather the pandemic and to rapidly adapt to the changes in technology and consumer behaviour for sustainable growth.

The report covers the past four years and data highlights include: 10,000 Digital Transformation Grants totaling over \$24 million to small businesses across the province; almost \$18 million in Digital Service Squad Grants covering 226 municipalities and creating 580 jobs; and providing digital training for over 33,000 business owners.

Building on the successful launch and development of Digital Main Street in Toronto by TABIA in June 2016, the Ontario Grants Program was initiated province-wide in October 2018. It quickly became a valuable resource, helping more than 27,000 individual small businesses across the province raise their digital profile and sell online. The report notes that small businesses that took advantage of the OGP said the program was a key factor in sustaining their business throughout the lockdowns.

“Since 2016, Digital Main Street has provided essential digital support to small businesses across Ontario,” said John Kiru, Executive Director of TABIA. “As this report shows, the knowledge and experience meant Digital Main Street was poised to support even more small businesses in an invaluable way during the pandemic and was able to work with Government partners to expand DMS services across the country.”

Recognizing the importance of the DMS program in reaching and supporting new businesses and new markets, the Government of Ontario followed through on their 2021 Fall Economic Statement commitment to invest an additional \$40 million over the next two years. This renewed support is expected to help 32,000 more small businesses embrace technology, work more efficiently, and generate new revenue streams that will sustain them through tough economic times and be ready for future long-term growth. The report supports the case that further investment in the DMS program will deliver positive short- and long-term results for small businesses that will help stimulate economic recovery and revitalize local communities.

The DMS Ontario Grants Program is administered by OBIAA, and vertically integrates with their mission to help Ontario’s main streets thrive.

“Digital Main Street was originally designed to help the traditional brick-and-mortar businesses of Ontario’s main street cores adopt the digital tools they needed to compete,” said Kay Matthews, Executive Director of

OBIAA. “When the pandemic hit, DMS was there - the right program for the times, helping more small businesses survive. Now, as we are coming out the other side, it’s very clear that businesses that took advantage of Digital Main Street are now positioned for a brighter future. As our report demonstrates, DMS and its Ontario Grants Program are a vitally important, immensely valuable resource for small businesses.”

[Digital Main Street: E-volving Opportunities for Small Business, its accompanying video](#), and more information about Digital Main Street’s vital contribution to Ontario’s small businesses can be found at <https://obiaa.com/projects/digital-main-street/>

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ABOUT OBIAA

OBIAA is the network that represents unique and vibrant BIAs across Ontario. The Association supports and advocates on behalf of its members through the building and nurturing of strong relationships and partnerships. OBIAA is a leader in the development and sharing of information, tools, resources and best practices, and is the ONE voice on common issues.

ABOUT TABIA

The Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) is a non-profit umbrella organization working with the 85 Business Improvement Areas within the City of Toronto, who in turn represent more than 90,000 business and property owners.

ABOUT Digital Main Street

Digital Main Street is a program that helps main street businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, and our Digital Service Squad, a team of street-level team members who help main street businesses grow and manage their operations through technology.

Digital Main Street was created by the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) with direct support from the City of Toronto. DMS is also supported by a group of strategic business partners, including Google, Mastercard, Shopify, Microsoft, Facebook, Intuit QuickBooks, Square, and Lightspeed. The program is delivered Pan Canada in support of small business thanks to the support of all three levels of government.
www.digitalmainstreet.ca.

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