

# Great Lakes Local Action Fund

## 2024 Application Guidelines

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### Contact Information

For questions regarding the Great Lakes Local Action Fund (GLLAF), please contact:

**The GLLAF Team**

**Telephone:** 705-761-3970

**Email:** [greatlakesfund@ontario.ca](mailto:greatlakesfund@ontario.ca)

For questions or technical support with the online Transfer Payment Ontario platform, please contact:

**Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care**

**Telephone:** 1-855-216-3090

**Email:** [TPONCC@ontario.ca](mailto:TPONCC@ontario.ca)

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## 1.0 Great Lakes Local Action Fund (GLLAF)

The Great Lakes are the foundation of Ontario's economic prosperity, social well-being, and ecological health – supplying water to our communities, sustaining traditional activities of Indigenous peoples, supporting Ontario's economy, and providing healthy ecosystems for recreation, tourism and wildlife.

The province has worked for decades with the Great Lakes community, including governments at all levels, Indigenous communities, community and environmental groups, conservation authorities, businesses, and others to protect and restore the Great Lakes. This has included working collaboratively through initiatives and projects that have helped clean up polluted areas and supported the restoration of habitats and species.

To continue supporting community efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes, the Ontario government, through the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks is investing \$1.8 million in the Great Lakes Local Action Fund. Funding will support community-based projects that increase climate change resiliency and protect or improve water quality in the Great Lakes ecosystem in 2025.

### 1.1 Funding

Generally, applicants may apply for \$50,000 or for lesser amounts. Applications for amounts greater than \$50,000, and up to \$100,000, may be considered for projects that clearly demonstrate very high value in terms of environmental benefit to the Great Lakes and/or their connecting rivers, along with significant and broad community engagement and benefits, and strong project design, as described below under "Project evaluation".

### 1.2 Project timelines

Funding is available for projects occurring (costs incurred) between **January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025**.

All project activities and the final reporting to the ministry must be complete by **December 31, 2025**. It is recommended that applicants build in time between the end of project activities and final reporting to pull together the necessary documentation.

## 1.3 Application timeline

**Applications must be submitted electronically through the Transfer Payment Ontario (“[TPON](#)”) portal by September 26, 2024.** Applications not fully completed by the deadline, or submitted after the deadline, will not be accepted.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks before they will be provided with funding.

## 2.0 Applying through Transfer Payment Ontario

Applicants must have a TPON account in order to apply. If you do not have a TPON account, you must first create a My Ontario account and then register for TPON. Please sign up early; it may take up to 5 business days to be granted access. Follow the detailed steps outlined at [Ontario.ca/GetFunding](https://ontario.ca/GetFunding).

Once you are registered and have access, the next step is to download and complete the application form (and supporting documents) through TPON.

If you have any questions or difficulties during this process, there are resources to assist at [ontario.ca/GetFunding](https://ontario.ca/GetFunding) or you may contact the TPON Ontario Customer Service Line at 416-325-6691 or 1-855-216-3090, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (ET), or by email at [TPONCC@Ontario.ca](mailto:TPONCC@Ontario.ca).

## 3.0 Program Objectives

### 1. Improve climate change resiliency through ecosystem protection and restoration

- Implement local scale nature-based solutions to protect, enhance or restore riparian areas, culturally significant areas, reduce impacts to Great Lakes ecosystem health and increase awareness of the importance of these areas/actions to the health of the Great Lakes.
- Example activities may include:
  - planting native species (e.g., trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers)
  - preventing/reducing erosion of shorelines and sedimentation in natural creeks, streams or rivers (e.g., shoreline protection using natural solutions, re-vegetating buffer strips, mulching/seeding)
  - management of invasive species

### 2. Protect and improve water quality

- Implement local scale actions that address road salt, nonpoint source pollution and plastic pollution through prevention, mitigation and public awareness.
- Example activities may include:
  - mitigating the impacts of road salt use on waterbodies
  - preventing plastic pollution from entering waterbodies and removing plastic from waterbodies (e.g., interception, collection, education)
  - reducing nonpoint source water pollution (e.g., nutrients from lawns and gardens [not including agricultural], oil and other vehicle and household chemicals, pet waste and sewage)

## 4.0 Eligibility

### 4.1 Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for funding, the applicant must be a legal incorporated entity, such as:

- community-based incorporated organizations
- conservation organizations (i.e., non-governmental, not-for-profit, charitable corporations whose work focuses on environmental protection, conservation, and/or restoration)
- Indigenous communities
- conservation authorities and their foundations\*
- municipal governments\*
- academic institutions including schools as represented by their school boards, universities and community colleges
- industry and non-profit associations or organizations

Applicants are strongly encouraged seek partnership opportunities with other organizations in their community (e.g., community/youth groups, schools/school boards, small businesses, etc.) to enhance project outcomes, community engagement and awareness, including opportunities supporting broader inclusion and diversity with underserved or underrepresented communities.

The organization that would oversee and take responsibility for implementing the project is the organization that must apply, and that organization must meet the eligibility criteria above.

\*To be eligible for funding, municipalities and conservation authorities and foundations associated with a conservation authority must partner with at least one community-based organization or Indigenous community and must provide a signed letter from the community-based organization or Indigenous community as part of their application, which sets out the role of the organization/community in the proposed project.

- Community-based organizations include local not-for-profit groups like agricultural, landowner, youth, and environmental and conservation groups, as well as schools and other academic institutions, and First Nations and Métis organizations.
- Partnering with a community-based organization means the community-based organization must be actively involved in delivering the project, for example, participating in project design; or contributing a significant amount of staff or volunteer time to the project's implementation.

Notes:

- If awarded funding, a First Nations community may require a Band Council resolution to enter into the transfer payment agreement with the ministry. When required by the community, a copy shall be provided to the ministry prior to signing the transfer payment agreement.
- Métis communities and organizations include the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat and Métis communities/organizations that are incorporated or that are associated with a corporation that serves as the legal entity for contracting purposes.
- If awarded funding, a municipality may require a by-law authorizing the municipality to enter into the transfer payment agreement with the Ministry. When required by the municipality, a copy of the by-law shall be provided to the ministry prior to signing a transfer payment agreement.

## 4.2 Eligible projects

To be eligible for funding, projects must:

- aim to meet at least one of the GLLAF objectives described above
- engage community members in the implementation of the project
  - Note: Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek out partnership and collaboration opportunities with other organizations to enhance youth and community engagement during the implementation of the project, including underserved and underrepresented communities.
- start no earlier than January 1, 2025, and be completed by December 31, 2025

**Incomplete applications and projects that do not meet the criteria above will not be considered eligible for funding.** Please see section 6.0 below for detailed information about what must be included in a complete application package.

## 4.3 Ineligible Projects

The following types of projects are ineligible for funding:

- projects where the entire focus is on education and outreach (i.e., with no direct actions addressing program objectives)
- feasibility studies or plans, and land-use planning
- contaminated site remediation (e.g., sediment remediation, brownfields)
- activities that occur within Provincial Parks
- strictly beautification activities
- land acquisition
- projects being done to comply with specific legal requirements
- projects requiring an individual or class environmental assessment (EA) (unless already completed or a class EA category A project)
- projects where the funds are used to build, develop, purchase, or make significant improvements to capital assets owned/controlled by the funding recipient

The lists of eligible and ineligible projects above are not comprehensive. If you are unsure about the eligibility of your project and activities, please contact us by email at [greatlakesfund@ontario.ca](mailto:greatlakesfund@ontario.ca), or by phone at 705-761-3970.

Eligible groups can apply for more than one project but must use a separate application form for each eligible project. The ministry may, in its absolute discretion, limit the number projects awarded funding per eligible group.

## 4.4 Eligible Costs

Funding may be awarded to an eligible group for up to 100% of eligible costs incurred in Ontario directly related to the delivery of eligible projects. Any eligible project costs which are paid for using funds provided to the recipient under an GLLAF transfer payment agreement may not also be paid for by other funding sources.

Administration costs for the project cannot exceed 25% of the funding requested.

Applicants should be aware that the ministry may not fund all aspects of a project, although the applicant will be required to complete the full project in order to receive allocated transfer payment funds. Applicants should identify in the application form how the full project will be completed if only partial transfer payment funds are provided from the GLLAF.

Examples of **eligible** costs include:

- **Goods:** Includes materials and supplies required for the project.
- **Services:** Includes third party costs such as contractor services/equipment. Costs for some types of services may include reasonable disbursements in addition to fees if commonly charged for such services. However, funds may not be used for costs that would otherwise be ineligible for the program (e.g., hospitality).
- **Staff:** Includes wages and mandatory benefits for staff assigned to the project, such as project managers, and that will be directly involved in implementing the project.
- **Consultants:** Includes third party expertise for services such as detailed engineering or landscape design plans. Consultant costs may include reasonable disbursements in addition to fees if commonly charged for such consulting services. However, funds may not be used for costs that would otherwise be ineligible for the program (e.g., hospitality).
- **Equipment/other capital items:** Generally limited to rental costs. A purchase may be approved, by request, under certain circumstances.

Note: Funding from the ministry may be applied to the non-refundable portion of HST only. The ministry will not provide any funds beyond the approved funding amount.

Examples of **ineligible** costs include:

- ongoing overhead, core administrative activities of organizations (e.g., rent)
- insurance
- capital expenses relating to the purchase, construction or betterment of tangible capital assets (e.g., building structures, vehicles, office furniture, computers, IT or communication equipment, or any other assets that have a useful life of greater than one year and meant for use in the organization's operation on a continuous basis)
- land securement
- clothing (except for safety purposes)
- appreciation gifts (e.g., gift certificates for volunteers)
- honoraria (except for honoraria for Indigenous Elders or community knowledge holders for their participation, which are eligible costs)
- travel, accommodation, hospitality, or entertainment expenses (e.g., food, beverages)
- signage that does not provide information relevant to the project
- costs incurred prior to the effective date of the transfer payment agreement with the ministry
- refundable harmonized sales tax (HST)
- legal costs including but not limited to litigation

The lists of eligible and ineligible costs are not comprehensive. If you are unsure about whether your costs may be eligible for funding, please contact us by email at [greatlakesfund@ontario.ca](mailto:greatlakesfund@ontario.ca), or by phone at 705-761-3970.

By receiving funds from the GLLAF, the recipient may become subject to legislation applicable to organizations that receive funding from the Government of Ontario, including the *Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010* (Ontario), the *Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996* (Ontario), and the *Auditor General Act* (Ontario).

Applicants are responsible for ensuring and showing that no project expenses which are being

requested from GLLAF are also covered by other funding sources (i.e., no “double-dipping”).

## 5.0 Application Evaluation

All GLLAF applications are initially screened for completeness and eligibility and then evaluated against the following criteria:

### **Alignment with GLLAF objectives, as described in Section 3.0 above**

- The more strongly a project is aligned with GLLAF objectives, the more likely it is to be favourably evaluated.
- Projects which include collaboration with multiple organizations and significant community/youth engagement will be evaluated more favourably.

### **Environmental benefits**

- How well the project would contribute to addressing an identified objective.
- The extent to which the project is expected to result in specific and measurable environmental benefits.
- The potential long-term benefits of the project (e.g., applications should describe how the benefits of the project will be sustained/occur over time).

### **Project design and workplan**

- Workplan will be evaluated on how clearly and appropriately the proposal provides details about the steps that will be implemented to complete the proposed work.
- Project budget will be evaluated on how clearly it reflects the workplan, outlining the associated expenditures, and whether costs are reasonable.
- How likely the project is to be completed in the timeframe described, being ready to begin upon signing of a transfer payment agreement, and complete, with final reporting, by December 31, 2025. Implementation risks have been considered and mitigation proposed.
- Relevance of the performance measures built into the project to assess the effectiveness of project activities. Outcomes and outputs will be reported upon project completion.

### **Expertise, leverage and value for money**

- How well the application demonstrates that the project has the necessary and qualified contributors and resources to achieve its intended purposes.
- Project leverages support (cash and/or in-kind) from other contributors. Higher levels of support improve the evaluation of a project.
- How well the application demonstrates why the funding is needed for the project to take place.
- Evaluation of projects will consider purchasing procedures to ensure value for money. It is recommended that three quotes be obtained for materials and services over \$5,000.

### **Social and/or economic co-benefits, community involvement and collaboration**

- Project provides high quality volunteer engagement, where volunteers are actively contributing to meaningful project outcomes, and developing their own skills and knowledge.
- Projects promotes innovation such as the implementation of new tools and approaches to addressing program objectives.

- Projects that support broader inclusion and diversity with opportunities that support underserved or underrepresented communities.

**Whether or not to provide funding and who funding is provided to is within the sole discretion of the ministry.** In its final evaluation, the ministry may also consider the kinds of projects proposed, geographic distribution, the number of projects funded per organization, and types of organizations applying in order to support a variety of projects and recipients across the province.

## 6.0 What to include in the application package

**Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.** A completed application package must include:

- a completed application form through TPON, including a fully completed work plan that outlines how all project activities will be finished and final reporting submitted by **December 31, 2025**
- a detailed project budget
- signed letters of support from key organizations or individuals, other than your organization and its members, if they are critical to project delivery or required for eligibility purposes
- property access permission from landowners
- signed letters from other funding sources, if any, to confirm their contributions

The following items are also suggested for inclusion in the application package, to strengthen the application:

- copies of permits, approvals, or permit applications needed for your project, if applicable and available. These may be submitted at a later date if needed.
- organization's purchasing policy, if available
- a map or maps of the site(s) should be included if it helps to explain the project

## 7.0 Additional Information for Applicants

- Applicants are responsible for obtaining all permits to implement the proposed activities.
- Applicants are responsible for obtaining landowner permission to access private property to undertake the proposed activities.
- For projects occurring on private property, applicants are strongly encouraged to enter into a stewardship agreement with the property owner to ensure project objectives and outcomes are sustained.

## 8.0 Notification

All applicants will be notified by e-mail of the outcome of their application. Following provisional approval of successful projects, recipients will be required to enter into a transfer payment agreement with the Province of Ontario before any payments will be made. Applicants should not proceed with a project on the expectation that it will be funded under the GLLAF without an executed agreement with the ministry.

## 9.0 Agreement and Payment

Before any funding is provided, successful applicants will be required to enter into a transfer payment



agreement which includes the terms and conditions of the project, expenditures and reporting requirements.

The terms and conditions of the funding will be set out in detail in the transfer payment agreement. Generally, those terms and conditions will be consistent with the following:

- payments will be made following the completion of milestones and ministry approval of required project reporting and in alignment with cash flow needs. An initial payment is generally made upon signing of the transfer payment agreement.
- the final date to submit all final reporting and financial documentation is **December 31, 2025**
- applicants approved for funding will be required to submit certificates of insurance to confirm coverage in accordance with the terms of the transfer payment agreement
- applicants approved for funding will need to attest in TPON that they are in good standing with tax, labour and environmental laws

Until the transfer payment agreement is finalized and signed, the ministry cannot guarantee funds for any project. Successful applicants shall not announce nor disclose information about the funding or the agreement until they are advised by the ministry.

If you would like to see an example of the detailed transfer payment agreement before applying, please contact us at [greatlakesfund@ontario.ca](mailto:greatlakesfund@ontario.ca).

## 10.0 Recognition

Following the finalization of the transfer payment agreement and subject to the approval of the Ministry successful applicants are required to acknowledge the receipt of financial assistance from the Government of Ontario, possibly in the form of a signage or other media

## 11.0 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

All applications submitted to the ministry may be subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). FIPPA provides a right of access to information in the custody or under the control of the ministry, subject to a limited set of exemptions, such as section 17(1) of the act. This exemption applies to information that reveals a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information supplied in confidence, where the disclosure could reasonably be expected to result in certain harms.

If an applicant believes that any of the information contained in its application or submitted to the ministry under TPON falls under this exemption, and the applicant (or another party to whom the information relates) wishes to indicate to the ministry that submitted material is confidential, it should be clearly marked as confidential. If the ministry receives a request for access to this information, the ministry may notify the applicant so the applicant may make representations concerning its disclosure.

Applicants are advised that the names of funding recipients, the amount of funding, and the purpose for which funding is awarded is information the ministry routinely makes available to the public.

## 12.0 Auditing

To ensure integrity in the use of public funds, the Province of Ontario reserves the right to require independent verification of reported information as required in the terms of the transfer payment agreement. The terms as set out in a transfer payment agreement must be satisfied to receive payments.

The successful applicant shall provide, if requested by the province, any necessary permissions to access the property where the project activities took place for a site visit and make available any



records, documents and/or information that may be required for this purpose.

## 13.0 Terms of Reference

The following provisions apply to this application process for GLLAF:

- (i) This application process is not intended to create a formal legally binding procurement process and shall not give rise to the legal rights or duties applied to a formal legally binding procurement process.
- (ii) The ministry reserves the right to seek clarification, and supplementary information relating to the clarification, from applicants. The response received by the ministry from an applicant shall form an integral part of the applicant's submission.
- (iii) At the conclusion of this process, selected applicants will be expected to enter into a transfer payment agreement with the ministry (please see section 9.0 of the guidelines for further information).
- (iv) Neither party shall have the right to make claims against the other with respect to this application process, the selection of any applicant, the failure to be selected to enter into a transfer payment agreement, or the failure to honour applications prior to the execution of such an agreement.
- (v) The ministry will not consider an applicant whose application is found to contain misrepresentations.