

**Ontario Junior Exploration Program Guide
2026–2027**

Ministry of Energy and Mines

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What you need to know before you apply?

Before completing your Ontario Junior Exploration Program application:

- Read the entire program guide.
- Applications are submitted through Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) and, to access TPON, a My Ontario account must be set up in advance.
- 2026-2027 Intake Period: May 21 – June 26, 2026, for projects with eligible activities starting on or after April 1, 2026.
- Note that the deadline for applications is **June 26, 2026, at 4 p.m.** Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Applications to the program will be assessed on a first-come, first served basis.
- An applicant can only apply for funding for one project per intake period. Any additional applications received will not be considered for funding, including applications submitted in multiple streams.
- Email OJEP@ontario.ca if you have any accommodation requests, require alternative formats, or have any program-specific inquiries.

What is the Ontario Junior Exploration Program?

The Ontario Junior Exploration Program (OJEP) is an initiative of the Ontario government that will help attract investment in early exploration, expand the pipeline of mineral development projects, including critical minerals, and lead to more mines and jobs in Ontario.

Early exploration is key to the discovery of new and existing minerals, including critical minerals, which is a priority area for Ontario. The mines of the future depend on discoveries made by junior companies during the exploration phase. By funding the eligible costs associated with early exploration, OJEP can reduce risk for private investors, boosting Ontario's appeal as a jurisdiction of choice for mining investment.

To support early mineral exploration, Ontario is investing \$30 million over the next three years in the Ontario Junior Exploration Program. This includes \$12 million dedicated to the Critical Minerals Stream and \$1.5 million for the Prospectors Stream.

- **Prospectors** can apply for up to **\$50,000 per project** in the Prospectors Stream.
- **Junior mining companies** can access up to **\$200,000 per mineral exploration project**.

Additionally, approved projects will be eligible for an **extra \$15,000** to support Indigenous Participation, on top of the existing funding.

This means:

- **Prospectors** can receive up to **\$65,000** per project.

Junior mining companies can receive up to **\$215,000** per project in both **Critical Mineral and Exploration streams**.

Critical Minerals

Over the last 20 years, the global economy has been shifting. New technologies and high-growth sectors, such as renewable energy, electric vehicles, high-end consumer electronics and communications technologies, are driving the need for critical minerals.

Ontario is home to significant critical minerals deposits, including lithium, cobalt, copper and nickel. We are well positioned to become a global supplier, producer and manufacturer of these minerals, which are important to daily life. By supporting early exploration for critical minerals through OJEP, Ontario is helping to unlock the province's vast mineral exploration potential and paving the way for unprecedented growth in our mining sector. (See [Appendix A](#) for Ontario's Critical Minerals List.)

Program Objectives

- Increase mineral exploration in Ontario
- Attract and increase investment in mineral exploration, development and mining
- Promote development of critical minerals
- Promote employment of Indigenous community members and businesses in early exploration

Program Streams

Critical Minerals Stream: Projects under the Critical Minerals Stream are projects where a critical mineral, as identified in Ontario's Critical Minerals List (Appendix A), is the primary or secondary mineral exploration target.

First, projects where the primary mineral exploration target is a critical mineral ("Primary Target Projects") will be considered, in the order they are received.

Second, if there is funding remaining once decisions have been made on Primary Target Projects, projects where the secondary mineral exploration target is a critical mineral ("Secondary Target Projects") will be considered, in the order they are received.

If funding under the Critical Minerals Stream is fully allocated, any remaining Primary or Secondary Target Projects will automatically be considered under the Exploration Stream, in the order they are received.¹

Early Exploration Stream: Projects under the Early Exploration Stream include:

Projects where a mineral not included in the list of critical minerals, as identified in Appendix A, is the exploration target.

¹ **Note:** In addition, any Primary or Secondary Target Projects submitted under the Critical Minerals Stream that, after ministry review, are determined to not have a critical mineral as the mineral exploration target, will be automatically considered under the Exploration Stream.

Any Primary Target Projects or Secondary Target Projects that are instead being considered under the Exploration Stream, for the reasons outlined above.

All projects in the Exploration Stream will be considered in the order they are received.

Prospectors Stream: Projects under the Prospectors Stream include:

Projects under the Prospectors Stream include any grassroots exploration work conducted by a licensed Ontario prospector. Whether targeting critical minerals or non-critical minerals, projects will be considered in the order they are received.

Who is eligible to apply?

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for OJEP funding, an applicant² is required to:

- Be a non-producing, junior mining company or prospector with a market capitalization of up to \$100 million (or of a comparable value, if a private company) as of May 21, 2026, the opening date of the intake period.
- An applicant must be registered on the Ontario Business Registry prior to entering into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Province of Ontario.
 - Note:** Applicants under the Prospectors Stream are exempt from this eligibility requirement.
- Submit an application that proposes exploration activity in Ontario under the early mineral exploration streams, including mineral recovery exploration, as follows:
 - Early mineral exploration involves the identification of new mineral exploration targets or the evaluation of existing targets in an area that is not known to host a mineral deposit with economic potential.

Note: Mineral exploration projects involving the recovery of minerals from mine waste will be considered on a case-by-case basis (for example, tailings or waste rock associated with abandoned or orphaned mining and/or mineral processing operations.)

Note: Exploration targets that are at the resource delineation stage, or exploration targets that have recorded past mineral production or contain historical mineral resources are not eligible for funding.

² Note: If the Applicant is a listed person under the *Special Economic Measures Act* and/or the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)*, the Applicant is not eligible for funding under the OJEP. If, in the ministry's sole and absolute discretion, the Applicant operates in affiliation, collaboration, or association with any person listed under the *Special Economic Measures Act* and/or the *Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law)*, the Applicant may not be eligible for funding under the OJEP.

- Provide a copy of a valid Certificate of Insurance for this project which includes the following:
 - general commercial liability coverage at a limit of not less than \$2 million per occurrence;
 - a cross-liability clause;
 - contractual liability coverage; and
 - a 30-day written notice of cancellation.

In addition, prior to executing a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Province of Ontario, the addition of “His Majesty the King in Right of Ontario as represented by the Minister of Mines” as an additional insured is required.

- Be enrolled in the Mining Lands Administration System (MLAS) and hold the necessary mining lands tenure required to carry out the project. Mining lands tenure is to be kept in good standing for the duration of the project (e.g., mining claims cannot lapse, be abandoned, cancelled or forfeited, and rent payments must be kept up to date on any lease or licence). The ministry is to be notified, in writing, if any mining lands tenure relevant to the project is transferred at any point during an approved project.
- Have a valid recovery or exploration plan and/or permit issued under the *Mining Act* (Ontario) prior to work proceeding and for the duration of project (where required).³
- In the event the plan/permit holder and/or tenure holder is not the applicant (for example, in the event of an option agreement or some other relationship between the applicant and the plan/permit holder and/or tenure holder), the applicant must have the approval of the plan/permit holder and/or tenure holder to apply for OJEP funding and carry out the project. Two applicants cannot receive funding for the same project.
- Provide proof that the applicant has the funds to cover 100 per cent of total project costs. A copy of the applicant’s recent bank statement or a signed letter of attestation from the company’s signing authority will be accepted as proof of funds. Audited financial statements or Management Discussion & Analysis (MD&A) will not be accepted as proof of funds. A bank statement for a related company will not be accepted as proof of funds.

Note: Applicants under the Prospectors Stream are exempt from this eligibility requirement.

For applications under the Prospectors Stream, additional eligibility requirements are:

- The prospector must possess an Ontario prospecting license for a minimum of one year before the date of the application.

³ An applicant may *apply* for funding under OJEP if a plan or permit application has been submitted to the ministry, but the plan is not yet effective, or the permit has not yet been issued. However, an applicant will not be *eligible* for funding until a plan is effective, or a permit issued, subject to the terms of the program guide.

- The claims where work is planned must be in good standing with the first year of assessment work filed and approved.
- The prospector must hold at least 25 per cent interest in the claim where eligible activity will occur.
- The prospector must not be associated with a junior mining company for any claims receiving OJEP funding.
- Prospectors may apply for one project per intake period.
- Prospectors may claim a daily labour rate of up to \$350, unless labour costs are claimed based on eligible invoiced expenses.

When can I apply?

2026 – 2027 Intake Period: May 21– June 26, 2026, for projects with eligible activities starting on or after April 1, 2026.

The deadline for applications is **June 26, 2026 at 4 p.m.** Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Applications to the program will be assessed and approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

The ministry reserves the right to either extend or reduce an intake period or add additional intake periods, depending on the number of applications received.

How much funding is available and what is the cost-sharing requirement?

Non-producing junior mining companies in Ontario that meet the program's eligibility requirements may apply for funding up to \$200,000 for one project per intake period under the early exploration streams.

Applicants for the Prospectors Stream that meet eligibility requirements may apply for funding up to \$50,000 for one project per intake period.

Additionally, recipients can receive full reimbursement for Indigenous Participation expenses up to \$15,000, potentially increasing total funding to the following:

- Prospectors in the Prospectors Stream can receive up to **\$65,000** per project. Junior mining companies in the Critical Mineral or Exploration Streams can receive up to **\$215,000** per project.

How will this funding be disbursed?

The ministry will disburse approved funding for a project in two installments. Upon satisfactory review of the project's interim report, funding recipients will receive up to 30

per cent of the agreed funding amount. Upon satisfactory review of the final report, funding recipients will receive up to 70 per cent of the agreed funding amount.

What are eligible activities?

Eligible Early Exploration Activities

OJEP supports early mineral exploration, which involves the identification of new mineral exploration targets or the evaluation of existing targets in an area that is not known to host a mineral deposit with economic potential.

Note: Mineral exploration projects involving the recovery of minerals from mine waste will be considered on a case-by-case basis (for example, tailings or waste rock associated with abandoned or orphaned mining and/or mineral processing operations.)

Note: Exploration targets that are at the resource delineation stage, and exploration targets that have recorded past mineral production or contain historical mineral resources are not eligible for funding.

The following activities are eligible for funding:

- The establishment of a grid by line cutting, including picketing and chaining, when such a grid has been approved and is used to carry out an eligible survey.
- Prospecting, geological mapping, and related grassroots mineral exploration field activities
- Geophysical surveys (airborne or ground), geological and geochemical surveys, when such activities include the preparation of maps and reports by qualified personnel.
- Overburden stripping, trenching and test pitting, when such activities include the preparation of maps and reports.
- Surface sampling, trenching or test pitting tailings or other mine wastes, when such activities include the preparation of maps and reports.
- Surface overburden and core drilling for exploration purposes only, including mobilization, demobilization and core logging and sampling, supported by the preparation of plans, sections, drill logs and reports.
- Surface drilling of tailings or other mine wastes for recovery of minerals purposes only, including mobilization, demobilization, logging and sampling, supported by the preparation of plans, sections, drill logs and reports.
- Removal of material: all refuse, fuel drums, equipment and any other material or thing brought onto the lands for the early exploration activity.
- Activities to help meet the requirements for rehabilitation of exploration plans and exploration permit activities as described in the Provincial Standards for Early Exploration (e.g., capping and sealing of drill holes, disposing of drilling fluids and cuttings, cross-piling of drill core, backfilling, contouring and sloping and stockpiling).
- Activities that meet the requirements of a Recovery and Remediation Plan, or term and condition, associated with a mineral recovery permit.

- Evaluation activities: Assaying and analyses for the above activities, when such activities include the preparation of maps and reports.

Eligible Indigenous Participation Activities

This category is intended to encourage applicants to employ Indigenous community members and/or procure goods and services from Indigenous suppliers as much as possible for their projects. The following activities are eligible for funding at up to a maximum of \$15,000 (above the total approved funding for the project):

- Skills training for Indigenous community members.
- Employment of Indigenous community members in project-related activities.
- Procurement from Indigenous suppliers for services related to exploration, supplies, accommodation and machinery rental, as well as transportation of personnel, supplies and machinery to fulfill activities under an approved OJEP project.

What are eligible expenses?

Exploration expenditures that are eligible within the program include expenses for salaries, services related to exploration, supplies, accommodation and machinery rental as well as transportation within Ontario of personnel, supplies and machinery incurred as part of the fulfillment of an approved OJEP project as more particularly described below.

Eligible expenses refer to those costs, (not including HST) which are directly attributable to, and necessary for the applicant to complete the project and are not wholly or partially for another purpose.

Applicants can incur costs for the approved project on or after April 1, 2026 to and including February 28, 2027.

Project costs eligible for funding through OJEP are set out below under the following categories:

Labour (salaries)

- Salary and benefits for employees of the applicant, as well as hourly wages and benefits for temporary employees working on the project activities.
 - **Note:** Budget salaries and benefits are to be in proportion to the amount of time spent working directly on project activities.

Mandatory Employer Related Costs (MERCs). MERCs include employer's contributions to Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

Equipment Rental and Supplies

- Equipment rentals or supplies required for implementing the project activities.

Transportation (mobilization and demobilization)

- Costs to transport personnel, supplies, and machinery to and from the project site. Expenses will only be reimbursed in accordance with the Ontario [Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive](#), even if costs exceed what is set out in the directive.

Meals and Accommodation

- Meals and accommodation costs that are explicitly project-related and represent the most economical option. Expenses will only be reimbursed in accordance with the Ontario [Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive](#), even if costs exceed what is set out in the directive.

Indigenous Participation Eligible Expenses

Indigenous Participation Eligible Expenses include:

- Salary and benefits for Indigenous employees of the company, as well as hourly wages and benefits for temporary Indigenous employees working on the project activities.
 - **Note:** Budget salaries and benefits are to be in proportion to the amount of time spent working directly on project activities.
- Mandatory Employer Related Costs (MERCs). MERCs include an employer's contributions to Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.
- Skills training for Indigenous employees.
- Costs to procure from Indigenous suppliers, services related to exploration, supplies, accommodation and machinery rental, as well as transportation of personnel, supplies and machinery to fulfill activities under an approved OJEP project.

What are some examples of expenses that are not eligible?

- Costs not directly associated with meeting the project milestones as specified in the Transfer Payment Agreement with the ministry.
- Retroactive costs: Any costs incurred before the program start date of April 1, 2026, are not eligible for funding.
- Costs incurred on or after February 28, 2027, are not eligible for funding.
- Tangible capital costs such as, but not limited to, land, buildings, vehicles, equipment, etc.
- Daily rates for use of personal equipment including vehicles, ATV's, trailers, etc.
- Infrastructure costs (e.g., building and facilities).

- Costs related to proposal development and application development (including staff and consultants).
- Meals associated with entertainment, gifts and alcoholic beverages.
- Costs associated with lobbying or government relations activities.
- Tax expenses (including, but not limited to HST, sales taxes, tax filing, income taxes, etc.).
- Cost of basic utility services.
- Allowance for interest on invested capital, bonds, debentures, bank or other loans together with related bond discounts and finance charges.
- Legal, accounting, property acquisition.
- Administrative costs associated with regular business activities (internet, software, etc.).
- Prototyping.

Note: the above list is not exhaustive.

When does a project need to be completed?

For the purposes of OJEP, an approved “project” will be defined by the terms and conditions set out in the Transfer Payment Agreement with the ministry, including the project start and end date, activities set out in the work plan and eligible expenses set out in the budget.

The project will start no earlier than **April 1, 2026** and must be completed on or before by **February 28, 2027**.

For a list of key dates, please see [Appendix B](#).

How do I apply?

Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) provides you with one-window access to the Government of Ontario’s funding opportunities. You will use the system to apply for OJEP, track your submission, submit reports, view payments and more.

Please submit the application online through [Transfer Payment Ontario](#) by no later than **June 26, 2026** at **4 p.m.** Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Early applications are encouraged.

Step 1: Enroll in Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON)

My Ontario Account Set-Up

Applicants using TPON for the first time need to [create a “My Ontario” account](#). Setting up an account may take up to five (5) business days so allow at least one week to register before starting the application process.

If an individual applicant has previously used the Mining Lands Administration System (MLAS) or submitted an application for funding from other programs through TPON, a new My Ontario account may not be required.

Please note that the My Ontario account is registered at the individual level and not the company/organizational level. If someone in your organization has an account that is used for a different funding program, but you are the one submitting a new application, a separate account **will** be required.

Technical questions regarding TPON may be directed to Transfer Payment Ontario Client Care from Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EDT, except for government and statutory holidays, at:

Email: TPONCC@ontario.ca

Telephone: 1-855-216-3090 or (416) 325-3408

Please note that the information you provide for registration (such as address, contact information, etc.) will be automatically filled into the application form for OJEP.

Applications with the required supporting documentation are to be submitted on-line through TPON.

Once an application has been started, it may be saved or downloaded at any point and returned to later. Please refer to [Transfer Payment Ontario](#) for instructions on how to submit the application.

Please note that applicants will need to complete the supplier registration and application in TPON for direct deposit of funding payments.

Step 2: Complete the Application

Once you are registered and have access to TPON, the next step is to complete an application online by following these steps:

1. Log into Transfer Payment Ontario.
2. Click on “Submit for Funding” and select the Ontario Junior Exploration Program (OJEP).
3. Review or complete sections in the online application as per the guidelines below.
4. Submit your application along with all mandatory attachments (see [Attachments Checklist](#)).

If you require an alternative format or have any accessibility accommodation requests, please contact: OJEP@ontario.ca.

When you submit your application, you will receive a confirmation email. If you have not received a confirmation email within 48 hours of your submission, please call TPON Client Care at 1-855-216-3090 or 416-325-3408.

Complete applications will be assessed and approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

Following the evaluation period, the ministry will inform the primary contact (as listed in the application) by email about the status of the application.

How do I get assistance with the application?

For help in applying through TPON, please refer to [Get Help](#) section of [Ontario.ca/GetFunding](#).

If you have any questions or issues during this process, do not hesitate to contact the TPON Client Care at 1-855-216-3090 or 416-325-3408, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EDT or by email at TPONCC@ontario.ca.

For questions related to OJEP and this guide, please contact ministry staff at OJEP@ontario.ca.

How do I complete the application in TPON?

Applicants will be required to download, fill out and upload their completed application to TPON. Further information about each section of the application form is outlined below. Please ensure that all parts of the TPON application are completed and that you have submitted the required supporting documentation as attachments.

Section A: Eligibility Requirements

Please complete the eligibility checklist to ensure you meet the requirements ([see Attachments Checklist](#)).

Section B to D: Organization Information

These sections are explained in the application form. Sections A and B are pre-populated. To make a change to this information, please submit an assistance request through the TPON system (see [Assistance with Application](#)).

Section E: Grant Payment Information

Should your application be successful, the information provide in this section will be used to make payments. Please note that Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) is required and will be deposited in the organization's bank account.

Section F: Project Information

This section is where applicants provide details on their project.

Program Stream: Please select **one** program stream for your project. An applicant can only apply for funding for **one** project for the intake period.

Please refer to the section “Program Streams” for a full description of each program stream.

- Critical Minerals Stream**
- Exploration Stream**
- Prospectors Stream**

Project Name: Please give your project a name.

Project Start Date: Please identify a start date for your project (on or after April 1, 2026). Note: You can only apply for one project per intake period.

Project End Date: Please identify an end date for your project. It must be on or before February 28, 2027.

Requested Amount: Identify the amount of funding you are requesting to deliver your project (50 per cent of total eligible project costs). Funding is capped at \$215,000 for the Early Exploration and Critical Minerals streams, and up to \$65,000 for applicants under the Prospectors Stream.

Total Cost of the Project: Identify the total cost of the project, not the 50 per cent eligible costs.

Project Summary: Give a brief description of your project, including exploration methods.

Project Objectives: Please describe how your project will help fulfill one or more of the following objectives of OJEP:

- Increase mineral exploration in Ontario
- Attract and increase investment in mineral exploration, development and mining
- Promote development of critical minerals
- Promote employment of Indigenous community members and Indigenous businesses in early exploration

Project Activities: From the checkboxes provided, select the project activities for which you are requesting funding. You can choose more than one activity from the list.

Primary Target Commodity/Deposit Type: Describe the primary commodities/deposit type being sought, including any critical minerals if you are applying to the Critical Minerals Stream.

Secondary Target Commodity/Deposit Type: Describe the secondary commodities/deposit type being sought, including any critical minerals if you are applying to the Critical Minerals Stream.

Other Targeted Commodity/Deposit Types (if applicable): Describe any other targeted commodities/deposit type being sought.

Project Rationale: Briefly describe why you chose this project area for exploration and the exploration methods described above.

Target Rationale: Briefly describe why the project area has the potential to host the targets identified above, including critical minerals.

Anticipated Project Results: Outline your expected/anticipated results of the project, including how it could lead to further exploration and/or mine development in Ontario.

Indigenous Participation: If applicable, please describe how your project will build Indigenous participation, including possible training, employment and procurement opportunities with target results, where possible (e.g., number of Indigenous people to be trained and employed through project, number of Indigenous businesses to be engaged in project/procurement processes).

Previous Mineral Exploration Experience: Give a brief summary of your company's previous experience in mineral exploration.

Previous Work on Property: Describe the previous work done on property, including year, type of work, by whom and any significant results.

Has Your Project Received OJEP Funding Previously: Give a brief summary of any previous OJEP funding received for previous work on the property.

Area/Township: Identify the area or township in which the project is located.

UTM Coordinates: Pick a central location of the project and provide the UTM coordinates.

Plan or Permit Number(s): If you have a recovery or exploration plan or permit issued for this project, please enter the number of the plan or permit. If you have applied for an exploration plan or permit for this project, please enter the application number of the plan or permit. For a plan, the number follows the format of PL-xx(year)-xxxxxx(number) and for a permit, the number begins with PR-xx(year)-xxxxxx(number). For the plan, a copy of the MLAS screen showing the plan is active or has been submitted, and, for a permit, the actual permit issued or a copy of the submitted permit application. If the applicant is different from the plan or permit holder, please describe. You must indicate that the plan/permit holder is aware the applicant has made an application for OJEP funding and will be carrying out the project.⁴

⁴ An applicant may *apply* for funding under OJEP if a plan or permit application has been submitted to the ministry, but the plan is not yet effective, or the permit has not yet been issued. However, an applicant will not be *eligible* for funding until a plan is effective, or a permit issued, subject to the terms of the program guide.

List of Tenure: List the claims, leases, etc. only where the eligible activities are being carried out. If your list is too long for the application, please include as a separate attachment. Note: Prospectors applying under the Prospectors Stream must hold at least 25 per cent interest in claims where eligible activities are being carried out.

Applicant/Tenure Holder Relationship: If the applicant is different from the mining lands tenure holder, please describe. In the event of option arrangement or some other relationship, please indicate that the tenure holder is aware the applicant has made an application for OJEP funding and will be carrying out the project.

Section G: Project Work Plan

Complete the work plan to identify your project's key activities, providing dates when the activities are going to be carried out.

Below is a sample work plan.

Tip: Some activities will not have a unit associated with them such as rehabilitation, evaluation. Where there is no unit, please enter N/A.

Sample Work Plan

Activity (for more information see eligible activities)	Total Units (e.g., km, area, volume, samples)	Start Date (on or after April 1, 2026)	End Date (no later than February 28, 2027)
Line cutting, chaining, picketing, grid layout (kilometres)			
Surveys			
Ground geophysical (kilometres)			
Airborne geophysical (kilometres)			
Geological (area)			
Geological (samples)			
Geochemical (area)			
Geochemical (samples)			
Stripping, pitting and trenching			
Pitting and trenching (volume)			
Stripping (area)			
Surface Drilling			
Drilling (no of holes)			
Drilling (metres)			
Rehabilitation			
Removal of material (No unit required)			
Activities to meet the requirement for rehabilitation in the Provincial Standards for Early Exploration (No unit required)			
Evaluation of all activities			
Report preparation, assays/analyses (No unit required)			

Section H: Budget

Complete the budget section and identify total costs of project. This includes costs for which you are seeking OJEP funding (50 per cent of eligible project costs). The budget is separated into project activities and is organized according to eligible costs. In the details section please provide as much detail as possible to identify the costs.

Important note: Any salary or contractor/consultant costs that fall under the Indigenous Participation Eligible Expenses, are only to be included in the Indigenous Participation Eligible Activities section (please ensure to not double count these costs).

Sample Budget

Budget Items (exclude HST and costs that fall under Indigenous Participation Eligible Activities)	Details	Total (\$)
Line cutting, chaining, picketing, grid layout		
Labour (salaries) (Describe number of people, position, and hourly wage)	<i>E.g., 2 line-cutters @\$35 an hour for 21 days. 1 supervisor at \$45 an hour for 28 days.</i>	
Contractors and consultants (Company names and type of work, if possible)	<i>E.g., XYZ Line Cutting Service at \$800-\$1,000 per kilometre.</i>	
Equipment rentals/supplies (List equipment needed)	<i>E.g., ATV rental at \$75 a day plus gas as per government travel directive at 41 cents per kilometre.</i>	
Transportation (Mobilization and demobilization)	<i>E.g., 250 km travel to and from project site, daily for 2 vehicles at 41 cents per kilometre per vehicle as per the travel directive.</i>	
Meals and accommodations	<i>E.g., Food for 3 staff members at \$45 a day per person as per the travel directive. Hotel rooms for 3 staff members at \$150 a night.</i>	
Surveys (ground geophysical, airborne geophysical, geological and geochemical)		

Labour (salaries) (Describe number of people, position, and hourly wage)		
Contractors and consultants (Company names and type of work, if possible)		
Equipment rentals supplies (List equipment needed)		
Transportation (Mobilization and demobilization)		
Meals and accommodations		
Stripping, Pitting and Trenching		
Labour (salaries) (Describe number of people, position, and hourly wage)		
Contractors and consultants (Company names and type of work, if possible)		
Equipment rentals supplies (List equipment needed)		
Transportation (Mobilization and demobilization)		
Meals and accommodations		
Surface Drilling		
Labour (salaries) (Describe number of people, position, and hourly wage)		
Contractors and consultants (Company names and type of work, if possible)		

Equipment rentals supplies (List equipment needed)		
Transportation (Mobilization and demobilization)		
Meals and accommodations		
Rehabilitation (removal of material, etc.)		
Labour (salaries) (Describe number of people, position, and hourly wage)		
Contractors/consultants (Company names and type of work, if possible)		
Equipment rentals/ supplies (List equipment needed)		
Transportation (Mobilization and demobilization)		
Meals and accommodations		
Evaluation Activities: Assaying and analyses for the above activities		
Labour (salaries) (Report writing)		
Contractor/consultants (Laboratory processing fees)		
Indigenous Participation Eligible Activities (100% eligible up to \$15,000)		
Indigenous training, employment and procurement	<i>E.g., Basic mining skills training for 1 Indigenous employee at \$750 per course; 1 line-cutter at \$35 an hour, 8-hour days at 21 days; procuring ATV rentals from an Indigenous business at \$75 a day for four days.</i>	

Attachments Checklist

Please attach the following information to your TPO application:

1. Proof of funds to cover 100 per cent of total project costs

- ✓ A copy of the applicant's bank statement,

OR

- ✓ **A signed letter of attestation from the company's signing authority committing to covering 100 per cent of total project costs.**

The following will **not** be accepted in place of proof of funds:

- ✗ Audited financial statements
- ✗ Management Discussion & Analysis (MD&A)

2. If proposing a project activity for a plan or permit, include:

- ✓ Activity Details Report
- ✓ Two maps (regional-scale map and project-scale map) that meet ministry map standards
 - [Plan map standards](#)
 - [Permit map standards](#)

3. If proposing a project activity that does not require a plan or permit, include:

- ✓ Two maps (regional-scale map and project-scale map) that meet ministry map standards
 - [Plan map standards](#)
 - [Permit map standards](#)
- ✓ Please ensure the project-scale map includes all relevant mining lands tenure.

4. Copy of permit issued by the ministry or proof of active plan as authorized by the ministry, or a copy of a submitted plan or permit application.

- ✓ Copy of Mining Lands Administration System (MLAS) screen showing plan active

OR

- ✓ Copy of permit as sent by the Ministry of Mines at the time permit was issued

OR

- ✓ Copy of a submitted plan or submitted permit application

The following will **not** be accepted:

- ✗ Expired permit
- ✗ Permit that will expire before the project end date

5. Valid Certificate of Insurance

A copy of a valid Certificate of Insurance for this project which includes the following:

- ✓ Commercial general liability insurance for \$2 million per occurrence (third party bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage);
- ✓ A cross-liability clause;
- ✓ Contractual liability coverage; and
- ✓ A 30-day written notice of cancellation.

Applicants must complete the application and submit attachments via TPON on or before June 26, 2026 at 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

Common application errors

1. Bank statement for the applicant applying is not provided. A bank statement for a related company will **not** be accepted as proof of funds.
2. Bank statement or letter of attestation does not demonstrate the applicant has the funds to cover the total project costs. The applicant must provide proof it can cover 100 per cent of total project costs.
3. The organization applying is not registered on the Ontario Business Registry. An applicant must be registered on the Ontario Business Registry prior to entering into a Transfer Payment Agreement with the Province of Ontario. Applicants are encouraged to register prior to submitting the application.

How will the application be evaluated?

Funding is not automatic.

Applications that are complete and meet the requirements will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- ✓ Clarity of application (based on maps provided, synthesis of previous work, description of project, mineral exploration experience).
- ✓ Project feasibility (based on information provided in the application, including the work plan and the budget).
- ✓ Alignment with the program objectives of OJEP.

How are funding decisions made?

Funding available through this program will be provided to approved projects on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants are encouraged to submit their completed application package as early as possible during the intake period (see [When can I apply?](#)).

Incomplete applications will not be evaluated. Please see [Attachments Checklist](#) to ensure you have attached everything for the application.

To ensure you meet the program's basic eligibility requirements, please see [Who is eligible to apply?](#)

What are my company's obligations if approved for project funding?

Successful applicants will, among other things, be required to:

- Sign a funding agreement with the ministry outlining the terms and conditions for receiving funding. No funding disbursements will be made until after funding agreements are executed and all conditions to funding have been satisfied.
- Carry and provide proof of required insurance (see above for requirements)
- Report back to the ministry by due dates provided in the funding agreement using the ministry's reporting mechanism.
- Provide an itemized interim and final expense claim and keep all receipts for auditing purposes.
- Keep mining tenure in good standing for the duration of the project. Please notify OJEP, in writing, if any tenure relevant to the project is transferred at any point during an approved project.

Additional Information

Applicants should be aware that the ministry is bound by the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#), R.S.O. 1990, c. F. 31 (Freedom of Information), as amended from time to time, and that any information provided to the ministry in connection with an application may be subject to disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information requirements.

Approved projects may be the subject of public announcements.

Please note the Ministry is unable to provide legal or financial advice to applicants. To obtain advice about whether OJEP funding may have any tax or other financial implications on your company, please contact your company's financial advisors/professionals.

What are the reporting requirements during and after the project?

As will be fully detailed in Transfer Payment Agreements between the ministry and successful applicants, reporting requirements during and after the project may include, but not be limited to the following:

Interim Progress Report

Funding recipients will submit an interim progress report, including project updates and a list of expenditures, halfway through the project as identified from the project start and end dates in your project application. The ministry will provide a template and the specific deadline for your interim report will be set out in the Transfer Payment Agreement. Once the ministry determines your report is satisfactory, 30 per cent approved funds will be released.

Final Report

Funding recipients will submit a final report in two parts: First, a technical report that meets the standards of a ministry Assessment Work Report. Please use the [Technical Standard for Reporting Assessment Work](#) to complete this report. Second, funding recipients will submit a final report detailing results of the project and expenditures. The ministry will provide a template for this second part of the final report.

Final reports are due 15 days following project end date and as set out in the Transfer Payment Agreement.

Interim and final reports will include a project expense claim, signed by the company's signing authority.

Disclaimer

OJEP is a discretionary, non-entitlement program with a limited annual budget. The ministry does not guarantee funding to applicants, including applicants who meet eligibility requirements, nor does the ministry guarantee that the total amount requested by successful applicants will be granted. The ministry reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to fund or not fund any particular project for which an application is submitted. The ministry also reserves the right to impose whatever conditions it deems advisable in the acceptance of an application and in the transfer payment agreement. In the event of any conflict between this program guide and an executed transfer payment agreement, the agreement prevails.

Applicants should not take any action, or incur any costs related to the program, that is predicated on receiving funding from the ministry until an application is approved and all parties have entered into a transfer payment agreement acceptable to the ministry. The ministry is not responsible for paying any costs incurred by an applicant should the application not be approved or if the applicant fails to enter into a transfer payment agreement acceptable to the ministry.

For clarity, until the execution of an agreement between a successful applicant and the ministry, no contractual relationship exists between the province and an applicant, and the province is not subject to any contractual obligation in respect of OJEP.

Who do I contact for more information?

For questions related to OJEP, please contact: OJEP@ontario.ca

For questions related to the Transfer Payment Ontario system, please contact the TPON Client Care at 1-855-216-3090 or 416-325-3408, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. EDT or by email at TPONCC@ontario.ca.

Appendix A: Ontario's Critical Minerals List

Aluminum	Antimony
Barite	Beryllium
Bismuth	Cesium
Chromite	Cobalt
Copper	Fluorspar
Gallium	Germanium
Graphite	High-purity Iron
Indium	Lithium
Magnesium	Manganese
Molybdenum	Nickel
Niobium	Phosphate
Platinum group elements (PGEs)	Rare earth elements (REEs)
Scandium	Selenium
Tantalum	Tellurium
Tin	Titanium
Tungsten	Uranium
Vanadium	Zinc
Zirconium	

Appendix B: OJEP Important Dates and Information

Ontario Junior Exploration Program Dates

	Application Opens	Application Closes	Project Start Date	Interim Report Due Date	Project End Date	Final Report Due Date
2026-2027 Intake	May 21, 2026	June 26, 2026	On or after April 1, 2026	Halfway through project as set out in the Transfer Payment Agreement	On or before February 28, 2027	Final reports due 15 days following project end date as set out in the agreement and no later than February 28, 2027

Important Resources

Ontario Junior Exploration Program: OJEP@ontario.ca

[Create a “My Ontario” account](#)

[Ontario.ca/GetFunding](https://ontario.ca/GetFunding)

Application Technical Assistance: TPONCC@ontario.ca

Telephone: (416) 325-6691 or 1-855-216-3090, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time

[Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive](#)

[Exploration Plan map standards](#)

[Exploration Permit map standards](#)