

**Northern Ontario Resource Development  
Support Fund  
Program Guidelines**

**Ministry of Northern Economic Development and Growth**

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# Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund

These Program Guidelines are to be used to submit required project information under the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund (“NORDS Fund” or the “Program”).

## 1.0 Overview

The Ontario Government has committed to sharing the benefits of resource development with municipalities, specifically with municipalities in Northern Ontario. While we recognize that municipalities may experience benefits from resource development, they may also experience impacts on infrastructure.

## 2.0 Program Objectives

To fulfill the Ontario Government’s commitment to share the benefits of resource development with northern municipalities, the NORDS Fund provides funding to help offset some of the impacts resource development has on municipal infrastructure.

## 3.0 Program Eligibility

### 3.1 Who is eligible?

All 144 municipalities in Northern Ontario are eligible.

For the purposes of the Program, Ontario considers Northern Ontario to be comprised of the territorial districts of Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, and Timiskaming. This is consistent with the delineation of Northern Ontario as designated in the Places to Grow Act, O. Reg. 416/05.

### 3.2 How can I demonstrate resource development impacts?

Municipalities will be required to demonstrate and/or describe how the proposed Capital Project(s) is impacted by, or advances opportunities related to resource development and how the project is or will be addressing or mitigating those impacts\*.

\*Resource development impacts are generally associated with impacts resulting from primary natural resource extraction and processing activities (e.g. forestry, mining, aggregates, agriculture), but may also include related activities that are associated with or support those natural resource activities, such as value-added processing, supply and services, repair and manufacturing, etc.

Resource development activities do not need to occur directly within a municipality's boundaries to have an impact.

### **3.3 What is an eligible project?**

Projects may include:

- repairs or upgrading of existing infrastructure that is impacted by resource industry use;
- the construction of new infrastructure that will reduce or mitigate the impact of resource industry use;
- the construction or upgrading of new or existing infrastructure to enable, mitigate, or attract future use by the resource industry; or
- other Capital Projects that may be able to demonstrate impacts of resource development.

Municipalities may submit multiple projects in any Program Year as long as they do not exceed their annual and overall allocation.

### **3.4 What are eligible expenses?**

Eligible expenses may include capital costs/expenses required to complete the project and may include the construction, upgrading, or replacement of new or existing infrastructure. Only project costs that are directly related to the proposed project(s) and recorded as a capital expense will be considered eligible and projects should be recorded as a capital asset once completed.

Expenses incurred on or after April 1, 2026 are considered eligible.

Program funding can be used to fund 100% of eligible project costs.

### **3.5 What expenses aren't eligible?**

Projects that cannot demonstrate an existing or future impact from resource development, or that are not capital expenses or assets associated with the project, will not be considered.

Examples include:

- Operating expenses;
- Rolling stock (e.g., trucks, graders, etc.);
- Stand-alone studies (e.g., feasibility, engineering, strategy, etc.);
- Purchase of movable/transitory equipment;
- Legal fees;
- Taxes; or
- Costs of completing any application for other funding programs.

### **3.6 Is the project aligned with existing municipal planning documents?**

Municipalities are encouraged to consider proposed projects that are aligned with existing municipal planning documents (i.e., Asset Management Plan, Official Plan, or others as applicable), and where applicable identify which documents they are aligned with.

## **4.0 Program Administration and Funding**

### **4.1 How much funding is available?**

The NORDS Fund makes funding available to municipalities in Northern Ontario to share in the benefits from resource development and help offset some of the impacts of resource development on municipal infrastructure.

NORDS will allocate \$15 million per year amongst the 144 municipalities in Northern Ontario. Each municipality will have an identified allocation funding amount they will be eligible for, which takes into consideration factors such as municipal size and capacity.

### **4.2 How will funds be allocated?**

Each municipality has been allocated a potential amount of funding to reflect municipal size and infrastructure needs. No municipality will be eligible for more than \$400,000 in any Program Year.

Smaller municipalities will be allocated a higher proportion of funding to their size in order to recognize capacity limitations.

### **4.3 What is the Program Term?**

NORDS will be administered using 5-year Program Terms. Annual allocations for each municipality are expected to remain the same over the five-year Program Term.

### **4.4 What if I haven't identified an eligible project to use my full allocation in a Program Year or want to save up for a larger project?**

Eligible recipients may accumulate ("bank") their unused allocation in any given year to utilize towards an identified and approved project in a future year. All funding must be utilized by the end of the 5-year Program Term, ending March 31, 2031.

Recipients will be required to keep banked funds in an interest-bearing account and report on interest earned on the funds as part of year-end reporting (March 31 of that

Program Year). Interest collected on these unused funds will be subtracted from the next year's allocation. Only interest collected on funds carried over from one year to the next must be reported.

Detailed requirements, including the treatment of interest generated, will be specified in the recipient's transfer payment agreement.

#### **4.5 How does partnering and topping-up work?**

Municipalities may partner with one or more other eligible recipients on an eligible project. Where municipalities wish to partner on a project, the municipality that owns the asset will act as the project lead. Partner municipalities that are not the project lead will advise the Ministry of Northern Economic Development and Growth of their participation in the project and confirm that they wish to transfer all or a portion of their allocation to the lead municipality to support the project through a Council resolution.

Funding can be used to top-up municipal contributions for an eligible project(s) funded under other programs, if permitted by the other program.

### **5.0 Submitting Projects**

#### **5.1 How do I submit my project information?**

Municipalities will submit a Project Information Form for proposed projects through the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) system which will be used to administer the program. Potential recipients must be registered and have access to the TPON system to submit their Project Information Form and participate in the NORDS Fund.

Municipalities may access the Project Information Form as soon as the program is launched through TPON. Completed Project Information Forms must be submitted by July 31, 2026.

***TIP: Regional Economic Development Branch staff are available to assist you to ensure all requirements are met prior to submitting your Project Information Form.***

The Project Information Form will seek information including:

- description of the proposed project(s);
- description of how the project(s) are impacted by resource development and how the project is addressing or mitigating those impacts;
- identification of total project costs, NORDS funding requirements, and other funding sources, as well as proposed timelines;
- identification, if applicable, of how the proposed project is aligned with existing municipal planning documents; and
- confirm that assets associated with the project are owned by the recipient.

Proposed projects for subsequent years will be submitted as part of an updated workplan for the next Program Year.

Project Information Forms will provide the ability to submit more than one project in any Program Year.

The Ministry of Northern Economic Development and Growth will be reviewing Project Information Forms to ensure they meet NORDS Fund eligibility requirements.

Municipalities are encouraged to plan for future projects, and identify and submit projects for future years as part of their annual workplans. Note that municipalities will have the ability to update or revise these projects if projects or priorities change, however, the recipient must seek approval from the Ministry of Northern Economic Development and Growth for these changes.

## **5.2 What reports need to be submitted and when will funds be disbursed?**

Municipalities will be required to submit annual reports providing a status update on the project, outlining the work completed, and confirming how funding was utilized. Municipalities will also be required to submit a workplan for proposed projects prior to receiving their allocation for the next Program Year.

Specific dates and requirements for submitting reports will be outlined through the recipient's transfer payment agreement and detailed instructions will be provided directly to the recipient.

Once all required project information has been received, reviewed to determine if it satisfies program requirements, and the recipient has entered into a transfer payment agreement with the Ministry of Northern Economic Development and Growth, funding will be disbursed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the transfer payment agreement.

## **6.0 Confidentiality and Public Reporting**

The ministry is bound by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. F. 31, as amended from time to time. Any information provided to the ministry in connection with a project may be subject to disclosure in accordance with that Act.

Approved projects may be the subject of public reporting and/or announcements.

## 7.0 Disclaimer

The Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund is a discretionary, non-entitlement program with a limited annual budget. The ministry does not guarantee funding or any funding amount to any municipalities, including municipalities that meet all eligibility requirements. The ministry reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to fund or not fund any project submitted for consideration and further reserves the right to impose whatever conditions it deems advisable in connection with the approval of any project and in any funding agreement. In the event of any conflict between the program guidelines and an executed funding agreement, the executed funding agreement prevails.

Municipalities should not take any action, or incur any costs related to the Program, predicated on receiving funding from the ministry until a project is approved and all parties have entered into a funding agreement acceptable to the ministry. The ministry is not responsible for paying any costs incurred should a project not be approved, or if the municipality fails to enter into a funding agreement acceptable to the ministry. Until the execution of a funding agreement between a municipality and the ministry, no contractual obligation exists between them, and the Province is not subject to any contractual obligation in respect of the Program.

## 8.0 Who can I contact if I need help or have questions?

Staff of the Regional Economic Development Branch of the Ministry of Northern Economic Development and Growth are available to assist you or answer any questions.

If you have questions about the NORDS Fund you can contact:

Email: [nords@ontario.ca](mailto:nords@ontario.ca)

Mail: Ministry of Northern Economic Development and Growth  
Attention: Transportation, Trade and Investment Branch  
Roberta Bondar Place, Suite 200  
70 Foster Dr  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON, P6A 6V8

Or feel free to contact your local Regional Economic Development Branch Northern Development Advisor (a list can be found at [INFO-GO | Government of Ontario Employee and Organization Directory](#)).

For TPON help, please refer to the “Get Help” section of [Ontario.ca/GetFunding](https://ontario.ca/GetFunding). If you have questions or issues during this process, do not hesitate to contact TPON Client Care at 1-855-216-3090, or 416-325-3408, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST, or by email at [TPONCC@ontario.ca](mailto:TPONCC@ontario.ca).

## **Appendix: Definitions**

**Capital Project** – any project where associated costs are recorded as a capital expense and once completed are recorded as a capital asset by the municipality.

**Project Information Form** – the form to be completed in TPON that requests the required information associated with the proposed project(s).

**Program Year** – the administrative period between April 1 and March 31 of a given year.

**Program Term** – the 5-year period from April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2031.