

Partner Program

2025 Application Guidelines

Contact Information

For questions regarding the Wetlands Conservation Partner Program (WCPP), please contact:
The WCPP Team, in the Great Lakes Office, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Telephone: 647-808-8253 or 705-313-3623
Email: glo@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

1.0 Wetlands Conservation Partner Program

Protecting and investing in natural infrastructure like wetlands is important for local economies and communities. Wetlands purify the water and air, protect biodiversity and natural heritage, provide recreational opportunities, provide carbon sink capacity, help with climate change adaptation and resiliency, and support Indigenous traditional practices.

The WCPP provides capital funding support to restore and enhance wetlands in priority areas and improve the resilience of wetlands in Ontario.

1.1 WCPP 2025 call for applications

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (ministry) is accepting applications for the 2025 grant-funding round of the WCPP. Approximately \$9.6 million is available over two fiscal years (2025-26 and 2026-27) for the 2025 round of funding.

Project start dates shall commence on or after January 1, 2026. All project activities including the final project report must be complete by December 31, 2026. Applicants may apply for a minimum of \$200,000 in WCPP funding for a capital project or a collection of capital sub-projects, to restore or enhance wetlands in Ontario.

WCPP 2025 funding is available for two types of projects: wetland restoration and wetland enhancement. For the purposes of the WCPP these include:

- **wetland restoration** means re-establishing a wetland where one existed previously
- **wetland enhancement** means improving the features or functionality of an existing wetland where needed, or expanding a wetland

1.2 Deadline

Applications must be submitted electronically through the Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) portal by 3 p.m. (ET) on Wednesday, October 8, 2025. Applications that are incomplete or submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

2.0 Applying through Transfer Payment Ontario

All applications must be submitted electronically through [TPON](#).

Applicants must have a TPON account to apply. If you do not already have one, you must first create a [My Ontario Account](#) and then register for TPON. Please register early, as it may take up to 5 business days to receive access. Follow the detailed steps outlined at: [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](#) 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 p.m. (ET), or by email at: TPONCC@Ontario.ca.

3.0 Program objectives

The objectives of the WCPP are to:

1. improve functionality of wetlands (such as through improving connectivity, removing invasive species, enhancing adjacent shoreline and riparian areas, flooding attenuation)
2. conserve, restore or enhance existing wetlands, including their features and functions (for example, re-establishing wetlands where they once existed, increasing the size of existing wetlands)
3. mitigate stormwater impacts exacerbated by impervious surfaces and more frequent and intense weather events associated with climate change (such as excess urban water runoff, greater urban flooding risks)
4. improve shoreline resiliency to climate change impacts such as high-water levels and intense storms (wave action, for example)

4.0 Eligibility

4.1 Eligible applicants

To be eligible for funding, applicants must be legal entities.

Only the following types of organizations (legal entities) are eligible for 2025 WCPP funding:

- municipal governments
- conservation authorities and their foundations
- conservation organizations (i.e., non-governmental, not-for-profit or charitable corporations whose work focuses on environmental protection, conservation or restoration)
- Indigenous communities

Additionally, to be eligible applicants must have implemented at least 2 other similar types of projects in the last 5 years (meaning in the last 5 years, applicants for restoration projects must have completed at least 2 other restoration projects; applicants for wetland enhancement projects must have completed at least 2 other enhancement projects).

Eligible organizations are encouraged to collaborate with other organizations (such as agricultural organizations/associations, community groups, etc.) on WCPP projects, including opportunities supporting broader inclusion and diversity. 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.

4.2 Eligible projects

To be eligible for consideration for WCPP funding, projects must:

- meet at least one of the 4 objectives of the WCPP (described in section 3.0)
- be a capital project (or a collection of capital sub-projects) with a total project value of at least \$300,000 (WCPP funds requested plus matching contributions)
- at minimum provide matching contributions at a ratio of \$1 in non-provincial funding for every \$2 in WCPP funds
 - for example, a project with a total value of \$300,000 should outline a project budget that includes \$100,000 in contributions from non-provincial sources and \$200,000 from the WCPP
 - for non-provincial funds, both in-kind and cash from the recipient and partnering organizations is eligible, with a preference for cash contributions (see section 5.0)
- take place in one or more of the following geographic areas:
 - Great Lakes coastal wetlands, with a priority placed on wetlands in [Areas of Concern](#) (AOCs)
 - [Ecoregions 6E and/or 7E](#), which are areas of the province that have experienced significant historic and ongoing wetland loss and impact

Projects proposed and to be led by Indigenous communities are encouraged to indicate matching contributions where possible and are not required to have a 1:2 match.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Please see section 6.0 for detailed information about what must be included in a complete application package.

4.3 Ineligible projects

The following types of projects or projects including the following activities are not eligible for WCPP funding:

- creation of, or changes to stormwater ponds without wetland features or functions
- creation of new wetlands in places where wetlands have not previously existed
- projects to offset destruction of any wetland
- land securement projects, including purchase, easements and donations of land
- feasibility studies or other types of exploratory work to determine a path forward on a potential project
- projects that are required by Ontario or federal law
- projects that take place in a provincial park or conservation reserve, or on other provincial Crown land
- projects that are not planned to be complete by December 31, 2026

The list of types of ineligible projects above is not comprehensive. If you are unsure about the eligibility of your project and activities, please contact us by email at: glo@ontario.ca, or by phone at 647-808-8253 or 705-313-3623.

4.4 Eligible costs

WCPP funds may only be used for eligible expenses incurred in carrying out capital projects.

The following expense categories are eligible for funding:

- **Goods:** Includes materials and supplies required for the project.
- **Services:** Includes third-party costs such as a contractor to excavate a wetland. 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 WCPP (for example, 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 WCPP (for example, accommodation, hospitality).

- **Equipment or other capital items:** Usually this covers rental costs. A purchase may be approved by request under certain circumstances.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring and showing that no project expenses which are being requested from the WCPP are also covered by other funding sources (meaning no double-dipping).

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.

4.5 Ineligible costs

Ineligible expenses include:

- fundraising
- lobbying
- non-project costs
- costs incurred before the effective date of the transfer payment agreement (TPA)
- overhead (costs incurred by applicant regardless of the project)
- voluntary payments
- accommodation, hospitality, food and beverages
- non-capital costs that cannot be capitalized

There may be other expenses that are not eligible. If you are not certain about a particular expense, please contact the WCPP team.

5.0 Application evaluation

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

Alignment with WCPP objectives, as described in section 3.0

- The more strongly a project is aligned with WCPP objectives, the more likely it is to be favourably evaluated.
- Projects will be evaluated more favourably if they aim to achieve multiple program objectives.

Environmental benefits

- How well the project would contribute to addressing an identified environmental need.
- The extent to which the project is expected to result in specific and measurable environmental benefits.
- The strength of the plan to maintain the long-term benefits of the project (for example, after the project has been completed).

Project design and workplan

- The workplan will be evaluated on how clearly and appropriately it provides details about the steps that will be implemented to complete the proposed work.
- The 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 WCPP TPA and completed, with final reporting by December 31, 2026.

- The extent to which implementation risks have been considered and mitigation measures proposed. For proposals with multiple sub-projects, this may include the submission of a list of contingency sub-projects.
- The relevance of the performance measures built into the project to assess the effectiveness of project activities. Note that outcomes and outputs will be reported upon project completion.¹

Expertise, matching and value for money

- How well the application demonstrates that the project has the necessary and qualified contributors and resources to achieve its intended purpose.
- Projects that have a greater proportion of cash that make up the matching contributions and/or exceed a 1:2 match ratio will score higher in the evaluation.
- 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

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 other factors, such as 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 complete 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, 2026**.
- A detailed project budget, using the WCPP Budget Calculator template provided (downloadable from TPON).
- Signed matching contribution letters from all organizations providing funding to meet the matching contribution eligibility criteria. Letters should outline the amount of funds being contributed by the organization and any other roles the organization will have as a project participant. If funding contribution letters are not available at the time the application is submitted, they may be provided prior to a TPA being signed with the Province.²

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

- A map of the site(s) to show the geographic location of the project(s).
- Signed letters of support from key organizations or individuals other than your organization and its members, if they are critical to project delivery. These letters should describe the role of these other project participants.
- Copies of authorizations such as permits and approvals, or authorization applications needed for your project, if applicable and available.
- Your organization's purchasing and procurement policy, if available.

7.0 Additional information for applicants

- Applicants are responsible for identifying and obtaining any authorizations required for their project. Projects cannot proceed without obtaining the required authorizations.

¹ Every project must report on the number of wetlands restored and/or enhanced, as well as number of wetland hectares restored and/or enhanced.

² If the matching criteria will be met in part or wholly by funds provided by the organization applying for funding, these funds should be listed in the budget calculator template provided under the 'Applicant Organization' column.

- Applicants are responsible for obtaining landowner permission to access private property to undertake the proposed activities.
- For projects proposing to undertake management of invasive Phragmites use the [Invasive Phragmites – Best Management Practices guidebook](#) to develop your project.

8.0 Notification

All applicants will be notified by email of the outcome of their application. Following provisional approval of successful projects, recipients will be required to enter into a TPA 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 WCPP without an executed agreement with the ministry.

9.0 Agreement and payment

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a TPA 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 TPA. 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 TPA.
- The final date to submit all final reporting and financial documentation is **December 31, 2026**.
- Applicants approved for funding will be required to submit certificates of insurance to confirm coverage in accordance with the terms of the TPA.
- Applicants approved for funding may need to attest that they are in good standing with tax, labour and environmental laws.
- Applicants approved for funding of \$750,000 or more will be required to submit audited segmented financial information on completion of their project. WCPP funds may not be used to produce this audit report.

Until the TPA is finalized and signed, the ministry cannot guarantee funds for any project. Successful applicants are required not to 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 TPA before applying, please contact us at: glo@ontario.ca.

10.0 Recognition

Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the receipt of financial assistance from the Government of Ontario, in the form of a signage, news release and/or other media, as indicated in the TPA.

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 TPA. The terms as set out in a TPA must be satisfied to receive payments. The successful applicant shall provide, if requested by the Province, confirmation of any necessary permissions to access the property where the project activities took place and make available any records, documents or information that may be required for this purpose.

13.0 Terms of reference

The following provisions apply to this application process for WCPP:

- (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 TPA 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 TPA, or the failure to honour applications prior to the execution of such an TPA; and
- (v) the ministry will not consider an applicant whose application is found to contain misrepresentations.