IGNACE BUSINESS FUNDING AND WORKFORCE UPDATE

November 3, 2026 | Information for local businesses

Local businesses considering improvements, planning to hire, investing in employee skills or facing recruitment challenges may be able to access government programs and regional business services. This update summarizes selected opportunities and practical next steps ahead of the next Ignace Area Business Association meeting.

AT A GLANCE

Summer hiring — Canada Summer Jobs 2027: Employer applications are open until December 3, 2026. Eligible small businesses may receive wage subsidies for hiring youth aged 15–30.

Business improvements — Rural Ontario Development (ROD): The next Business Development intake is January 18–February 25, 2027; eligible projects can receive up to 35% of costs, to a maximum of $10,000.

Employee training — Ontario Job Grant: Eligible employers can seek support for third-party skills training. Individual-employer applications involving 25 or fewer trainees are currently being accepted.

Recruitment — REDI: Kenora District is part of Ontario's 2026–2027 Regional Economic Development through Immigration initiative. Local employer participation details are still being clarified.

Internships and expansion — NOHFC: Funding may be available for qualifying internships and eligible northern business expansion projects; sector and project restrictions apply.

Business advice and financing — PACE: Patricia Area Community Endeavours provides counselling and repayable business financing.

SUPPORT FROM THE TOWNSHIP

Businesses are welcome to contact the Township's Economic Development Generalist, Daniella Okoye, to discuss proposed projects, skills needs or recruitment challenges. The Township can help identify potentially relevant programs, review published eligibility requirements and connect businesses with program contacts.

To start a conversation, please share a short description of your business, proposed project or staffing challenge, approximate costs (if known) and preferred timeline.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Funding is subject to program rules, application assessment, available budgets and funding agreements. Confirm eligibility, spending dates and documentation requirements with the program administrator before making financial commitments. Official program links are provided throughout.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS 2027

Summer wage subsidies | Applications currently open | Deadline: December 3, 2026

Canada Summer Jobs supports quality summer work experiences for young people aged 15–30. The 2027 employer application window runs from October 27 to December 3, 2026, closing at 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time.

Funding and employer eligibility

Private-sector employers with 50 or fewer full-time employees may qualify for funding of up to 50% of the applicable provincial or territorial minimum hourly wage. Eligible not-for-profit employers may receive up to 100% of the minimum hourly wage plus mandatory employment-related costs. Public-sector employers may also apply under the program's rules.

New for 2027: organizations generally must have been actively operating for at least two years by December 31, 2026, with a valid CRA business number; a limited exemption applies to certain 2026-funded organizations. A CRA payroll account is required before hiring the youth.

Eligible positions and preparation

Positions must offer 30–40 hours a week for 6–16 consecutive weeks, within April 19–August 28, 2027. Employers should plan meaningful job duties, supervision, wage costs and start/end dates and review national and local priorities before submitting.

Apply through Grants and Contributions Online Services (GCOS), the recommended method. Funding is competitive and approval is not guaranteed.

Official Canada Summer Jobs 2027 applicant guide

Application instructions and portal information

RURAL ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT (ROD) PROGRAM

Business Development stream | Cost-share funding | Next intake: January 18–February 25, 2027

Eligible rural businesses may receive 35% of approved project costs, up to $10,000. The fourth intake closes February 25, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Intake dates and forms may change.

Who and what may qualify

Generally, businesses must operate in rural Ontario with 1–20 payroll employees (excluding owners), and satisfy location, property and compliance rules. Qualifying property taxes may be paid directly or through rent/lease; Indigenous businesses have specified exemptions.

Project areas include market development, cybersecurity, succession planning and accessibility improvements. This is not a general renovations or equipment-replacement fund. Routine expenses, unrelated equipment and other excluded costs are not supported; businesses that already received ROD funding are generally not eligible for another successful application.

For illustration, a $20,000 fully eligible project at 35% funding would receive $7,000, leaving $13,000 for the business or other permitted sources, assuming approval.

Suggested preparation: identify the business need, outcomes, itemized quotes, project budget and proposed timing. Check current guidelines before incurring costs.

Official ROD Business Development guidelines

ROD program application periods

TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT SUPPORT

ONTARIO JOB GRANT

Eligible third-party employee training | Applications currently accepted for certain employers

The Ontario Job Grant (formerly Canada–Ontario Job Grant) helps eligible employers purchase training for existing employees or new hires. The standard support ceiling is $10,000 per trainee. Employers with fewer than 100 employees generally contribute at least one-sixth of eligible costs; employers with 100 or more generally contribute at least half.

For certain smaller employers hiring and training previously unemployed individuals, support may reach $15,000 per trainee without a minimum employer contribution, subject to program assessment. Ontario is currently accepting individual-employer applications involving training for 25 or fewer participants.

Training must be approved before it begins. Employers should confirm business, trainee, course provider and cost eligibility. For an initial discussion, prepare the skills gap, course details, training dates, provider quote and participating employees.

Ontario Job Grant — official program and eligibility

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH IMMIGRATION (REDI)

Workforce recruitment | Employer participation details to be confirmed

Kenora District is a participating region in Ontario's 2026–2027 REDI initiative, which operates within the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP). The initiative may be relevant to employers facing persistent difficulties recruiting skilled workers.

REDI is not a wage subsidy or grant, and regional inclusion does not itself establish eligibility for an employer or worker. There is no separate REDI application process; OINP program requirements continue to apply.

The Township is seeking further details about employer participation and practical steps for local businesses. Additional guidance and relevant contacts will be shared when confirmed.

Employers interested in the initiative may contact the Township's Economic Development office with details of hard-to-fill positions, qualifications, wages, hours and recruitment efforts.

Ontario REDI initiative — official information

NOHFC AND BUSINESS EXPANSION

NOHFC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Internship wage support for eligible northern employers

Eligible businesses may receive up to 50% of an intern's salary and employer mandatory employment-related costs, to a maximum of $35,000 annually. Supported internships ordinarily last 52 weeks at a minimum of 35 hours a week. Businesses generally need one year of operation and at least one full-time employee.

Internship roles must provide substantive training and direct onsite supervision. Routine clerical, general manual labour, retail and general sales roles are not eligible. Candidate eligibility and recruitment requirements also apply.

An application must be submitted before hiring. Hiring before funding approval carries financial risk; funding is normally reimbursed based on costs incurred, with payments around six months and at completion.

To prepare, develop a job description, training objectives, supervision plan, wage budget and recruitment approach.

NOHFC Workforce Development Program

NOHFC INVEST NORTH — GROW

Business expansion | Conditional contribution and loan options

Eligible established Northern Ontario businesses seeking to expand may qualify for a conditional contribution of up to 20% of eligible costs, capped at $400,000. Loan-only and combined contribution/loan options are also available. Potential eligible expenses include construction, leasehold improvements, equipment, technology and certain project-related training or marketing.

Retail, consumer services, food services and accommodation are generally excluded, although some destination tourism operations may qualify under specific rules. Routine maintenance and working capital are not eligible.

The next published competitive-round deadline for a detailed business plan is January 31, 2027. This is a detailed-plan deadline, not necessarily the first step: businesses should contact NOHFC and begin its application process early to confirm project fit and timing.

NOHFC Invest North — Grow: eligibility and application details

PACE BUSINESS ADVICE AND FINANCING

Business counselling, planning support and repayable loans

Patricia Area Community Endeavours (PACE) serves Ignace and offers business counselling, planning support, mentorship and loans. Its publicly advertised standard loan offering is up to $300,000 for eligible small and medium-sized businesses and social enterprises, subject to an assessment of the business and its ability to repay.

Unlike a grant, PACE financing must be repaid. Its advisory and mentoring services may also be useful to owners who are not currently looking for a loan.

Businesses can approach PACE with a business challenge, an investment proposal or a planning need. Applicants for financing should expect to discuss their business plan, financial information and cash-flow projections.

Contact: reception@pace-cf.on.ca | 807-221-3293

PACE business advice and services

PACE loan information

BUSINESS QUESTIONS AND NEEDS FOR DISCUSSION

The Township welcomes feedback from local business owners ahead of the next Ignace Area Business Association meeting. The questions below may help identify opportunities for discussion and follow-up:

- Are you considering a business improvement, new equipment, expansion or other investment in 2027?
- Are you experiencing difficulty recruiting or retaining employees, including seasonal workers?
- Are there training opportunities or funding programs you would like to explore?
- What business-related challenges or support needs would you like to raise at the meeting?

Daniella Okoye

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This resource is provided for general information and does not replace current government program guidelines or program administrator decisions.