

Haldimand Rural Water Quality Program Guidelines

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1. Program Overview

The Haldimand Rural Water Quality Program is an initiative of Haldimand County and its partners to improve water quality in Haldimand County. The Program has been developed in conjunction with representation from the agricultural community and is based on the successful programs in Wellington, Waterloo and Brant Counties. The program will be delivered by the three local Conservation Authorities, the Grand River Conservation Authority, Long Point Region Conservation Authority and Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

The benefits of improved water quality include a safe secure water supply, a healthy aquatic ecosystem, increased recreational opportunities, sustainable agricultural operations and a vibrant economy. Everyone benefits when water quality is improved and protected.

2. Structure of Financial Incentives

Financial incentives will be offered as a grant to share the implementation costs of a project. Landowners eligible to receive funding through other programs will be encouraged to make use of those funds in addition to the funds available to through the Haldimand Rural Water Quality Program. Where landowners are eligible to receive funds through another program, the grant rates will be adjusted to ensure that landowners do not receive more than 100% towards the cost of their projects.

Project	Grant Rate for Combining Grants	Maximum RWQP Grant rate	Performance Incentive	Maximum grant
Livestock access restriction*	50%	75%-100%*		\$5,000
Erosion Control Structures	50%	50%		\$5,000
Tree planting/natural restoration - stream buffers, fragile land retirement, field windbreaks,	30%	80%		\$5,000
Living Snow Fence		100%	\$750/acre	\$5,000
Sediment Basins/Wetland Creation	50%	80%		\$5,000
Cover Crops			\$10-\$20/acre	\$1,500
Soil Testing		75%		\$1,000
Nutrient Management Plans		75%- 100%**		\$2,000
Crop Nutrient Plans		75%		\$2,000
Water Well Decommissioning	50%	100%		\$1,000
Innovative Technology	Innovative technologies and projects that do not conform to the guidelines will be considered by the Review Committee on a project by project basis.			

***livestock access restriction materials are eligible for 100% cost-share if installed by the landowner: producer NMAN training course fee eligible for 100% cost share.**

3. Application and Eligibility Details

3.1 How to Apply

Attend an Environmental Farm Plan workshop (EFP) by either in-person or participated virtually, and complete the worksheets applicable to your farming operation. The EFP is a self-assessment of your farm operation from an environmental perspective. The goal of the EFP is to raise awareness of potential environmental concerns you may not have considered and supports the intended program benefit of improving and protecting local water quality. The EFP is delivered locally by Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association in partnership with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. For details and workshop dates visit www.ontariosoilcrop.org. The EFP must be completed prior to grant payment, but may be done after your application is approved.

1. Contact the Rural Water Quality Program representative at your local Conservation Authority for assistance with planning your project and applying to the program.
 - Grand River Conservation Authority – ruralwater@grandriver.ca (519)-621-2761
 - Long Point Region Conservation Authority – watercare@lprca.on.ca (519)-842-4242
 - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority – info@npca.ca (905) 788-3135
2. Program staff will present your application to the Rural Water Quality Program Review Committee for consideration. The Review Committee consists of the Haldimand County Agricultural Advisory committee who will evaluate the project on its potential to protect and improve water quality. The Review Committee meets on a bimonthly basis and will review proposals as required.
3. Once the project proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Rural Water Quality Program Review Committee, you will be notified in writing to proceed with the project.
4. To be reimbursed for your approved project expenses, notify staff once the project is completed, paid for, and you have copies of all receipts. A site inspection is required to confirm that the project is complete. At that time you can submit copies of invoices and proof of payment (invoice signed “paid in full” by contractor, a copy of the cancelled cheques or a bank statement) for all eligible project expenses to program staff.
5. Within 5 weeks of a site inspection that determines that the work is complete and satisfactory, your cost-share payment will be sent to you. If the project is delayed Conservation Authority staff must be made aware as funding may become unavailable.

3.2 Eligibility

1. A grant to implement all or some of the farm related best management practices in the Rural Water Quality Program may be paid to an individual applicant who:
 - is a resident of Ontario
 - is a registered owner of the project property in Haldimand County used for agricultural purposes or whose property is under the influence of agriculture
 - attends an EFP workshop (in person or online)
 - under this program, a person is deemed to be the owner of land if the person leases the land for farming from the registered owner. Where the applicant is the leasee, written permission for the project is required from the property owner.
2. The project must be: located in Haldimand County, satisfy the individual project category criteria, and protect and improve surface or groundwater quality.
3. The following costs are generally eligible for grant assistance:
 - purchased materials and supplies
 - professional fees
 - fees for design and construction.

NOTE: The labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business are not eligible.

4. All approvals and permits are the responsibility of the applicant. Projects must meet all legal requirements including:
 - municipal bylaws
 - provincial and regional highway setbacks
 - Provincial Acts
 - Canada Farm Building Code
 - Ontario Building Code
 - etc.
5. Innovative technologies and projects that do not conform to the guidelines will be considered by the Review Committee on a project by project basis. Applicants should contact program staff to determine the application requirements.

3.3 Limitations to Grant Eligibility

1. Grants are limited to eligible agricultural properties in Haldimand County.
2. Unless specified otherwise, grant maximums are per farm. A 'farm' is defined as a Municipal Property Assessment Corporation delineated land parcel.
3. Projects should be able to clearly demonstrate the potential to improve or protect water quality.
4. Retroactive projects are not eligible for funding. Projects completed prior submitting an application to the program will not be considered. Any applicant who proceeds with a project before it has been approved by the Rural Water Quality Program Review Committee has no assurance that financial assistance will be provided.
5. An applicant must specify the program year in which the project will be completed. If the project cannot be completed within the specified year, the grant will not be paid. However, the applicant may request an extension in writing, from the Rural Water Quality Program Review Committee.
6. Funds will be allocated on a priority basis. Those projects with the higher potential for improving water quality will be considered first.
7. Grant payments will not include HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate.
8. The Review Committee will set funding allocations annually. At that time they may decide to set allocations for priority areas, and or project categories. Funds may be limited based on this decision.

NOTE: Although the local Conservation Authorities, the Environmental Farm Plan Program and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs may provide information regarding the practices and structures described in the Rural Water Quality Program application form, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the practices and structures undertaken are suitable to the applicant's operation, and technically and structurally adequate. Neither the members of the Review Committee, Conservation Authority, OMAFRA, or the Environmental Farm Plan Program are liable for any loss arising from the use of any advice or information provided as part of or under this program.

4. Livestock Access Restriction to Watercourses

Cost-share Rate: 50% if combined with other funds
75% of labour and materials if not eligible for additional funds
100% of materials if HRWQP is the only source of funds and
landowner is providing labour

Maximum Payment: \$5,000 per farm (land parcel)

Purpose:

- To improve surface water quality by controlling livestock access to watercourses.

Eligible Projects:

- fencing along watercourses/ wetlands
- livestock crossings
- alternative watering devices

Project Details:

1. Fencing

- Temporary fencing will be considered eligible but will require a signed agreement requiring the applicant to install the fence prior to livestock being introduced to the pasture every year and to maintain the fence while livestock are present in the pasture
- Maximum cost share will not exceed **\$4.00/ft or \$13.25 /m**
- Fencing must be at least 10 feet (3.4 m) from the top of the bank of any watercourse.
- Only fencing along a watercourse will be considered for funding.

2. Crossings

- Bed-level, low flow or above flow crossings (bridge, large diameter culvert) may be considered. All in-stream work will require a Conservation Authority permit. Work done on a municipal drain will require additional approval from the municipality.
 - For bed-level crossings, gates must be installed at each streambank to allow livestock to be restricted out of the crossing. Gates shall be opened only for the purposes of moving livestock to the other side for pasture rotation purposes. Watering facilities must be available on both sides of the stream.
 - To be eligible for cost-share on a stream crossing, fencing along the watercourse must either be undertaken concurrently, or livestock must already be restricted from the watercourse.

3. Alternative Water Devices

- Watering devices are eligible for funding only where livestock are restricted from the watercourse.

NOTE: Projects in and along waterways and ditches may require approval by municipalities, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and your local Conservation Authority prior to implementation. In addition, any work done on municipal drains also requires prior approval from the municipality. Staff will provide assistance to landowners in acquiring the proper permits but it is the landowner's responsibility to ensure that all necessary approvals are received.

Eligible Costs:

- Engineering fees and permits.
- Material and labour (other than owner or owner's dependent family).
- Permanent and temporary fencing.
- Livestock crossings as outlined above.
- Alternative water devices such as nose pumps, spring boxes, wind and solar powered pumping units. Other systems may be considered.

Ineligible Costs:

- Primary hydro lines.
- Drilling new water wells.
- Labour and machinery use of applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business
- Grant paid will not include HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate

5. Erosion Control Structures

Cost-share Rate: 50%
Maximum Payment: \$5,000 per farm (land parcel)

Purpose:

- To control soil erosion problems on farmland and watercourses which impact surface water quality.

Eligible Projects:

- Structures such as;
 - Grass waterways
 - Water and sediment control basins (WaSCoBs)
 - Terraces
 - Drop structures
 - Vegetation strips
- Streambank stabilization including ditchbank seeding, spillway drop structures, culvert protection, and bioengineering techniques.
- Associated tile inlet and outlet structures.
- Improvements to existing stream crossings for machinery.

Project Details:

- Evidence of efforts to address soil erosion through management practices must be provided as part of the application. The chance of obtaining funding for erosion control projects will be enhanced if practices to control erosion are used on the applicant's adjacent fields.
- Retaining professional engineers to develop the design is advisable on complex and/or large projects. The private sector is responsible for addressing these requirements. Supervision of construction by a professional engineer is not mandatory, yet may be specified as required by program representatives on large and/or complex projects.
- Projects must be designed and constructed to the standards specified in the OMAFRA Agricultural Soil Erosion Control Manual.
- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies prior to construction. This may include; Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Conservation Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources. In addition, any work done on municipal drains also requires prior approval from the municipality.
- All collected water must be taken to a sufficient and legal outlet.
- Systematic tile drainage systems or surface inlet structures that are not an integral part of the erosion control structure are not eligible.

Eligible Costs:

- Professional design,
- Labour, material, professional engineer construction supervision and equipment rental

Ineligible Costs:

- Permits and fees.
- Labour and machinery use of applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business
- Grant paid will not include HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate.

6. Tree Planting/ Natural Restoration

Cost-share Rate:	30% if combined with other funds 80% if HRWQP is the only source of funds
Maximum Payment:	\$5,000 per farm (land parcel)

Purpose:

- To improve water quality by retiring fragile agricultural land into appropriate native species.

Eligible Projects:

- Planting of appropriate native species including prairie vegetation and tree/shrub species on retired fragile agricultural land such as floodplains, steeply sloped and erosion prone land.
- Planting/seeding buffer areas along watercourses and wetlands.
- Tree windbreak establishment to prevent wind erosion.

General Comments:

- Livestock must be excluded from the site; special considerations may be given for prairie restoration.
- A plan is required specifying species, planting density, location, site preparation and maintenance. To promote approval, the plan should be developed in conjunction with Conservation Authority staff or a private consultant.
- The participant is responsible for proper site preparation as well as the care and maintenance of the plantings. Mowing may be needed during the establishment period to reduce weed competition.
- The participant is responsible for the care and maintenance of the plantings.
- Appropriate native species are encouraged.
- Applicants will be required to sign a 15 year management agreement.

Project Details:

1. Fragile land retirement:

- Fragile lands are tilled or pastured lands subject to either erosion or flooding.
- Fragile lands are also areas that serve as recharge areas, adjacent to wetlands or prone to standing water.
- Plantings of native vegetation including trees, shrubs, grasses and other plants will be considered.

2. Buffer strips:

- Buffer strips may be established along watercourses adjacent to either pasture or cropped land. A buffer may include native trees, shrubs, grasses and or other plants.
- Minimum buffer width is 10 feet. Wider widths are encouraged.
- Municipal approval is required for tree planting along municipal drains.

3. Field Windbreaks:

- Protect and improve surface water quality by reducing wind erosion. This includes field windbreaks, roadside windbreaks and other linear plantings.
- At maturity, windbreaks should have 30-50% porosity during erosive periods of the year.

Eligible Costs:

- Trees, shrubs, plant material, protection systems and planting costs to a maximum of \$30/tree
- Seed costs associated with establishing appropriate groundcover for the approved tree planting project
- Costs associated with replacing trees and shrubs will be considered by the Review Committee if forestry staff feels a project was unsuccessful due to factors beyond the control of the landowner (i.e. stock quality, weather, etc).

Ineligible Costs:

- Commercial stock, fruit trees or Christmas tree species which are commercially marketable in less than 15 years are not eligible.
- Farmstead landscaping
- Labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business.
- Grant paid will not include HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate

7. Living Snow Fence

Cost-share Rate: 100%

Maximum Payment: \$5,000

Land Retirement Payment: Total payment of \$1450 per 0.4 hectare (1 acre)

Purpose:

- To implement living snow fences in Haldimand County in priority areas.

Project Details:

- **All projects must be approved by Haldimand County Roads Operations as a priority area before the project is submitted to the Review Committee for approval of funds.**
- 100% of the cost of the establishment will be eligible for funding up to \$5,000.
- The performance incentive will be paid as two lump sums based on the areas calculated as length of the living snow fence times a width of 10 m. The first will be 6 months following a successful tree plant (\$750 per acre or 0.4 hectares) the second will be provided after 4 years upon inspection by the Conservation Authority (\$700 per acre or 0.4 hectare)
- A written agreement may be required between the Municipality and landowner.
- Trees cannot be cut for 15 years (only maintained).
- From the date of planting up to the first 3 years dead trees will be replaced at the cost of the municipality
- A planting plan for the living snow fence will be developed in consultation with Conservation Authority staff taking into account, soil type, desired porosity, distance to road and prevailing wind direction.

Eligible Costs:

- Trees, shrubs, plant material, protection systems and planting costs to a maximum of \$30/tree.
- Seed costs associated with establishing appropriate groundcover in tree planting area.

Ineligible Costs:

- Projects that do not follow the prescribed Living Snow Fence planting plan approved by the Haldimand RWQP Review Committee are not eligible for funding.
- Commercial stock, fruit trees or Christmas tree species which are commercially marketable in less than 15 years are not eligible.
- Labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business.
- Grant will not include HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate

8. Sediment Basin/Wetland Creation

Cost-share Rate: 50%
Maximum Payment: \$5,000 per farm (land parcel)

Purpose:

- To control sediment, nutrients and elevated flows from agricultural runoff.
- Project should be designed to increase and promote wildlife habitat.

Eligible Projects:

- Berms with culverts, control structures, and overflow spillways located between field runoff and natural habitat down slope (watercourse, wooded ravine, etc.)
- Dugouts excavated between field runoff and natural habitat down slope.

Ineligible Projects:

- Berms or dugouts that do not catch and store surface runoff from agricultural fields.

Project Details:

- Impoundment size should be sufficient to catch and store a one in two year storm.
- Design developed by professional engineers is advisable on large projects (projects that service 20 acres or more).
- All projects must have an outlet (drop structure, culvert) and overflow spillway.
- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies prior to construction. In addition, any work done on municipal drains also requires prior approval from the municipality.
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Eligible Costs:

- Professional design
- Labour and material, professional engineer construction supervision and equipment rental

Ineligible Costs:

- Permits and fees
- Labour and machinery use of applicant, family dependents, and the applicant's business
- Grants paid will not include HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate.

9. Cover Crop

Performance Incentive:	\$20/acre
Maximum Grant:	\$1,500 per farm operation*

Purpose:

- To promote the establishment and over-wintering of cover crops (living or dead), which help provide soil protection and reduce soil erosion to watercourses.

Eligible projects:

- Crops that are grown for the purpose of providing cover over the winter. Crops grown for harvest are excluded from the cover crop category (e.g., winter cereals).
- Grazed cover crops will be considered on a case by case basis taking into consideration stocking rate, topography and distance to surface water. Where approved, the funding for grazed cover crop will be 50% of the rate set above.

Project Details:

- Priority will be given to areas directly adjacent to watercourses, wetlands or with tile drainage.
- Applicants should register all potential fields and provide a crop rotation plan.
- A spring residue measurement of at least 50% cover is required to receive the incentive. The cover crop will be verified by program staff before spring tillage.
- Crops may be tilled no sooner than the spring of the year following planting (they may be chemically killed the previous fall). The exception is fall strip tillage, which must still meet the minimum 50% cover as verified in the following spring.
- Where the cover crop does not meet 50% cover during the spring assessment, AND no tillage or grazing has occurred, seed costs will be reimbursed to a maximum of \$10/acre on approved acres.
- Cover crops must be destroyed before June 1.
- Returning applicants may apply for the cover crop incentive
 - on a different field
 - on the same field in as another year where the applicant plants a different cover crop/species mix, or where the cover crop follows a different harvested crop.

Performance Incentive Payment Details:

- Incentive payments are limited to a maximum of \$1,500 per FBR for life of program.
- Producers will be paid the incentive after program staff has confirmed that the field(s) were managed according to program guidelines. Producers do NOT have to produce proof of payment for cover crop seed and/or planting costs unless submitting for seed costs where 50% cover was not achieved.

*A farm operation is defined as a farm business with a unique Farm Business Registration Number.

10. Soil Testing

Cost-share Rate: 75%
Maximum Payment: \$1000 per farm operation*

Purpose: To promote the application of crop nutrients at the proper rate, time and place from appropriate sources to support crop productivity and minimize potential contamination of ground and surface water.

Eligible projects:

- Soil sampling and analysis with fertility recommendations (including but not limited to soil pH, organic matter, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, calcium, sodium, buffer pH, calcium, base saturation, cation exchange capacity).
- Additional micronutrient and or particle size analysis in combination with standard soil analysis packages (see above).

Project Details:

- Priority is given to fields adjacent to watercourses, wetlands or are systematically tile drained.
- Fields must not have been soil sampled in the last three years.
- Sampling must be completed under the supervision of a Certified Crop Advisor or agronomist.
- Soil analysis must be done at an Ontario accredited soil testing laboratory:
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/resource/soillabs.htm>

Eligible Costs

- Soil sampling and analysis, including mapping of sample locations.

Ineligible Costs:

- Soil testing by non-accredited laboratories
- Crop scouting and pest monitoring
- Field perimeter mapping
- Plant tissue or manure analysis (these costs may be eligible under the Nutrient Management Plan / Crop Nutrient Plan category)
- Repeat services on the same production acres
- Labour and machinery use of applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business
- Grant will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate

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11. Nutrient Management Plans

Cost Share Rate: 75% – 100*%
Maximum Payment: \$2,000 per farm operation*

Purpose: To encourage the most effective use of available nutrient resources, optimize yields, and protect groundwater and surface water.

Eligible Projects:

- A voluntary 3 year Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) created using OMAFRA's NMAN software program.

Note: The nutrient management strategy (NMS) that is required to obtain a building permit under the Nutrient Management Act is not a NMP. A NMS documents the type and # of livestock, volume of manure produced, available land base and manure storage requirements. A NMP contains added information documenting where, when and at what rate manure/nutrients will be applied to the available land base.

Project Details:

- A printout or electronic summary from the NMAN Program containing the following information must be submitted to GRCA staff for review:
 - for each farm property, a Farm Unit Summary
 - manure/nutrient source summary, manure/nutrient information (type, analysis, etc.)
 - If applicable, MSTOR manure storage sizing calculations & storage information (yearly amount, number of days of storage, amount remaining)
 - manure/nutrient application graph (tracks total (all types), amount remaining)
 - manure/nutrient application summary (for each field, the rate, source, amount, method, setback)
 - field summary (field id, soil information, area, crop type, # of nutrient applications)
- To receive funding, the nutrient management plan must adequately supply the required crop nutrients without over applying and producing 'red flags' in the NMAN program.

Eligible Costs:

- Soil, plant tissue and manure nutrient sampling and analysis. (Cost shared at 75%)
- Professional fees for preparation of a nutrient management plan (Cost shared at 75%)
- Registration fee to attend Producer Nutrient Management Plan Preparation Using NMAN training session (Cost shared at 100%). Software is available at www.nutrientmanagement.ca

Ineligible Costs:

- Costs associated with the renewal of an existing plan

- Crop scouting and pest monitoring
- Repeat services on the same production acres
- Fees associated with the completion of a NMP required by the Nutrient Management Act
- Labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business.
- Grant will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate

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12. Crop Nutrient Plans

Cost Share Rate: 75%
Maximum Payment: \$2,000 per farm operation*

Purpose: To encourage the most effective use of available nutrient resources, optimize yields, and protect groundwater and surface water on cropping operations without livestock housing.

Eligible Projects:

- A written crop nutrient plan covering at least one full crop rotation and a minimum of three years that describes the timing, source, placement and rates of all applied nutrients.

Project Details:

The plan must outline, at a minimum, the following details on a per field basis:

- soil sampling and analysis (including frequency of sampling, sampling plan, and soil test results that include organic matter, soil phosphorus, pH etc.), and
- maps of fields showing locations of any sensitive features requiring special management or setbacks
- acreage and soil type
- crop rotation
- tillage practices for each crop
- Timing, source, placement, and rates of all applied nutrients
- Crop removal and the nutrient balance for each crop, including credits from legumes and/or manure
- Fertilizer recommendations (for all inputs including organic amendments) for each crop
- Management practices to reduce risk of nutrient loss

The plan may also include the following other eligible activities to support the development of the crop nutrient plan:

- Manure sampling and analysis
- Field profitability mapping services
- Plant tissue sampling and analysis

Eligible Costs:

- Consulting fees for plan development services and preparation provided by appropriate, qualified professional (e.g. Certified Crop Advisor)
- Soil, plant tissue and manure nutrient sampling and analysis

Ineligible Costs:

- Costs associated with the renewal of an existing plan

- Repeat services on the same production acres
- Labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business.
- Grant will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate

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13. Plugging Unused Water Wells

Cost-share Rate:	50% if combined with other funds 100% without other funds
Maximum Payment:	\$1000 per well

Purpose:

- To prevent groundwater contamination via improperly abandoned or unused water wells by encouraging the proper plugging of wells that are dry or no longer used

Eligible Projects:

- Proper plugging of unused water wells (dug, bored or drilled) by a licensed well contractor.

Project Details:

- Must comply with Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks procedures for plugging or abandoning an unused water well according to Ontario Regulation 903. Details of the procedure must be documented on a water well record and a copy submitted upon completion to the program representative.
- A drilled well inside a dug well is considered one project and therefore qualifies for one grant only.
- If you have an existing well record for the well that you are proposing to decommission, please include a copy with the application form. If you do not have a well record, please contact the Water Well Help Desk at 1-888-396-WELL (9355) or helpdesk@waterwellontario.ca or use the website map tool at www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/map-well-records
- A directory of Licensed Well Contractors in Ontario can be found here: www.ontario.ca/page/find-licenced-well-contractors
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Eligible Costs:

- Licensed contractor fees.
- Any labour or materials associated with proper well plugging procedures.

Ineligible Costs:

- Labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business.
- Grant will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate