



DCC-Retail Modernization Project Grant

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Program Information and Eligibility Requirements

Overview and Benefits

The DCC Retail Modernization Project Grant (RMPG) is part of a broader Digitalization Competence Centre (DCC) initiative. RMPG is designed to support retail businesses (Retail) to advance their digital transformation and optimize their technological investments.

Specifically, RMPG helps retail businesses with the purchase of effective digital equipment and software to help them transform and grow. As such, eligible Retail can receive a reimbursement of up to \$5,000 in funds post, approved, acquisition of technology. The grant contributes to the cost of hardware, software and the direct external cost to implement and operate said technology. All clients selected for a RMP grant will need to supply formal proof of payment and respond to follow up outcome survey requests.

Program Objectives

- support digital literacy.
- accelerate digital adoption for Retail.
- support commercialization of Ontario technologies by connecting SMEs looking to adopt digital technologies to Ontario technology firms
- increase resilience and competitiveness in the High Street economy.

RMPG is delivered by OCI on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade.

Benefits to the Applicant

- **Better understand your organization's technological needs**
- **Optimize and accelerate adoption of new digital technologies, minimizing costs**
- **Modernizing and enhancing the competitiveness of your business**
- **Achieve increased efficiencies in business operations by automating processes**
- **Funding to support the implementation of your digital technology needs**



How Funding Works

OCI Contribution	50 per cent (maximum) of total eligible project costs, up to \$5,000
Applicant Contribution	Minimum total project costs \$6,000 (OCI contribution of \$3000)
	50 per cent (minimum) of total eligible project costs (i.e., minimum 1:1 match to OCI contribution)
Timing	Project costs must be incurred after project approval and execution of OCI funding agreement

Example	Total eligible project costs: \$10,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum OCI contribution: \$5,000 Minimum applicant contribution: \$5,000 cash
Funding Recipient	Retail applicant company

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant

- Be incorporated federally or provincially with a valid Business Number
- Be a for-profit, privately owned business
- Have between 1 – 50 full time equivalent employees
- Must have been in business for at least 1 year
- Have a permanent public physical ‘Bricks and Mortar’ retail location in Ontario
- Must be engaged in consumer-facing retail activities (i.e. the process of selling goods or services directly to consumers for their personal use, which constitutes the final stage in the supply chain where products and services are made available to end-users e.g. Book Shop, coffee shop, hairdresser)
- Must have at least \$100,000 of annual revenues in one of the previous three tax years
- The applicant cannot have received/been approved for any other Federal or Provincial funding for the budget line items listed in the RMP application
- Have a change management culture and structure that values growth and innovation, willingness to review/adopt new technologies to support scaling
- Have the ability and willingness to invest resources
- Have the capability to implement and internally sustain new technologies



The following types of small businesses are ineligible:

- Businesses engaged in e-commerce operations, exclusively online store-fronts
- Corporate chains, franchises, or registered charities
- Representatives of multi-level marketing companies
- Not-for-profits
- Businesses that do not engage in retail activities (i.e. services where there is no transfer of a tangible product).
- Businesses whose focus is on providing advisory or consultation services (e.g., financial, insurance, mortgage, real estate industries, law firms etc.).
- Medical services including but not limited to GP, Dentist, Chiropractic, message therapy
- Hospitality where there is not a food offering/menu
- Entities that have previously received, or are currently receiving, DMAP grant support.

Project

- Projects must support Ontario-based Retail to adopt digital technology and transformation in the business and drive productivity increases and company growth.
- The project should significantly accelerate the business's digital transformation and have a high impact on their productivity and company growth (e.g., job creation/retention, new revenue, new customers, follow on investment and productivity improvements)
- Projects must purchase hardware or software to be eligible for reimbursement

The following are examples of eligible expenses:

- Point of Sales Hardware
- Mobile POS
- CRM
- Accounting Software
- Electronic Shelf Labels
- RFID and IOT
- Self-Checkout Kiosks
- Digital storage
- Inventory management
- AI customer interaction systems
- Loss prevention – Video
- Scheduling and labor management
- Technology installation



The following are examples of ineligible expenses:

- Software subscriptions
- Fixtures and fittings (shelving etc.)
- Stock for sale
- Labor
- Consultancy
- Indirect Costs
- Rent
- Marketing
- Website & SEO

How to Apply

Application Process and Timelines

Program Status: **Open for applications (accepted on a rolling basis)**

1. Applications MUST be initiated in AccessOCI by an OCI Business Development Manager (BDM) or an OCI Digital Adoption Advisor (DAA). Once initiated, the Applicant will receive login information to begin completing the application. Businesses that wish to be connected with an OCI BDM or OCI-DAA a [Client Intake Form](#).

Please note completion of this form does not constitute an application for funding. A BDM/DAA will contact you to discuss the opportunity. If you are already working with a BDM/DAA, please indicate this in the form.

2. Once the BDM/DAA confirms that the opportunity is suitable for the program, you will be sent a link to OCI's online application system, AccessOCI.
3. Complete the online application form and upload any supporting documents
4. Request your BDM/DAA to provide an endorsement of the application. Once the endorsement is provided, the applicant or BDM/DAA will then be able to submit the application.
5. OCI will internally review the application within approximately one week for eligibility, completeness and financial compliance. A list of any deficiencies will be sent to the applicant for revision.
6. When the application is endorsed as eligible and complete by OCI's internal team, the application will be sent for review to a committee comprising subject matter experts. Applicants will be notified of OCI's decision regarding funding by email.



7. Once the application is approved for funding, the applicant will be forwarded a copy of OCI's standard funding agreement, with an embedded copy of the submitted application, for execution. This funding agreement must be signed, via OCI's online electronic signature function, by the applicant and returned to OCI.

- **Please note: the OCI Funding Agreement is non-negotiable.**

Reference Documents

- [Eligible Expenditures Guide](#)
- [OCI Funding Agreement](#)
- [Reporting Instructions](#)
- [Proposal Questions](#) - (Note: this sample application template is for informational purposes only. Applications are only accepted through OCI's online system where full application requirements are listed).

Assessment Process and Criteria

RMPG is a discretionary, non-entitlement program with limited funding. All eligible applications undergo a review process where the applications are evaluated against program objectives and other assessment criteria. Not all eligible applications will be approved for funding.

Applications are internally reviewed for eligibility, completeness and financial compliance, prior to evaluation. The final funding decision is made by OCI.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated against assessment criteria including, but not limited to:

- Clarity of the need for digital modernization and adoption of digital technology
- Significance of the opportunity, expected growth potential and economic benefit to Retail and Ontario (e.g., job creation/retention, new revenues, new customers, follow on investment and productivity/efficiency increases)
- Capacity for and prioritization of investing in adoption of digital technologies
- Clarity, feasibility and appropriateness of the project plan and budget
- Overall quality and completeness of the application

Projects that are outside of the scope of the program may be referred to partner programs as appropriate.



Project Activation, Funds and Reporting

Project Activation

- Upon execution of the funding agreement, OCI will activate the project in the AccessOCI system.

Flow of Funds

- RMPG is a reimbursement program. Upon successful execution of the Funding Agreement and project completion, clients have 30 days to purchase and implement the technology. After which clients will need to submit their completed invoice/documentation from the supplier/vendor and proof of payment to receive grant monies.
- Project funding will not be released until the project is activated and the project completion claim report has been approved. OCI will not be held responsible for any expenses incurred for the project prior to project approval and receipt of the approval notification. If for any reason the requirements for activation are not met within thirty (30) days of the date of release of the approval notification, the funding offer may be retracted.
- Funding will be released directly to the SME following a reimbursement model, the SME will be responsible for payment of all vendors/suppliers.

Project Reporting

To receive funding from OCI, the applicant MUST complete all required reports as a contractual obligation as outlined below.

Note: Applicants MUST *retain invoices and other relevant documentation relating to eligible expenses. These should be included in the Final Claim and Report*

Final Report, Claim and Outcome Survey

A final report, including a progress report, proof of expenditures, financial attestation, and a request for reimbursement, will be required at the end of the project. Fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled completion date, the applicant will receive an email notification of the project end date from the AccessOCI system, with a link to the Final Progress and Claim Report should the applicant wish to begin entering data.

Applicants will be required to complete a **mandatory post-project outcomes survey**, three months after the completion of their Retail Modernization Project (RMP). The survey collects information on the impact of the RMP grant and digital technology implementation on the business. Responses will be anonymized and used for internal analysis and government reporting only. The survey must be completed within two weeks of receiving the survey.



- Applicants are required to report on project milestones, success stories, financials, productivity, commercialization and economic outputs
- Applicants will be required to report on efficiencies and productivity gains achieved—or expected to be achieved.
- If a project extension is required, the applicant **MUST** request it using the Project Administration tab in their AccessOCI project file. Extension requests must be made before the project end date and be approved by OCI.
- On the scheduled project completion date, the applicant will receive another notification and a link to complete the Final Project Progress and Claim Report from OCI's AccessOCI system.
- All required final reports from the applicant must be submitted within 10 days of project completion in order to be reimbursed for eligible expenses and maintain a good financial standing with OCI.
- If early reporting is required, the applicant **MAY** request it by emailing OCI.

Project Metrics

Retrospective Survey

Applicants will be required to complete a brief retrospective survey on an annual basis for three years from the end date of the project. At one, two, and three years after project completion, the applicant will be sent a link to complete a retrospective survey to collect data on commercial outcomes from the project. This information is required by OCI for assessment of program impact and continuous improvement.

Project Changes

If there are any other material changes to the project, including, but not limited to, changes related to the applicant company, scope of work, timelines, deliverables or eligible expenses, the applicant **MUST** contact the OCI Program Manager as soon as the changes are known. Failure to advise OCI of any change before submission of the final report will result in funds not being released.

For any variances to the OCI budget line items of \$500 or greater, or extensions to the project end date, the applicant must complete a Project Change Request form prior to the project end date, using the Project Administration tab in their AccessOCI project file. Note under no circumstances can the approved project budget be increased.



Contacts

For program-related inquiries, regarding program guidelines, eligibility and submitting the online application, please contact your business development manager or OCI DAA.

Or [Search OCI's Knowledge Base of Frequently Asked Questions](#).

For other inquiries, please contact:

Vahid Sadr

Program Manager

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