

A 2012 report by fDintelligence's (Financial Times Ltd.) ranks Ontario third among US states and Canadian provinces in winning foreign direct investment projects in 2011. Ontario creates close to half of Canada's new jobs — the Green Energy Act has helped create 20,000 jobs alone — and the provincial unemployment rate is now the lowest it's been since 2008.

The most important thing we can do to strengthen our economy right now is to eliminate the deficit. We're on track to do it by 2017-18 while protecting the gains we've made in health care and education. This will continue to create confidence among investors and businesses that want to set up shop and create jobs here in Ontario. A strong economy is what makes the great quality of life our families enjoy possible — including good schools and hospitals. Together, we'll build a brighter future for our children and grandchildren.

Ontario's Economy

Ontario is the seventh largest economy in North America. Our province was ranked third for attracting foreign direct investment projects in 2011 behind California and New York.

Ontario has created 555,700 net new jobs since October 2003 and almost 346,100 net new jobs since the recessionary low in June 2009.

2011 saw 121,300 jobs created — the highest level of job creation since 2003. And over 45% of all new Canadian jobs in 2011 were created in Ontario.

The [Canadian Federation of Independent Business](#) has recognized Ontario's success in cutting red tape and improving government-to-business service by moving Ontario up a full grade in their ranking. It's one of the biggest improvements in Canada.

Businesses remain confident in our province — investment in machinery and equipment rose almost 19% in 2011.

Did you know? Ontario's GDP rose by about 2.1% in 2011 and all private-sector forecasters expect modest growth to continue.

Balancing the Budget

Ontario has beaten deficit forecasts for a third year in a row, and we have a plan to pay down the deficit by 2017-18 while focusing on our priorities — education, health care and more jobs. Here are five things Ontario is doing to help balance the books:

1. Ontario is ending the Slots at Racetracks program and using that \$340 million in annual funding to support health care and education. The Province will work with the industry to make the change with one-time transition funding.
2. The government is reducing the space used by its employees, avoiding future maintenance costs. This will generate more than \$500 million and free up resources to protect health care and education as we eliminate the deficit.

3. Ontario has proposed opening ServiceOntario to more public-private partnerships. This would mean even higher-quality service for families at a lower cost.
4. More than half of all government spending goes to wages and benefits so Ontario must look at these costs in order to eliminate the deficit. Ontario is working towards agreements that keep our five-year plan on track and we're extending the MPP pay freeze from three to five years.
5. Ontario is finding new, more efficient providers for services of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC). Key services will continue, including the [Polar Bear Express](#) between Cochrane and Moosonee, and buses to communities that are now served only by the ONTC. Based on current estimates, supporting the ONTC today would require about \$100 million per year in government funding.

Did you know? For every dollar in new revenues outlined in the 2012 Budget, there are four dollars of savings and cost-containment measures.

Tax Plan for Jobs and Growth

Income Taxes

Ontario is helping businesses become more competitive. As businesses grow, they make new investments, which lead to new jobs.

Ontario got rid of the capital tax and the small business deduction surtax.

The general corporate income tax (CIT) rate went down from 14% to 12% on July 1, 2010 and to 11.5% on July 1, 2011.

Ontario's combined federal-provincial general CIT rate is now almost 13 percentage points lower than the average combined federal-state CIT in the United States. It's also competitive with the average CIT rate of [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) member countries.

To help balance the books, Ontario is freezing the general CIT rate and business education tax rate reductions until the deficit is eliminated.

Did you know? We are reducing taxes for Ontario businesses by over \$8 billion a year.

[BlogON: Ontario Savings Bonds](#)

Find out what Ontario Savings Bonds can do for you and all of us.

HST

With the HST fully phased-in, about \$4.6 billion a year in embedded taxes paid by businesses is removed. It's also reducing paperwork costs for businesses by more than \$500 million a year. These savings can be used to help businesses grow, hire people and lower prices.

A study by tax expert Michael Smart titled, “[The Impact of Sales Tax reform on Ontario Consumers: A First Look at the Evidence](#)” found that six months after the implementation of the HST, about two-thirds of the HST savings to businesses were passed on to consumers through lower prices.

Ontario is on track to save businesses more than \$8 billion per year when you combine:

- CIT rate reductions for large and small businesses to date
- the HST
- elimination of the capital tax

Capital investments made by businesses helped Ontario’s economic growth last year, accounting for more than half the total increase in real GDP.

Investments in machinery and equipment were particularly strong, rising 19.8% last year, following a 15.2% increase in 2010.

Tax Credits and Benefits for Families

[Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit](#)

- To help seniors stay in their homes longer, Ontario introduced a credit of up to \$1,500 per year to make renovations such as installing stair lifts or accessibility ramps.
- This is good news for seniors and their families, good news for contractors in the renovations sector, and good news for our health care system because it costs less when care is provided at home rather than in a long-term care facility.

[Ontario Clean Energy Benefit](#)

- As the province transitions towards a clean, modern and more reliable electricity system, the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit (OCEB) is helping many families, farms and small businesses manage electricity costs by providing 10% off on their electricity bills, for the first 3,000 kilowatt-hours used every month.
- A cap of 3,000 kilowatt-hours per month was brought in September 1, 2012, and will generate savings of about \$500 million for the province over four years.
- Customers with higher levels of consumption, such as some small businesses, will continue to receive an OCEB benefit related to the first 3,000 kWh per month they use.
- Taking a balanced approach to the OCEB is a responsible way of managing the needs of electricity consumers and the fiscal implications of providing electricity price relief.

[Ontario Child Benefit and Social Assistance](#)

- Ontario is raising social assistance rates by 1%.
- The Province created the Ontario Child Benefit in 2007 and it now reaches more than one million children each month. Ontario will increase the Ontario Child Benefit, though at a slower pace:
 - In 2009, Ontario accelerated the planned increase to the benefit plan by two years to help families in need get through the global recession.

- o Right now, the maximum payment each year per child is \$1,100. In July 2013, the maximum was to go up to \$1,310.
- o Instead, it will be \$1,210 next year and then rise to \$1,310 in 2014.

Children's Activity Tax Credit

- Helps offset the cost of activities to encourage good health and active minds (e.g., sports or music lessons).
- Provides a maximum credit of about \$50 each (or \$100 for a child with a disability).

[Find out what other Ontario tax credits and benefits your family may be eligible for.](#)

Progress By Sector

Auto

- Ontario is North America's number one automaker.
- Our province is home to five of the top light vehicle makers ([Toyota](#), [General Motors](#), [Ford](#), [Chrysler](#) and [Honda](#)) — a unique status within NAFTA.
- About 485,000 jobs are supported by the [automotive sector](#) across Ontario.
- During the worst recession in a generation, we committed \$4.8 billion to support the restructuring of GM and Chrysler, an investment that supported Ontario's entire auto industry.
- 2012 saw over 1,000 new jobs created in the auto sector including:
 - o Toyota announced 400 new jobs at its Woodstock facility to ramp up production of the highly successful RAV4 crossover.
 - o Ford announced a third shift at its Essex engine plant. This is expected to create 100 jobs in Windsor, Ontario.

[BlogON: 2012 Auto Show](#)

Ontario automakers have a lot to be proud of.

Aerospace

- Ontario has one of the most diversified [aerospace sectors](#), with 13 of the top 25 global aerospace companies and over 300 smaller firms supporting this \$6.5 billion industry and employs 22,000 people.
- The world's largest landing gear test facility is operated by [Goodrich](#) in Oakville, Ontario.
- 60% of all landing gear in operation on large aircrafts today is made in Ontario.

[BlogON: Flying Colours: A Proud Ontario Business](#)

Aircraft refurbishment company helps create jobs and opportunity in Peterborough.

Clean Energy

- Ontario's clean energy initiatives are on track to create 50,000 jobs. Over 25,000 clean energy jobs have been created since 2009.
- We're renewing our energy system to maintain a reliable electricity supply to power our economy, create jobs and build a cleaner, healthier future for our children and grandchildren.
- Since 2003, coal use has dropped by almost 90% and will be stopped completely by the end of 2014.
- Ontario now has more than 2,000 megawatts of wind power online, which is expected to produce enough electricity each year to power more than 550,000 homes. In 2003, there were only 15 megawatts of wind power, enough power for 4,000 homes.
- Ontario also has the 25 largest solar farms in Canada. Wind and solar produced more electricity than coal in 2011.

Clean -Tech

- North America's largest solar photo voltaic farm is located in Sarnia, Ontario.
- With 192 MW installed in 2011, Ontario had the second highest rate of installation of solar capacity in North America (after California).
- Ontario has 2,700 clean-tech firms and employs 65,000 people in the [clean-tech sector](#), generating annual revenues of more than \$8 billion.
- SAIL, a California-based venture capital firm and Stifel Nicolaus [have chosen Ontario](#) to establish a \$100 million clean-tech fund.
- [A \\$30 million early-stage clean-tech fund was established](#) with private sector investment through MaRS.

Culture and Tourism

- Tourism Toronto reported that 2011 was a record year: The number of hotel room nights sold in Toronto surpassed 9 million for the first time ever.
- Toronto was the first North American city to host the [International Indian Film Academy \(IIFA\) Weekend and Awards](#), attracting tens of thousands of visitors and raising Ontario's profile to hundreds of millions of viewers in 110 countries.
- Border crossings from overseas grew by 7% compared to 2010, including increases of 42% from China, 15% from India and 10% from Brazil.
- Toronto hosted the Microsoft Worldwide Partner's Conference in July 2012. According to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, the conference attracted over 15,000 people to the city and generated an estimated \$39 million in economic activity.

Did you know? Ontario's provincial parks receive over 9.5 million visits annually.

[BlogON: It's Festival Season in Ontario!](#)

Ontario has got lots of summer festivals, each with its own theme and flavour. There's something for everyone! See what's on near you.

Film, TV and Digital Media Production

- Ontario is the third largest film production location in North America (behind California and New York).
- Last year was Ontario's best year ever — production volume of film and television projects climbed to a record \$1.26 billion, an increase of 31% since 2010.
- Since 2003, employment in Ontario's entertainment and creative industries has grown faster than employment in the broader economy — the sector employed approximately 30,000 Ontarians in 2011.
- To continue attracting investment in the production sector, Ontario offers [competitive tax credits](#).

BlogON: Ontario in the spotlight on Oscar night

"In Darkness", written by Ontarian David F. Shamoon was nominated for best foreign language film.

Financial Services

- Toronto has the third most competitive financial services sector in North America and is ranked tenth, globally.
- Ontario's financial services sector employs more than 300,000 people.
- The [World Economic Forum](#) has named Canada the world's soundest banking system for the fifth straight year in its [Global Competitiveness Report](#).

Did you know? For every dollar a Canadian bank makes in New York City, they pay 45 cents in tax. But in Toronto, they pay 25 cents.

Food and Agriculture

- Agri-food is one of Ontario's leading industries, contributing more than \$33 billion to the economy every year.
- Food and beverage processing is Ontario's second-largest manufacturing sector and supports about 100,000 jobs in communities across the province.
- Since October 2003, the [Rural Economic Development program](#) has supported 418 projects, with an investment of \$167 million, resulting in more than \$1.2 billion in new economic activity.
- Ontario has provided more than \$2 billion directly to farmers in income support since 2003.
- Since 2003, investment of \$97 million in 139 food processing projects under the [Rural Economic Development program](#) has generated over \$591 million in new economic activity, creating or preserving over 21,000 jobs in the food processing sector.
- The [Rural Summer Jobs Service Program](#) has helped place more than 40,000 students since 2003 — including over 3,400 this year.

Did you know? The Greater Toronto Area is one of the top three food processing clusters in North America.

BlogON: Ontario Craft Beers Hit The Spot

Discover a new favourite and savour the offerings of an Ontario craft brewery near you.

BlogON: Award-Winning App Features Eastern Ontario Cheese-Making

By working together, Ontarians continue to show their innovative spirit and expertise, build strong businesses and create jobs.

Housing

- Through the Investment of Affordable Housing for Ontario program, we are creating over 5,000 new jobs building and repairing about 7,000 [affordable housing](#) units in Ontario.
- As of January 1, 2012, Ontario is a North American leader in energy efficiency for new buildings — compared to a house built in 2006, a house built in 2012 must be 40% more energy efficient to be up to code.

Information Communications Technology (ICT)

- Ontario is first in Canada and second in North America in the ICT sector for number of businesses.
- Ontario's ICT sector employs about 270,000 people, representing about 50% of total Canadian ICT employment.
- Ontario supported the [Communitech](#) hub in Waterloo, where over 458 new companies have been created since it was launched in 2010.

BlogON: From Basement to Big Time: Shopify

A story about an Ontario snowboarder who turned his passion into one of Canada's fastest growing companies.

Life Sciences

- Ontario is one of North America's [top five regions in biotech](#). Ontario is ranked fourth in North America for total number of Life Sciences-related FDI projects.
- The province is home to world-renowned research centres, hospitals and clinicians that include the [Ontario Cancer Institute](#), [SickKids](#), [Mount Sinai](#), and [London Health Sciences Centre](#).
- 51% of revenues (2010) and 56% of employment (2011) in Canadian pharmaceutical and medical manufacturing occur in Ontario.
- Ontario is supporting the [Life Sciences Commercialization Strategy](#), the [Ontario Brain Institute](#) and the [Ontario Institute for Cancer Research](#).
- Through the Global Leadership Round in Genomics & Life Sciences (GL²), Ontario is supporting 19 world-class genomics research projects at eight labs.
- GL² funds will support the work of more than 230 researchers and will also help create jobs for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research assistants, associates and technicians from across Canada and abroad — their work could lead to the discovery of cures for diseases like cancer while ushering in a new era of personalized medicine.

Mining

- The value of mineral exploration in Ontario was over \$1 billion for the first time ever in 2011.
- Ontario's market share of exploration investments within Canada has climbed from 20% in 2007 to 26% in 2011.
- Toronto is the global leader in mining finance, with the Toronto Stock Exchange and the TSX Venture Exchange holding roughly 58% of global mining listings.

Infrastructure**Public transit**

Since 2003, Ontario has invested more than \$13.4 billion in public transit in Ontario, including over \$6 billion in [GO Transit](#).

Air Rail Link

[Metrolinx](#) will build, own, and operate the [Air Rail Link](#), which will be in service by 2015 (in time for the [2015 Pan Am Games](#)), connecting Canada's two busiest transportation hubs — Union Station and Pearson International Airport. Construction began in summer 2012 and will be completed in 2014.

Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan

In spring 2009, Ontario committed over \$9 billion for Metrolinx regional transit projects in Toronto and York Region:

- The [VIVA](#) bus rapid transit project in York Region will include upgrading the existing VIVA system to provide bus-only lanes and new stations on Yonge Street, Highway 7 and Davis Drive. Construction is now underway.
- Construction on the Eglinton Crosstown light rail transit (LRT) project started in August 2011. Tunnelling will begin in late 2012, heading east from the west launch site at Keele Station to Yonge-Eglinton Station.
- In 2010, Metrolinx concluded a contract with Bombardier for the purchase of light rail vehicles for use on the LRT lines in Toronto, leading to increased manufacturing at its Thunder Bay plant.
- Metrolinx is partnering with the City of Toronto and Toronto Transit Commission to deliver four Metrolinx LRT projects in Toronto (the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, the Scarborough RT conversion to LRT, the Sheppard East LRT and the Finch West LRT).

GO Transit

- Since 2003, [GO Transit](#) has put into service new rail cars and buses that are modern, accessible, more fuel efficient and can carry more passengers.

- GO has completely replaced its existing locomotive fleet and expanded it with the purchase of 57 new fuel-efficient MP40 locomotives.
- In 2011-12, GO rail service was extended to Kitchener-Waterloo and over 4,000 parking spots were added across GO's network.
- Last year, GO Transit's on-time performance was 95%. GO's on-time performance in 2010-11 was 94%, up from 91.7% the year before.

BlogON: Making the Connection

Expanding GO service helps Ontarians like Marisa. It also helps us grow our economy and create jobs as we add more tracks and service.

Transit Projects

- Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension
 - This project is expected to create an estimated 20,000 jobs during construction. The Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension is expected to add 36 million transit trips and eliminate 30 million car trips per year.
 - Both tunnel and station construction are currently underway.
- Mississauga Transitway
 - This project will provide bus rapid transit (BRT) service along Highway 403, Eastgate Parkway and Eglinton Avenue in Mississauga starting in 2015.
 - Construction is well underway on bus-only lanes and stations.
- Ottawa Light Rail Transit Project
 - The Ottawa light rail transit project is the single largest provincial investment in transit infrastructure in the City of Ottawa's history and should create 20,000 jobs.
 - It will improve traffic flow in the city with the removal of more than half the buses from downtown and reduce the city's fuel consumption by 10 million litres every year.
- Waterloo Region's Rapid Transit Project
 - This rapid transit project will connect the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge, and will connect with GO Transit services.
 - The project will create about 8,000 jobs across the province and will be in service by 2017.

Union Station Revitalization

Major improvements to Union Station are now underway. Improvements include:

- A three-fold increase to [GO Transit](#) concourse space to make room for twice as many GO Transit passengers at Union Station by 2030.
- A new glass atrium roof over the GO Transit platforms.
- Construction of a new northwest [PATH connection](#) that will extend, underground, from Union Station up York Street to the existing PATH system in the Wellington Street area to relieve crowding and support future downtown growth.
- The restoration of heritage features of the main building.

Some parts of the project, including the lower retail portion, will be completed in 2016.

Video: Premier at Union Station

Gas Tax

Ontario dedicates two cents per litre of the provincial gas tax to municipalities for transit.

In 2011-12, 95 transit systems in 126 communities across the province received gas tax funding. These 126 communities represent more than 88% of the total population of Ontario.

Did you know? Compared to 2003, 2010 transit ridership has increased by nearly 132 million trips on public transit. That translates into more than 110 million car trips not taken on our roads.

Electric Vehicles

The [Electric Vehicle Incentive Program](#) was launched in July 2010. So far Ontario has provided over 575 incentive payments and over 700 green plates have been issued.

Nine vehicles are now eligible:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Mercedes Smart Fortwo | 6. Fisker Automotive Karma |
| 2. Nissan Leaf | 7. Ford Focus Electric |
| 3. Mitsubishi i-MiEV | 8. Chevrolet Volt |
| 4. Tesla Roadster | 9. Toyota Prius PHV |
| 5. Ford Transit Connect | |

Ontario is also showing its commitment to electric vehicles (EV) through:

- 19 research and development projects related to EV technology over the next six years in a [partnership with Magna](#).
- [Production support](#) of the Toyota RAV4 electric vehicle in Woodstock.
- Long-term plans for [charging stations at select GO Transit parking lots](#).

In the 2012 budget, the [Electric Vehicle Incentive Program](#) and the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program were combined, saving about \$43 million.

Highways

Ontario has made historic commitments in provincial highways and bridges that total more than \$17 billion since 2003.

In 2012-13 Ontario will create or sustain more than 18,500 jobs repairing and improving our southern highways.

Ontario will create or sustain more than 5,200 jobs repairing and improving our Northern highways in 2011-12.

Did you know? Since 2003, Ontario has built or rebuilt 6,700 Kilometers of road and 828 bridges across Ontario, longer than from here to Alaska.

[High occupancy vehicle lanes](#) are now in use on Highways 403 and 404 (GTA), 417 (Ottawa) and QEW (Halton Region).

Ontario is redeveloping service centres where travellers can refuel, use restrooms or buy snacks. The first 16 redeveloped service centres are now up and running and three will open next year.

Did you know? Ontario's roads are among the safest in North America.

Improvements to the [Windsor-Detroit Tunnel Canadian Plaza](#) will help with local traffic problems. The detailed design of the Canadian plaza began in the fall of 2011. Construction started in September 2012 and will take about two construction seasons to complete. This project is part of the federal-provincial [Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving strategy](#).

Ontario is reforming truck design and weight allowances to make them safer, more productive and environmentally friendly, and help reduce wear on roads and bridges by:

- Introducing the use of self-steering axles and axle load equalization technology on what are now known as safe, productive, infrastructure-friendly (SPIF) vehicles.
- Allowing wider use of low rolling-resistant wide single truck tires in place of traditional dual tires to increase fuel mileage.
- Allowing aerodynamic devices on heavy trucks to reduce wind resistance to increase fuel mileage.
- [Requiring speed limiters](#) on trucks, capping speed at 105 km/h.

Did you know? Ontario has created or maintained, on average, close to 100,000 jobs across the province each year since 2003 through the building of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, community centres, water infrastructure and schools.

Schools

Since 2003, improving Ontario's education infrastructure has created or preserved about 16,000 jobs, on average every year.

Ontario launched [Good Places to Learn](#) in 2005 to renovate and repair schools, build additions, and fund new school construction. In 2009, Ontario provided more funding to help improve energy efficiency in our schools.

More than 27,000 [renewal projects](#) have been completed or are underway. Since 2003, 570 new schools are now open, under construction or planned. Ontario has also helped make more than 2,600 publicly funded schools more energy efficient.

Hospitals

Since 2003, 23 new hospitals have been built or are underway. Ontario has invested approximately \$14 billion in health care infrastructure since 2003, supporting over 17,000 jobs on average each year.

Completed:

1. William Osler Health Centre (Brampton)
2. Royal Ottawa Health Care Group
3. West Parry Sound Health Centre
4. Peterborough Regional Health Centre
5. Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
6. Mattawa General Hospital
7. Runnymede Healthcare Centre (Toronto)
8. Bloorview Kids Rehab (formerly Bloorview MacMillan Children's Centre, Toronto)
9. Health Sciences North
10. Pembroke Regional Hospital
11. Sioux Lookout Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre
12. Sault Area Hospital
13. North Bay Regional Health Centre
14. Woodstock General Hospital
15. Sarnia, Bluewater Health

Under construction:

16. Niagara Health System
17. Bridgepoint Health (Toronto)
18. St. Joseph's Health Care (London)
19. St. Joseph's Healthcare (Hamilton)
20. Cornwall Community Hospital
21. Halton Healthcare Services
22. Humber River Regional Hospital (Toronto)
23. Women's College Hospital (Toronto)

Ontario has invested more than \$12 billion in health care infrastructure since 2003. Construction is moving forward or is complete for more than 100 major projects at hospitals across the province.

Pan Am Games

Ontario successfully bid for the [2015 Pan/Parapan American Games](#) and supported the set up of the [Toronto 2015 Organizing Committee](#).

Ontario has committed \$514 million towards the Pan Am Games Athletes' Village in the West Don Lands.

Metrolinx will build, own and operate the Air Rail Link which will be in service in time for the [2015 Pan Am Games](#), connecting Canada's two busiest transportation hubs — Union Station and Pearson International Airport. Construction began in summer 2012.

Hosting the Games will:

- Trigger investment in new and existing sports and recreation infrastructure as well as a legacy fund.
- Create 15,000 jobs in construction and Games operations.
- Create 5,200 jobs in the construction of the Pan Am Athletes' Village, situated in the West Don Lands.
- Attract 250,000 tourists and bring 10,000 athletes and team officials to Ontario.
- Build and train a team of up to 20,000 volunteers — a valuable foundation for future events and community building.

Did you know? You can track some of Ontario's largest infrastructure projects at www.infrastructureontario.ca.

This school year, a total of about 120,000 children are enrolled in full-day kindergarten. And many students who are off to college or university are getting 30% off their tuition.

Ontario is now recognized across Canada and around the globe as a leader in educational excellence. Our students rank among the best in the world when it comes to standard test results, and Ontario kids consistently score above the Canadian average in math, reading and science. Ontario has chosen to keep class sizes small so students will continue to get the attention they need to succeed.

We're investing in education because that's how we build a strong workforce, a vibrant economy and a bright future for our children and grandchildren.

Elementary and Secondary School

Full-day kindergarten

As of September 2012, about 120,000 four- and five-year-olds in 1,700 schools are benefitting from [full-day kindergarten](#).

Another 900 schools will offer it in September 2013. Ontario is protecting full-day kindergarten and it will be available to every four- and five-year old by 2014.

Did you know? Depending on demand, some boards are offering [before- and after-school programs](#) to help with a seamless transition from classroom to childcare.

[Video: Full-day kindergarten in Northern Ontario](#)

[Read video transcript](#)

Growth of full-day kindergarten

- September 2010: 35,000 students; 600 schools
- September 2011: 50,000 students; 800 schools
- September 2012: 120,000 students; 1,700 schools
- September 2013: 184,000 students; 2,600 schools
- September 2014: 250,000 students; 3,600 schools

Class Sizes

Students in smaller classes get more attention, helping them to improve their reading, writing and math skills so they are more likely to succeed. That's why in this year's budget, Ontario chose to protect [smaller class sizes](#):

- Nine years ago, only 31% of primary classes had 20 or fewer students. Today, it's 91%.
- All classes in Grades 1 to 3 now have 23 or fewer students compared to 64% nine years ago.

Did you know? Ontario students are ranked among the best in the world.

Test Scores

2011-12 [Education Quality and Accountability Office \(EQAO\)](#) assessment results:

- 70% of students in Grades 3 and 6 are meeting or beating the provincial standard (a “B” grade) — up 16 percentage points from 54% nine years ago.
- Over 50,000 more students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 are meeting or beating the provincial standard in reading, writing and math compared to 2002–03.

Ontario students scored among the highest in the world on the [2009 Program for International Assessment](#) test. The next set of results will be available in December 2013.

[BlogON: Ontario Students Lead Canadian Peers](#)

Ontario students continue to shine — results from the 2010 Pan Canadian Assessment Program show our Grade 8 students are ranked among the top in Canada.

Student Success

Ontario is helping students in Grades 7 to 12 get an education that fits their strengths, goals and interests. Programs include:

- [Specialist High Skills Major](#): Allows students to focus on a future career through classroom courses, workplace experiences and sector certifications. This school year, about 38,000 Grades 11 and 12 students are participating in 19 majors, including aviation and aerospace, environment, justice, community safety and emergency services, and more.
- [E-Learning](#): Gives students access to online courses and allows teachers to share resources across the province.
- [Dual Credits](#): Counts towards a student’s high school diploma as well as a college certificate, diploma or apprenticeship. In 2011–12, about 15,000 students participated.
- [Co-operative Education](#): Students can earn up to two high school credits they need to graduate through hands-on learning in a workplace.

Ontario is also helping struggling high school students get back on track to graduate:

- Every school board has a Student Success Leader who works directly with principals to improve graduation rates.
- [Student Success Teams](#) provide extra support and attention in every high school for students who need it.

- On average, there is one Student Success Teacher in every high school.
- Last school year, 124 high schools — 39 more than the previous year — across Ontario took part in workshops that help build staff leadership.

Did you know? Tiffany Sherri Caldwell from Saugeen District Secondary School in Port Elgin became a skilled welder and the prom queen too. Read her and others' inspiring stories [here](#).

BlogON: Homework Help Adding Up To Better Grades And Stronger Students

Homework Help is an online place where students from Grades 7 to 10 can sign in to get help with the math concepts they learn in school.

Grad Rates

Working with students, parents and educators, Ontario's [Student Success Strategy](#) has helped raise the high school graduation rate.

Nine years ago, only 68% of students finished high school. Today, that number is 82%.

That means about 93,000 more students have graduated than would have if the rate had stayed the same.

Graduation Rates in Ontario:

2003-04: 68%
2004-05: 71%
2005-06: 73%
2006-07: 75%
2007-08: 77%
2008-09: 79%
2009-10: 81%
2010-11: 82%

College, University and Apprenticeship

30% Off Ontario Tuition Grant

This year, Ontario introduced the new [30% Off Ontario Tuition grant](#) to help lower the cost of a postsecondary education.

Students in a university or college degree program will save \$1,680, while students in college diploma and certificate programs will save \$770 every year — money that can be put towards things like textbooks or housing.

So far, [200,000 students have received money back](#).

The new grant is the latest improvement to the [Ontario Student Assistance Program](#). Ontario has one of the most generous student assistance programs in the country, reaching about 230,000 students this year through loans and grants.

BlogON: If You're a Student, You Can Save

When students like Michael start their postsecondary education next fall, they'll have the new 30% Off Ontario Tuition grant to help lower the cost.

More Spaces

Over the past nine years, we've funded an increase for about 210,000 more postsecondary students, including 60,000 more [apprentices](#).

Enrolment at Ontario's universities is up 26% from 2002-03. At Ontario Colleges enrolment is up 18.5%.

Since 2003, Ontario has created almost 15,000 new graduate spaces — an increase of 57%.

In the past eight years, Ontario created 260 more first-year medical student spaces.

Did you know? Last year in Ontario, workers (aged 25+) with a high school education gained a net 900 jobs. But workers with a postsecondary education gained a net 107,600 jobs.

Apprenticeships

About 120,000 [apprentices](#) are learning a trade today — nearly 60,000 more than in 2002-03.

Annual apprenticeship registrations have grown by about 13,000 in the last nine years, reaching more than 30,000 this year. We'll continue to increase the number of new registrations while providing support to help apprentices complete their training.

We also established the [Ontario College of Trades](#) to modernize Ontario's apprenticeship and skilled trades system.

Modernizing Facilities

Our students deserve the best facilities possible to help them learn. That's why we're expanding, renewing and modernizing our colleges and universities, so they're ready to support Ontario's long-term research and skills-training needs.

Investments include:

- 100 additional medical school spaces
- 7 skills training facilities at colleges
- facility renewal at colleges and universities across Ontario
- 49 capital projects completed in partnership with the federal government through the [Knowledge Infrastructure Program](#)

- 24 major capital projects at colleges and universities announced in 2011

[BlogON: In “The Zone” at Ryerson University](#)

At Ryerson’s downtown Toronto campus, amazing things are happening thanks to the ideas and talents of some bright Ontario students.

Training

Second Career

The [Second Career](#) program offers laid-off workers up to two years of training to help them find jobs in growing sectors of the economy.

Second Career has helped over **62,000 laid off** workers retrain since June 2008. More than 92% of Second Career clients who responded to a follow-up survey indicated that skills training helped them with their future employment.

[BlogON: Second Career, Second Chance](#)

Find out how Dennis turned the challenge of losing his job into an opportunity to move forward with Ontario’s Second Career program.

Summer Company

The [Summer Company](#) program provides up to \$3,000 and mentoring to help students between 15 and 29 start and operate their own business.

In 2012, 483 businesses were launched through the program, creating jobs and building entrepreneurial skills amongst Ontario’s youth.

Since Summer Company began in 2001, students have started over 4,400 businesses across a wide range of sectors, including graphic design, landscaping, manufacturing, fashion design, computer repair and food services. They have learned and developed entrepreneurial skills that will help them strengthen Ontario’s economy for the future.

Summer Jobs

We’re helping over 76,000 students get jobs and access services this summer. The Summer Jobs Strategy includes targeted resources for youth in high-needs neighbourhoods.

Employment Ontario’s [Summer Jobs website](#) helps students:

- find job listings
- search for a job through [Employment Ontario](#) agencies
- get help to improve their marketing skills and resume writing
- apply for a job with the [Ontario government](#)

Employers are also encouraged to hire students and provide hands-on training for tomorrow's workforce through a [\\$2-per-hour hiring incentive](#).

Ontario's summer jobs programs and services are open to students who plan to return to school the following fall.

[BlogON: Where will a summer job take you?](#)

NFL draft-pick Tyrone Crawford talks about his Summer Jobs for Youth experience with Border City Boxing in Windsor.

Internationally Trained Professionals

Since 2003, we have invested in 300 [bridge training programs](#) that have helped more than 50,000 newcomers get the training they need to find a job in their field.

We passed the [Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act](#), 2006 and created the [Office of the Fairness Commissioner](#) to ensure a fair and transparent process for registration and licensing in 40 regulated professions.

[Global Experience Ontario](#) is a one-stop information and resource centre that has helped nearly 10,000 internationally trained people so far.

This school year, Ontario has provided [tuition-free language programs](#) that will help more than 120,000 newcomers improve their ability to speak English or French.

Funding to support the training and integration of [international medical graduates](#) is five times what it was in 2003, meaning 1,521 more international medical graduates were practising in Ontario as of 2011.

In November 2012, the government released Ontario's first immigration strategy, which was developed after reviewing recommendations from Ontario's Expert Roundtable on Immigration, as well as consulting with many sectors and stakeholders across the province. The goal of the strategy is to make immigration work better for Ontario's economic development and better support newcomers and their families so they can succeed and fully contribute to Ontario's economic prosperity.

Did you know? Ontario offers more training positions and assessments for international medical graduates each year than all other provinces combined.

Thousands more nurses are on the job. Since 2003, 23 new hospitals have been built or are underway. When it comes to surgical wait times for key services, Ontario has gone from worst to first in Canada, and over two million more Ontarians have a family doctor.

Our goal is to make Ontario the healthiest place in North America to grow up and grow old. We have an [Action Plan for Health Care](#) to help get us there.

Our parents and grandparents had the vision and compassion to create our uniquely Canadian, universal health care system. And now, it's our turn to protect and strengthen health care, so it's there for our children and grandchildren, just as it is there for us.

Access to Care

More Doctors

In 2003, there was a serious doctor shortage. Since then, Ontario has attracted 4,000 more doctors and helped 2.1 million more Ontarians [find a family physician](#), according to the Ontario Medical Association. In fact, since 2006, Ontario has added more physicians than the national average.

Ontario has added 260 more first-year medical school spaces — a 38% increase since 2004. The province has more than doubled the number of spaces for [international medical graduates](#) from 90 to 200 each year. And Ontario is increasing the number of family medicine residency positions by 160% (326 spaces) by 2013.

In 2005, Ontario opened the [Northern Ontario School of Medicine](#)— the first new medical school in 30 years — with main campuses in Thunder Bay and Sudbury, and research sites across Northern Ontario. The school has graduated 220 new doctors since the spring of 2009.

Since 2007, Ontario has opened four new medical education campuses in Kitchener-Waterloo, St. Catharines, Windsor and Mississauga.

The province also created the [HealthForceOntario Northern and Rural Recruitment and Retention Initiative](#) to help attract more physicians to rural and northern communities. Since the program began in 2010, Ontario has added 192 physicians— 72 medical specialists and 120 family physicians.

Freezing Doctors' Pay to Protect Health Care

Ontario is committed to protecting health care for patients and their families. That's why the province is asking doctors to accept a pay freeze so that more precious health care dollars can be invested in:

- home care for 90,000 more seniors over the next three years
- access to same-day and next-day appointments as well as after-hours care

Ontario is also updating the fees paid to physicians based on available evidence. As technology improves, more procedures can be completed in less time but fees haven't kept pace and this is an opportunity to find more savings.

Did you know? Ontario's doctors are the best paid in Canada.

More Nurses

Over 15,000 more nurses are working in Ontario since 2003. The [Nursing Graduate Guarantee Initiative](#) is providing nursing graduates with full-time job opportunities.

Ontario is helping to keep experienced nurses on the job longer —holding onto their valuable knowledge and skills with programs like the [Late Career Nurse Initiative](#) and creating new nursing roles that allow them to fully use their skills.

Ontario has also more than doubled the number of primary care Nurse Practitioner education spaces from 75 to 200. Today there are 1,874 nurse practitioners on the job in Ontario compared to 729 in 2007.

Did you know? [Telehealth Ontario](#) is there for you. To speak with a nurse 24/7, call 1-866-797-0000

Family Health Teams

Ontario created 200 [Family Health Teams](#) working to provide health care services to over 2.9 million Ontarians. That includes 42 new family health teams in northern communities.

The province is now putting more tools in the hands of Nurse Practitioners and pharmacists, both in regular clinics and family health teams. This helps the health care system run smoother by using resources more efficiently. For example:

- Your nurse practitioner could set and cast a simple fracture if you have broken a bone.
- A pharmacist could give you your flu shot.

Did you know? Today almost 10 million people are enrolled with primary care providers who practice in a group setting like a Family Health Group, Family Health Team or Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic.

Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics

Twenty-four of the 26 [Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics](#) are now open. These clinics are helping to improve access to care for more than 27,000 Ontarians. Another two are expected to open in 2012-13.

Did you know? Ontario is the first Canadian province to introduce [Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics](#) in our communities.

More Choices for Birth

This year, Ontario committed to building two [midwife-led birth centres](#) to give new moms more choice in how and where they deliver their babies while freeing hospital delivery rooms to handle higher-risk deliveries. These birthing centres are on track to provide services next summer.

Midwives will care for over 22,100 women and their newborns this year.

[Video: Birth Centres Coming to Ontario](#)

[Read video transcript](#)

Birth Centres

Wait Times and Long-Term Care

Wait Times

Ontario launched the [Wait Times Strategy](#) in 2004. In 2008, the province began to include emergency room wait times in the strategy.

To help lower wait times, Ontario has opened 34 new MRIs since 2003 and there are four more on the way.

So far, Ontario has invested about \$1.7 billion to fund about three million more medical procedures, reduce bottlenecks, measure progress and publicly [track results](#).

Did you know? Ontario now has the shortest wait times in Canada. The days of waiting saved since 2005 would cover 4,000 lifetimes.

Ontario has reduced wait times:

Cancer surgery by 59 days

Cataract surgery by 136 days

Hip replacement by 197 days

Knee replacement by 232 days

Long-Term Care

Wait times are further reduced when people have more choices for care, which helps them avoid unnecessary hospital stays. That's why Ontario is making sure that the right type of care is available.

These investments include:

- Support to seniors and caregivers to help seniors stay healthy and live independently and comfortably in their own homes. Over 215,000 more Ontarians received care in their homes in 2010-11 than in 2003-04.
- 9,322 more beds and 10,000 more staff in [long-term care](#) homes since 2003.
- An increase of \$885 million in funding since 2003 for [Community Care Access Centres](#) to help manage home care, personal support and homemaking services for those who need it.
- Funding for assisted living services in supportive housing has increased by almost 62% since 2003.

Ontario is helping to improve the quality of care and the accountability of [long-term care homes](#) for the treatment and well-being of over 77,000 residents.

[BlogON: Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit](#)

Like many people her age, Sue Ellis is doing whatever she can to help out with aging parents and at the same time watch her children grow up

Prevention

Vaccines and Newborn Screening

In 2003, there were eight publicly funded [vaccines](#). Today there are 15, including chickenpox.

Did you know? Ontario's vaccination program saves families more than \$1,400 per child.

Before 2003, Ontario screened for two rare genetic disorders in newborns. Ontario now [screens for 28 rare genetic diseases and disorders](#), including sickle-cell disease and cystic fibrosis.

Did you know? Ontario's newborn screening program is the most comprehensive in Canada.

Cancer Screening and Care

The Integrated Cancer Screening program is bringing together existing breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening programs and services into one coordinated program to support patients, providers and health system planners.

Ontario provided 303,712 more breast cancer screening exams in 2011–12 than in 2003–04. The province has also added 60 new breast cancer screening sites since 2003–04 for a total of 160 sites as of March 2012.

Before 2003, Ontario didn't have an organized program to screen for colorectal cancer— the second deadliest form of cancer in Canada. In 2007, Ontario announced Canada's first province-wide [colorectal cancer screening program](#). So far, it has funded 134,000 colonoscopies and over 2 million fecal occult blood tests.

The province is also funding [the PSA test](#) for men who are at high risk for prostate cancer to detect and treat cancer earlier. Surgical wait times for cancer surgeries are now 30 days shorter than in 2005.

Ontario is helping more patients become cancer-free by funding more new cancer drugs like Rituxan, which is used to treat chronic lymphocytic leukemia, Yervoy and Zelboraf, which are used to treat melanoma, and Zytiga and Jevtana, which are used to treat prostate cancer.

Did you know? The Ontario Government announced it was investing \$15 million over the next three years to expand the Ontario Breast Screening Program to reach women between the ages of 30 and 69 who are at high risk for breast cancer.

Diabetes

Ontario is standing by families affected by diabetes with the [Ontario Diabetes Strategy](#), which includes initiatives designed to address the growing challenge of diabetes and improve health outcomes for people impacted by diabetes by:

- Educating the public, especially those at high risk, about diabetes and ways to prevent it.
- Supporting patients in self-management of their disease.
- Increasing the adoption of evidence-based clinical guidelines on the part of providers and improving access to proven care and treatment options.
- Improving local and regional coordination of diabetes services and care.

Did you know? Ontario was the first province in Canada to fully fund insulin pumps for children and youth with type 1 diabetes, saving families up to \$18,300 per child in the first five years. The program was expanded to include adults with type 1 diabetes in September 2008.

Flu

This will be the thirteenth year the [Universal Influenza Immunization Program](#) has been offered to all Ontarians six months of age and older who live, work or attend school in Ontario.

Now, Ontario is making it easier than ever to get your free flu shot close to home — through your family doctor, nurse-led flu immunization clinics and now at participating pharmacies.

Specially trained pharmacists can give the flu shot to Ontarians, age five and over. You can find a health care provider offering the flu shot near you at Ontario.ca/flu.

Smoking

The province has worked to [toughen tobacco laws](#), ban smoking in public places and encourage more Ontarians to [quit altogether](#).

The smoking rate has gone down to 19.3% in 2010 from 24.5% in 2000.

[BlogON:How Nic Kicked the Habit](#)

Read Nic's story and find out how you can get the support you need to quit today.

Healthy Lifestyles

Ontario's [Healthy Communities Fund](#) helps promote good health across the province. This year, over 200 local and regional projects received funding.

On an annual basis, [Ontario's After-School Program](#) provides 18,000 children and youth with after-school activities, including sport and recreation, in over 350 sites across the province.

Since 2003, Ontario has quadrupled its investment for the [Student Nutrition Program](#) to \$17.9 million annually. Last year, Ontario provided nutritious breakfasts, snacks and lunches to over 630,000 elementary and secondary students.

Ontario has helped 3,552 athletes through the [Quest for Gold Program](#) since it began in 2006.

Did you know? 87% of Ontario is covered in Crown land, parks and water. Ontario has a great outdoors. Find out how you can take advantage.

[BlogON: Ontario: Snowmobiling Destination Of Choice](#)

Getting started in snowmobiling is easy. It's an active way to enjoy Ontario's beautiful countryside — and have fun.

Environment

Coal-fired generation contributes to air pollution which has a negative impact on the health of Ontarians. According to a 2005 study, the total annualized health, environmental and financial costs of coal were \$4.4 billion.

Ontario is [protecting the air](#) —since 2005, Ontario has introduced nearly 70 new or updated air standards. These standards help protect us against things like cancer, developmental problems and respiratory illness. And we have reduced our use of coal for electricity by 90%.

Ontario has [curbed the unnecessary use of cosmetic pesticides](#). The Cosmetic Pesticides Ban prohibits the sale and use of pesticides, which include herbicides, fungicides and insecticides, for use on lawns, gardens, parks and school yards. Ontario's is one of the toughest bans in the world with over 100 pesticides banned as of November, 2012.

The [Lake Simcoe Protection Plan](#) is working. Phosphorous levels in Lake Simcoe are down by 40%, improving water quality and protecting fish.

In 2011, Ecojustice's Drinking Water Report Card awarded Ontario the highest mark in Canada for drinking water protection. And the Chief Drinking Water Inspector's annual report shows that over 99% of all municipal drinking water quality tests meet provincial standards.

Did you know? Ontario's cosmetic pesticides ban is one of the toughest in the world.

Did you know? The goal of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan is to reduce the amount of phosphorous in the water equivalent to 1.75 million boxes of powder dish detergent.

Mental Health

Ontario is investing in the [Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy](#), starting with children and youth that will help 50,000 more kids and their families access the supports they need, when and where they need it.

Last year Ontario focused on delivering services for about 20,000 more children and youth. This includes placing 600 new mental health workers in schools, communities and courts.

Working Together for Kids' Mental Health is now available in 11 communities. Front-line workers (such as teachers, child workers and youth workers) can now get the screening and needs-assessment training and tools they need to identify issues sooner, and connect children and youth with the right services.

Through the [Ontario Child and Youth Telepsychiatry Program](#), Ontario connected psychiatrists to more than 1,500 young people living in rural, remote and under-served communities. The province also provided education and training for professionals working in community-based agencies.

The province continues to work closely with the [Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health](#) to provide mental health agencies with knowledge and best practices so that children and youth receive the best possible mental health services.

Fair Drug Prices

High drug prices prevent money from being invested in front-line services that families depend on.

Since 2006, Ontario has [made changes](#) to the drug programs that allow people to get more value for money on prescription drugs and increase access to new, more effective drugs.

These changes are saving the health system about \$500 million per year, which the province is investing back into front-line health care. In 2011–12, Ontario saved an additional \$100 million.

Changes include:

- lowering the prices of most generic drugs to 25% of the cost of the comparable brand-name product
- a more streamlined and transparent approval and funding process for new and more effective drugs

Ontario is also asking the wealthiest seniors to pay a little more for their prescription drugs. Right now, a senior with an annual income of \$300,000 receives the same benefit as a senior with an income of \$30,000. That's why the province is changing the program so that, as of August 1, 2014, single seniors with net incomes of \$100,000 or more and senior couples with a combined net income of \$160,000 or more will pay more of the cost of their prescription medicine. This change will affect only about 5% of Ontario's seniors — those with the highest incomes.

Did you know? \$500 million is enough to cover the entire yearly budget of William Osler Health System, and is over four times the budget of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, almost twice the annual budget of Health Sciences North and eight times the yearly budget of Woodstock General Hospital.

Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care

Our goal is to make Ontario the healthiest place in North America to grow up and grow old. We have an [Action Plan for Health Care](#) to help get us there.

Ontario's aging population and fiscal challenges require changes to how we deliver health care.

Our plan will help build a quality system that is more responsive to patients and delivers better value for taxpayers.

The action plan has three priorities:

- Keeping Ontario Healthy
- Faster Access to Stronger Family Health Care
- Right Care, Right Time, Right Place

The Action Plan for Health Care in Ontario will ensure families get the best health care where and when they need it, while ensuring all Ontarians get better value for their health dollars. We will engage providers to improve care and support Ontarians in taking charge of their own health.

The plan will:

- Make responsible decisions on funding priorities and ensure funding is shifted to where we get the best value.
- Provide new measures to prevent illness in the first place and help Ontarians stay healthy.
- Give Ontarians better access to family doctors and Nurse Practitioners — through after-hours care and same-day and next-day appointments — that will save Ontarians time, keep them healthier and help them avoid trips to the hospital.
- Support Ontario's seniors who want to live independently at home, in their communities, by providing more home care supports.

Quality, consistent care organized around patients and based on the best evidence – it's the way forward.

So far, Ontario has:

- Changed how it funds hospitals, away from historical global funding to funding based on how many patients they see, the services they deliver, and the quality of those services.
- Launched the [Healthy Kids Panel](#) to tackle childhood obesity.
- Launched the [Seniors Care Strategy](#) to help seniors stay healthy and live at home longer.
- Expanded the availability of nicotine replacement therapies to addiction treatment centres.
- Expanded the [scope of practice for pharmacists](#).
- Announced the creation of [two birth centres](#) for women to receive care by a midwife, outside of hospitals.

We are investing in home care for 90,000 more seniors, including 3 million more personal support worker hours.

Did you know? Ontario is curbing unnecessary testing such as vitamin D levels, bone mineral density and pre-operative sleep-study testing. This will save over \$140 million a year.



Progress Report 2012

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Economy

- In 2011, 46% of all new Canadian jobs were created in Ontario.
- Infrastructure investments helped create or preserve about 100,000 jobs per year since 2003, including building or rebuilding more than enough road to stretch from Ontario to Alaska.

Education

- **570 new schools have been built or are underway since 2003.**
- **More students are graduating than ever before:**
2003-04: 68%
Today: 82%
That's 93,000 more graduates.
- **1,700 schools are offering full-day kindergarten this school year to 120,000 students:**
Sept. 2010: 35,000 students
Sept. 2011: 50,000 students
Sept. 2012: 120,000 students

Health Care

- **23 new hospitals have been built or are underway since 2003.**
- **2.1 million more Ontarians have a family doctor.**

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