

Published plans and annual reports 2024–2025: Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Plans for 2024–2025, and results and outcomes of all provincial programs delivered by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities in 2023–2024.

Ministry overview

Ministry's vision

Ontario's postsecondary system prepares students and job seekers with the high-quality education, skills and opportunities needed to get good jobs, providing Ontario's businesses with the skilled workforce and talent they need to thrive and prosper. The postsecondary system is a critical part of the province's social and economic fabric, contributing to stronger and healthier communities.

The ministry provides operating funding to publicly assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes, manages equipment and renewal programs in the postsecondary sector, establishes provincial objectives for the use of public funds and designs frameworks for achieving these objectives. In addition, the ministry regulates career colleges who play an important role in Ontario's postsecondary landscape, providing learners with the knowledge and skills they need to get a job in today's workplace.

The ministry also ensures that high-quality postsecondary education is accessible to all qualified candidates through tuition frameworks, student financial assistance, targeted funding (including funding for French-language and bilingual programs), accountability mechanisms, and digital and experiential learning opportunities.

Ontario's science and research sector fuels the province's economic growth and is a critical part of growing the province's economy. The ministry funds world-class research in Ontario universities, colleges and academic hospitals. Ontario's competitive research funding programs, and support for research institutes drive commercialization, innovation and

help attract and retain world-class talent. The ministry's focus on the Intellectual Property (IP) Action Plan prioritizes the generation, protection, management and commercialization of IP in the postsecondary and innovation sectors to maximize the value of Ontario-grown research and innovation.

Supporting postsecondary education, research and innovation helps Ontario compete and thrive in the global economy and are more important than ever as drivers of protecting people's health and the economy.

Ministry programs

Helping students succeed

Extending tuition freeze

Building on Ontario's historic 10% reduction in tuition in 2019–2020, along with tuition freezes over the past four years, the province is continuing a general freeze on tuition for at least the next three years for most Ontario students to keep postsecondary education more affordable for students and their families. The ministry is allowing tuition increases for domestic out-of-province students, as well as in a limited number of previously approved programs with tuition below the sector average of comparable programs. The government's action to reduce and freeze tuition has provided students and parents with savings of an estimated \$1,600 per year on average for university students and an estimated \$350 per year on average for college students, compared to what they would have paid under the previous policy (prior to 2019–2020) that allowed 3% increases each year.

The ministry will also engage with colleges and universities to create tuition fee transparency to help students and their families better understand how tuition fees are used.

Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP)

OSAP continues to provide financial assistance to eligible students in postsecondary studies who need it most, including grant, loan, bursary, scholarship and other aid programs. Ontario has also expanded OSAP to students in eligible, independently delivered programs at Indigenous Institutes as well as students enrolled in more than

1,900 eligible micro-credentials programs at both public and private institutions.

Virtual learning

Learning that combines the strengths of both in-person and virtual instruction continues to grow across Ontario's postsecondary sector. Also known as hybrid learning, the province has taken significant steps to position itself as a global leader and has made investments to support institutional capacity for the delivery of virtual postsecondary education.

In 2020, the government launched Ontario's Virtual Learning Strategy to support the needs of Ontario's postsecondary institutions, learners, and educators. The strategy improves access to high-quality virtual postsecondary education and retraining opportunities that are market-responsive and globally competitive. The strategy and associated investment have resulted in over 450 projects from across the province and created more than 600 digital resources to support Ontario's institutions, students, faculty, and staff as they teach and learn online.

The Virtual Learning Strategy builds on and leverages Ontario's existing digital learning organizations – Contact North | Nord and eCampusOntario – which improve access and drive innovation in virtual teaching and learning.

College degree expansion

In April 2022, the government expanded degree granting at publicly assisted colleges. This included introducing three-year college degrees in applied areas of study and increasing degree cap limits at colleges to offer greater flexibility to design and deliver programs that will provide more options for students to meet labour market needs.

With a focus on key in-demand sectors, these new, three-year applied degrees and additional four-year degree programs support Ontario's commitment to increasing choices and reducing barriers to high-quality, local education for students.

Some examples of three-year applied degree programs that are being considered or are under development include a Bachelor of Animation and a Bachelor of Construction Management.

Micro-credentials

Micro-credentials help prepare workers for in-demand jobs through rapid training at

Ontario's public and career colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes. These short-duration programs are recognized by many employers and are convenient ways for people to retrain and upgrade their skills, giving them more opportunities in the job market. Not only does this help workers find new employment, but it also helps respond to regional labour market needs and the needs of specific employers.

Since 2020, the Ontario government has announced over \$60 million in Ontario's Micro-credentials Strategy, including \$5 million from the 2023 Ontario Budget for a second round of the Micro-credentials Challenge Fund to support the creation of more micro-credential projects. The first round helped create over 300 new micro-credentials across the province.

There are about 1,900 micro-credentials that are currently eligible for funding through the Ontario Student Assistance Program for Micro-credentials at 34 publicly assisted postsecondary institutions across Ontario, with more being added regularly.

Applied Masters Degrees

Subject to regulatory approvals, to help more students find jobs, the province intends to allow colleges to offer applied masters degrees in areas of study that will help students graduate with in-demand skills, expertise and credentials. This approach will also provide employers access to more industry-ready employees that meet labour market needs in specialized fields such as advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence and animation.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

Ontario's economy is becoming more knowledge-based and technology-driven, and a skilled workforce is an important driver for the province's economy and competitiveness. That is why Ontario supported students in STEM programming with an investment of \$100 million in 2023–2024 for STEM program costs at institutions with enrolments above currently funded levels. On average, STEM graduates have better post-graduation outcomes than their non-STEM counterparts, with lower unemployment and higher wages. Therefore, providing enhanced support for these programs will help postsecondary students secure good, in-demand jobs.

Support for the health care workforce

The government of Ontario is continuing its mission to build a stronger health care workforce so that well-trained and well-supported doctors, nurses, personal support workers (PSWs) and other health care professionals are there to provide quality care to the

people of Ontario.

The ministry works closely with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care to deliver nursing and medical education in Ontario. In 2023, the Ontario government introduced the *Your Health Plan for Connected and Convenient Care*. A key pillar of the Plan includes hiring more health care professionals by increasing training seats for students, including:

- 260 new undergraduate seats and 449 postgraduate positions for physicians in training
- 52 New Physician Assistant training seats
- 150 New Nurse Practitioner education spaces
- 1,500 additional nursing education spaces
- 24,000 personal support workers in training by the end of 2023

Nursing education

2023 was a record-breaking year for new nurses in Ontario, with over 17,000 new nurses registered to work in the province and another 30,000 nursing students studying at one of Ontario's colleges and universities.

The ministry is also supporting the modernization of clinical education for Practical Nursing (PN) and Bachelor of Science – Nursing (BScN) students by investing an additional \$124.2 million over three years and extended for a fourth year, beginning in 2022–2023 (\$41.4 million annually). This investment has enabled publicly assisted colleges and universities to expand laboratory capacity supports and hands-on learning for nursing students, supporting opportunities for learners to demonstrate their knowledge of theories and principles in practical setting.

By continuing to boost the number of spaces available to educate nursing students and enhancing their education opportunities, the government is making sure there are enough trained health care workers to support Ontario's growing population for years to come.

Medical education

Ontario needs more doctors. This is why Ontario continues to expand undergraduate and postgraduate medical training seats across the province.

Through the 2022 and 2023 Budgets, the government announced two rounds of expansions of medical school education in Ontario, adding a combined 260 undergraduate seats and 449 postgraduate positions. This is the largest expansion of undergraduate and postgraduate medical education in over 10 years.

By 2028, these new medical expansions will bring the total number of undergraduate seats to 1,212 and postgraduate training seats to 1,637.

As announced in the 2024 Budget, the government is addressing the need for family physicians and improving the province's primary care capacity by expanding medical training and supporting York University in establishing a new medical school in Vaughan. This will be the first medical school in Canada primarily focused on training family doctors.

This \$9 million investment builds on other existing medical education and training expansions within Ontario, including the establishment of a medical school at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU). In 2023–2024, the ministry provided \$9.4 million to support operating costs for TMU's planning activities including curriculum and accreditation of the medical program, equipment and supplies, as well as organizational readiness.

These investments bolster Ontario's health workforce, ensuring that people can easily and conveniently connect to the care they need where and when they need it.

Paramedicine education

Ontario announced funding for more than 300 additional spaces in primary care paramedic programs at publicly assisted colleges across Ontario as of the 2023–2024 academic year. More student spaces in primary care paramedic programs will make it easier for future paramedics to access education and training closer to home. Expanding the pipeline of talent for the future will also help bolster the paramedic workforce and make sure emergency services are available to respond to emergencies when and where Ontarians need them.

Veterinary program

To improve access to veterinary care across Ontario, the government is supporting the launch of a new collaborative Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program with the University of Guelph and Lakehead University. This new program will increase enrolment by 20 new students per year, resulting in up to 80 new Doctor of Veterinary Medicine seats over four years, to better support the livestock agri-food sector, when and where farmers need it

most. The ministry will collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to support the joint program.

Ontario Learn and Stay Grant

In January 2023, the government announced the expansion of the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant to include paramedic and medical laboratory technologist programs in priority communities. The grant provides full, upfront funding for tuition, books and other direct educational costs to students in return for working and caring for people in the region where they studied for a term of service after they graduate. The program is designed to incentivize students to learn and stay in the regions they studied, thus helping to bring in-demand health care workers to communities that need them most.

The Ontario government has also increased eligibility to include students in their second year and those at Indigenous Institutes in eligible regions starting from the 2024–2025 academic year. For the 2023–2024 academic year, only first-year students were eligible to apply, but after 2023–2024, the grant will continue to be available to these students as they move into their second year and beyond.

Since its introduction in 2022, the government has dedicated \$61 million towards the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant. In the 2023–2024 academic year, over 5,000 students applied for the grant. Over \$30 million in grant funding has been issued to about 3,800 students for the 2023–2024 academic year, exceeding the original target of 2,500 recipients.

The first cohort of the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant will be graduating in April 2024 and starting their work commitments shortly after their completion of studies.

Strengthening postsecondary education

Ontario is committed to supporting the quality, accessibility and sustainability of the postsecondary education system now and into the future, so learners continue to get the skills and education needed to get good jobs and meet labour market needs.

Blue-ribbon panel report

In Spring 2023, the ministry created a blue-ribbon panel to provide advice and recommendations for keeping the postsecondary education sector financially strong and focused on providing the best student experience. The panel delivered their

recommendations to the Minister of Colleges and Universities and their report was publicly released in November 2023.

Financial sustainability in the postsecondary education sector

Ontario is taking action to stabilize postsecondary institutions by introducing a suite of measures, including an investment of nearly \$1.3 billion in new funding:

- \$903 million over three years through the new Postsecondary Education Sustainability Fund starting in 2024–2025, including \$203 million in funding for top-ups for institutions with greater financial need.
- \$167.4 million over three years in additional funding for capital repairs and equipment.
- \$10 million in additional one-time funding through the Small, Northern and Rural Grant for colleges and Northern Ontario Grant for universities in 2024–2025.
- \$15 million over three years beginning in 2024–2025 through the Efficiency and Accountability Fund to support third-party reviews that will identify actions institutions can take to drive long-term cost savings and positive outcomes for students and communities.
- \$100 million in 2023–2024 to support STEM program costs at publicly assisted colleges and universities with enrolments above currently funded levels.
- \$65.4 million to support research and innovation, including \$47.4 million for the infrastructure refresh of Ontario's Advanced Research Computing systems and \$18 million for their ongoing operations and maintenance.
- \$23 million to enhance mental health supports, including \$8 million for the Postsecondary Mental Health Action Plan over the three years.

Postsecondary education sustainability fund

The government will be providing \$903 million over three years, starting in 2024–2025, through a Postsecondary Education Sustainability Fund, with \$700 million in broad-based support for all institutions and \$203 million in additional top-up funding for institutions with the greatest financial need.

This will help institutions to address their immediate, critical needs so they can continue delivering high-quality education to students.

Small, Northern and Rural Grant for colleges and Northern Ontario Grant for universities

The government recognizes that northern and smaller postsecondary institutions face unique financial challenges. That is why the province is providing a one-time investment of \$10 million in 2024–2025 to top up the Small, Northern and Rural Grant for colleges and Northern Ontario Grant for universities.

This funding will support financially vulnerable institutions while the government works with them on efficiency initiatives.

Efficiency and Accountability Fund

To support publicly assisted colleges and universities in delivering a high-quality education and experience to students in an efficient, accountable and transparent manner, the government is creating an Efficiency and Accountability Fund. The fund will provide institutions with \$15 million over the next three years, starting in 2024–2025, to support third-party reviews that will identify actions institutions can take to drive long-term cost-savings and positive outcomes for students and communities. These reviews will target structural issues as well as operational policies in order to improve sustainability and student experiences.

Strategic Mandate Agreements and performance-based funding

The Ontario government is ensuring the province's publicly assisted postsecondary institutions have a clear mandate focused on meeting the needs of students and equipping them to succeed in rewarding careers. That is why the government introduced a new, historic, 'made-in-Ontario' performance-based funding model that links a larger portion of provincial postsecondary operating funding to student and economic outcomes, making the province a national leader in performance-based funding.

Renewal, maintenance, and equipment funding

In the 2022 Ontario Budget, the Ontario government announced an investment in critical maintenance, repairs, upgrades and renewal of \$596.6 million over three years, starting in 2022–2023, for Ontario's universities and colleges. In the 2022 budget, the government also announced the Indigenous Institutes Facilities Renewal Program, the first program of its kind which provides the nine Indigenous Institutes in Ontario with \$1.5 million per year over three years (starting in 2022–2023), vital funding to support safe and accessible facilities for Indigenous learners.

The Ontario government is also investing an additional \$167.4 million over three years, starting in 2024–2025, in funding for capital repairs and equipment. These investments will allow institutions to address their deferred maintenance backlog, undertake critical repairs, modernize classrooms, upgrade technology, and improve their environmental sustainability, while continuing to deliver a safe experience for students on campus. This also includes investing in another two years for the Indigenous Institutes Facilities Renewal Program (2025–2027) at \$1.5 million per year and creating the new Indigenous Institutes Equipment Fund at \$1.5 million over three years.

Supporting access to college and university education in French

Ten colleges and universities currently offer French-language and bilingual programs to more than 32,000 students. Ontario provides special purpose funding to support the additional costs of offering these programs and recently supported the establishment of Université de l'Ontario français and the transition of Université de Hearst as autonomous, francophone universities.

Of the \$149 million provided to French-language postsecondary institutions in 2023–2024, \$82 million was contributed by the province and \$67 million was contributed by the federal government, through the *Canada-Ontario Agreement on Minority Language Education and Second Official Language Instruction* and the *Canada-Ontario Agreement on the Establishment of the Université de l'Ontario français 2019–2020 to 2026–2027*.

In December 2023, the ministry launched roundtable discussions with Ontario's French-language and bilingual postsecondary institutions to ensure a sustained platform for collaborative conversations.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the ministry is implementing Ontario's French Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy, a four-year, multi-pronged strategy that aims to address the French-language and French as a second language teacher shortage in both the French and English school systems. Multiple projects are underway to increase the number of French teachers available and ready to support Ontario students and families.

The ministry also collaborates with the Ministry of Francophone Affairs to support and monitor institutions designated under the French Language Services Act, and to support government priorities related to francophone education and economic development.

Research and innovation

Supporting research continues to be a priority for Ontario. The province recognizes that it is foundational to commercialization and innovation and to attracting and retaining world-class talent in the province. That is why the government will continue to invest in research and ensure an innovative environment that builds capacity and creates jobs, opportunity and growth.

Mitacs

As announced in the 2023 Ontario Budget (<https://budget.ontario.ca/2023/index.html>) , the ministry is investing an additional \$32.4 million over three years to support about 6,500 high-quality research internships through Mitacs, an organization that builds research partnerships between postsecondary institutions and industry.

By helping to fund these partnerships through Mitacs, the government is continuing to support thousands of research internships for undergraduate and graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows to help them gain the skills they need for in-demand jobs after graduation.

These internships support high-quality research and range widely in discipline, with support for key provincial priorities like critical minerals, advanced manufacturing and life sciences.

Expansion of the McMaster Nuclear Reactor

In the 2023 Ontario Budget, the Ontario government announced investing \$6.8 million over three years to support the expansion of the McMaster Nuclear Reactor (MNR). The MNR is the largest research reactor in Canada and has been in operation since 1959. Scientists use the MNR for research and development in medical isotopes, radiopharmaceuticals, advanced materials and more. The MNR supports Ontario industries including nuclear medicine, nuclear fuel production, natural resource exploration and chemical manufacturing through significant commercial contracts.

This investment will help to increase the operations of the reactor to 24 hours per day, five days a week at five megawatts to increase the amount and diversity of isotopes produced.

This added capacity will enable more research in strategic areas including advanced materials, clean energy and Small Modular Reactors and create important opportunities

for expanded research and development, as well as create quality jobs in southern Ontario while positioning Ontario as a leader in the global nuclear medicine market.

Supporting the Sudbury Neutrino Observatory

The Ontario government is investing \$14 million over two years, starting in 2024–2025, to continue to support and expand the operations of the Sudbury Neutrino Observatory (SNOLAB) - an underground science laboratory located in Sudbury. This investment will ensure the province remains a leader in advanced science, technology and innovation and continues to be a jurisdiction of choice for scientific research in the field of fundamental physics.

At two kilometers below the Earth's surface, SNOLAB is the deepest underground lab in North America, providing ideal conditions for physicists studying dark matter and neutrinos. Ontario's investment in SNOLAB will:

- open the door to new discoveries in fundamental science
- provide a unique training environment to attract, develop and retain the next generation of scientists and engineers
- help maintain Ontario's leadership in this field and attract international research and investment partnerships
- support technology development and promote mobilization of knowledge and transfer of technology to society

Supporting the Ontario Brain Institute and creating a Centre for Analytics

The Ontario government is investing \$65 million over a three-year period to support the Ontario Brain Institute (OBI) in its mission to accelerate solutions that improve Ontarians' brain health.

This investment also includes \$5 million in operating funding over three years to create a Centre for Analytics at OBI. This centre will help transform the science discovered in labs into insights that will improve the practice of medicine and the lives of those affected by brain disorders in Ontario and around the world.

The Centre for Analytics is an important commitment from the 2023 Ontario Budget that will democratize data across research networks and the international community to create strong data foundations, first-in-class platforms, and scalable Artificial Intelligence (AI)

products to gain more value out of the data.

Intellectual Property and Intellectual Property Ontario (IPON)

The Ontario Intellectual Property (IP) Action Plan aims to enhance the generation, protection, management, and commercialization of intellectual property. The pillars of the IP Action Plan include:

- Intellectual Property Ontario (IPON) – the first agency in Canada devoted to working with innovators, businesses and researchers to increase the value of their intellectual property
- basic and advanced IP curricula
- the Commercialization Mandate Policy Framework
- a new governance framework for Regional Innovation Centres

IPON is a key pillar of the IP Action plan. As announced in the 2022 Ontario Budget, the province is supporting IPON with an investment of about \$58 million over three years. This investment will support the province's innovators, including researchers and entrepreneurs, to maximize the value of and protect their IP, gain a competitive advantage in the global market, and support long-term economic growth. IPON is a shared priority for the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, and is jointly funded (50:50) by the two ministries. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities is the lead oversight ministry for the agency, working in close partnership with the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Ontario's Advanced Research Computing systems

In February 2024, Ontario announced it is supporting the world-class research being done in our postsecondary institutions with more than \$65 million to support research and innovation.

This investment includes:

- \$21.2 million in funding for 2023–2024 to support the costs to replace the Graham Advanced Research Computing (ARC) system located at the University of Waterloo.
- \$26.2 million in funding for 2024–2025 to support the costs to replace the Niagara ARC system located at the University of Toronto.
- \$6 million in funding per year over three years starting in 2024–2025 to support the

ongoing operations of Ontario's ARC systems, which include two national platforms and several domain-specific systems.

This funding will help ensure Ontario researchers can continue to access state-of-the-art ARC systems to further their research and Ontario institutions can leverage their fair share of federal investments to refresh national ARC systems.

These investments will also help us ensure that the social and economic opportunities that result from discoveries made in Ontario benefit Ontarians and the Ontario economy.

Perimeter Institute

Ontario's investments in the Perimeter Institute have helped to solidify Ontario's status as a top jurisdiction for research excellence, world-leading talent, and innovation. The Perimeter Institute is a global centre of research excellence in theoretical physics that was created to advance knowledge and realize the opportunities of the quantum revolution.

Ontario is continuing its support of the Perimeter Institute through an investment of up to \$36 million (\$12 million/year) over three years starting in 2024–2025. The renewed funding will support Perimeter's efforts to conduct research in key research areas such as quantum science that will keep Ontario globally competitive, grow our quantum industries and support economic growth in Ontario. The new investment will also support Perimeter's continued efforts to attract, develop and retain talent in Ontario while strengthening the STEM pipeline in Ontario.

Ontario Collaborative Innovation Platform

Ontario is working to help businesses and innovators engage in world-class research, development and commercialization, and to provide Ontario postsecondary students with real-world, hands-on experience.

The Ontario government is making an investment of \$2.31 million over three years to support greater collaboration between industry and the postsecondary education and research sectors, to create well-paying jobs in local communities and help build a resilient economy. This investment is supporting the operation of the Ontario Collaborative Innovation Platform, an online portal that matches industry professionals with R&D partners in the postsecondary sector, streamlining access to available funding, and addressing the many points of friction and red tape that have historically impeded these types of commercialization partnerships.

2024–25 strategic plan

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities promotes excellence and equity in higher education, life-long learning and research.

Ontario's postsecondary system is a critical part of the economy, preparing students and job seekers with the high-quality education, skills and opportunities needed to get good jobs, and providing employers with a talented and skilled workforce to help them thrive and prosper.

Supporting research and innovation helps the province compete in the global economy and strengthens its intellectual property driving Ontario's economic growth.

A plan for the future

Ontario's plan for the future of higher education and advanced research will:

- Focus on meeting the needs of all students and equipping them to succeed in rewarding careers.
 - Execute a tuition fee framework that keeps education affordable for lower and middle-income families.
 - Expand work-integrated learning through academic partnerships with employers and industry and continue to focus on a bold Micro-credentials Strategy that will be flexible, train people faster and rapidly meet labour market needs.
 - Build a financially sustainable postsecondary education and research sector that is transparent, efficient and accountable.
 - Invest in research and innovation that will see Ontario expand the development and commercialization of intellectual property and economic prosperity, and
 - Create an ecosystem that attracts and retains the world's best researchers in Ontario and protect the value of their research for the benefit of Ontario.
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**Table 1: Ministry
Planned
Expenditures 2024–
2025 (\$M)**

Operating	11,518.69
Capital	670.37
TOTAL	12,189.06

Note: Total amount includes statutory appropriations and consolidations. Operating and Capital Assets are not included.

Key Performance Indicators

Improved access to and uptake of high-quality virtual learning resources among Ontario postsecondary students

The ministry is committed to ensuring that high-quality education is accessible through digital opportunities. To do this, the ministry is focusing on improving access to and uptake of high-quality virtual learning resources among Ontario postsecondary students. The ministry is measuring its progress related to this through self-reported data collected from instructors who adopt Open Education Resources (OERs) made available through eCampusOntario's Open Library on the number of learners impacted by adoptions.

eCampusOntario developed its Open Publishing Infrastructure in 2017-2018 and launched its Open Library website in March 2019. The data indicates that the number of students impacted has been steadily increasing since tracking commenced in July 2019 with 19,923 learners impacted by the adoption of ministry funded OERs. By December 2023 this further increased to 244,512 generating approximately \$22.1M in student savings since the launch.

Improved access to and uptake of high-quality virtual learning resources among Ontario postsecondary students

Indicator	Baseline value and date	Trend value and date	Target value and date
Number of learners impacted by adoptions of ministry-funded Open Educational Resources (OERs).	07/19/2019 Value: 19,923	12/31/2023 Value: 244,512	03/31/2025 Value: 300,000

Data source: eCampusOntario's Open Library. Frequency of data collection is annual.

Improving alignment between postsecondary systems and labour market needs

The ministry is also focused on ensuring that employers in Ontario have access to a skilled workforce. To do this the ministry is improving alignment between postsecondary systems and labour market needs. The ministry is measuring its progress related to this by tracking the proportion of college/university graduates employed full-time in a field related or partially-related to their studies.

Colleges:

For the 2022–2023 reporting year, 76% of college graduates were employed full-time in a field related or partially-related to their studies. The ministry is targeting to maintain at least 70% by 2024–2025.

Improving alignment between postsecondary systems and labour market needs

Indicator	Baseline value and date	Trend value and date	Target value and date
Proportion of college graduates employed full-time in a related or partially-related field	03/31/2013 Value: 70%	03/31/2023 Value: 76%	03/31/2025 Value: 70%

Note: Metric is based on the number of respondents employed in full-time jobs six months after graduating who also indicated that their jobs were related or partially related to the program they graduated from.

Universities:

For the 2022–2023 reporting year, 90% of university graduates became employed in a field related or partially related to their studies. The ministry is targeting to maintain at least 90% in 2023–2024.

Improving alignment between postsecondary systems and labour market needs

Indicator	Baseline value and date	Trend value and date	Target value and date

Indicator	Baseline value and date	Trend value and date	Target value and date
Proportion of university graduates employed full-time who are in a related or partially-related field	03/31/2014 Value: 89%	03/31/2023 Value: 90%	03/31/2024 Value: 90%

Note: Metric is based on the number of respondents employed in full-time jobs two years after graduating who also indicated that their jobs were closely related or somewhat related to skills developed at university.

Highlights of 2023–2024 results

Putting students first

- Recognized college graduates for contributing to the growth of the province's economy and improving lives through the Premier's Awards for College Graduates.
- Extended the current tuition freeze (with limited increases previously approved) for colleges and universities by at least an additional three years, providing more financial relief and predictability for families and students seeking access to affordable postsecondary education.
- Re-introduced the tuition fee transparency initiative to help students and their families better understand how tuition fees are used.
- Consulted with select postsecondary institutions, Indigenous Institutes, career colleges, student groups and other key stakeholders on barriers accessing student housing as part of the government's Housing Supply Action Plan.

- Provided financial assistance through OSAP to approximately 440,000 full-time students in the 2023–2024 fiscal year.
- Supported over 450 virtual learning projects from across the province that resulted in more than 600 digital resources that support Ontario's institutions, students, faculty and staff as they teach and learn online.
- Supported laptop and internet loaner programs that make over 1,500 laptops and more than 500 modems available to learners in rural, northern, Indigenous and francophone communities.
- Introduced legislation, that would, if passed:
 - authorize the Minister to issue directives requiring colleges and universities to provide information about ancillary fees and other students costs, including costs for textbooks or other learning materials
 - require colleges and universities to have policies in place to combat racism and hate, including but not limited to anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia
 - require colleges and universities to have policies in place relating to mental health and wellness supports and services.
- Invested a total of \$32.6 million in 2023–2024 in mental health supports for postsecondary students at colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes.
- Continued support for about 6,500 high-quality research internships through Mitacs, an organization that builds research partnerships between postsecondary institutions and industry, with \$32.4 million over three years.
- Launched the development of a career portal to help students understand labour market needs and make informed decisions on postsecondary education. This will consolidate various sources of information to help students and newcomers access education and careers in Ontario.
- Took steps to allow colleges to submit proposals to offer applied master's degrees tailored to labour market needs (subject to regulatory approval).
- Invested about \$55 million to support publicly assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes to provide academic accommodations to students with disabilities.
- Renewed the Ontario-Ukraine Solidarity Scholarship, as well as the Ontario

Remembrance Scholarship to provide eligible students at Ontario's publicly assisted colleges and universities with a scholarship of \$10,000.

Sector financial sustainability

- Received the blue-ribbon panel's report with recommendations for keeping the postsecondary education sector financially strong and focused on providing the best student experience possible. The blue-ribbon panel report was released publicly in November 2023.
- Implemented the new University Financial Accountability Framework to work with the university sector to monitor financial health.

Postsecondary institutions

- Moved forward with the expansion of degree granting at publicly assisted colleges to offer greater flexibility to design and deliver programs that will provide more options for students to meet labour market needs.
- Expanded OSAP eligibility to more than 1,900 ministry-approved, quality-assured micro-credentials at public and private postsecondary institutions.
- Reduced administrative burden for career colleges through legislative changes that came into force January 1, 2024 that included a name change to the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005*, more flexibility for program renewals, and clarified virtual learning policies.
- Invested \$203.2 million in 2023–2024 to support critical maintenance, repairs, upgrades and renewal at Ontario's universities and colleges.
- Invested \$100 million in 2023–2024 to support STEM program costs at publicly assisted colleges and universities with enrolments above currently funded levels.
- Announced an additional \$167.4 million over three years, starting in 2024–2025, for capital repairs and equipment.
- Provided funding for an additional 110 French-language teacher education spaces for 2023–2024 at the University of Ottawa and the Université de l'Ontario français.

Indigenous Institutes

- Invested \$26.4 million in the Indigenous Institutes Operating Grant to support the nine

Indigenous Institutes in the province that provide access for up to 1,700 postsecondary education learners.

- Starting in 2022–2023, Ontario provided Indigenous Institutes with \$1.5 million each year for three years through the Indigenous Institutes Facilities Renewal Program to ensure students attending Indigenous Institutes have the facilities needed to support their learning. The government recently announced another two years of this funding (2025–2027) at \$1.5 million per year.
- In 2023–2024, Ontario provided Indigenous Institutes with \$2.5 million in funding for three years to support the Indigenous Institutes Mental Health Grant, which ensures that Indigenous Institutes can provide new or enhanced mental health, wellness, and trauma related programs and supports to their learners.

Health Human Resources

- Launched the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant in Spring 2023 to support about 3,800 eligible students (nearly \$30 million in funding) enrolled in a high-priority program in a high-priority community who have committed to work in an underserved community after graduating.
- Through the 2022 and 2023 Budgets, the government announced two rounds of expansions of medical school education in Ontario, adding a combined 260 undergraduate seats and 449 postgraduate positions. These are the largest expansion of undergraduate and postgraduate medical education in over 10 years.
- Helped more Ontario students become doctors in their home province by investing an additional \$33 million over three years, starting in 2023, to add 100 undergraduate medical school seats and 154 postgraduate medical training seats.
- Supported the clinical education component in nursing education programs through an investment of \$41.4 million in 2023–2024.
- Worked collaboratively with the Ministry of Health to expand personal support worker (PSW) training and recruitment initiatives in 2023 with an investment of \$300 million over three years. As of November 2023, all 24 publicly assisted colleges, approximately 122 career colleges (operating approximately 182 campuses), six Indigenous Institutes, and 25 district school boards offer PSW training.

- Worked with the Ministry of Health to support the first ever enrolment expansion initiative for paramedics in Ontario, with an investment of \$2.3 million to create over 300 new student spaces in 2023–2024.
- Increased enrolment in nursing and personal support worker programs at six Indigenous Institutes by continuing a 2022 investment of \$34 million over four years to support culturally responsive education and training pathways.
- Expanded French-language nursing education with the launch of Collège Boréal’s new stand-alone four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at its Sudbury and Toronto campuses.

Research programs

- Invested \$133 million in 2023–2024 to support groundbreaking work at leading research institutes and universities across the province including: the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR), the Ontario Brain Institute (OBI), Clinical Trials Ontario (CTO), the Perimeter Institute, the Fields Institute, Ontario Genomics, the Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CAHBI), the Vector Institute, Compute Ontario, SNOLAB, Advanced Research Computing (ARC) facilities, and McMaster Nuclear Reactor (MNR).
- On March 18, 2024, the province announced an investment of over \$278 million to support 406 research projects at colleges, universities, and research hospitals through the Ontario Research Fund and Early Researcher Awards.
- Offered 40 clients a range of intellectual property (IP) services and expertise through IPON, a board-governed agency that serves as a go-to resource for IP expertise to help researchers and companies maximize the value of their IP, strengthen their capacity to grow and compete in the global market, and enhance research and commercialization outcomes.
- Recognized leading researchers in the province for their contributions in the fields of chemistry, economic science, physics and physiology/medicine with annual John Charles Polanyi Prizes.

Detailed financial information

Table 2: Combined operating and capital summary by vote

Operating expense						
Votes/ Programs	Esti mat es 202 4- 202 5 \$	Chan ge from Esti mate s 2023 - 2024 \$	%	Esti mat es 202 3-24 [1] \$	Interi m Actu als 2023- 2024[1] \$	Actu als 2022 - 2023[1] \$
Ministry Administration Program	15, 682 ,30 0	670, 300	4. 5	15, 012 ,00 0	17,0 89,0 00	15,0 29,6 17
Postsecondary Education Program	6,8 56, 795 ,60 0	225, 091, 600	3. 4	6,6 31, 704 ,00 0	6,63 4,03 0,60 0	6,19 8,26 6,23 6
Research Program	176 ,39 6,6 00	(30, 500, 500)	(1 4. 7)	206 ,89 7,1 00	193, 345, 400	176, 914, 394

Total Operating Expense to be Voted	7,0 48, 874 ,50 0	195, 261, 400	2. 8	6,8 53, 613 ,10 0	6,84 4,46 5,00 0	6,39 0,21 0,24 7
Statutory Appropriations	56, 456 ,01 4	(50, 000)	(0 .1)	56, 506 ,01 4	56,5 06,0 14	55,1 67,9 54
Ministry Total Operating Expense	7,1 05, 330 ,51 4	195, 211, 400	2. 8	6,9 10, 119 ,11 4	6,90 0,97 1,01 4	6,44 5,37 8,20 1
Consolidation Adjustment - Colleges	4,4 70, 275 ,60 0	(156 ,840 ,800)	(3 .4)	4,6 27, 116 ,40 0	5,11 3,59 0,50 0	4,77 8,07 0,89 8
Operating Expense Adjustment - Student Assistance Interest Expense Reclassificatio n	(48 ,97 9,9 00)	0	0. 0	(48 ,97 9,9 00)	(48, 979, 900)	(22, 045, 704)

Consolidation Adjustment - Children Aid Societies	(1 , 600 , 00 0)	(550 , 000)	N / A	(1 , 050 , 00 0)	(532 , 000)	0
Consolidation Adjustment - Hospitals	(5 , 651 , 50 0)	4 , 93 9 , 70 0	N / A	(10 , 59 1 , 2 00)	(5 , 7 79 , 0 00)	(8 , 5 42 , 4 35)
Consolidation Adjustment - General Real Estate Portfolio	(68 3 , 0 00)	(6 , 2 00)	N / A	(67 6 , 8 00)	(686 , 300)	(797 , 997)
Total Including Consolidation and Other Adjustments	11 , 518 , 69 1 , 7 14	42 , 7 54 , 1 00	0 . 4	11 , 475 , 93 7 , 6 14	11 , 9 58 , 5 84 , 3 14	11 , 1 92 , 0 62 , 9 63

Operating assets

Votes/ Programs	Esti mat es 2024 - 2025 \$	Change from Estimat es 2023- 2024 \$	%	Esti mat es 2023 - 2024^[1] \$	Interi m Actua ls 2023- 2024^[1] \$	Actu als 2022 - 2023 [1] \$

Votes/ Programs	Esti mate s 2024 – 2025 \$	Change from Estimat es 2023– 2024 \$	%	Esti mate s 2023 – 2024 ^[1] \$	Interi m Actua ls 2023– 2024 ^[1] \$	Actu als 2022 – 2023 [1] \$
Postsecond ary Education Program	482, 400, 000	151,40 0,000	45 .7	331, 000, 000	331, 000, 000	312, 030, 451
Total Operating Assets to be Voted	482, 400, 000	151,40 0,000	45 .7	331, 000, 000	331, 000, 000	312, 030, 451
Ministry Total Operating Assets	482, 400, 000	151,40 0,000	45 .7	331, 000, 000	331, 000, 000	312, 030, 451

Capital expense

Votes/ Programs	Esti mat es 2024 - 2025 \$	Chang e from Estima tes 2023- 2024 \$	%	Esti mat es 2023 - 2024 [1] \$	Inter im Actu als 2023 - 2024 ^[1] \$	Act uals 202 2- 202 3 ^[1] \$
Postsecondary Education Program	245, 980, 900	41,133 ,200	20 .1	204, 847, 700	208, 453, 300	219 ,60 9,4 15
Research Program	105, 168, 800	(5,473 ,200)	(4 .9)	110, 642, 000	101, 120, 000	60, 734 ,90 9
Total Capital Expense to be Voted	351, 149, 700	35,660 ,000	11 .3	315, 489, 700	309, 573, 300	280 ,34 4,3 24
Statutory Appropriations	959, 600	88,700	10 .2	870, 900	870, 900	5,7 78, 605

Ministry Total Capital Expense	352, 109, 300	35,748 ,700	11 .3	316, 360, 600	310, 444, 200	286 ,12 2,9 29
Consolidation Adjustment - Colleges	331, 290, 800	(11,02 5,100)	(3 .2)	342, 315, 900	317, 631, 600	290 ,59 6,9 81
Consolidation Adjustment - Hospitals	(13, 027, 800)	6,738, 400	N/ ***** A ***	(19, 766, 200)	(11, 146, 200)	(4, 481 ,62 9)
Total Including Consolidation and Other Adjustments	670, 372, 300	31,462 ,000	4. 9	638, 910, 300	616, 929, 600	572 ,23 8,2 81

Capital assets

Votes/ Programs	Esti ma tes 202 4- 202 5 \$	Cha nge from Esti mat es 2023 - 2024 \$	%	Esti mat es 2023 - 2024 [1] \$	Inter im Actu als 2023 - 2024 [1] \$	Actu als 2022 - 2023 [1] \$
Postsecondary Education Program	3,5 01, 000	3,50 0,00 0	35 0, 00 0. 0	1,00 0	1,00 0	0
Total Capital Assets to be Voted	3,5 01, 000	3,50 0,00 0	35 0, 00 0. 0	1,00 0	1,00 0	0
Ministry Total Capital Assets	3,5 01, 000	3,50 0,00 0	35 0, 00 0. 0	1,00 0	1,00 0	0

Ministry Total Operating and Capital Including Consolidation and Other Adjustments (not including Assets)	12 , 189 , 06 4 , 0 14	74 , 2 16 , 1 00	0 . 6	12 , 1 14 , 8 47 , 9 14	12 , 5 75 , 5 13 , 9 14	11 , 764 , 30 1 , 2 44
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Historic trend table

Historic trend table				
Historic Trend Analysis Data	Actual s 2021– 2022 ^[2]	Actu als 2022– 2023 ^[2]	Estima tes 2023– 2024 ^[2]	Estima tes 2024– 2025 ^[2]
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Ministry Total Operating and Capital Including Consolidation and Other Adjustments (not including Assets)	10 , 61 3 , 768 , 592	11 , 7 64 , 3 01 , 2 44	12 , 114 , 847 , 9 14	12 , 189 , 064 , 0 14
Percentage Change (%)	N/A *****	10 . 8 %	3%	0 . 6%

Actuals 2021–2022 vs. actuals 2022–2023

- Increase primarily due to higher college sector spending from the complete reopening of campuses after easing of public health restrictions and higher spending on student financial assistance.

Actuals 2022–2023 vs. estimates 2023–2024

- Increase primarily related to higher forecasted spending on Student Financial Assistance.

Estimates 2023–2024 vs. estimates 2024–2025

- Increase primarily due to additional funding to support financial sustainability for the postsecondary education sector, offset by lower forecasted college sector spending.

Agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs)

Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)

Through research and evaluation, HEQCO assists the Minister in improving all aspects of the postsecondary education sector, including improving the quality of education provided in the sector, access to postsecondary education and accountability of postsecondary educational institutions.

2024-2025 Expenditure Estimates (\$)	2024-2025 Revenue Estimates (\$)	2023-2024 Expenditure Interim Actuals (\$)	2023-2024 Revenue Interim Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Expenditure Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Revenue Actuals (\$)
4,100,000	N/A	4,100,000	56,300	4,100,000	N/A

Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB)

Makes recommendations to the Minister on applications for the Minister’s consent to offer degree programs and/or use the term “university” from new and existing private Ontario degree-granting institutions, out-of-province institutions, Ontario colleges and all others not authorized to award degrees by an Ontario statute.

2024-2025 Expenditure Estimates (\$)	2024-2025 Revenue Estimates (\$)	2023-2024 Expenditure Interim Actuals (\$)	2023-2024 Revenue Interim Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Expenditure Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Revenue Actuals (\$)
900,000	150,000	900,000	150,000	900,000	150,000

Intellectual Property Ontario (IPON)

Intellectual Property Ontario provides expert IP advice and access to IP resources to help researchers and companies to maximize the value of IP, strengthen their capacity to grow, compete in the market, and enhance research and commercialization outcomes.

Note: Funding is also provided by the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade.

2024-2025 Expenditure Estimates (\$)	2024-2025 Revenue Estimates (\$)	2023-2024 Expenditure Interim Actuals (\$)	2023-2024 Revenue Interim Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Expenditure Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Revenue Actuals (\$)

2024-2025 Expenditure Estimates (\$)	2024-2025 Revenue Estimates (\$)	2023-2024 Expenditure Interim Actuals (\$)	2023-2024 Revenue Interim Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Expenditure Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Revenue Actuals (\$)
13,933,600	N/A *****	7,682,300	N/A *****	2,249,001	N/A *****

Ontario Research Fund Advisory Board (ORFAB)

Reviews research proposals submitted to the Ontario Research Fund and Early Researcher Award program that have been assessed by a Review Panel and makes funding recommendations to the Minister. The board also provides strategic advice to the Minister on the research agenda to keep Ontario competitive and prosperous.

2024-2025 Expenditure Estimates (\$)	2024-2025 Revenue Estimates (\$)	2023-2024 Expenditure Interim Actuals (\$)	2023-2024 Revenue Interim Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Expenditure Actuals (\$)	2022-2023 Revenue Actuals (\$)
2,500	N/A *****	2,500	N/A *****	0	N/A *****

Ministry organization chart

Minister: Jill Dunlop

Parliamentary Assistant: Natalie Pierre

Deputy Minister: David Wai

Executive Assistant: Sarah Robb

Communication — Director: Jonathan Leigh (A)

Operations Division — Assistant Deputy Minister: Jeff Butler (A)

Executive Assistant: Shenique Turner (A)

Career Colleges — Director: Charlotte Smaglinski (A)

Student Financial Assistance: — Tricia Dorman (A)

Science and Research — Director: Colleen Hogan

**Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment: — Director:
James Brown**

**Financial Sustainability and Oversight Division — Assistant
Deputy Minister: Josh Paul**

Executive Assistant: Isabella Di Cristofaro

**Financial Sustainability Policy — Director: Lindsey Harrold
(A)**

**Postsecondary Finance and Transfer Payment — Director:
Nadia Eid (A)**

Strategic Policy and Planning Division — Assistant Deputy Minister: Zoe Kroeker

Executive Assistant: Anika Bhatti (A)

Postsecondary Education Policy — Director: Paddy Buckley

Postsecondary Education Programs — Director: Seetha Kumares (A)

Indigenous Education — Director: Hilary Blain

Strategic Policy Coordination — Director: Fiona Hack (A)

Corporate Management and Services Division — Assistant Deputy Minister: Jason Arandjelovic

Executive Assistant: Douglas Ngira-Batware

Corporate Finance and Services — Director: Konrad Stypka

Strategic Human Resources (Reports to Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities) — Director: Nadine Ramdial

Corporate Coordination (Reports to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Education (with exception of Corporate Priorities and Engagement Unit dedicated only to MCU)) — Director: Vanessa Bennett (A)

Legal Services (Reports to Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities) — Director: Aryn Hadibhai (A)

Ontario Internal Audit Education Audit Team (Reports to Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities) — Director: Anne Piattella (A)

French-Language Education Division (Reports to Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities) — Assistant Deputy Minister: Didier Pomerleau

Executive Assistant: Alain Daoust (A)

MCU French-Language Priorities — Director: Elizabeth Hoerath

Community Services I&IT Cluster (Reports to Ministry of Education, Colleges and Universities, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Tourism, Culture and Sport, Citizenship and Multiculturalism) — Chief Information Officer/ Assistant Deputy Minister: Rocco Passero

Executive Assistant: Marie Dearlove

Case and Grant Management Solutions (Reports to Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities) — Director: Sanaul Haque

Strategic Planning and Business Relationship Management (Reports to Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities) — Director: Sachin Jain (A)

Data Collection and Decision Support Solution — Director: Carm Scarfo

iACCESS Solution — Director: Farshad Mahlooji

Annual report: 2023–2024

2023–2024 results

Postsecondary education is a critical part of preparing Ontario students for the future. Ontario's internationally acclaimed postsecondary sector plays a critical role in creating a pipeline of talented workers, making sure people get the skills and education they need so they are qualified and ready to fill jobs and address the skills gap.

Supporting research in Ontario is foundational to commercialization and innovation and to attract and retain world-class talent in the province. This activity creates highly skilled jobs and enhances the global competitiveness for Ontario's companies and research institutions. That is why the government will continue to work with research institutions, research organizations and academic hospitals to ensure an innovative environment that builds capacity and creates jobs, opportunity and growth.

Key initiatives and results

In 2023–2024, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities delivered on many key government priorities that support driving Ontario's economic growth and prosperity.

The postsecondary education and research sectors play a critical role in building a better and brighter future for families, workers and businesses in Ontario. That is why the Ministry of Colleges and Universities has worked this past year to:

- Ensure the strength of the postsecondary sector by building capacity and supporting financial sustainability, efficiency and accountability to achieve outcomes that benefit students and help build Ontario's economy.
- Introduce legislation to require publicly assisted colleges and universities to have policies in place to combat racism and hate, mental health policies that let students know about supports available to them, and to authorize the minister to issue directives requiring institutions to provide ancillary fee information.
- Ensure publicly assisted colleges, universities, Indigenous Institutes and career colleges in Ontario are forward-looking and ready for the future by responding to both student and labour market needs.
- Encourage digital transformation through investments in virtual learning to support

hybrid teaching and learning.

- Support postsecondary student access to and success in postsecondary education through targeted supports including financial aid and mental health services.
- Protect the health care system through programs that accelerate and expand education and training for health care professionals to ensure we build the health care workforce needed to serve the people of Ontario.
- Protect intellectual property by making sure that Ontario-made ideas benefit the people of Ontario.
- Strengthen Ontario's research sector, supporting discovery and innovation.
- Ensure sound financial management of government resources and a commitment to continuous improvement to increase efficiency and effectiveness of programs.

Financial sustainability of the postsecondary education sector

Ontario is committed to supporting the quality, accessibility and sustainability of the postsecondary education system now and into the future, so learners continue to get the skills and education needed to get good jobs and meet labour market needs.

Blue-ribbon panel report

In Spring 2023, the ministry created a blue-ribbon panel to provide advice and recommendations for keeping the postsecondary education sector financially strong and focused on providing the best student experience. The panel delivered their recommendations to the Minister of Colleges and Universities and their report was publicly released in November 2023.

Strategic Mandate Agreements and Performance-Based Funding

To provide stability and predictability to Ontario's publicly assisted colleges and universities, the government implemented a three-year delay in activating the 2020–2025 Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMA3) performance-based funding, to recognize sector-wide challenges due to COVID-19 impacts, sustainability and economic trends.

In March 2023, the government made the decision to move forward with activating performance-based funding at a system-wide proportion of 10% for Year 4 (2023–2024).

Based on an in-depth review of the sector's performance, in February 2024 the ministry

announced that performance-based funding will be activated at a system-wide proportion of 25% for Year 5 (2024–2025). While the proposed activation proportion for the final year of the SMA3 process is faster than the progression proposed by the blue-ribbon panel's report, it is still aligned with the panel's final recommended proportion of 25%.

This proportion incentivizes institutions to operate both efficiently and effectively in producing positive student outcomes. The ministry will also continue to implement the “stop-loss” mechanism, which caps funding losses at 95% for each metrics allocation amount.

Performance-based funding activation will better position institutions to prepare students with the education and experience they need to get jobs in a related field, while also supporting postsecondary education sustainability.

Financial accountability framework

In 2023, the ministry implemented a new financial accountability framework for universities.

This framework is informed by the recommendations of a third party and the Council of Ontario Universities and supports the sector's ongoing commitment to the transparency of financial information and the ministry's commitment to proactively monitor institutional financial health.

It uses publicly available financial information to measure the financial health risk of universities to determine the appropriate course of action for the ministry and universities. The results of the health risk assessment will inform the ministry on whether it should communicate to the university the need for an action plan to fix identified financial concerns.

Support for the health care workforce

Health care professionals are vital to the health and long-term care of people in Ontario. The government is building up the health care workforce to strengthen the health care system and ensure Ontarians have access to the high-quality care they need and deserve.

Ontario Learn and Stay Grant

The Ontario Learn and Stay Grant (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-learn-and-stay-grant>)

provides students in health human resources programs with full, upfront funding for tuition, books and other direct educational costs in return for working and caring for people in the region where they studied for a term of service after they graduate. By providing targeted financial support that incentivizes students to learn and stay in priority regions, the Ontario government is helping communities get the workers they need for in-demand professions while also putting students first.

In response to labour market needs, in 2023 the government announced that the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant would include paramedic and medical laboratory technologist programs in priority communities. In Spring 2023, applications opened and over 5,000 students applied for the grant and about 3,800 students received the grant to date in the 2023–2024 school year. As of February 1, 2024, nearly \$30 million in Ontario Learn and Stay Grant funding has been issued.

Rural and northern communities continue to see shortages of health care workers, and the government is working to ensure that they have the required staff to respond to the needs of patients and our health care system.

As such, for the 2024–2025 academic year, Ontario announced the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant will continue to support specific health human resources programs, including:

- Nursing programs in Northern, Eastern and Southwestern Ontario
- Medical Laboratory Technologist programs in Northern and Southwestern Ontario
- Paramedic programs in Northern Ontario.

Nursing education

Maintaining excellence in nursing education continues to be a priority for Ontario, while also expanding choice for students and providing greater autonomy to institutions.

The year 2023 was record-breaking for new nurses in Ontario, with over 17,000 new nurses registered to work in the province and another 30,000 nursing students studying at one of Ontario's colleges and universities.

To build on this momentum, Ontario has made several investments to further expand the province's nursing workforce. As a part of the *Your Health Plan* (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/your-health-plan-connected-and-convenient-care>), we are also strengthening our health care workforce by providing \$128 million over the next three years to support enrolment

increases of 2,000 registered nurses and 1,000 registered practical nurses at publicly assisted colleges and universities . As of March 2024, 15 stand-alone Bachelor of Science in Nursing college degree programs have been approved by the ministry.

As part of this expansion, the province is adding an additional 150 nurse practitioner education spots. In 2023–2024 and 2024–2025, the government invested \$17.1 million to operationalize 101 seats through the Consortium of Universities and 20 additional seats at the University of Toronto funded through MCU for an amount of \$238,743 in 2023–2024 and \$238,743 in 2024–2025, bringing the total number of operational seats to 321 at schools across the province. Work is underway to operationalize the remaining 29 seats.

All 24 publicly assisted colleges and 14 publicly assisted universities offer some form of nursing education. Six Indigenous Institutes deliver nursing education in partnership with publicly assisted colleges and universities. For 2023–2024, there are 20 stand-alone programs offered by either publicly assisted colleges or universities and 8 collaborative partnerships (a university and one or more college partners) that offer a baccalaureate nursing program.

Personal Support Worker training

The government knows the important role personal support workers (PSWs) play in Ontario's health care system. The government continues to work closely with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Long-Term Care, and postsecondary institutions to ensure PSWs receive the training and education needed to support a high-quality PSW workforce in Ontario.

In 2022–2023 the ministry collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care on the second round of the PSW Challenge Fund. This resulted in an investment of approximately \$82 million to support up to 7,000 new PSW students at career colleges in Ontario.

As part of the province's *Your Health* plan, in November 2023, the government announced new expansion initiatives to continue to recruit and retain PSWs with an investment of more than \$300 million over three years.

As of November 2023, all 24 publicly assisted colleges, approximately 122 career colleges (operating approximately 182 campuses), six Indigenous Institutes, and 25 district school boards offer PSW training.

Enhancing personal support worker and nursing training at Indigenous Institutes

Announced in March 2022, Ontario is increasing enrolment in nursing and personal support worker programs at six Indigenous Institutes by investing \$34 million over four years.

Funding is helping Indigenous Institutes provide culturally responsive education and training pathways for learners to prepare for careers as registered nurses (RNs), registered practical nurses (RPNs) or PSWs. The investment is also helping Indigenous Institutes expand existing programs or create new ones to support the training of about 340 registered practical nurses, 60 registered nurses and 400 PSWs over four years. This investment has enabled Indigenous Institutes to expand partnerships with community health care providers and long-term care homes, as well as upgrade labs and equipment and provide more wraparound supports for students to help with retention.

French-language nursing programs

In June 2023, the government also announced that it would be expanding French-language nursing education with the launch of Collège Boréal's new stand-alone four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at its Sudbury and Toronto campuses. This includes an investment of up to \$630,000 to support an additional 70 practical nursing spaces at Collège Boréal for the 2023–2024 school year. With this investment, the government is ensuring that Ontario's French-speaking population can have access to French-speaking health care providers, allowing for better communication between provider and patient and ultimately better health care outcomes.

Making postsecondary education affordable, accessible and inclusive

Freezing tuition

The government is committed to ensuring that all qualified Ontario students have access to affordable, high-quality postsecondary education. Reducing tuition and increasing the affordability of college and university is part of the government's plan to help people get the training they need to get well-paying jobs.

For the 2023–2024 academic year, tuition fees remained frozen at the 2019–2020 levels for most Ontario residents. Institutions were able to increase tuition fees up to five percent for domestic out-of-province students and up to 7.5% annually on a multi-year basis in a limited number of programs previously approved with tuition fees below the sector

average of comparable programs.

Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024

In February 2024, the Ontario government introduced the *Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024* (<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-166>) that would, if passed, authorize the minister to issue directives requiring colleges and universities to provide information about ancillary fees and other students costs, including costs for textbooks or other learning materials. This could include ensuring that fees are published by institutions.

The Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024 would also, if passed, require colleges and universities to have policies in place relating to mental health and wellness supports and services and require colleges and universities to have policies in place to combat racism and hate, including but not limited to anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Ontario Student Assistance Program

The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) provided financial aid to approximately 440,000 full-time students in the 2023–2024 fiscal year and about 160,000 students accessed repayment supports.

The postsecondary programs that OSAP supports have also expanded. Students in eligible, independently delivered programs at Indigenous Institutes were eligible to apply for OSAP for the first time in the 2020–2021 academic year, and students can also now apply for OSAP for more than 1,900 eligible micro-credentials programs at both public and private institutions.

Alignment of provincial and federal Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) disability-related definitions and restrictions

In Spring 2023, Ontario updated its legislation to help remove financial barriers to postsecondary education for students with disabilities to ensure all students have the tools and resources to achieve their full potential. This was achieved by expanding the definition for students with disabilities to include students with both permanent disabilities and persistent or prolonged disabilities to enable those learners to access the same provincial OSAP benefits as students with permanent disabilities.

Additionally, Ontario enabled all eligible students with disabilities, including those with persistent or prolonged disabilities, to access repayment supports such as the Repayment Assistance Plan for Borrowers with Disabilities.

Aligning with the federal government on these changes will result in efficiencies and make it easier for students with disabilities to access financial aid.

Enhanced loan collections

As part of the 2023 fall economic statement package, Ontario made legislative amendments to support more efficient loan collection tools and processes to secure a greater amount of debt earlier from borrowers who have defaulted on their OSAP loan repayments. This change responds to a finding by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario that large amounts of student loans remain uncollected, totalling approximately \$1 billion since the inception of OSAP in 1975.

Virtual learning

The government committed over \$70 million from 2020 to 2023 to support Ontario's inaugural Virtual Learning Strategy (VLS). The strategy, informed by consultations with the postsecondary sector, emphasizes accessible and sustainable growth in virtual learning, supports digital transformation in teaching and learning at Ontario's postsecondary institutions, and builds the digital-ready workforce needed to support Ontario's economy.

To date, the investment in the VLS continues to support:

- Engagement and participation at every publicly funded college, university and Indigenous Institute in Ontario.
- Over 450 projects across the province, led by Ontario's publicly assisted colleges, universities, and Indigenous Institutes that resulted in more than 600 digital resources that support Ontario's institutions, students, faculty and staff as they teach and learn online. Projects were aimed at expanding options for traditional and life-long learning through the accelerated use of both online and hybrid learning, and expand the capacity and quality of virtual learning in Ontario's postsecondary education sector.
- Laptop and internet loaner programs that make over 1,500 laptops and more than 500 modems available for learners in rural, northern, Indigenous and francophone communities.
- About 500 short courses/modules transitioned online, the creation of over 400 new

short online courses/modules, and over 200 open educational resources developed at Indigenous Institutes.

Ontario is also increasing access to French-language digital teaching and learning resources, made possible by the financial support of the Government of Canada under the *Canada-Ontario Agreement on Minority Language Education and Second Official Language Instruction* (federal funding of \$5 million over two years: 2022–2023 to 2023–2024). In 2023–2024, Ontario made digital teaching and learning resources for the postsecondary education sector more widely available in French by providing eCampusOntario (<https://www.ecampusontario.ca/>) with funding to:

- Expand the Ontario Extend Program to include targeted French-language professional development and learning resources.
- Increase access and expand French-language open education resources.
- Engage the sector, particularly French-language and bilingual postsecondary institutions, by establishing and developing professional communities of practice that will help to enhance and encourage institutional, educator and learner connections.

Better supports for victims of sexual violence

In December 2022, the government passed legislation that further protects students by providing measures for postsecondary institutions to address faculty and staff sexual misconduct toward students and allows institutions to better address complaints when they arise. In particular, the amendments:

- Strengthen the tools available to publicly assisted colleges and universities and career colleges to address instances of faculty and staff sexual misconduct toward students (i.e. deeming sexual misconduct toward a student to be just cause for dismissal and preventing the rehiring of employees found to have committed sexual misconduct toward a student).
- Prevent the use of non-disclosure agreements in situations where a student brings forward an allegation of sexual misconduct by an employee, unless the non-disclosure agreement is requested by the student.
- Require institutions to have employee sexual misconduct policies that at a minimum, include the institution's rules with respect to sexual behaviour involving employees and students of the institution and examples of disciplinary measures that may be imposed on employees who contravene the policy.

These amendments came into effect on July 1, 2023. The ministry will work with institutions to ensure that sexual misconduct policies are in place and compliant with legislative requirements.

Supporting student housing

Publicly-assisted colleges and universities in Ontario are responsible for their student housing and often offer on-campus residences or institutionally-controlled off-campus housing. Career colleges and Indigenous Institutes generally do not offer housing. The ministry does not fund student residences or housing. The current housing shortage has impacted students, and international students are in particular vulnerable.

The ministry is supporting the government's Housing Supply Action Plan, in partnership with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in which students have been identified as a vulnerable population.

In Summer 2023, the ministry consulted with select colleges, universities, Indigenous Institutes, career colleges, student groups and other key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the barriers being faced when providing or accessing student housing. The ministry also worked with Colleges Ontario (CO) and Council of Ontario Universities (COU) to gather data on current and planned housing from all publicly assisted colleges and universities in Ontario.

In November 2023, the minister facilitated a postsecondary student housing roundtable with various stakeholders and key postsecondary partners which discussed how the government can work with partners to remove barriers and find innovative ways to get housing built. The objective of the roundtable was to discuss opportunities to incent private/public partnerships in support of increased availability of affordable student housing.

The consultations, data collection exercise, and Minister's Roundtable will inform recommendations which will aim to reduce red tape and barriers that are being faced by institutions and students.

Indigenous learning

Indigenous Institutes are a vital pillar of Ontario's world-class postsecondary education system. Ontario supports a postsecondary system that is accessible, respectful and inclusive for Indigenous learners.

In 2023–2024, Ontario invested \$26.4 million in the Indigenous Institutes Operating Grant to support the nine Indigenous Institutes in the province that provide access for up to 1,700 postsecondary education learners. This represents an increase of \$1.6 million, or 6.3%, from 2021–2022 funding levels.

In 2023–2024, Ontario also invested in the following special purpose grants for Indigenous Institutes:

- \$1.0 million for mental health services
- \$0.7 million to support accessibility for students with disabilities
- \$0.45 million for campus safety programs
- \$0.26 million for bursaries for Indigenous students
- \$1.5 million for enhancing skilled trades programs
- \$2.15 million for the First Nations Technical Institute’s First Peoples’ Aviation Technology – Flight Program, the only Indigenous aviation program in Canada
- \$4.7 million for the Indigenous Institutes Facilities Renewal Program.

In 2023–2024, the ministry also provided \$2.1 million in funding to the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council, which is recognized under the *Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17i34a>) and has key legislated roles with respect to quality assurance and student protection in the Indigenous Institutes pillar.

Indigenous Student Bursary

The ministry continued to provide supports for Indigenous students in financial need, through the Indigenous Student Bursary grant to colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes. Through this bursary, \$1.6 million was disbursed to Indigenous learners in 2023–2024:

- \$710,200 to universities
- \$660,300 to colleges
- \$260,000 to Indigenous Institutes

Indigenous Student Success Fund

The Indigenous Student Success Fund continues to provide \$18.2 million in funding

annually to colleges and universities. This funding helps institutions develop and deliver programs and services for Indigenous students, reducing barriers that prevent Indigenous people from accessing postsecondary education and increasing the involvement of the Indigenous community in institutional governance and program development.

French-language education

Ontario provides about \$73 million annually to support more than 32,000 postsecondary students enrolled in French-language and bilingual programs in Ontario.

The Université de l'Ontario français (UOF), Ontario's first French-language university that is governed by – and for – francophones, started its third academic year in Fall 2023. In 2022–2023 it had an enrolment of about 100 students, up from 29 in Fall 2021. In September 2023, UOF began offering an Initial Teacher Education Program on a full-time basis.

Students with disabilities

The government provides financial support to publicly assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes so they can ensure that all students have the tools and resources to achieve their full potential. Accessible education and training initiatives are important tools to address higher unemployment rates among persons with disabilities and improving overall labour market outcomes.

In 2023–2024, the ministry invested about \$55 million to support publicly assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes in meeting their legal requirements to provide academic accommodations to students with disabilities.

Supporting mental health

Mental health and addictions support is a priority for the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. The ministry is a partner in the multi-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, *Roadmap to Wellness* (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/roadmap-wellness-plan-build-ontarios-mental-health-and-addictions-system>), launched on March 3, 2020 and led by the Ministry of Health.

In 2023–2024, the ministry provided \$32.6 million in mental health supports for postsecondary students at publicly assisted colleges, universities and Indigenous Institutes.

In February 2024, the Ontario government announced that it is investing \$23 million to enhance mental health supports, including \$8 million for the Postsecondary Mental Health Action Plan over three years (2024–2027).

The province also introduced the *Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act, 2024* (<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-166>) that would, if passed, require colleges and universities to have policies in place relating to mental health and wellness supports and services.

International students

In January 2024, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced changes to the International Student Program for 2024 and 2025, including a cap on the number of applications for study permits it would process, excluding international students in Kindergarten to Grade 12, master's and doctoral degree programs.

In response to this cap, Ontario is prioritizing public postsecondary programs that will help prepare graduates for in-demand jobs that support Ontario's labour market needs. Applications will be allocated to institutions based on the following criteria:

- Prioritize programs in high-demand areas, including skilled trades, health human resources, STEM, hospitality and child care. French-language programs are also prioritized.
- Cannot exceed the institution's 2023 permit levels.
- As a final backstop, the ratio of international permits cannot exceed 55% (exclusive of high-demand areas) of the institution's 2023 first-year domestic enrolment.

Ontario will allocate 96% of permit applications to publicly assisted colleges and universities, with the remaining four per cent allotted to the province's language schools, private universities and other institutions. Career colleges will not receive any applications.

Also, as part of the changes announced by the federal government in January 2024, international students who begin a program at a publicly assisted college that is delivered through a private partner will not be eligible for a post-graduation work permit starting on May 15, 2024.

Special Student Scholarships

Ontario Remembrance Scholarship

The government renewed the Ontario Remembrance Scholarship in 2023–2024, which was created in memory of the 57 Canadians who perished in the 2020 Ukrainian International Airline crash (Flight PS752) in Iran. Many of the victims of this tragedy were part of Ontario's postsecondary community. As such, this fund will provide \$10,000 scholarships to 57 eligible students, one in memory of each victim, to support their studies during the 2023–2024 academic year.

Ontario-Ukraine Solidarity Scholarship

In response to the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, in April 2022, the province announced a \$1.9 million Ontario-Ukraine Solidarity Scholarship to support students attending Ontario's publicly assisted colleges and universities. In October 2023, the province invested another \$1.9 million to assist students impacted by the Ukrainian conflict first, followed by supports for students impacted by other conflicts. Each \$10,000 scholarship is awarded to 4 individual students at each publicly assisted college and university in Ontario—adding 188 scholarships in total. Scholarships are based on merit and financial need in the 2023–2024 academic year.

Experiential/work-integrated learning

Experiential and work-integrated learning opportunities at Ontario's postsecondary education institutions give students the experience they need to get in-demand jobs after graduating.

Through partnerships with eCampusOntario (<https://www.ecampusontario.ca/>) and Contact North | Nord (<https://contactnorth.ca/>) – organizations that support the growth and delivery of digital learning in Ontario – the government has created opportunities for virtual or technology-enhanced experiential learning. The government is also supporting student internships to help businesses, start-ups and new entrepreneurial companies grow and protect “Ontario made” innovations, ideas and products.

As announced in the 2023 Ontario Budget, the ministry is investing \$32.4 million over three years to support about 6,500 high-quality research internships through Mitacs, an organization that builds research partnerships between postsecondary institutions and industry.

This support for hands-on learning, and the efforts of employers, students and postsecondary education institutions to expand opportunities, has made Ontario a national leader in experiential learning.

Ensuring a high-quality, sustainable postsecondary education sector

Career colleges

Career colleges play an important role in Ontario's postsecondary landscape, providing learners with the knowledge and skills they need to get a job in today's workplace, including in priority sectors such as health and long-term care.

One of the government's priorities is to reduce administrative burden for career colleges and ensure that they can continue to deliver valuable training to students by cutting red tape.

Examples of recent initiatives to cut red tape for the sector include:

- Modernizing requirements for online or hybrid learning to give more flexibility to the sector in designing and delivering programs.
- Ensuring career colleges can keep any records electronically and revoking outdated requirements, such as the need to keep physical copies of the Act and regulations and program descriptions.
- Requiring the Superintendent of Career Colleges to review the *Ontario Career Colleges Act, 2005* (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05p28/v12>) every five years to ensure that provisions stay up to date.

These changes will allow career colleges to concentrate on providing learners with the skills-focused education needed to enter Ontario's workforce. The ministry will continue to work with the sector to identify ways to reduce burden while ensuring strong protection for students.

The province announced in February 2024 that it is also introducing measures to protect students and improve the integrity of career colleges. Ontario will better integrate enforcement efforts across ministries to strengthen oversight of career colleges and will ensure timely responses to concerns and complaints by improving data management, documentation processes and the efficacy of compliance investigations.

Career colleges play a key role in supporting Ontario's economic growth by offering short-term, flexible, career-focused training to prospective students to help them enter or re-enter the workforce, attracting international students who will also contribute to the province's economic prosperity.

Public College – Private Partnership Policy Review

The Public College-Private Partnerships (PCPP) Minister's Binding Policy Directive allows colleges to create innovative partnerships with private providers, generating additional revenue and helping them to be more financially competitive. This further enables colleges to invest in their campuses and communities.

On January 22, 2024, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced that, beginning in September 2024, graduates from these partnerships will no longer be eligible to apply for a Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP). The ministry is currently assessing and determining the full potential financial impact of IRCC's policy changes on public colleges with private partnerships and on the entire sector.

On January 26, 2024, the ministry also announced measures to protect the integrity of postsecondary education, including a moratorium on new PCPPs while further work is done to strengthen oversight mechanisms and ensure the quality of existing partnerships.

Laurentian University

Since Laurentian University initiated its restructuring process, the Ontario government has remained committed to collaborating with the university and providing ongoing support for sustainable operations to ensure its ability to serve students, parents, faculty, staff, and the community.

The government has taken steps to support Laurentian as the university continues its work toward setting sustainable operations.

Laurentian University, as part of the CCAA plan implementation, has entered into a long-term loan agreement with the province. This agreement imposes stringent conditions to uphold accountability, transparency, and financial discipline. The government is also acquiring real estate assets with a value of up to \$53.5 million, which will help Laurentian implement its Plan of Arrangement.

The government's top priority is making sure that students get the support they need and not experience any setbacks because of Laurentian's financial situation.

Renewal, maintenance, and equipment programs

Ontario invested a total of \$205 million in postsecondary infrastructure in 2023–2024. This

investment included:

- \$173 million through the Facilities Renewal Program to help publicly assisted colleges and universities with the critical maintenance, repairs, upgrades and renewal of existing facilities.
- \$20 million through the College Equipment and Renewal Fund to help colleges buy and renew instructional equipment and learning resources.
- \$10 million through the Training Equipment and Renewal Fund to help universities renew and buy modern, state-of-the-art equipment.
- \$1.5 million through the Indigenous Institutes Facilities Renewal Fund to help Indigenous Institutes address their priority maintenance and repair projects to ensure that their facilities are in good repair, and provide a safe environment for faculty, staff, and students.

Part of this investment required colleges and universities (Indigenous Institutes are exempt) to secure matching contributions from a private sector partner, which helps them deliver relevant, high-quality education and training to meet the evolving needs of employers.

In February 2024, the Ontario government announced it will invest \$167.4 million over three years in additional funding for capital repairs and equipment. These investments will allow institutions to address their deferred maintenance backlog, undertake critical repairs, modernize classrooms, upgrade technology, and improve their environmental sustainability, while continuing to deliver a safe experience for students on campus.

Major Capacity Expansion

In 2020, the ministry announced an updated Major Capacity Expansion Policy Framework. The updated framework is applicable to all publicly funded postsecondary institutions for major campus expansions, considering both domestic and international students, academic programs tied to local labour market needs, leveraging existing and planned local infrastructure, community partnerships and alignment with government priorities.

Under the updated framework, the ministry announced support for the operations of the new Markham Campus for York University opening in Spring 2024 and a new Milton campus for Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College opening in Fall 2028.

Research and innovation

Ontario is creating an ecosystem that attracts and retains the world's best researchers in the province and protects the value of their research for the benefit of Ontario. The province's research programs are important to the advancement of technologies and practices within education and business. That is why the government is working to make sure the social and economic opportunities that result from discoveries made in Ontario benefit Ontarians and the Ontario economy.

A thriving research sector is a central pillar of the province's innovation system. By providing funding for research, the ministry is ensuring that Ontario's research institutions have the tools they need to engage in world-class research, development and commercialization.

Ontario-funded research projects and research institutes help grow Ontario's economy by developing talent and fostering discovery. They provide opportunities to train top students and research talent on leading-edge techniques and technologies, creating the in-demand workforce of the knowledge economy. They also support the generation of new knowledge and discovery that form the pipeline of innovations that will drive economic prosperity into the future.

As announced in the 2021 Ontario Budget, the government is investing over \$500 million over the next 10 years to support additional high-value research undertaken across Ontario's universities, colleges, research institutes and research hospitals.

Investing in the University of Waterloo Innovation Arena

In April 2023, the Ontario government announced it is investing \$7.5 million to help build a state-of-the-art Innovation Arena at the University of Waterloo. The new \$35 million facility will be a hub for innovation in Ontario's life sciences sector in Kitchener and Waterloo, supporting the development of new health technology and the commercialization of intellectual property, and encouraging investment and job creation.

The facility will include a health-tech incubator and a small business centre with a shared wet lab for local entrepreneurs and start-ups. The Innovation Arena will become a focal point in Southwestern Ontario for innovation partnerships, collaboration among businesses, industry and researchers.

The Innovation Arena supports Taking Life Sciences to the Next Level (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/taking-life-sciences-next-level-ontarios-strategy>), the province's first life

sciences strategy in a decade.

Research institutes

As a further demonstration of the Ontario government's commitment to research excellence and commercialization, the ministry provides funding support to several research institutes. These institutes are internationally recognized centres of excellence, each with a unique mandate. Collectively, these organizations carry out research of strategic importance to the province, support research collaborations, focus on building talent, and on commercialization.

In 2023–2024, the Ontario government invested \$133 million to support ground-breaking work at leading research institutes and universities across the province. This investment included:

- Clinical Trials Ontario (\$2 million)
- Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR) (\$72 million)
- Ontario Brain Institute (OBI) (\$20 million)
- OBI Centre for Analytics (\$1 million)
- Perimeter Institute (\$12 million)
- The Fields Institute (\$2 million)
- Ontario Genomics (\$2.5 million)
- Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation (CABHI) (\$4.7 million)
- Compute Ontario (\$1.58 million)
- The Vector Institute (\$1 million)
- SNOLAB (\$6 million)
- Advanced Research Computing (ARC) facilities at 13 research institutions across the province (\$6 million)
- McMaster Nuclear Reactor (\$2.3 million)

Ontario Research Fund and Early Researcher Awards

The Ontario government is committed to supporting researchers, to help them make

discoveries that advance knowledge, drive progress and create jobs for the people of Ontario.

In 2023–2024, the Ontario government announced its investing over \$278 million in research projects at colleges, universities and research hospitals across the province. This funding is being delivered through the Ontario Research Fund (ORF) and Early Researcher Awards (ERA) and supports 406 research projects across the province. This included:

- ORF-College Fund Round 10: \$3 million for four projects
- ERA Round 17: \$7.4 million for 53 projects
- Genome Applications Partnership Program (GAPP) Round 23: \$2.0 million for one project
- ORF-Research Excellence Round 11: \$39.29 million for 25 projects
- ORF-Small Infrastructure Fund Round 52 (June 2021): \$9.40 million for 51 projects
- ORF-Small Infrastructure Fund Round 53 (November 2021): \$8.53 million for 48 projects
- ORF-Small Infrastructure Fund Round 54 (March 2022): \$10.73 million for 51 projects
- ORF-Small Infrastructure Fund Round 55 (June 2022): \$11.86 million for 65 projects
- ORF-Small Infrastructure Fund Round 56 (November 2022): \$11.18 million for 57 projects
- ORF-Large Infrastructure Fund 2023: \$152.34 million for 43 projects
- ORF-Biosciences research Infrastructure Fund: \$16 million for three projects
- ORF-Genomics Hubs: \$2.05 million for two projects
- ORF-Genomics Interdisciplinary Collaboration Teams (ORF-ICT): \$5.08 million for three projects

These funds will be used to cover the costs of research operations and infrastructure, including building, renovating and equipping research facilities with the latest technology, and supporting researchers to attract and retain research talent.

Intellectual Property

In 2023–2024, Ontario made significant progress to implement the Intellectual Property (IP)

Action Plan.

Intellectual Property Ontario

As announced in the 2022 Ontario Budget (<https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/pdf/2022-ontario-budget-en.pdf>) , Ontario is supporting Intellectual Property Ontario (IP) with an investment of about \$58 million over three years.

IPON, a board-governed agency that was established on January 4, 2022, serves as a go-to resource for Intellectual Property (IP) expertise to help researchers and companies maximize the value of their IP, strengthen their capacity to grow and compete in the global market and enhance research and commercialization outcomes.

Completion of IPON's beta phase and scale-up of services

In October 2023, IPON completed its initial beta phase, which included the provision of services to 40 clients from the medical technologies, automotive, artificial intelligence industries, as well as several Ontario Research Fund – Research Excellence recipients.

During the beta phase, IPON's services included:

- basic IP education programs and micro-credential courses
- up to \$25,000 in funding for IP protection and commercialization services
- one-on-one IP mentorship
- access to a roster of vetted IP experts and mentors in Ontario

On October 23, 2023, IPON announced that it officially launched its scale-up phase, during which it will expand its program and service offerings and increase the number of served clients from 40 to 150+.

IPON's new initiatives during the scale-up phase include three new client programming streams:

- IP Bootcamp, for the owners of IP who need immediate access to IP funding and are eager to engage with IP experts and resources.
- A Partner Program for IP owners who are affiliated with IPON partner organizations, such as Ontario Regional Innovation Centres, OCI or the Vector Institute, and need additional IP support to complement their existing services.

- The self-guided program for IP owners who want to learn and access services, including funding and education, at their own pace (soon to be rolled out).

As IPON transitions to a mature state, it is expected to serve over 400 clients.

Partnership agreements with innovation organizations

In 2023, to ensure a coordinated approach to IP and commercialization supports, IPON entered into five partnership agreements with innovation organizations.

For example, IPON engaged with the federal government's National Research Council (NRC) on the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), focusing on a strong referral system to expand client reach, understand gaps and effectiveness between services, and the development of common metrics.

Commercialization Mandate Policy Framework

On January 14, 2022, the ministry launched a Commercialization Mandate Policy Framework (CMPF) for all publicly assisted colleges and universities. Alongside the launch of new IP supports and services through IPON, this framework will help position Ontario to harness the value of the IP generated by the postsecondary sector to support researchers and innovators.

On September 25, 2023, IPON posted on its website, the Colleges and Universities Annual Commercialization Plans Report. The report is based on a review of the annual commercialization plans (ACPs) submitted by each of Ontario's publicly assisted postsecondary education institutions.

In February 2023, IPON announced and released a call for proposals for a Postsecondary Education Commercialization Support Pilot funding program aimed at augmenting the capacity of postsecondary education institutions' innovation and commercialization efforts. Twenty-two (22) proposals were received, 7 of which were selected to receive support. The funding was primarily used towards hiring employees at their respective Technology Transfer or Applied Research offices to help the institutions' innovation and commercialization efforts. The results of this pilot program are due by the end of March 2024.

An expansion of the above pilot program was announced in January 2024. Out of the 17 submitted expansion proposals, 10 were selected to receive funding. In total \$4.6 million in

funding has been approved through the Postsecondary Education Commercialization Support program.

Joint Working Group on Commercialization Metrics

In March 2023, the ministry in collaboration with IPON, established a Joint Working Group on Commercialization Metrics. The group is a collaboration between the government (both the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade), as well as university, college, industry and innovation sector representatives that will support the development of a consistent understanding and approach to the measurement of commercialization outcomes, including shared definitions of success in the areas of research, applied research and innovation.

IPON, along with the ministry, is leading the process to identify metrics and reporting standards that will be included in future annual commercialization plans to help show progress in implementing the CMPF and improving outcomes across the postsecondary sector.

IPON will be developing final recommendations in a report due to the ministry in Summer 2024.

IP curriculum

The ministry has also made significant progress in strengthening intellectual property literacy. Two updated foundational online IP courses are available in English and French through the University of Toronto and the Centre for International Governance Innovation. The ministry also worked with eCampusOntario to launch a call for proposals to develop an advanced IP curriculum designed to meet the complex learning needs for users wanting to sharpen their ability to generate, protect and leverage their IP in a global context. The advanced IP curriculum was developed and will be made available soon.



**Table 3: Ministry Interim
Actual Expenditures (\$M)
2023–2024^[3]**

Operating	11,958.58
Capital	616.93
Staff Strength ^[4] (as of March 31, 2024)	400.52

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Footnotes

- [1] ^ Estimates, Interim Actuals and Actuals for prior fiscal years are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure. Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the 2024 Ontario Budget.
- [2] ^ Estimates and Actuals for prior fiscal years are re-stated to reflect any changes in ministry organization and/or program structure.
- [3] ^ Interim actuals reflect the numbers presented in the *2024 Ontario Budget* (<https://budget.ontario.ca/2024/index.html>)
- [4] ^ Ontario Public Service Full-Time Equivalent positions.