



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rural Ontario Institute invests in ag-sector leadership and rural development through Funding from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

GUELPH, ON, March 24, 2023 – The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) announces support for leadership and rural development with up to \$620,300 in funding from 2023 to 2025 from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

“We are delighted to receive this recent announcement of funding from Ontario. This support will be leveraged alongside partners, donors and sponsors to ensure continued impact of ROI initiatives for rural communities,” says Joe Dietrich, ROI Board Chair.

Funds will support rural community economic and leadership development through ROI’s Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) and the Rural Change Makers (RMC) youth leadership program. Funds will bolster data tools and resources that connect and inform rural communities including ROI’s Rural Community Wellbeing Project, Rural Ontario Facts, and interactive dashboards.

“Salient data tools and strong leaders are needed to move rural communities forward in businesses, organizations, associations and on farms,” says Ellen Sinclair, ROI Executive Director. “They allow us to better understand the health and wellbeing of our communities and seize opportunities to address rural priorities that optimize social, economic and community development capacity within rural sectors.”

“I appreciate the Rural Ontario Institute and its commitment to building capacity in rural communities throughout the province,” said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. She added, “our government’s investment over the next 2 years will enable ROI to facilitate valuable initiatives that are valued by individuals, rural communities and businesses alike.”

“This foundational support is an investment in the future of rural Ontario, developing strong leaders, ensuring vitality of the Agri-food sector and rural communities,” says Gabe Ferguson, ROI Leadership Programs Director

In the coming year, ROI invites you to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. 2024 marks a special milestone for AALP - 40 years of exceptional agricultural leadership development and investment in the agriculture industry in rural Ontario and beyond. More details will be released in the coming months.



ABOUT

The [Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program](#) (AALP) is an 18-month experiential executive leadership program for those who want to shape the future of the agriculture and food industry and make a positive difference in rural communities across Ontario. AALP has graduated more than 500 agriculture leaders. The [Rural Change Makers](#) Program equips young leaders with critical skills to identify and overcome challenges with their communities. ROI leadership programming is designed to reflect the diversity of participants and the development of peer-to-peer mentorship, interrelationships, and broad networks with associated sustainable development outcomes for communities and rural sectors.

ROI is engaging with rural communities to create a [wellbeing dashboard](#) to display indicators selected from a new national standard (CSA R113-22). The dashboard allows communities to assess and interpret their wellbeing within their local rural context. [Rural Ontario Facts](#) provides a series of factsheets and interactive data dashboards making it easy for rural communities to visualize, understand and interpret complex data needed to inform evidence-based decision making.

CONTACTS

Ellen Sinclair, Executive Director
esinclair@ruralontarioinstitute.ca

MEDIA RELATIONS

Rural Ontario Institute
Guelph, Ontario
519-826-4204
info@ruralontarioinstitute.ca
www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca