TIAO Industry Stakeholder Calls
Tuesday, September 29, 2020

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For COVID-19 news or resources, visit https://www.tiaontario.ca/cpages/covid19

You can connect with the TIAO team by calling our toll-free number at: 1-888-436-6441

Share any community efforts, positive stories or messages of hope on social media #ontariospirit

You can email us with your thoughts, ideas, best practices and questions at: feedback@tiaontario.ca

The following is a digest of TIAO updates as well as questions asked during the industry calls hosted by TIAO. We’ve done our best to provide the answers you need, provide links where we can, and are committed to taking your concerns forward in our discussions with government officials.

Updates from TIAO:


  Minister Rickford announced the Northern Ontario recovery program, launched on Monday September 28th, which is going to be administered by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation. It is going to be a $20 million package allocated to support small businesses, to get the northern economy back on track. Small businesses can apply for a grant of up to $25,000; applications open from October 1 to the end of the year. Payments are grants, therefore forgivable, and can retro actively apply for any money that you’ve spent from March onwards. Some of the qualifying projects include renovations and new construction, purchasing new equipment and technology, advertising and marketing to showcase COVID-19 safety efforts.

- **FedDev Ontario still has funding available for businesses to access under the Regional Relief and Recovery fund.** There are two options and they are very similar to CEBA and to the larger business accounts with loans up to $40,000, with 25% that can be forgivable or for larger businesses up $500,000 that is fully repayable. The loans are designed to cover up to three months of fixed operating costs. If interested, you will need to fill out an online application.

  **RRRF:** www.feddevontario.gc.ca/eic/site/723.nsf/eng/h_02581.html?OpenDocument

- **Anyone in a municipality can access the Digital Main Street Program**
  https://digitalmainstreet.ca/futureproof/

  There are various levels of support to help you digitize your operations including access to a $2500 grant to help you build out an online storefront to increase your levels of engagement around digital marketing and sales strategy through the future proofing element of the program.

- **There is a Tourism Adaptation and Recovery Fund coming. This is not marketing money and can be used similar to the Northern Heritage Fund monies. It can be used as you**
adapt your business in order to meet the new normal. This is not through RRRF but through FedDev’s normal programming dollars; there is approx. $8 million available for the province.

What they are suggesting is that tourism dependent communities access this money, and they’re encouraging you to come together as a group. It can be used for purchasing PPP but you can’t use it for expanding your business; however you can use it for expanding your patio as an example.

If you are a not-for-profit tourism organization, local economic development office, or municipal/regional/First Nations government or Band Council with a project proposal, you are encouraged to contact FedDev Ontario at: https://www.feddevontario.gc.ca/eic/site/723.nsf/eng/h_00122.html?OpenDocument to review available funding options. (scroll to the section Support for Tourism-Dependent Communities)

• The Toronto Region Board of Trade is rolling out a pan provincial program called **Recovery Activation Program (RAP)**, in partnership with the local chambers of commerce and can also help with your development of a digital transformation plan. http://wtctoronto.com/scaleup/rap/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMltUlHer8L66v1V1ODlch3d4gzQEAAAYASAAEgJTI_D_Bwe

• Reminder that the Safe Travels Stamp application is now open - https://www.tiaontario.ca/cpages/safetraveltstamp

  There is no cost to participate and is an easy application process. The only caveat is that you do need to let us know which set of protocols you are following. If you’re following your local health & safety or your local public health authority protocols, then you will be in compliance. Approvals can take up to a week. It is a globally recognized program. To date, approx. 150 businesses have received the stamp.

• The Ontario Tourism Summit is open for ticket sales - $100 for up to five people from an individual business or $250 for five people from an organization. https://www.tiaontario.ca/events/test-ots

  You have the option to purchase a meal with your gala ticket ($75/pp). The gala ticket is included in the registration, but you get the opportunity to purchase a meal ticket which is supporting a local restaurant wherever you’re watching the gala broadcast from.

  The ticket includes an appetizer, entrée, and your choice of dessert, wine, beer or cider (from an Ontario producer). We will share information on these restaurants on our social media channels. Some organizations will also have watch parties for the awards gala.

• We are continuing to lobby government. We’ve got five points in front of them right now, all related to funding.

  We continue to lobby the federal government for tax credits in their budget. A provincial budget is coming November 14th so we are sharing our proposals, and lobbying government for monies for the tourism industry within that budget. We will be immediately turning around and starting to talk to the provincial government about the next budget, which will come in March/ April. So this is ongoing and we are trying to secure a bigger program and stimulus fund for the whole industry.

  At the federal level, TIAO is a part of the national coalition that is successful in getting the extension to the wage subsidy and the changes to CERB and EI which will finally include self-employed persons as well. We will continue to monitor and update you on any changes.

• The province is on a 28 day pause and the border is closed until at least October 21st.

• There is a real push for people to reduce their bubble / interaction to get the rate of infections down. Our narrative with government continues to be that tourism businesses have always been professional and are able to look after their clients, and do so in a safe and healthy manner. If we want the economy to recover, opening up (as much as possible) is in the best interest of the provincial economy.
- We are working diligently so that we can open up some more businesses, especially those in the meetings and events section, but also for those that have indoor capacity that is reduced right now.
- Please reach out to the TIAO team anytime you have any questions or want to talk something thru. We will continue to provide updates once we have them.

**Northern Ontario**

**Number of participants**: 38

**Updates from Destination Northern Ontario:**

- The Northern CFDC’s, through FedNor, have a program that grants up to $5,000 to help people transition or plan in this pandemic world. The $5,000 can go towards a new business plan or any kind of adjustments that people have had to make. (i.e. professional fees that you might incur as a result of the pandemic, revising a business plan moving things online to a new website, etc.)
  A lot of these programs are beginning to add up to a substantial amount of money and the need is different depending on everyone’s situation however there has been a considerable amount of programming available. It’s important to take advantage and not wait.

**Update from NOTO:**

- In regards to the Northern Ontario Recovery program, there’s some concerns about the name of the program versus what it actually does. This is not a program to make up any losses. The program gives an opportunity for operators who have to cover the added cost associated with trying to operate during COVID.
  If you haven’t opened your business yet, what will you need to do to be able to open next season or in the coming months, depending on your type of business? Really look at what you can do now and have this **$25,000 grant** to help you do that.
  Please contact Laurie if you want to discuss this further and get a better understanding of the program or discuss ideas. See NOTO’s recent newsletter for ideas/suggestions.

This is just one step to recovery; recovery will come in many different steps.
Please take the time and look through the program and apply it to your own businesses and see where you can find help. NOTO, TIAO, and many others continue to lobby on your behalf to get additional support.

Laurie Marcil can be reached at 705-499-7556 or by email at laurie@noto.net

**Questions:**

1) Any thoughts what the extended CEBA might look like?

I think they’re looking to add more eligible costs to the program, a lot of fixed costs. And we’re trying to understand whether or not at this point if the payback timeline will be extended. No one expected when CEBA was announced that we would still be in this position at this many months later.

If paid back by December 2022, 25% of the loan is forgivable and we are asking for an extension for the payback period.
We've also been in conversation with the province around how they can be working with municipalities. For some of you that doesn't factor in if you're in an unincorporated municipality, but we are trying to get some leeway for municipalities. Any property or other taxes and fees that have been deferred, potentially could get written off instead or made forgivable. We are pushing through on that piece as well.

2) When does the Recovery Activation Program start for applications?

Visit: http://wtctoronto.com/scaleup/rap/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIulHer8L66vIV1ODlch3d4gzQEAYASAAEgJtl_D_Bwe

3) Is the Tourism Activation Program a non-repayable fund?

The **Recovery Activation Program (RAP)** is a **no cost**, immersive series of highly practical online programs that are designed to help you identify areas to modernize your business so that you can confidently take on all the challenges that are thrown at you in the wake of COVID-19, such as managing your workforce virtually, finding new customers without going to a tradeshow, and managing disrupted supply chains – just to name a few.

In three steps – taking a Digital Needs Assessment, engaging in virtual sessions, and working with industry leading experts to plan your digital transformation – you will be on your way to new growth and opportunities.

http://wtctoronto.com/scaleup/rap/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIulHer8L66vIV1ODlch3d4gzQEAYASAAEgJtl_D_Bwe

4) I'm assuming that the Tourism Adaptation and Recovery Fund will be a non-repayable fund?

We are still confirming the details. Visit the site for more details

5) Are the new programs stackable?

You can't stack funding if NOHFC reimburses you for 100% of your expenses.

**This is written on the NOHFC website under the NORP**

- Funding will be in the form of a conditional contribution and will normally not exceed $25,000.
- NOHFC will cover 100% of eligible project costs.
- Applicants must demonstrate that the amount requested from NOHFC is incremental and does not duplicate other supports received

**Comment:**
If you applied for and received the $25,000 grant, expenses over and above that $25,000 grant could be eligible for other programs assistance. It's the same if you apply for the wage subsidy. The wage subsidy pays 75% of somebody's salary. Other monies, if you're successful in getting them, covers the other part but can't cover the wage subsidy part of somebody's salary.
6) Post COVID professional services was mentioned by David. Where can we learn more about this?

   I've seen it through Sault St. Marie so I'm assuming that's all the CFDCs in Northern Ontario. Go to your local CFDC community Futures Development Corporation.

7) If we have received RRRF then does that mean that we cannot apply for the new grant?

   As long as you're not covering the same costs, you should be able to apply for a new grant as well.

8) Is the application a "pre-approval" for NORP before spending the $$

   From our understanding, that is a no but we are getting clarification from the Minister.

9) I got some money from the RRRF, can I apply for more?

   There’s nothing to stop you from applying at this point, as long as you're not applying for covering the same items.

Additional Comments:

- I was able to get the Facebook Business grant of $3,200 cash and a $2,000 Facebook ads credit. That was a good grant for my business.

  Is that Facebook grant through Facebook directly, or another organization?

  I found it on a Chamber email. It was directly through Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/business/small-business/grants

- There are also MNDM advisors across the north who are ready to assist with the NOHFC Northern Ontario Recovery Program applications and questions. You can find your local rep here: http://www.infogo.gov.on.ca/infogo/home.html#orgProfile/-/212/en

  Thank you for continuing to try to get grant relief for income and expense lost last season.

Open Call (Sector Associations, Tourism Operators, Educators and DMOs)

Number of participants: 101

Questions:

1) Is this $8M for southern Ontario?

   Yes, it is a FedDev program.

Comment:

$1.6 M allocated for Francophone communities. Part of the $8M for Southern Ontario.
2) Any update on CEWS for seasonal businesses?

There are some proposed changes to CEWS and we are still reviewing that. We will get back to you on this.

We are proposing that seasonal businesses be able to show month to month.

3) Will TIAO be taking a position on the announcement on the extension of sick days? This will be very taxing on a lot of businesses.

We are looking into this right now as well as to changes to the Emergency Leave (ability to take leave if kids are being home schooled).

4) Any update on the Minister’s roundtables? One in Barrie was cancelled last week.

Not sure why they were cancelled. They are being co-hosted with local MPPs and the premise is to have an open conversation with stakeholders. The Minister continues to gather intelligence and input for what she's calling her five year recovery plan for her ministry.

5) When the government changed the temporary period to start in January, it caused many problems. I'm hearing from some of our industry is they are hoping that we're working hard to try and come to a resolution. I just thought I'd mention it because I'm sure everybody here is hearing from their partners.

We continue to encourage the government to either exempt or explore the tourism industry from those particular rules. However they did the extension for everyone. But we will continue to lobby government, either for another extension for tourism or for the exception that we've been talking about for months.

6) Any update from Destination Ontario on their Marketing Plans yet? We are seeing some social posts, but there still isn't a lot of information on DO's plans.

Destination Ontario had sent out a notice that their fall colours campaign brochure wasn't happening. They are still doing the campaign in a digital and social media format. They will be sending out an update on that accordingly. At this time, they are not able to release an overall campaign.

7) I heard murmurs about possible pushing hot spots back to stage 2. Is there any idea if the province will put programs in place to help those businesses they will impact if they do this? Most are just starting to see revenues, and are far from stable even open. A return to stage 2 will kill a number of them.

Still murmurs at this point. They are working hard to educate the public to take control of the situation. The Premier does not want to go backwards but will if asked to. He made one move to close bars and restaurants early.
Comment:

- My understanding is that there will be no details announced around the Speech from the Throne promises until after the US election. This makes planning for our industry challenging.
- The Premier has been very vocal about where the areas of concern are - house parties, groups and medical areas. Perhaps we can get him to talk about what we can do. That this may be the perfect time to take a road trip to visit another city, to stay in a hotel to experience outdoor activities; to encourage people that it’s still a safe activity because, to my knowledge, there's been no outbreaks in hotels around the province. A little positive messaging might go a long way to encouraging people to spend the weekend in an Ontario city.
- In response to increase in cases: They are also doing 3 times the testing that they did in the spring so that has to be taken into account.

RESOURCES:

- Ontario’s Stage 3 reopening [https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario-stages#section-3](https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario-stages#section-3)
- Industry Protocols and Guidelines: [https://www.tiaontario.ca/cpages/covid19](https://www.tiaontario.ca/cpages/covid19)
- Northern Ontario Business reopening Toolkit: [http://reopenthenorth.ca](http://reopenthenorth.ca)
- Safe Travels Stamp Application: [https://www.tiaontario.ca/cpages/safetravelsstamp](https://www.tiaontario.ca/cpages/safetravelsstamp)
- Ontario Tourism Summit, October 27-28, 2020, [https://www.tiaontario.ca/events/test-ots](https://www.tiaontario.ca/events/test-ots)

We look forward to speaking with you again soon!