

NEWS RELEASE

Canada and Ontario Invest in School Infrastructure to Respond to the Impacts of COVID-19

Projects will enhance health and safety protection for students and staff

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[Education](#)

OTTAWA — The governments of Canada and Ontario announced \$656.5 million in funding to provide critical infrastructure upgrades to protect students and staff from COVID-19 in the province's schools.

The infrastructure upgrades were announced by the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, the Honourable Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure for Ontario, and the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education for Ontario.

Communities across Canada are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, and need immediate assistance to ensure their public infrastructure is safe and reliable.

That is why both levels of government have been taking decisive action to support families, businesses and communities, and continue to look ahead to see what more can be done in these unprecedented times.

The majority of funding will support ventilation projects that improve air quality in classrooms across the province. Projects include HVAC renovations to improve air quality, installing water bottle refilling stations to improve access to safe drinking water, investing in network and broadband infrastructure to support remote learning, and space reconfigurations such as new walls and doors to enhance physical distancing.

The Government of Canada is investing \$525.2 million towards these projects through the COVID-19 Resilience stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. The Government of Ontario is contributing more than \$131.3 million to the projects.

The COVID-19 Resilience stream, implemented in response to the pandemic, allows the Government of Canada to invest up to 80 per cent in projects that support provinces, and up to 100 per cent in projects that support territories and Indigenous communities in their response to the pandemic.

Quick Facts

- Through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan, the Government of Canada is investing more than \$180 billion over 12 years in public transit projects, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, trade and transportation routes, and Canada's rural and northern communities. Ontario is investing \$10.2 billion in this program.
- To support Canadians and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, a COVID-19 Resilience stream has been added to the over \$33-billion Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to help fund pandemic-resilient infrastructure. Existing program streams have also been adapted to include more eligible project categories.
- Through the COVID-19 Resilience stream, over \$3 billion is available to provide provinces and territories with added flexibility to fund quick-start, short term projects.
- Under the COVID-19 Resilience stream, the federal cost share for public infrastructure projects is 80 per cent in the provinces, and 100 per cent in the territories and for projects intended for Indigenous communities.
- The Government of Canada has invested over \$8.3 billion in 2,876 infrastructure projects across Ontario under the Investing in Canada plan.
- Since the start of the pandemic, the Ontario government has invested more than \$1.6 billion to protect students, staff, and families from COVID-19.
- The investments build on the more than \$1 billion the Ontario government has invested since 2019 in new schools and child care spaces and additions to provide working families with access to quality, safe, and state-of-the-art learning

spaces. Supported by provincial funding, 95 per cent of Ontario schools have reported upgrades or enhancements to their air filtration systems, with over 40,000 HEPA filters and other ventilation devices in classrooms.

Quotes

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the wellbeing of students, parents and teachers. As we continue to battle this crisis, ensuring a safe learning environment for our kids is critical. That's why the Government of Canada is investing 80 cents on every dollar for a total of over \$500 million to make schools across Ontario safer for students and teachers. These projects will improve air quality, install more hand washing stations and support better physical distancing. They are part of the federal government's support to help Canadians get through the pandemic safely, create good jobs across the province, and build stronger, more resilient communities."

- The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities

"As the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly highlighted, investments in the health and wellness of Ontarians is more critical than ever. Supporting air-quality and other infrastructure projects in schools helps to protect our communities, making them stronger, healthier and safer today, and for years to come."

- The Honourable Laurie Scott
Minister of Infrastructure for Ontario

"Ontario's government is focused on protecting the lives of students, staff, and their families. We put a plan into action that leads the nation – delivering air ventilation improvements to over 95% of schools, 7,000 additional staff, and improved cleaning, testing and stronger screening. This one-time investment will help improve the safety of schools, building upon Ontario's annual investment of over \$1.4 billion to maintain schools and \$550 million to build new schools. We also recognize that in addition to these school-based infrastructure investments, Ontario's plan to defeat this pandemic includes vaccines for school staff. We have prioritized education staff in high priority communities and all special education staff across the province, and will expand to all staff as supply becomes available."

- The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education for Ontario

Additional Resources

- [Backgrounder: Canada and Ontario invest in school infrastructure to respond to the impacts of COVID-19](#)
 - [Investing in COVID-19 Community Resilience](#)
 - [Canada Healthy Communities Initiative](#)
 - [Investing in Canada: Canada's Long-Term Infrastructure Plan](#)
 - [Investing in Canada Plan Project Map](#)
 - [Federal infrastructure investments in Ontario](#)
 - [Ontario Builds Project Map](#)
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