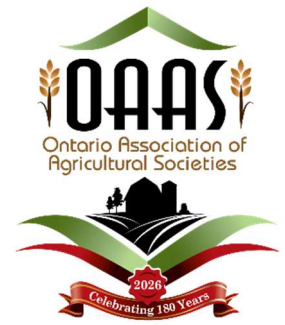


# Ontario Renews Support for Building Community Leaders Program with Three-Year Funding Extension



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**April 2026 – STIRLING, ONTARIO** — The Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS) is pleased to announce a renewed three-year funding commitment supporting Building Community Leaders, a province-wide leadership and governance training program designed to strengthen Ontario’s agricultural societies and agricultural adjacent organizations. Delivered in partnership with the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI), the program continues to build leadership capacity, enhance governance practices, and strengthen risk management skills across rural Ontario.

“Ontario’s agricultural societies are essential to thriving rural communities and a strong agri-food sector,” said Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. “By investing in leadership and governance training programs through the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies, we are equipping leaders in rural Ontario with the knowledge, skills and training they need to succeed.”

With this renewed investment, registration is now open not only to Ontario’s 210+ agricultural societies, but also to agricultural adjacent organizations including such as Ontario Horticulture Societies, Plowmans Association, Junior Farmers’ Association of Ontario, 4 H Ontario, and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, expanding the program’s reach and impact across the rural leadership landscape.

“Ontario agricultural societies are at the front line of vibrant rural community life,” said Vince Brennan, Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies. “This renewed funding allows us to expand the Building Community Leaders program to even more organizations that support agriculture, youth development, and rural leadership. Together, we are strengthening the foundation of rural Ontario.”

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, previously announced provincial support of \$836,250 over three years for this training. This continued investment of **\$812,009** ensures that rural boards of directors, volunteers, and emerging leaders have access to high quality training, tools, and resources that reinforce strong governance and effective organizational management.

The expanded Building Community Leaders program will support leadership development across a broader network of rural organizations that host fairs, events, youth programs, and agricultural education initiatives. Participants will gain access to workshops, governance resources, and practical tools designed to enhance organizational effectiveness and volunteer engagement.

Agricultural societies and agricultural adjacent organizations rely heavily on volunteers who play a vital role in educating the public about agriculture, celebrating rural heritage, and supporting local economies. By strengthening leadership capacity across these organizations, this investment ensures that rural fairs, youth programs, and agricultural initiatives continue to thrive and attract new generations of volunteers and leaders.

For more information about the OAAS, visit [www.oaasfairs.com](http://www.oaasfairs.com).

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