



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ROI announces recruitment for the 2024 Rural Change Makers Program

GUELPH, ON, May 1, 2024 – The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is pleased to announce the opening of recruitment for the 2024 Rural Change Makers (RCM) program with the support of regional partners: Opiikapawiiin Services LP (OSLP) - representing a collective of 24 First Nations from Northwestern Ontario, Community Futures Huron, Haliburton-Minden Hills community collective including 20 businesses, leaders, organizations, farmers and educators, TRENVAL Business Development Corporation, Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation, Renfrew County Economic Development and Four County Labour Market Planning Board. The Rural Change Maker Program welcomes applications from engaged young leaders aged 18-35 in rural and northern Ontario eager to become the next faces of change and mobilize action around issues important to their communities.

“It will be exciting to see our youth from Wataynikaneyap partner communities advance their skills, knowledge and gifts through leadership roles and community projects. The path they choose on their shared leadership journey will help build positive outcomes for the future,” said Laura Calmwind, Training Program Manager of Opiikapawiiin Services LP (OSLP).

“The Four County Labour Market Planning Board is proud to support the Change Makers Program as a partner for 2024-25. It is important in retaining our youth in the region to engage with them and to build meaningful relationships with their communities,” says Dana Soucie, Executive Director of Four County Labour Market Planning Board. “The Change Makers program has proven to be very successful with their excellent hands-on, grass roots approach to educating future leaders. We are so excited for this year’s applicants!”

“Trenval Community Futures is proud to bring the Rural Change Makers Program to the Bay of Quinte Area. This program is a springboard for young changemakers to ignite their passions, cultivate leadership skills and amplify their voices as they embrace challenges that will shape communities in the future,” said Amber Darling TRENVAL Business Development Corporation.

“This is a very strong curriculum that takes youth out of the classroom and gives them hands-on experience in community economic development and leadership. The Program provides essential tools for Rural Change Makers to move their ideas forward,” said Paul Nichol, General Manager, CF Huron.

Applications for the 2024 RCM program open May 1, 2024 and close July 1, 2024, with the selection process commencing in August 2024 when up to 36 motivated young adults will be selected to join the experience. These leaders will participate in a series of developmental

training sessions, come together for experiential gatherings, complete self-assessments, form planning committees for local activities, and lead entrepreneurial or community initiatives.

“Within the priorities of the Haliburton County Development Corporation, we work on the development of initiatives that will increase the number of youth involved in studies in Haliburton County. HCDC will share knowledge, guidance and collective resources to support youth involved in the Rural Change Maker Program alongside our community partners,” said Patti Tallman, Executive Director Haliburton County Development Corporation.

“Renfrew County Community Futures and the County of Renfrew Economic Development Division are pleased to partner to support the Rural Change Maker Program. Shaping emerging leaders to bring forth community development solutions is critical to the future of not only Renfrew County, but to rural communities across Ontario,” said Cyndy Phillips, Executive Director, Renfrew County Community Futures and Melissa Marquardt, Manager, County of Renfrew Economic Development Division.

“Participants of ROI’s youth leadership programs do incredible things both in their communities and lives with many past participants taking on leadership roles in local or provincial government, businesses and local community organizations,” says Melanie Bidiuk, ROI Communications Manager and RCM Program Coordinator. “Rural Change Makers are the leaders of tomorrow and this initiative prepares them for those future challenges.”

For more information on the RCM program and how to apply visit <https://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/changemakers>. The deadline for applications is July 1, 2024.

Support for the Rural Change Makers program has been generously provided in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ontario Mutual Insurance Association and RBC Future Launch.

ABOUT ROI

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is a non-profit organization committed to developing leaders, informing decision makers and connecting communities. ROI delivers the renowned Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) entering its 40th year of operation, and the Rural Change Maker program, a youth leadership initiative for young rural, emerging leaders to address local priorities. We provide data research and analysis on rural trends and demographics. Information is disseminated in our Rural Ontario Facts products - factsheets and accompanying dashboards. Currently, ROI is engaged in a rural housing initiative that will help communities to address the housing and homelessness crisis being faced by thousands of Canadians.

ASSOCIATED LINKS

- [Rural Change Makers](#)
- [Rural Ontario Institute](#)
- [Opiikapawiiin Services LP](#)
- [Renfrew County Community Futures Development Corporation](#)
- [County of Renfrew Economic Development](#)



- [Four County Labour Market Planning Board](#)
- [Haliburton County](#)
- [Township of Minden Hills](#)
- [Community Futures Huron](#)
- [TRENVAL](#)

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