



## NEWS

## Funding available for local horse businesses impacted by COVID-19

Province providing up to \$20,000 in financial support to help cover direct costs needed to maintain horses

Kawartha Lakes This Week  
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A new Equine Hardship Program hopes to give local horse businesses financial breathing room as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to run full speed ahead.

The provincial program will provide individual businesses offering horse related experiences up to \$2,500 per horse to a maximum of \$20,000 in financial support to help cover direct costs for feed, water, veterinary care and farrier services needed to

maintain horses.

During the pandemic many horse experience businesses such as riding schools, trail ride operations, and horse camps have been unable to operate, which has put these businesses and their horses in jeopardy.

“Supporting local equine businesses in HKLB and across the province to help keep up with the costs of animal care is important so they can be ready for when it is safe to resume normal operations,” explained Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes- Brock MPP Laurie Scott.

The pandemic has disrupted many of the activities offered by horse experience operators making it challenging for some to care for their animals this winter. The government is investing \$3 million province wide.

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There are roughly 150 horse experience businesses in Ontario including more than 50 horse camp or trail ride operations, at least 15 carriage operators, at least 14 therapeutic riding centres and many riding schools. These businesses also include horse drawn carriage or sleigh rides.

Under the Equine Hardship Program, costs incurred between March 17, 2020 and Feb. 28, 2021 will be eligible. Enrolment and claim forms will be accepted until March 12, or while program funding remains available, whichever comes first.

Horse experience businesses will be eligible for funding if they earned at least 50 per cent of their revenue in 2019 from horse experience activities, their 2020 revenue was less than half of what was earned in 2019 due to the pandemic, and they attest they are facing hardship as a result of COVID-19 that will make it difficult to care for the horses.

The Equine Hardship Program was specifically designed for horse experience businesses that are not eligible for other agriculture related programs that help farmers manage risk such as the Risk Management Program and AgriStability.

To learn more and apply to the Equine Hardship Program, visit [www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/equinehardship.htm](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/equinehardship.htm)

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