



CollaboratiON

Building Ontario Together!
February 6-8, 2024



Economic
Developers
Council
of Ontario

**67TH Annual
Conference & Showcase**

Marriott Downtown at CF Toronto Eaton Centre

PROGRAM

**Here's what's scheduled for the conference so far (subject to change).
Check back often for new program details.**

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

1:30-3:30 p.m.

Preconference Workshop, Ontario Investment and Trade Centre, 35th Floor, Toronto

Beginners guide to effective funding proposals

In this 2-hour hands-on workshop, participants will build their awareness of the grant process and the key steps to submitting a proposal. Funding programs are competitive, so it is important to learn the steps to help put your organizations best foot forward. This workshop is geared towards staff who are new or relatively new to grant writing. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the main building blocks of a grant proposal, including writing tips and best practices for communicating a project idea and to provide similar advice to businesses in your community.

So come with an idea and be ready to write. At the end of session, you will have a proposal outline and the resources you need to expand your outline into a full proposal.

Objectives:

- Explain the proposal writing process
- Components of an effective proposal
- How to effectively understand what applications are looking for
- Understand how proposals are evaluated by taking on the role of a reviewer
- Tips for managing projects, and how to best set up your project/monitoring system

The Pre-conference Workshop will precede the EDCO Conference and Showcase (February 6-8) to help maximize the professional benefits from limited travel budgets. Please note that registration to this event is separate and not included in the conference registration fee.

Registration:

EDCO members: \$25 (+hst)

Non-members: \$50 (+hst)

Click [HERE](#) to register.

- 4:00-6:00 p.m. Registration Opens! *(Base of Escalator, Lower Concourse / Grand Ballroom Foyer)*
- 2:00-6:00 p.m. Showcase set-up
- 4:30-5:30 p.m. **EDCO Ice Breaker Mix & Mingle:** Lobby Lounge, Main Lobby (adjacent to Trios): Join fellow delegates for an informal get-together around the fireplace in the Lobby Lounge before heading out to the opening reception. This is a great chance to meet up with “seasoned” conference goers as well as welcome “first timers”!
- 6:00-8:00 p.m. **Opening Reception:** Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge Street, Toronto
Start your EDCO 2024 experience off with colleagues at the beautiful Toronto Reference Library. Be sure to stop by the Registration Desk (conveniently located on the lower conference level) and pick up your name tag and complimentary TCC transit pass before heading out!

Presented by



Wednesday, February 7, 2024

- 7:15 a.m. Registration Opens
Hot Breakfast *(Base of Escalator, Lower Concourse / Grand Ballroom Foyer)*
Presented by



- 8:00 a.m. Early Bird Breakfast and Learn: **Enabling Growth in Ontario’s Energy Transition**
Ontario’s electricity sector is in the midst of significant transformation to meet unprecedented demand in order to facilitate economic growth and broader electrification across various sectors. In this session, municipalities will learn about their important role in driving and responding to this change while supporting reliability across the province.

Presenters:

Denise Jamal, Director, Stakeholder and Community Engagement, and Ahmed Maria, Director, Transmission, Independent Electricity System Operator

Presented by



- 8:30 a.m. EDCO Annual General Meeting (*EDCO Members Only*) (*Grand Ballroom*)
- 9:15 a.m. Conference Opening and Welcome (*Grand Ballroom*)
- 9:25 a.m. Traditional Blessing and Land Acknowledgement: Garry Sault, Ojibway Elder for the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- 9:45 a.m. Opening Keynote Presentation - Shawn Kanungo, Partner, Queen & Rook:
The Great Reimagination
The business world has fundamentally changed forever. The growth and adoption of technologies, such as Generative AI, is at a dizzying pace. Our expectations have been pushed forward 10 years due to the pandemic. We are now looking for economic development leaders to be fearless in a changing world.
- These drivers are forcing everyone to reimagine their entire organizations. How do we survive? How do we disrupt ourselves before someone else does? How do we deliver better outcomes to our stakeholders? Today, we need to reimagine – be bolder, braver and experimental.
- In this awe-inspiring and energetic talk, Shawn Kanungo provides an optimistic roadmap for the future for economic development. He explores how we can take unexpected approaches to innovation to remain competitive and relevant.
- Presented by***



- 10:45 a.m. Health Break in Showcase + Knowledge Pods (*Trinity Ballroom, Bay*)
Health Break delivered by
The Amazon logo, consisting of the word "amazon" in a bold, black, sans-serif font with a curved orange arrow underneath it pointing from the letter 'a' to the letter 'z'.
- 10:50–11:10 a.m. **KNOWLEDGE POD** (*Bay*)
Drive Economic Growth with Digital Tools and Website Design Strategies
Looking to strengthen your online presence for economic development? In this session, you will learn valuable insights on digital tools and best practices so you can have a competitive site that attracts and supports businesses to your community. We will cover how to:
- Recognize the value of a dedicated economic development site
 - Position your unique advantages with visually engaging and informative content
 - Promote your key information forward by using navigation and layout best practices

We will walk through real-world examples that demonstrate the opportunities your community has to navigate and succeed in this competitive online space.

Presented by



11:30 a.m.

Concurrent Workshops

i. Empowering Rural Ontario: Fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for Sustainable Economic Development (Salon A/B)

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, the vitality of rural communities in Ontario relies on embracing diversity, ensuring equity and promoting inclusivity. This session will delve into the significance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in fostering sustainable economic growth in rural Ontario. From acknowledging the unique challenges faced by these communities to exploring innovative strategies, this session aims to empower attendees with practical insights and actionable steps to drive positive change.

Moderator: Nour Mazloum, Marketing and Communications Manager, Kingston Economic Development

Panelists:

Kadie Ward, Commissioner and Chief Administrative Officer, Ontario Pay Equity Commission

Deepikaa Gupta, Manager, Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership

Meredith Forget, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism, Perth County

ii. Economic Developers = Jack of all Trades + Sustainability Experts? (Salon C/D)

Everyone is talking about sustainability- and today's economic developers are constantly being bombarded with questions from business owners, municipal partners and third-party stakeholders. But what role can we really play in today's efforts towards a more sustainable Province, and how can we collaborate with other experts in this space to ensure we are assisting all parties in reaching their goals? This panel of experts will offer their perspective on the matter and offer some success stories for you to take home and implement in your own community.

Moderator: Karisa Downey, Senior Economic Development Officer, City of Milton

Panelists:

Sara MacRae, Manager of Climate and Energy, Dufferin County

Christopher Warren, Executive Director, Sustainability Leadership

Bruce Taylor, President, Enviro-Stewards

Presented by



iii. Investment Evaluation on the Back of a Napkin (York A/B)

It's been claimed that some billion-dollar real estate deals were penciled out on the back of a napkin, but is that an urban legend or can this work today??? In this session, Economic Developers, Planners and Government Officials will learn the basics of real estate investment proformas including quick estimation methods for revenues and costs in order to quickly understand whether a project is viable or even desirable. Attendees will walk away from this session with a better understanding of return on investment versus return of investment along with Real Estate Cap Rates in different economic situations as well as their own "napkin"!

Moderator: Cephas Panschow, Development Commissioner, Town of Tillsonburg

Panelists:

Ted Davis, Chief Operating Officer, Avison Young

Renu Narang, Business Centre Manager, BDC

12:30 p.m.

Lunch (Grand Ballroom)

Presented by



1:15 – 1:35 p.m.

KNOWLEDGE POD (Bay)

Leverage the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program to hire and retain skilled foreign workers in Ontario

Discover the key to meeting workforce needs and driving business success in Ontario! Join us for an informative presentation with a representative from the Ministry of Labour Immigration Training and Skills Development (MLITSD). Together, we'll explore how the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP) can be an immigration pathway to retain or attract highly skilled foreign workers.

Presented by

Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development



1:45 p.m.

Concurrent Workshops

i. Immersive Horizons: Navigating Economic Growth with AR, VR, and AI (Salon A/B)

Get ready to embark on a journey of economic transformation! In this dynamic workshop, you'll uncover the boundless possibilities of immersive technologies as catalysts for development. Through engaging demonstrations, interactive sessions, and insightful discussions, we'll delve into the art of leveraging Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to propel your community's economic landscape forward. Discover how these innovative tools can enhance tourism, commerce, and learning experiences while fostering a vibrant and future-ready ecosystem.

Moderator: Dr. Mira Ray, Executive Director, Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (RIE) for Georgian College

Panelists:

Drew MacNeil, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder, XpertVR

Rob Theriault, Immersive Technology Manager, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Georgian College

Katherine Scarrow, General Manager, Content Studio, Globe and Mail

Presented by



ii. Innovate to Elevate: Best Practices for Sector Development (Salon C/D)

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, staying ahead requires more than just keeping up with trends – it demands a comprehensive understanding of industry dynamics, innovative thinking, and strategic planning. This workshop is designed to equip you with the tools, insights, and connections needed to drive growth and competitiveness within sector development.

Moderator: Sarah Young, Senior Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer, City of Barrie

Panelists:

Adam Solomon, Vice President, Business Development, ResearchFDI

Asmaa Al-Hashimi, Business Development Consultant, Invest Hamilton

Shauna Carr, Economic Development Officer, Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership

Presented by:



iii. What are you doing for me now? (York A/B)

An interactive session to examine the shifting gears of economic development priorities, programming and the changing municipal culture. A review of the gold standard guiding principles and values associated with building relationships and network contacts to achieve performance targets.

Moderator: Rob Hunter, CEcD, Ec.D(F)

Panelists:

David Paul, Principal, Quaich Business Services

Jay Amer, President, Amer & Associates Economic Development

Chris King, Chief Executive Officer, Quinte Economic Development Commission

3:00 p.m. Health Break in Showcase + Knowledge Pods (*Trinity Ballroom, Bay*)



3:05–3:25 p.m. **KNOWLEDGE POD** (*Bay*)

Brand Building and Communication with Digital Media: Getting noticed in an increasingly cluttered digital world

Come and explore commonly experienced opportunities and challenges to consider when developing effective digital marketing-communications content for your community. Whether you are working to enhance your community's brand, build capacity, increase awareness, stimulate attraction, revitalize your downtown, or encourage retention - effective use of digital media is more critical than ever before. Learn how an Ontario-based digital media company has quietly helped organizations and communities effectively tell their stories and achieve their goals, changing hearts and minds with award-winning digital media for more than 27 years.

Presented by



memory tree

3:30 p.m.

Plenary Presentation: Investment Attraction “Ask the Expert” (*Grand Ballroom*)

This session gives economic development professionals the opportunity to connect with several experts in the investment attraction field in a short amount of time. There is no agenda – just free flowing conversation and a chance to build relationships with development experts and gather industry intelligence.

During this session you’ll meet experts from the commercial and industrial real estate sector, investment attraction specialists from all levels of Government and EDCO member peers that have attracted large investments, including automotive assembly and battery cell manufacturing, to their communities.

Over the course of 90 minutes, you’ll meet 5 different industry experts and spend 15 minutes **Asking them Anything!**

Experts:

- Bill Harvie, Economic and Business Advisor, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)
- Jeff Mahon, Director of International Business and Geopolitical Advisory, StrategyCorp
- Khawar Nasim, Vice President of Business Development, Invest Ontario
- Kurt de Vries, Trade Commissioner, Global Affairs Canada
- Lance McLellan, Vice-President, South West Ontario, BDC
- Len Magyar, Development Commissioner, City of Woodstock
- Marc Beauchamp, Managing Director, Hickey Canada
- Michael Fedchyshyn, Vice-President, Strategies and Business Solutions, Invest Ontario
- Mitchell Blaine, Executive Vice-President, Sales and Leasing, JLL

- Nicholas Potkidis, Associate Vice President, CBRE Limited
- Sean Dyke, Chief Executive Officer, St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation
- Shelley Hirstwood, Director of Business Development, Kingston Economic Development Corporation
- Stephen Paul, Director, Community and Development Services, Lennox and Addington County
- Ted Davis, Chief Operating Officer, Avison Young
- Thomas Cattana, Senior Vice President, Sales Representative, Colliers International

Presented by



4:45 p.m. Program ends for the day

4:45–6:15 p.m. **Feast On® Reception** (*Grand Ballroom Foyer*)

Feast On® is the true certified taste of local. Each business that has gone through the Feast On® certification process has proven their commitment to sourcing and celebrating Ontario-grown food & drink. They're going the extra mile and sourcing with purpose. They're fighting the good fight just like those who work our land in ethical and sustainable ways. By choosing a Feast On® Certified business, you support our local food system too.

Presented by



Thursday, February 8, 2024

7:30 a.m. Registration Opens
Hot Breakfast (*Base of Escalator, Lower Concourse / Grand Ballroom Foyer*)

Presented by



8:00 a.m. Early Bird Breakfast and Learn: **Municipal Community Insights Breakfast Trivia!**
Jump start your day with a fun and interactive breakfast trivia session! Test your knowledge against Environics Analytics' 2023/2024 demographics, behaviours, visitors, lifestyles insights across different communities in Ontario. Up for grabs are 2 Tim Hortons gifts cards for the two highest scores!

Presenters:

Nader Shureih, Senior Vice President, Public Sector, Environics Analytics
Samuel Lau, Director, Business Development, Environics Analytics

Presented by



8:30 a.m. Conference Opening and Welcome (*Grand Ballroom*)

8:35 a.m. **Plenary Presentation: Bright Ideas Competition**

The EDCO Bright Ideas Committee is proud to host the 4th annual Bright Ideas Competition. Starting in the Spring of 2023, three teams of economic development practitioners were tasked with exploring new perspectives and solutions that would support the economic development community in Ontario. After surveys, research and community engagement, the three teams are eager to present their findings. Now is your chance to be part of the jury to help select this year’s winning team! Your vote will be part of the final adjudication process. Join the Bright Ideas Competition teams as they present their innovative ideas on addressing housing with timber solutions, toolkits for supporting small business transitions, and integrating automation in the manufacturing sector.

Moderator: Brock Dickinson, Director, Economic Development Program – University of Waterloo

Retooling for The Future, Integrating Automation into the Manufacturing Sector in Ontario

Elizabeth Edwards, *Economic Development Officer - City of Quinte West*

Addressing the Housing Crisis with Timber Solutions

Genny Smith, *Entrepreneur and Business Coach – County of Huron*

Sarah Benčić, *GIS Innovation Coordinator – Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio- Economy*

Public Sector Best Practices for Encouraging Small Business Transitions

Brenna Carroll, *Economic Development Officer – Township of Southgate*

Brittany Wise, *Huron Business Centre Manager – Huron County*

9:30 a.m. **Concurrent Workshops**

i. Attracting and Retaining Talent (*Salon A/B*)

Learn how to effectively sell your community’s unique attributes to ensure your region becomes the chosen destination for promising talent. Discover recent trends in talent attraction and retention, the value of a mentorship program, and the importance of supporting new residents after they have arrived.

Moderator/Panelist: Vito Grammatico, Senior Economic Development Officer, City of Windsor

Panelists:

Christine McLean, Small Business Coordinator, Hastings County

Robyn Webb, Executive Director at National Connector Program and Director, Labour Market Development at Halifax Partnership
Jason Dennison, Director, Business Intelligence and Analytical Services at Fleming College

ii. The Pivot: How to adapt policies, procedures and project management when dealing with a sudden change of context (*Salon C/D*)

No matter how well prepared we are, sudden changes happen. These changes are almost always beyond a local economic developer's control, and can range from local shocks (i.e., a cornerstone industry leaving town, natural disasters) to much wider challenges (i.e., change in Provincial government focus, energy costs, COVID-19). The purpose of this session is to explore and discuss what economic developers are doing – and should be doing – to adapt when the status quo for a community is upended. This session looks at how communities can effectively make 'The Pivot' by considering:

- When it is time to pivot?
- How do you decide what to focus on during a pivot?
- What have local economic developers done when faced with a sudden change of context? What tactics and strategies have worked? And which have not?
- When there is a change of context, what are the effects on day-to-day work? Long-term planning?
- How do you get elected officials/management/stakeholders onboard with your new direction?
- Are there things that you can do to make future pivots easier?

Moderator: Catherine Oosterbaan, President, Oosterbaan Strategy

Panelists:

Evan Cleave, Assistant Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University

Julia Crowder, Economic Development and Tourism Manager, Town of Smiths Falls

Belinda Wick-Graham, Director of Economic and Community Development, Town of Minto

Jeff Loney, Economic Development Manager, County of Bruce

iii. Business Retention in an Automated World! (*York A/B*)

Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) programs are often the forgotten pillar of a good Economic Development Program. While Corporate Visitation programs, Virtual Meetings, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, are all great tools for engaging with your business community. However, with the demands of the post-pandemic economy, with its fast paced, constantly changing expectations, mean that new approaches are required. Economic Developers need to take advantage of automation tools to support their local business community while maintaining personal contact through a variety of means. This session will highlight successful implementations approaches to building and maintaining relationships with local businesses that result in increased growth and investment.

Moderator: Stephen Morris, Team Lead – Economic Development Programs Unit
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Panelists:

Daniel Hengeveld, Vice President of Investment Attraction, Toronto Global
Stephannie Schlichter, Director of Economic and Creative Development, City of Barrie
Cephas Panschow, Development Commissioner, Town of Tillsonburg

10:45 a.m.

Health Break in Showcase + Knowledge Pods (*Trinity Ballroom, Bay*)



10:50-11:10 a.m.

KNOWLEDGE POD (*Bay*)

Shine a SPOTLIGHT on your Community!

Through an exclusive offer in partnership with EDCO, Environics Analytics is making data and analytics available and affordable to Ontario's smaller communities! Join this Knowledge Pod session and see data in action. Learn about how you can leverage this tool to inform planning, communications, programs, and service delivery.

Presented by



11:30 a.m.

Concurrent Workshops

i. Crafting the Perfect Pitch to Site Selectors, Businesses and Talent (*Salon A/B*)

Are you ready to showcase what makes your location truly unique? Join Steve Kirby as he presents a 5-step process for creating a compelling pitch that will set your location apart and help attract investment, talent, and growth. Discover how local knowledge, AI, and data visualizations can be combined to communicate your community's value proposition more effectively across your website, social media platforms, and other marketing channels.

Moderator: Sarah Young, Senior Business Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer, City of Barrie

Presenter:

Steve Kirby, Vice President, Sales & Partnerships, Localintel

ii. The Bentway works "to ignite the urban imagination", using the city as site, subject, and canvas (*Salon C/D*)

Toronto's Gardiner Expressway runs elevated for 6.5km, right through the city's downtown core and just steps from its waterfront. Though convenient for cars above, this hulk of concrete forms an imposing barrier at street level, an obstacle separating visitors from Toronto's top attractions and its greatest natural resource (Lake Ontario).

But what if the Gardiner could be much more? What if we re-framed an obstacle as opportunity?

The Bentway leads a growing, creative movement to imagine new possibilities for urban infrastructure. Inspired by the wild success of New York City's The High Line, its

work began in 2018 with the opening of Bentway 1.0; the first in a series of new under-Gardiner destination parks and connective links.

In this session, you will hear from leaders at The Bentway Conservatory - an independent not-for-profit organization and charity working in partnership with the City of Toronto, professional artists, tourism partners, and the local community – on lessons learned, best practices, and creative ideas for overlooked urban spaces.

These ideas can be adopted and applied to any community across Ontario considering reimaging public space to inspire residents with a sense of pride and place and draw new visitors seeking unique experiences.

Also included in this session is a brief update from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport on service and program supports.

Moderator: James Lynn, Senior Business Advisor (A), Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

Panelists:

Ilana Altman, Co-Executive Director, The Bentway Conservancy

Robert McKaye, Senior Manager, Planning and Design, The Bentway Conservancy

iii. Power up! Learn how to use the new Ontario ZoomProspector web tool for investment attraction, business support & place marketing (York A/B)

Join Alissa Sklar (fDi Intelligence/ GIS Planning) for a practical overview of the new Ontario-wide ZoomProspector web tool, with a guide to making the most of interactive online data for investment attraction, business support, place marketing, and building rapport with your community stakeholders. This intuitive, mobile-friendly new online tool will showcase your available commercial properties and make it easier than ever to research, analyze and market your community's key investment data. Featuring robust demographic, labour force, consumer expenditure, talent pool, and business/ industry data, the easy-to-use Ontario ZoomProsector helps visualize and map dynamic data to speed up investment decisions. The presentation will also draw from the most recent data in the recently released publication, Economic Development Marketing & Priorities, 3rd edition, based on data from 2021 and 2023 surveys of economic developers and site selection consultants.

- Learn how you can access, analyze & share your community data
- Understand tools such as dynamic radius, free draw, 3D renderings, and pinpoint for analysis
- See how to save properties in multiple named folders to organize different projects
- Turn data variables into beautiful thematic heat maps
- Turbocharge your place marketing, social media, e-newsletters, proposals, etc.
- Discover how to make updates to your listings
- Speed up responses to RFIs and preparation of business cases
- Answer your questions

Moderator: Nicole Simone, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Invest Ontario

Presenter:

Dr. Alissa Sklar, Vice President of Marketing, GIS Planning/fDi Intelligence

Presented by



12:30 p.m.

Lunch (*Grand Ballroom*)

1:15-1:35 p.m.

KNOWLEDGE POD (*Bay*)

My Main Street: Data-Driven Community Economic Development

The My Main Street program, initiated by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, has invested an additional \$15 million aimed to revitalize main streets through two streams of programming: the Community Activator stream, which supports strategic placemaking projects; and the Business Sustainability stream, which delivers data-driven insights and funding to independent, small businesses on main streets across southern Ontario. Learn more about program opportunities for your community's main streets. **Applications open February 15, 2024.**

Presented by



1:45 p.m.

EDCO Scholarship: Announcement

2:00 p.m.

Plenary: Fireside Chat with The Honourable V. Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

Moderator: Brooks Barnett, Manager, Economic Development Policy, Amazon

Presented by



2:45 p.m.

Health Break (*Grand Ballroom Foyer*)

Health Break delivered by



3:00 p.m.

Closing Plenary (*Grand Ballroom*): THE Ultimate in CollaboratiON!

Daved Goldman and Nobu Adilman (AKA “DaBu”), Choir! Choir! Choir!

End your #EDCO2024 conference experience literally on a high note with the international singing phenomenon called Choir! Choir! Choir! That’s right: they teach, and you’ll sing but don’t worry, it’s the biggest party ever! Daved Goldman and Nobu Adilman (AKA “DaBu”) travel the world igniting crowds with their boundless energy and

humour, inspiring large groups of non-singers to harmonize with the greatest pop songs of all time! Within seconds, you'll feel yourself opening up, to yourself and the others around you. You'll see how singing can bring your teams closer than ever.

So warm up your pipes and get ready to experience THE ultimate EDCO collaboratiON!

- 4:00 p.m. Closing Remarks
- 4:05 p.m. Program ends
- 5:30 p.m. President's Reception (*Grand Ballroom Foyer*)
- 6:30-9:30 p.m. President's Dinner and Awards of Excellence (*Grand Ballroom*)
Emcee: Dave La Fame, Award winning tribute artist
Get ready to celebrate the "stars" of Ontario's economic developer community at EDCO's "Oscar" Night!
- 9:30-11:30 p.m. President's EDCO's "Oscar" After Party Celebration (Grand Ballroom)
Plan to stay for the EDCO "Oscars" After Party and continue to celebrate with colleagues! **DJMike** will be on hand to keep the party going! Everyone at the party will receive a complimentary drink ticket.