

Port Colborne joins Digital Main Street's ShopHERE powered by Google to support local businesses

The program offers local businesses and artists the opportunity to start selling online

Port Colborne, ON (June 11, 2020) - To help support our local small businesses, today Port Colborne is joining the ShopHERE powered by Google program, with a goal of getting more businesses online this year.

ShopHERE powered by Google, which started in the City of Toronto, helps independent businesses and artists build a digital presence and minimize the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In May, [Google Canada announced](#) a one million dollar investment to enable Digital Main Street to expand the program to municipalities across the country, offering more businesses and artists the opportunity to build their own online store.

Because the opportunities afforded by the digital economy are still limited if people don't have the right skills, Google's investment will also help more small businesses and artists receive the digital skills training needed to participate in the digital economy.

The program is now available to small businesses in Port Colborne. Local businesses and artists can apply for the program at www.digitalmainstreet.ca/shophere to get their online store built at no-cost.

"The resilience of the City of Port Colborne is due in part to the strength and character of our local business operators and their commitment to supporting our local economy," said Bill Steele, Mayor, City of Port Colborne. "I am happy to announce the City's participation in the ShopHERE powered by Google program, in collaboration with corporate partners such as Shopify, Mastercard, Microsoft, Facebook, eBay, and eShipper, as part of our COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan. I encourage all eligible businesses to take advantage of this opportunity."

The focus of the program is to help Port Colborne businesses establish free customized online stores to carry out online commerce, preparing as many businesses as possible for the digital economy. Training will also be provided for businesses on how they drive customers to their online stores.

"The City of Port Colborne is made up primarily of small businesses, most of which have been significantly impacted by COVID-19. To support retention and recovery, the City has been working closely with local businesses and has launched a shop local social media campaign and designated website, along with curbside pick-up parking stalls," commented Julian Douglas-Kameka, economic development officer, City of Port Colborne. "Port Colborne's involvement in the ShopHERE powered by Google program is another way we're ensuring the health of our local economy. The ShopHERE program provides a free customized virtual store, training and equips our local businesses with the resources needed in a digital economy."

“Since Google began its business in Canada nearly twenty years ago, we’ve been focused on helping Canadian businesses of all sizes to unlock the prosperity of the internet,” says Sabrina Geremia, VP and Country Manager, Google Canada. “We remain optimistic and more determined than ever that technology is the toolkit for a world of opportunities. Our one million dollar investment will go towards expanding the ShopHERE program nationally, so we can help small businesses across Canada navigate the challenges ahead.”

“Main street businesses are facing unprecedented times due to COVID-19. They need to be able to sell online if they are going to survive and we are proud to expand the ShopHERE powered by Google program to help them achieve this. This program is critical in ensuring main streets can adapt and evolve during this crucial time.” - John Kiru, Executive Director, Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas

About Google Canada

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful. As a global technology leader, Google's innovations in web search and advertising have made its website a top internet property and its brand one of the most recognized in the world. Google Canada has offices in Waterloo, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa with over 1,500 Canadian Google employees working on teams across Engineering, AI Research, Sales and Marketing.

About Digital Main Street

Digital Main Street is a program that helps main street businesses achieve digital transformation. The program is built around an online learning platform, structured training programs, and our Digital Service Squad, a team of street-level team members who help main street businesses grow and manage their operations through technology.

Digital Main Street was created by the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) with direct support from the City of Toronto. DMS is also supported by a group of strategic business partners, including Google, MasterCard, Microsoft and Shopify.

About the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA)

The Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas (TABIA) is a non-profit umbrella organization working with the 83 Business Improvement Areas within the City of Toronto, who in turn represent more than 40,000 business and property owners.

About ShopHERE powered by Google

The ShopHERE program offers businesses and artists the opportunity to build a digital presence and minimize the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. ShopHERE is supported by a number of community and corporate partners, including Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, Shopify, Google, Mastercard, Microsoft, Magnet, and The Schulich School of Business - York University.

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