

GRANTS ONTARIO

Government of Ontario website provides streamlined services to organizations



Developing an integrated end-to-end grants-related transfer payments management system

Making grant applications easy

Today, Ontario organizations seeking grants from the provincial government have easy online access to all the information they need, through one source—the Grants Ontario website. Here they can find out about available grants and how to apply. They're able to submit and track the status of applications electronically, on any device. Grant recipients can also prepare and submit reports online. Once entered, an organization's information is held securely within the back-end system, making future interactions even easier.

The Government of Ontario benefits from online grant tracking capabilities, which ensure accountability. For the Government, the centralized Grants Ontario system has enabled efficient and cost-effective management of grant delivery, a crucial means of achieving its public policy objectives and providing services to citizens.

It wasn't always so.

The burden of paper-based processes and multiple systems

Until 2010, grant applicants had to fill out complicated forms and submit them by mail, along with all the accompanying documentation and paperwork. Each grant program had its own forms, and data had to be re-entered with each application. Errors and incomplete files caused delays and frustration. The processes were cumbersome, slow and inefficient—for both applicants and government employees.

CHALLENGES

- Replace and modernize more than 70 complex forms used by different ministries and programs
- Meet accessibility requirements and quality service standards
- Allow fast on-the-fly form generation, and dynamic addition and deletion of sections
- Enable both online and offline capabilities
- Integrate Adobe technology with Oracle Siebel back-end system

SOLUTION

Adobe Experience Manager solution within Adobe Marketing Cloud



WHY 4POINT?

- Adobe Premier Solution Partner specialized in Adobe Experience Manager (AEM)



- Lessons and best practices learned through over 1000 implementations
- Understanding the pain points and concerns of government institutions
- A flexible, collaborative approach that builds strong relationships

“The grants management project was launched to realize opportunities identified in earlier reviews. We needed to make the whole process more efficient, while supporting Ontario’s quality customer service initiative. 4Point not only addressed these needs in a highly professional manner but also established a solid foundation for future digitization projects.”

Henderson Zhu

Lead Systems Analyst/Developer
Ministry of Education, Ontario

In 2011, three Ontario ministries joined together to look for a way to improve the grant delivery process. The strategy they developed included the province’s Quality Services Standards and provided recommendations about streamlining processes, technological enhancements to increase efficiency, and opportunities for delivering services electronically.

The path to efficiency

4Point welcomed the opportunity to show how Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) Forms, part of Adobe Marketing Cloud, could address those issues and provide the Government with an integrated end-to-end grant management system.



Within a relatively short time frame, the project team was tasked with developing and implementing an Adobe ES3 solution. It was to replace the paper-based grant request process, involving more than 70 complex forms, with an online interactive process. The solution had to connect with the Government’s Oracle Siebel back-end system and be capable of both online and offline submissions. Accessibility was yet another key requirement.

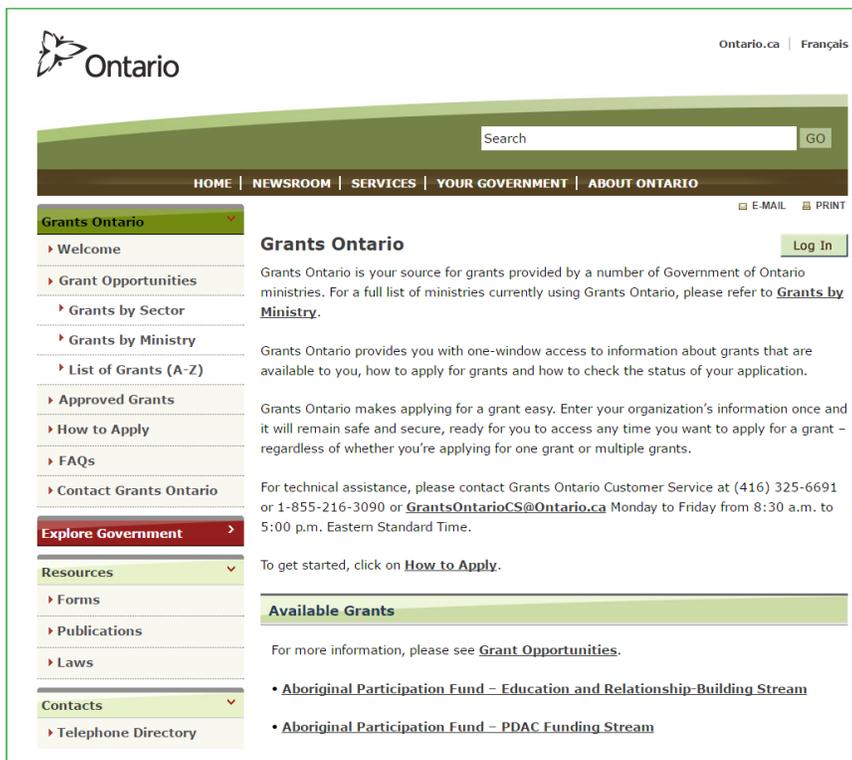
4Point was responsible for gathering all requirements as well as defining, developing and implementing the solution. At every stage, the team worked closely with stakeholders. This collaboration was especially critical—and effective—when it came to the integration between the Adobe ES3 server and the Siebel system.

4Point recognized that AEM Forms offered the power and flexibility needed to transform the way Ontario handled grants. The robust workflow capabilities of AEM Forms, which can include both online and offline modes, and its ability to assemble forms dynamically, would make the rapid generation and consumption of forms possible. We were confident that our solution would be compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, as well as the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA).

A model system

The solution met all the requirements, and the province launched Grants Ontario in 2012. All the former subsystems had been consolidated into one central system, which at the time served more than 9,000 internal and external users. Roughly 120 programs in ten ministries and agencies were involved.

4Point was able to replace all the complex paper-based forms with a single smart application form build in AEM, and one report form build now handled all interim and final reports. Grant applicants had their single window and all the benefits of electronic access; the Government had a streamlined, efficient system that was easier to manage, flexible and easily extendable. The project also established a Grants Management Reference Model that would prove useful for other implementations.



Grants Ontario
Government of Ontario
<http://www.grants.gov.on.ca/>

The benefits of the unified system were soon noted by economist Don Drummond, author of an official report on the reform of Ontario's public services. He recommended extending the system, since the expansion would "create efficiencies in program administration as well as lower per unit ministry maintenance costs."

Managing close to
120 programs

9000+ users
external & internal

25 ministries
of the provincial government

327 programs
involved by 2014



Grants Ontario System
Reference Guide
for
Applicants

“Further efficiency and value-for-money gains would be achieved by expanding this platform to the OPS. The expansion would create efficiencies in program administration as well as lower per unit ministry maintenance costs.”

Don Drummond

Chair, Commission on the Reform of Ontario’s Public Services (Report, 2012)



The recommendation was followed. In 2015, the Grants Ontario system was approved to be the Enterprise Technology Solution for project-based time-limited programs in all 25 ministries of the provincial government. The number of programs, based on a 2014 survey, then totalled 327.

Improving service delivery today and tomorrow

The Grants Ontario experience can be seen as yet another example of the trend that is gaining momentum around the world: the consolidation of government content and services on one digital platform, offering citizens a single, easy-to-use access point.

Ontario’s grant applicants are not alone in expecting their interactions with government to be easy, convenient and engaging. Government organizations, in turn, are increasingly aware of the benefits of digital services in terms of efficiency, return on investment, information security and improved customer service. Many of them—including the Government of Canada, with Canada.ca— are also choosing Adobe products such as AEM for their renewal initiatives.

As 4Point demonstrated with Grants Ontario, the application is robust and expandable enough to accommodate additional programs with ease. In the past year, in fact, two more ministries have joined the Grants Ontario system. New features and functionalities can also be added to the solution: mobile form delivery is already on the horizon. Whatever enhancements lie ahead, we can expect the results to include added convenience, increased productivity, improved workflow efficiency, and more engaging user experiences.

BENEFITS

EFFICIENT

Consolidated forms and streamlined processes save time for both clients and administrators, while reducing errors and inconsistencies.

CONVENIENT

Clients access user-friendly, one-window system when and how they want; both online and offline modes available.

ACCESSIBLE

Fully compliant with web accessibility guidelines and *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

COST-EFFECTIVE

Government expects to realize millions of dollars in savings within three years.



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