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Yellow Ducks and Free Money

A minor fire storm of gossip and criticism hit the Toronto talk radio airwaves in early June as preparations for the Canada 150th birthday celebrations were fully underway!

The Province of Ontario, as part of the Ontario 150 tour, gave away a large grant funding (free money) with a portion going towards the rental of a large yellow duck. Reputedly the world's largest yellow duck, the six-story giant inflatable waterfowl was showcased at the Redpath Waterfront Festival from July 1st – 3rd in Toronto.

Many people expressed their skepticism about the value of the yellow duck installation and one politician referred to the project as an "absurd waste of taxpayers' dollars".

The good news is that you too, as a Canadian resident, can access numerous federal and provincial government programs that give money away, upon a written submission, in the form of grants, loans (non-refundable and repayable) and subsidies (employee wage subsidies for example). These government programs are designed to promote various government policy objectives such as encouraging women business owners, creating economic development in remote communities, assisting in the funding of new factories, green initiatives and so on.

The opportunities for you to apply for funds to meet your needs include an estimated:

- 5,300 Private Foundations

- 1,800 Federal Government programs
- 3,950 Provincial Government programs
- 11,400 Municipal program and finally
- 80,000 Scholarship programs for education

The figures are supplied by Chris Johnson, a Canadian expert on "unlocking Canada's Free Money Vault", as he refers to it.

There are two obstacles that prevent Canadians from applying for any of these programs. The first is the assumption "it doesn't apply to me". The second obstacle is the sheer confusion about how to get started as well as the eligibility criteria (these criteria are usually spelled out on the actual applications).

The key to success is first applying for any programs that you may be suitable for, which can lead to multiple grants for the same need, according to Johnson, and making sure the applications are completed correctly in order to avoid rejection on a technicality.

The starting point for the Federal Government is: www.canadabenefits.gc.ca [1]. The website provides the name of the program, its policy purpose and eligibility requirements. The key is to use the government's own verbiage (the magic sauce) in your answers when completing the application. Make sure your application refers back to how your application will solve a government problem such as creating jobs!

You can also access business programs: www.CanadaBusiness.gc.ca [2] for help in buying a business, expanding a business or to get capital grants to start or expand a business. Residents of Ontario can go to www.gov.on.ca [3] and each province has similar websites.

There are all types of programs including energy, education (including getting grants to help graduates pay off student loans) and to promote women business owners (men can benefit also as minority shareholders). In fact, according to Johnson, an estimated 1 million Canadians benefit annually from all types of programs! All it takes is some time and effort.

Happy Canada 150th!

Huffington Post, [Canada Gets Giant Rubber Duck For Its Birthday Because A Loon Is Too Damn Expensive](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/05/30/giant-rubber-duck-toronto_n_16882646.html) [4]. Retrieved on June 15th, 2017.

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