



Ontario Racing - NCRHHA Relocation Support Program

Following the cessation of standardbred racing at Rideau Carleton Raceway/Hard Rock Ottawa on April 2, 2026, Ontario Racing (OR) committed to working with the National Capital Region Harness Horse Association (NCRHHA) to develop a Relocation Support Program.

Many Ottawa-area horsepeople would like to continue owning, training, and racing their horses in Ontario. As the Ottawa-area horses had an off-season of four months to condition and qualify horses for racing, the activity needs to occur at an active racetrack. The Relocation Support Program has been established to aid in offsetting the increased financial burden of racing four-to-six hours away from the Ottawa-area.

The Ottawa-area horsepeople are isolated from the majority of standardbred racetracks located in the central/south-western areas of Ontario. The closest racetrack, Kawartha Downs, is 275 km from Ottawa and operates during the summer season. The next closest are Mohawk at 477 km and then Flamboro Downs and Georgian Downs at approximately 500 km.

There are two scenarios that horsepeople, who remain actively racing in Ontario, fall under:

- 1) True relocation to central/south-western Ontario, including new residence and relocation of stable. These individuals will likely rent a home and ship their horses once to a training centre in C/SW Ontario. This will allow them close access to multiple racetracks with year-round racing opportunities.
- 2) Regular trucking/shipping back and forth between Ottawa and the racetrack of choice. This is a six-hour, one-way drive with a trailer in tow. These horsepeople will look to maximize their time by racing multiple horses over a weekend, or two-to-three day period. The trainers will need a hotel room for one-to-two nights. The adverse nature to relocate is anchored to established lives in the Ottawa area including family commitments and primary employment.

Overall, the first month will be the most costly with least returns in purses as horses become reconditioned to racing after the offseason. As horses regain their conditioning, the race results and purses will become better, thus funding the ecosystem of participation.

Program Framework

Through the FY2027 Annual Business Plan, the Ontario Racing Board of Directors has allocated \$400,000 in funding for the Support Relocation Program. This is a combination of unused purses at Rideau Carleton Raceway from FY2026 and an additional \$104,000 from FY2027 purses.

It is anticipated that 130-140 horses will apply for this program. The program's minimum full payment will be \$3,000. Should anything be left over, that balance will be split up following the 'Funding Payment Per Horse' guidelines, ensuring the full amount of funding is utilized for the benefit of active and eligible horsepeople in Ontario.



Eligibility Criteria for the Framework

To be eligible, individual horses must meet the following criteria:

- Program funding is for trainers/horses that raced November/December 2025 at Rideau Carleton Raceway (trainers/horses that chose to leave the meet prior to November 2025 and continue racing at other Ontario racetracks will not qualify for program funding)
- First owner on paper must be the same since March 3, 2026, demonstrating commitment to eligible horse and avoiding owners who sold off their horses when Rideau Carleton did not commence qualifiers
- Eligible starts at Ontario racetracks must occur between April 3, 2026, and July 3, 2026
- Aged racehorses (3YO and older) must have a minimum of three (3) starts or, young racehorses (2YO) must have a minimum of two (2) starts
- Horses must be stabled in Ontario from April 3 - July 3, 2026, to qualify for this relocation funding
- Standardbred Canada data will be used to determine if horses met the minimum number of starts criteria

Application and Payment Process

- Trainers will apply to Ontario Racing with projected eligible horses and backup documentation to demonstrate each horse's stabling location (i.e. current invoice made out to the trainer submitting the application)
 - NCRHHA, the Central Ontario Standardbred Association (COSA) and OR will review applications to confirm validity
 - Applications must be received by June 25, 2026. This provides 2.5 weeks from program announcement to submit complete information
 - First owner on paper will be paid after horse made its third start (for 3YO) or second start (for 2YO)
 - Program details and application form (excel file) will be made available on OntarioRacing.com and StandardbredCanada.com
1. Populate the application form using Excel
 - a. Questions related to application content can be directed to COSA or NCRHHA
 2. Email the file with supporting documentation to Daniela Vizcaino dvizcaino@ontarioracing.com

Funding Payment Per Horse

- Ontario-based trainers and horses stabled in Ontario and meet the above eligibility criteria will be eligible for the full (100 per cent) payment under this program
- Quebec-based trainers and horses stabled in Quebec in November/December 2025, and have relocated their stable to Ontario, and meet the above eligibility criteria will be eligible for half (50 per cent) of the payment under this program



- 2YO horses stabled in Ontario during November/December 2025, have the same owner as of December 31, 2025, and meet the above eligibility criteria will be eligible for half (50 per cent) of the payment under this program
- Ontario-based owners/trainer (one person in a combined role) who sent horses to an established central/southwestern Ontario trainer, and meet the above eligibility criteria will be eligible for half (50 per cent) of the payment under this program
- Trainers and horses stabled outside of Ontario or Quebec during November/December 2025 but meet the above eligibility criteria are not eligible for payment

Program Reporting

At the completion of the program, Ontario Racing will prepare summarized program closure reporting, demonstrating the alternate distribution of the Racetrack Payment under the Funding Agreement, and provide it to the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG). The reporting will include of number of horses, number of trainers, amount paid, by owner. The complete list of eligible horses and subsequent application details will also be provided as part of the final report.

Public Posting

Ontario Racing will make available the list of program recipients on ontarioracing.com.

Program Approval Date: May 15, 2026