



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Desjardins and EBO Financial Education Centre are proud to launch the Desjardins Mutual Assistance Fund – a unique micro-loan program in Eastern Ontario!

Ottawa, January 19th, 2021 – Desjardins and EBO Financial Education Centre officially announce the launch of **Desjardins Mutual Assistance Fund**, a new community service offered to the population of Eastern Ontario, providing access to its micro-loan program.

The Desjardins Mutual Assistance Fund has made its mark in Quebec for over twenty years and now for over twelve years in the Ottawa region in Ontario through EBO Financial Education Centre. It was long coming in Eastern Ontario, and it is the result of Desjardins' continuous desire to extend the reach of this program.

Thanks to this community investment by Desjardins, the program will be extended to Eastern Ontario, as part of the budget counselling service of EBO Financial Education Centre, a reputable non-profit organization established in the national capital region for over 40 years.

Born from a long-standing partnership between Desjardins and EBO, this program conveys the will of both organizations to meet the needs of Eastern Ontario's communities by helping people and families facing financial hardship, all the while aiming for long term prevention, through free budget counselling sessions offered in both official languages.

A dedicated budget counsellor, Nathalie Lessard (www.centre-ebo.com), is now trained and available. She can't wait for the opportunity to help, impartially and without judgment, those who are in a vulnerable and precarious financial situation. It will certainly be welcomed at a time where a pandemic has created economic havoc for a large number of people and families around us.

For the EBO Centre, which will coordinate the program, being able to extend the Desjardins Mutual Assistance Fund in Eastern Ontario is significant. Because it knows first-hand that a little help at the right time, though an interest-free micro-loan that can be reimbursed based on the person's ability to repay, can make a big difference at a critical time, while preventing people from turning to loan options that impose abusive repayment terms to an already vulnerable population.

And for Desjardins, this micro-loan program represents a true investment in the community and a strong expression of its values in terms of social solidarity, financial education and commitment to community development.

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