



Community Funding Framework Policy Statements

Social Development and Funding

Community Safety, Well-Being, Policies and Analytics

Community and Social Services City of Ottawa

February 2026

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General Policy Statement

Vision

Ottawa has a strong and sustainable not-for-profit social services sector working collaboratively to ensure an equitable and socially inclusive city for all residents.

Mission

Community Funding improves community well-being by investing financial and capacity building resources in the non-profit social services sector to address the root causes of poverty and increase equitable access to services for residents facing the greatest needs and barriers in our community.

Mandate

The mandate of Community Funding is to invest in a sustainable social infrastructure of community non-profit social services that:

- provides equitable access to programs and services
- responds to community needs
- demonstrates measurable outcomes and financial accountability
- collaborates to build community capacity and development
- aligns with City of Ottawa strategic priorities

Priority Groups

2SLGBTQQIA+ community members; Francophones; immigrants and newcomers; Indigenous Peoples; older adults; people living in poverty; people with disabilities; racialized people; rural residents; women; and youth.

The City of Ottawa is committed to applying an anti-colonialist, equity, and inclusion lens to all funding decisions. This means actively identifying and addressing systemic barriers, prioritizing fairness and transparency, and ensuring that funding processes and outcomes promote meaningful participation and equitable access for all communities, particularly those historically underserved.

Funding Priorities

- **Poverty Reduction** involves both addressing the root causes and alleviating the effects of poverty in the community.
- **Community Development** is an inclusive process whereby community members become engaged, educated and able to generate and implement collective solutions to shared concerns.
- **Social infrastructure** refers to the network of institutions, services, and community-based systems that support residents and communities in meeting their social needs, strengthening community resilience and well-being.

General Principles

The Community Funding program is a Contribution Program. Recipients of funding under the Community Funding program receive a Contribution as opposed to a Grant.

- A Contribution is a conditional transfer payment to an organization which is subject to being accounted for or audited. Performance objectives and reporting requirements will be specified in a Contribution agreement.
- If the term of the Contribution agreement is more than twelve (12) months, the City may, at the City's discretion, increase or decrease the amount of the Contribution at any time during the term of the agreement.

The total amount of funding available is subject to the Council-approved municipal budget and may vary annually.

The Director, Community Safety, Well-Being, Policies and Analytics, and the Program Manager, Social Development and Funding, have the delegated authority, individually, to manage and administer the Community and Social Services Department Community Funding budget.

The Policy also provides that the Director of Community Safety, Well-Being, Policy and Analytics and the Program Manager, Social Development and Funding, individually, are permitted to reallocate funds between funding streams to respond to evolving community needs or priorities, and to allocate additional funds to successful funding recipients with a valid contribution agreement, without holding an open call for proposals.

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

General Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for funding, applicants must meet the following conditions:

- Be a not-for-profit corporation*
 - Not-for-profit corporation is an active non-share corporation incorporated under one of the following legislative acts:
 - Part III entitled “Corporations Without Share Capital” of the province of Ontario’s Corporations Act;
 - The province of Ontario’s Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, S.O. 2010, c. 15 (proclaimed in force on October 19, 2021);
 - Part II of the Canada Corporations Act with a certificate of continuance issued under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act; or
 - the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act.
- Have been a not-for-profit corporation for at least 2 years OR be sponsored by a not-for-profit corporation that has been in operation for more than 5 years*
- Have an organizational mandate that aligns to the Community Funding Framework priorities
- Be located in and serve residents of Ottawa
- Demonstrate financial viability and organization sustainability
- Operate in a non-discriminatory manner as set out by the Ontario Human Rights Code
- Be governed by a democratically elected Board of Directors
 - A democratically elected board of at least three (3) members manages the corporation. Each member must be at least 18 years old and a member of the corporation. The board elects a president from among its members. Most Directors must live in the City of Ottawa and cannot be related. The board must:
 - Have a constitution outlining responsibilities for activities, events, programs, projects, and services.
 - Hold regular meetings (at least four per year or two per operating season).
 - Host an annual general meeting open to the public, including elections.

- Provide annual financial statements accessible to the public and the City.
- Be in Good Standing with the City of Ottawa
 - Being in Good Standing means that the applicant has fulfilled all the terms and conditions of all previous and current agreements with the City and is in good financial standing with the City (i.e. no arrears).

***Stream-Specific Eligibility Requirements**

Certain funding streams have additional conditions or exceptions to the General Eligibility Requirements:

- **Civic Events Funding:** Applicants can be a non-for-profit organization - no need to be a registered not-for-profit corporation incorporated under a legislative act of the province of Ontario or a federal statute.
- **Sustainability Fund:** Applicants must have been a not-for-profit corporation for at least 5 years. Sponsorship is not permitted under this stream.
- **Older Adult Plan Funding:** City departments are also eligible to apply for implementing of a project or program that contribute to the City Older Adult Plan's goals and priorities.

Ineligibility

Applicants cannot be:

- Faith-based organizations whose proposed services/activities include the direct promotion and/or required adherence to a faith or religious practice;
- For-profit organizations or ventures;
- Organizations which act primarily as a funding source for other groups;
- Hospitals, clinic-based services or medical treatment programs;
- Organizations of political affiliation or which have a mandate to conduct political activities;
- Other levels of government or organizations proposing programs within the legislated mandate of other governments;
- Provincial/national organizations, unless a local chapter/branch exists to explicitly serve the residents of the city of Ottawa;
- School boards, primary and secondary schools or post-secondary institutions;
- Sports clubs;
- Business Improvement Associations which are local boards of the City of Ottawa, established under a City by-law and receiving funding from the City budget.

Allowable and Ineligible Expenses

Allowable Expenses

Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Staff wages and benefits
- Lease and occupancy costs
- Utilities
- Insurance
- Administration
- Transportation
- Operating supplies
- Fundraising expenses
- Training and workshops
- Volunteer expenses
- Professional fees (required for program delivery)
- Minor renovations or capital expenses
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Unexpected legal fees
- Unexpected, required training
- Other expenses to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Financing of deficits, debts, or loans
- Building reserves for the organization
- Shortfalls due to funding cuts or adjustments
- For-profit ventures
- Conferences, sponsorships, special events and beautification initiatives
- Costs for major capital equipment/renovations, construction or development of new facilities, land maintenance
- Staff bonuses
- Payments to other levels of government (GST/Payroll Tax)
- Any expense of a party related to the funding recipient - with "related party" as defined under the accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO)
- Any expense that may involve a conflict of interest - a conflict of interest includes but is not limited to any circumstances where the funding recipient or any person who has the capacity to influence the funding recipient's decisions, has outside commitments, relationships or financial interests that could, or could be seen to, interfere with the funding recipient's objective, unbiased and impartial judgment in relation to the funded program or project and/or the use of the funding contribution from the City.
- Other to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis

Criteria for Assessing Eligible Proposals

The assessment of eligible proposals will be based on total scores from a proposal evaluation and quantitative impact assessment.

Proposal evaluation

Criteria include, but are not limited to:

- **Needs and Impact** – Alignment with the Community Funding Framework priorities, as well as the needs of the target populations for the funding and how their needs will be met.
- **Efficiency and Collaboration** – The importance of the funding to the continued capacity of the organization, contribution to the sector, and the organization's ability to collaborate and be an effective partner in achieving funding priorities and outcomes.
- **Transparency and Accountability** – The organization's ability to articulate and deliver their plan to meet their service mandate as well as their outcomes and reporting strategy.

Impact Assessment

Evaluation/scoring includes, but is not limited to:

- **Greatest Impact** – The potential impact of the initiative, including where and how widely the services are accessible to the target populations.
- **Geographic Equity** – How resources are targeted and aligned to areas of the city facing greatest needs or greatest inequities.
- **Equity for Priority Populations** – The extent to which the initiative addresses barriers and promotes inclusion for equity-denied groups, including but not limited to individuals who face systemic challenges related to income, race, language, disability, gender identity, or other intersecting factors.

Reporting and Monitoring Requirements

Prior to final allocations, applicants may be required to submit financial statements as follows:

- Audited financial statements.
 - If the Contribution is \$50,000 or less than \$50,000, unaudited financial statements may be provided, at the complete discretion of the City, if they have been approved and signed by two officers, each of whom (i) has been appointed under a by-law of the Contribution recipient to sign agreements and contracts that bind the Contribution recipient; and, (ii) has legal capacity to execute agreements and contracts that bind the Contribution recipient.
 - Unaudited financial statements are financial statements prepared by the organization without an independent auditor's opinion. These statements must be approved by the Board of Directors and signed by two officers legally authorized to bind the organization. Unaudited statements may be prepared internally or with the support of an external bookkeeper or accountant.
- Annual report for last completed fiscal year.
- Annual General Meeting (AGM) minutes for the last two completed fiscal years:
 - Draft AGM minutes from last completed fiscal year; and
 - Most recent approved AGM minutes signed by two individuals with signing authority for the organization.
- Current Board of Directors list.
- Current organizational chart.
- A valid certificate of insurance identifying the City of Ottawa as an additional insured under the insured's policy/policies of insurance.

Recipients will be required to submit outcome and financial reports in accordance with the terms and conditions set out in the Contribution Agreement.

Additional information and/or compliance with special conditions may also be requested at the City's sole discretion.

Funding Streams

The Community Funding Framework has seven (7) funding streams:

Funding Stream and Term	Purpose
Sustainability Funding (5-year)	To maintain a strong social infrastructure and sustainable non-profit social sector that ensures equitable provision of services for residents facing the greatest barriers and challenges.
Project Funding (1-year or 3-year)	To support planned, time-limited initiatives, pilot projects, and capacity-building activities to address service gaps or strengthen organizational effectiveness.
Community Response Funding (One-Time)	To provide rapid, flexible support for situations where community is experiencing an urgent, time-sensitive challenge, and contribute to community well-being and resiliency.
Emergency Funding (One-Time)	To help address one-time unexpected, critical expenses that threaten an organization's ability to deliver essential services and cannot be covered by an organization's existing financial resources.
Civic Events Funding (Per event)	To strengthen neighbourhood and community belonging, connection, and inclusion by supporting free, accessible, volunteer-led events.
Community Safety Well-Being Funding (1-year to 3-year)	To build the capacity and fund the non-profit social services sector to respond to the identified priorities and goals as described in the City of Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.
Older Adult Plan Funding (1-year to 3-year)	To build the capacity and fund the non-profit social services sector and City departments to respond to the identified priorities and goals as described in the City of Ottawa's Older Adult Plan.

Sustainability Funding

Purpose

The purpose of Sustainability Funding is to maintain a strong social infrastructure and sustainable non-profit social sector that ensures equitable provision of services for residents facing the greatest barriers and challenges.

Funding Term

5 years (renewable)

Description

The Sustainability Fund provides stable, predictable, multi-year operational funding that strengthens the core services and infrastructure of non-profit social service sector. Both core operational and program expenses are eligible for funding.

It includes Corporate Initiatives – see appendix A.

Stream-Specific Eligibility

Applicants must have been in existence for at least 5 years. Sponsorship is not permitted under this stream.

Application Process

Details of the application process, including application deadlines, will be available at Ottawa.ca/communityfunding.

How Allocation Decisions are Made

Applications will be assessed through an allocation committee process.

An applicant's success in obtaining funding depends upon the allocation committee's final evaluation and the funding available within the envelope.

All decisions of the allocation committee are final.

Project Funding

Purpose

The purpose of Project Funding is to support planned, time-limited initiatives, pilot projects, and capacity-building activities to address service gaps or strengthen organizational effectiveness.

Funding Term

One year or three years. The City of Ottawa will determine the funding term based on the funding available and the current needs in the call for proposals.

Description

One-Year Project Funding: One-Year project funding is allocated to time-limited or defined pilot projects that build sector service capacity or address a service gap. One-Year project funding allows rapid adaptation and innovation. This fund is available to all organizations that meet eligibility criteria.

- One-year project funding can be extended for up to two additional years, depending on availability of funds, persistent community need, and cumulative assessment.

Three-Year Project Funding: Three-Year project funding is allocated to organizations not receiving Sustainability Funding. Funding supports organizations to build their agency capacity, establish a track record and demonstrate their ability to respond to service gaps.

- Three-year project funding recipients can be considered for the Sustainability Fund, depending on availability of funds, persistent community need, and cumulative assessment.

Application Process

Details of the application process, including application deadlines, will be available at Ottawa.ca/communityfunding.

How Allocation Decisions are Made

Applications will be assessed through an allocation committee process.

An applicant's success in obtaining funding depends upon the allocation committee's final evaluation and the funding available within the envelope.

All decisions of the allocation committee are final.

Community Response Funding

Purpose

The purpose of Community Response Funding is to provide rapid, flexible support for situations where a community is experiencing an urgent, time-sensitive challenge, and contribute to community well-being and resiliency.

Funding Term

One-Time

Description

Community Response Funding helps organizations deliver rapid, one-time support for urgent, time-sensitive community challenges that must be addressed quickly. It is intended to deliver short-term activities that stabilize and strengthen community well-being, resilience, and safety during unexpected situations, while promoting equity, inclusion, and local needs.

Application Process

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the calendar year. This time-limited funding is available until the budget envelope is exhausted. Funding maximums will be confirmed annually.

Details of the application process will be available at [Ottawa.ca/communityfunding](https://ottawa.ca/communityfunding).

The City reserves the right, subject to budget availability, to solicit applications for initiatives that help to achieve Council priorities and City program objectives.

How Allocation Decisions are Made

Applications will be reviewed when received and a decision will be made within 30 business days of the City communication acknowledging receipt of the application.

Funding decisions will be made at the recommendation of the Community Development and Funding team and approved by the Program Manager, Social Development and Funding.

All decisions of the Community Development and Funding team and the Program Manager of Social Development and Funding are final.

Emergency Funding

Purpose

The purpose of Emergency Funding is to help address one-time unexpected, critical expenses that threaten an organization's ability to deliver essential services and cannot be covered by an organization's existing financial resources.

Only agencies in receipt of funding from the Sustainability Fund, Community Safety and Well-Being Fund, Project Funding, and Older Adult Plan Funding are eligible to apply for Emergency Funding.

Funding Term

One-time (per organization per funding year)

Description

This funding supports urgent operational needs such as emergency repairs, equipment failure, required training, or legal compliance issues so organizations can maintain safe, stable, and uninterrupted service delivery. It is not intended for expansion, ongoing programming, regular operating costs, or community-level issues. The emergency expense must relate to services and activities that align with the Community Funding Framework priorities.

Application Process

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the calendar year. This time-limited funding is available until the budget envelope is exhausted. Funding maximums will be confirmed annually.

Details of the application process will be available at [Ottawa.ca/communityfunding](https://ottawa.ca/communityfunding).

How Allocation Decisions are Made

Applications will be reviewed when received and a decision will be made within 30 business days of the City communication acknowledging receipt of the application.

Allocation of the Emergency Fund is completed by conducting a financial review of the organization which includes reviewing the overall organization reporting, including financial viability status and reserve levels.

Funding decisions will be made at the recommendation of the Community Development and Funding team and approved by the Program Manager of Social Development and Funding.

All decisions of the Community Development and Funding team and the Program Manager of Social Development and Funding are final.

Additional Reporting Requirements

Recipients may be required to submit quotes prior to receiving funding and provide confirmation of work/purchase/installation or other information, at the sole discretion of the City.

Civic Events Funding

Purpose

The purpose of Civic Events Funding is to strengthen neighbourhood and community belonging, connection, and inclusion by supporting free, accessible, volunteer-led events.

Funding Term

One-Time (per organization per funding year)

Stream-Specific Eligibility

Applicants may be any non-profit organization; they do not need to be a registered corporation. A non-profit organization or group is an association, club, or society that operates solely for social welfare, civic improvement, recreation, or other non-commercial purposes—not for profit.

Description

These events help residents build relationships and foster safe, welcoming, and cohesive communities. Events must:

- Include multiple activities, family entertainment and attractions designed to appeal to residents in a rural area, priority neighbourhood or priority group
- Promote community well-being by welcoming all community members
- Promote equity and inclusion
- Align with the priorities of the Community Funding Framework

Eligible events include, but are not limited to, events that:

- Are held over one or two consecutive days
- Have free admission to enter the event
- Are primarily planned and executed by volunteers
- Are open, targeted and promoted to the public in the geographic neighbourhood where the event is being held or to a priority group

Ineligible events include, but are not limited to:

- For profit activities/events
- Major arts and cultural festivals and major agricultural fairs
- Events with a citywide mandate, whose scope and audience outreach extends to the entire city
- Self-promotional, marketing activities or fundraising initiatives
- Capital projects
- Commercial ventures, conventions and tradeshow
- Events where the public can only participate as a spectator, including but not limited to stand-alone parades, sporting events, contests, tournaments, concerts

Application Process

Details of the application process, including application deadlines, will be available at Ottawa.ca/communityfunding.

How Allocation Decisions are Made

All applications will be assessed through an allocation committee process.

An applicant's success in obtaining funding depends upon the allocation committee's final evaluation and the funding available within the envelope.

All decisions of the allocation committee are final.

Community Safety and Well-Being Funding

Purpose

The purpose of Community Safety and Well-Being Funding is to build the capacity and fund the non-profit social services sector to respond to the identified priorities and goals as described in the City of Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

Funding Term

One year to three years. The City of Ottawa will determine the funding term based on the funding available and the current needs in the call for proposals.

Description

One Year and Two-Year Project Funding: One- and two-year funding is allocated to initiatives or programs that address an emerging or ongoing need and respond to the identified priorities and goals as described in the City of Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

- One- and two-year project funding is allocated to time-limited or defined pilot projects that build sector service capacity or address an emerging or ongoing need.

Three-Year Project Funding: Three-year funding is allocated to initiatives or programs that build the capacity of non-profit social services sector to respond to the identified priorities and goals as described in the City of Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

- This can include but is not limited to scaling up or improving a program or project currently being delivered successfully. This funding is not for pilot or new projects.

Application Process

Details of the application process, including application deadlines, will be available on [Ottawa.ca/communityfunding](https://ottawa.ca/communityfunding).

How Allocation Decisions are Made

Applications will be assessed through an allocation committee process.

An applicant's success in obtaining funding depends upon the allocation committee's final evaluation and the funding available within the envelope.

All decisions of the allocation committee are final.

Older Adult Plan Funding

Purpose

The purpose of Older Adult Plan Funding is to build the capacity and fund the non-profit social services sector and City departments to respond to the identified priorities and goals as described in the City of Ottawa's Older Adult Plan.

Funding Term

One year to three years. City of Ottawa staff will determine the funding term based on the funding available and the current need in the call for proposals.

Description

One-Year and Two-Year Project Funding: One- and two-year funding is allocated to initiatives or programs that address an emerging or ongoing need and respond to the identified priorities and goals as described in the City of Ottawa's Older Adult Plan.

- One- and two-year project funding is allocated to time-limited or defined pilot projects that build sector service capacity or address an emerging or ongoing need.

Three-Year Project Funding: Three-year funding is allocated to initiatives or programs that build the capacity of non-profit social services sector and City departments to respond to the identified priorities and goals as described in the City of Ottawa's Older Adult Plan.

- This can include but is not limited to scaling up or improving a program or project currently being delivered successfully. This funding is not for pilots or new projects.

Application Process

Details of the application process, including application deadlines, will be available on Ottawa.ca/communityfunding.

Stream-Specific Eligibility

City departments are eligible to apply for the implementation of an initiative or program that contribute to the OAP goals and priorities.

How Allocation Decisions are Made

All applications will be assessed through an allocation committee process including members of the City's Older Adult Plan Roundtable.

An applicant's success in obtaining funding depends upon the allocation committee's final evaluation and the funding available within the envelope.

All decisions of the allocation committee are final.

Appendix A - Corporate Initiatives Funding

Description

Corporate Initiatives funding and related programs are approved by City Council to be managed by the Community Funding and Development Branch as Term of Council priorities. Funds are administered as part of the Sustainability Fund. Funding may be reallocated, as necessary over time, to respond to priority community needs.

Current Funding Programs / Initiatives

- Community Development Framework
- Community Garden Allocation Fund
- Ottawa Youth Engagement Committee
- Snow Go Program

1. Community Development Framework

The Community Development Framework (CDF) is a multi-partner community-based collaborative that works at a neighbourhood and a systems level to support community development and resident led action in priority neighbourhoods.

The Southeast Ottawa Community Health and Resource Centre, acting as the lead community partner for the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres, receives annual funding to support the core operating costs related to a community development secretariat function; allocation of funds to priority neighbourhoods; resident leadership development; impact evaluation and capacity building. This delivery model was approved by Council in 2012 (ACS2012-COS-CSS-0003).

2. Community Garden Allocation Fund

The City of Ottawa has had a Community Garden Action Plan since 2004 (ACS2004-CPS-CSF-0016). In April 2009, City Council adopted a formal policy statement entrenching community gardening as a valuable community activity that can contribute to community development, civic participation, neighborhood revitalization, environmental awareness and a healthier lifestyle (ACS2009-COS-RCS-0005).

Since 2004, Council has approved additional funding for the development of new community gardens and the enhancement or expansion of existing community gardens (2009 – Approved as part of the 2009 budget process; and 2015 – ACS2015-COS-CSS-0016).

The City currently funds Just Food Ottawa to administer the Community Garden Network (CGN) and the Community Garden Allocation Fund.

3. Coordination of the Ottawa Youth Engagement Committee

In 2013, City Council approved funding to Youth Ottawa to establish and coordinate a youth committee to ensure that youth played a key role in championing, monitoring and assisting with the implementation of the actions contained in the Youth Summit Action Plan (ACS2013-COS-CSS-0006). In 2014 the Ottawa Youth Engagement Committee was launched (ACS2013-COS-CSS-0005).

4. Snow Go Program

In 2014, Council approved the transfer of funding for the Snow Go and Snow Go Assist programs from Public Works Department to the Renewable Community Funding Program (ACS2014-COS-PWS-0016).

There are two components to the Snow Go Programs as follows:

Snow-Go program is a snow removal coordination program that links seniors and persons with disabilities with individuals and contractors willing to clear snow from private driveways and walkways. Residents using the program make payments directly to the individual or contractor who removes snow. The program provides no direct financial subsidy to residents.

Snow Go Assist program provides eligible low-income seniors and persons with disabilities with financial assistance to hire an individual or contractor to clear snow from private driveways and walkways.