



**The Regional Municipality of Durham**  
**Community Social Investment Program Application Guidelines**  
**2024 Thriving Communities Fund: Call for Applications**

Submission Closing Date: May 13, 2024,  
12 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time)

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## About The Region of Durham

Durham Region is a great place to live, work, and build a life. The broader region provides a wide range of programs and services to a growing, and increasingly diverse community of residents, businesses, and visitors. The 2021 Census population reported by Statistics Canada for Durham Region is 696,992, an increase of 7.92% since 2016<sup>1</sup>. There are an estimated 45,800 residents (6.6%) living with low income. By 2041, the population is forecasted to increase to one million residents<sup>2</sup>. Locally, we are seeing an increase in demand for human services as the needs of Durham residents become more complex.<sup>3</sup>

Durham's non-profit sector plays a vital role in providing critical services to residents, building and strengthening communities, and contributing to economic stability. The Region is committed to investing in Durham's non-profit sector through a community investment program to help grow strong, resilient communities. This program is called the Community Social Investment Program (CSIP) and has been established by the Social Services Department. The Community Social Investment Program is the Region's commitment to help sustain the local non-profit sector to meet growing needs across Durham communities.

## Community Social Investment Program

The purpose of the Community Social Investment Program (CSIP) is to support the allocation of social services investments to non-profits that enhance or improve human services across Durham communities. The CSIP will support local organizations with mandates to reduce poverty, address social inequities, promote wellness, and support communities to thrive, by providing a standardized process for issuing public funds by the Region.

### Program principles

The following principles have guided the structure, engagement, and decision-making processes for the Community Social Investment Program.

**Dignity and Belonging:** Healthy and resilient communities provide opportunities for civic engagement and participation for all. Ensuring that individuals and/or families have a voice, and feel they have a place in their community, is essential.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** Ensuring the voices of our diverse region are reflected by investing in organizations that prioritize marginalized and equity-deserving members of the community through programs and services.

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<sup>1</sup> [Profile table, Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population - Durham, Regional municipality \(RM\) \[Census division\], Ontario \(statcan.gc.ca\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Demographics and Statistics - Invest Durham](#)

<sup>3</sup> Durham Community Foundation. (2023). Together we Thrive: Durham's Vital Signs Report 2023. Available from: [VitalSigns-Report-11-24-23.pdf \(durhamcommunityfoundation.ca\)](#)

**Impact:** Emphasis on investments that aim to prevent poverty and improve quality of life for residents through non-profit organization services and programs that help divert residents from more costly programs.

**Collaboration** Recognizing that complex problems benefit from collaborative solutions, opportunities for partnerships that address community need, align resources and expertise, and coordinate service amongst stakeholders.

**Accountability:** Transparent reporting to create trust-based partnerships and measures of accountability through an annual report to Council that will share stories of impact, strategic alignment and funding decisions.

The CSIP provides the foundation for a transparent application process, including clear eligibility, evaluation, and reporting criteria. The program will include diverse funds to allow for innovative and flexible investments by varying the length of funding terms, eligibility criteria, and priorities of each fund. Funds will continue to be developed pending annual regional budget approvals and through program evaluation and feedback.

The Social Services department oversees the CSIP as part of its human services delivery to Durham communities. The CSIP also aligns with the Department's current priority to develop a Poverty Prevention Strategy. Investments to Durham's non-profit sector support healthy, resilient communities for all, by helping to prevent and address poverty.

## **Thriving Communities Fund**

For 2024, the Region will issue an open call for applications for the Thriving Communities Fund ("the Fund"). The fund will support non-profit organizations with a mandate, and/or demonstrated efforts, to prevent or reduce poverty, by investing in operational and/or capacity building activities that strengthen their ability to deliver key programs and services to residents and contribute to a thriving region.

Funding will be provided with a preference to leverage community partnerships for future sustainability and will be assessed on an ongoing basis for effectiveness and relevance using data gathered through reporting and key performance indicators.

The 2024 funding limit is up to a maximum of \$50,000 per approved application, with a limited number of organizations to be funded.

## **Investment Term**

The funding term is one year for the period of January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024.

## **Key Dates – 2024 Call for Applications: Thriving Communities Fund**

Call for applications launches	April 15, 2024
Closing date for applications	May 13, 2024, 12 p.m. EST
Notification to agencies	Week of June 17th, 2024
Final reporting deadline	December 1, 2024

### **Application: Two-Step Process**

**Please ensure you leave time during the open call for applications to complete both steps.**

#### **Step One: Organizational Assessment Tool**

This tool provides an accessible and inclusive process for organizations indicating an intent to apply for funding. The tool ensures grassroots organizations have an opportunity to express interest in funding and provides information to the Region to help identify gaps in funding and assess areas to help build capacity. The Organizational Assessment is completed through the Region's funding portal. This assessment will be completed by first time applicant organizations and then validated for new or updated information in subsequent calls for applications.

Applicants who complete the organizational assessment may be flagged for review and receive a notification via email before they can proceed to the full funding application. This can take up to two to three business days. Organizations will have an opportunity to connect with staff to review the assessment and identify opportunities to improve their funding applications before submission. If it is determined that an organization will not be eligible for funding, there may be supports available through the CSIP to help enhance an organization's eligibility for future funding opportunities.

#### **Step Two: Funding Application**

Funding applications will be accepted electronically, through the Durham Region funding portal. Applications will open to applicants after the Organizational Assessment tool has been completed and validated.

The application must be signed by an individual that is able to bind the organization to a funding agreement and verify that all information is accurately reported. Applications will be evaluated based on community needs and identified priorities and is subject to funding availability. Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

Applicants are encouraged to utilize the following guiding documents and tools when completing their applications:

- [Durham Region Strategic Plan](#)
- [Durham Region Open Data Portal](#)
- [Region of Durham Health Neighborhoods](#)
- [Durham Region Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Info Hub](#)
- [Durham Immigration and Inclusion Community Plan](#)
- [Age-Friendly Strategy and Action Plan](#)
- [Statistics Canada Census Data](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action for First Nations, Inuit & Métis Peoples](#)
- [Statistics Canada: LIM\(AT\) measures](#)

## **Application Review Process**

The funding application review process begins immediately after the submission deadline. Staff will review the application for completeness and general eligibility. Applications that are incomplete or do not meet eligibility requirements will not be assessed beyond this review point.

Applications that meet the general eligibility requirements will be assessed by a Funding Review Committee that consists of staff from the Region of Durham, including the Program Manager and other regional staff, as well as community stakeholders as required.

Eligible applications will be reviewed against the program principles and funding stream criteria, financial sustainability, demonstrated need, anticipated outcomes, and collaboration. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their funding application.

All projects and funding allocations will be subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Social Services.

## **Outcomes Reporting**

Outcome reporting is a key component of the CSIP. Notifications of these reporting milestones will be sent via the funding portal. Successful applicants must be prepared to identify measures they will use to track and report on the anticipated outcomes identified in their funding application. If reporting requirements are not met by deadlines as indicated in funding agreement, this may result in the termination of future fund payments.

A key component of the CSIP is sharing stories of impact. Organizations are also encouraged to use qualitative measures to share outcomes and report on impact (e.g., quotes from staff or program participants, short videos, pictures, impact reports, etc.)

Outcomes will be reported through midterm check-ins with regional staff and an outcomes report. These outcomes and stories of impact may be used in communications material and future reports to Council to promote program success and guide program development.

## Eligible Organizations

Organizations that meet the following criteria can be considered for funding:

- Organizations, or a branch of the organization, must be located in Durham Region.
- The funding request must serve residents of Durham Region.
- Organization must operate in accordance with all applicable laws and legislation.
- Organization can provide minimum insurance coverage requirements, including but not limited to commercial general liability insurance. Additional insurance requirements may be required at the sole discretion of the Region.
- Must be incorporated as a non-profit organization (with or without charitable status) OR unincorporated community organizations may apply under Financial Sponsorship of a registered charitable organization that meets all eligibility criteria.

\*Please note, non-incorporated non-profit groups must designate a Financial Sponsor. Financial Sponsor will sign the funding agreement and is responsible under the agreement for the funds received. Please review the [Financial Sponsors section](#) in this guidelines document and contact staff by emailing [funding@durham.ca](mailto:funding@durham.ca) ahead of submissions to discuss.

**Note: Individual funding streams may require additional or exempt criteria. Please ensure you are reviewing all funding resources and documents prior to submitting your application.**

## Eligible Activities Examples

Funding requests for operational and/or capacity building activities that will strengthen an organization's ability to reduce or prevent poverty may include, but are not limited to:

- Professional fees to assist in the development of organizational plans, strategies or policies.
- Development or revision of financial management or Human Resources policies
- Costs associated with staff training and development that align with organizational mandates and plans.
- Consultant fees required to develop organizational plans, strategies, or policies.
- Program evaluations or assessments.
- Staff salaries.
- Rent, supplies, technology.
- Marketing and/or communication activities.

## **Ineligibility Criteria**

Applications that fall under the following criteria will not be considered for funding.

### **Ineligible Organizations**

The Community Social Investment Program will not fund the following types of organizations:

- Hospitals and post-secondary education institutions. See Durham Region Community Investment Grant Policy.
- Organizations where the service component is conditional upon participation in religious or political activities.
- For-profit organizations (eligible non-profits may apply in partnership with for-profit organizations if the non-profit is the demonstrated program lead).

### **Ineligible Activities and Costs**

Applications, unless otherwise exempt, will not be considered for the following:

- Religious or political activities or proselytizing
- Capital Construction.
- For profit work.
- Event sponsorships.
- Debt retirement, depreciation, or deficit funding.
- Projects more appropriate for consideration under other Durham Region policies and projects
- Settlement and English language projects funded by the federal and provincial governments.
- Applications made exclusively by government or government-based organizations.
- Projects at the national or provincial level, unless Durham Region-based branch exists, and a direct local benefit can be demonstrated.

## **Financial Sponsor**

Non-profit groups that are not incorporated must designate a Financial Sponsor. The Financial Sponsor will sign the funding agreement and is responsible under the agreement for, but not limited to, reporting on the funds received. It is recommended that non-profit groups working with a Financial Sponsor create an agreement. This agreement should include:

- Roles and responsibilities of partnering group.
- Process for allocating and documenting funds received and distributed.
- Decision-making process between partner organizations.
- Conflict resolution approaches if required.

Some Financial Sponsors require a fee to act in this capacity, these fees are eligible expenses under CSIP funding and can be included in your budget proposal. We encourage applicants requiring a financial sponsor to connect with the funding team ahead of submission ([funding@durham.ca](mailto:funding@durham.ca)).

## **Staff Supports**

If you have any questions about the funding process or the application, staff are available to help. If you need any assistance to complete your application, or require an alternative format to submit your application, please email [funding@durham.ca](mailto:funding@durham.ca) to connect with a staff person.

## **Region of Durham Right to Revise**

The Region of Durham reserves the right to:

- a. Revise the call for application schedule;
- b. Revise the call for application and/or to issue amendments to the call for application;
- c. Not award the full amount of funding requested and;
- d. Reject, cancel or to reissue the call for application in whole or in part if it is deemed in the Region of Durham best interests, with no penalty, prior to the execution of an agreement.

## **No Region of Durham Obligation**

This call for application does not commit the Region of Durham, in any way, to select a preferred application, or to proceed to negotiations for an agreement, or to award any agreement. The Region of Durham reserves the right to reject all applications and/or terminate this call for application process at any time.

## **Applicant's Expenses**

Applicants are solely responsible for their own expenses in preparing, and submitting, applications, and for any costs incurred by the applicant in meetings, negotiations or discussions with the Region of Durham or its representatives relating to, or arising from, this call for applications.

The Region of Durham and its representatives, agents, and advisors will not be liable to any applicant for any claims, whether for costs, expenses, losses, or damages, or for any other matter whatsoever, incurred by the applicant in preparing and submitting a application, or participating in negotiations for an agreement, or other activity related to or arising out of this call for application.

## **No Contract**

By submitting an application and participating in the process as outlined in the call for applications, applicants expressly agree that no contract for any kind for services is formed under, or arises from, this call for application, prior to the signing of a formal funding agreement.

## **Conflict of Interest**

An applicant shall disclose in the application any potential, actual or perceived conflicts of interest and existing business relationships it may have with the Region of Durham, its elected or appointed officials, representatives, employees, funded agencies, or funders. An applicant must disclose any Relationship of Close Proximity defined as a relationship between any employee, director, officer or volunteer of the applicant(s) and Region of Durham where they are or have served as a director, a family member, a past employee, or a known future employee. The Region of Durham may rely on such disclosure.

## **Confidentiality**

All submissions become the property of the Region of Durham and will not be returned to the applicant. All submissions will be held in confidence by the Region of Durham unless otherwise required by law. Applicants should be aware the Region of Durham is subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)* of Ontario. Applicants acknowledge that the terms of the call for applications or of any funding agreement entered into between an applicant and the Region of Durham pursuant to this call for applications, including the name of the applicant, the consideration, term, and details of the agreement, may be subject to disclosure under *MFIPPA*. To avoid disqualification, all applicants are expected to ensure the confidentiality of this call for applications.

Applicants agree that outcome reports and stories of impact may be used in communications material and future reports to Council to promote program success and guide program development.

## **Property of the Owner**

All materials submitted in response to this call for applications will become the property of the Region of Durham upon delivery to the program manager and will not be returned to the applicant. The applicant's written response to the call for applications, or portions thereof, may also become a part of the agreement.

## **Licensing**

Upon award, the applicant will be responsible for a strict adherence to all Federal, Provincial, and Municipal codes and by-laws and must obtain all permits and licenses as applicable.

## **Safety Codes and Regulations**

Upon award, the applicant must adhere to all safety rules, regulations, and labour codes in effect in all jurisdictions where the work is to be performed.

## **Indemnity and Insurance**

The applicant agrees to indemnify and save harmless the Region of Durham for any claim demand arising out of the performance by the applicant of the contract.

The applicant agrees to obtain and maintain adequate insurance coverage relating to the operations and liability assumed under the contract in form and substance satisfactory to Region of Durham and, if so requested, deliver copies of such insurance policies or certificates evidencing the same to Region of Durham.

The applicant agrees to maintain Workers' Compensation coverage in accordance with the requirements of the [Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) if required and provide evidence of compliance with the *Act* as may be requested at any time Region of Durham.