

CIRCULAR ECONOMY INITIATIVES FUND (CEIF) APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2025

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ABOUT THE FUND

York Region recognizes that the successful implementation of its Integrated Waste Management Master Plan - the SM4RT Living Plan - will require collaboration and engagement with residents and local community organizations across the Region. A Circular Economy Initiatives Fund has been established to support registered charities and non-profit organizations implement their community-driven waste reduction and reuse projects. Such projects will help York Region achieve its SM4RT Living Plan’s objectives and deliverables of reducing waste, conserving valuable resources and building sustainable communities. This is a critical step to move the Region away from the traditional model of a linear economy (take, make, dispose) to a more sustainable circular economy that values waste, with a focus on reduction and diversion from landfill.

FUND OBJECTIVES

Consideration will be given to projects that meet one or more of the following objectives:

- Reduce Waste: Deliver projects that result in a reduction (tonnes) of residential waste generated or an increase in reuse of residential waste, diverting it from landfill
- Enhance Education and Awareness: Develop and deliver education and awareness projects for residential communities that lead to behaviour change and action and/or increase knowledge and understanding of the value of waste

AVAILABLE FUNDING

Funds of up to \$25,000 (CAD) per project will be available to support community-based waste reduction and re-use projects. Funding requests between \$5,000 and \$25,000 (CAD) will be considered and allocated based on evaluation by the Fund Review Committee. The number of organizations selected will be determined by the strength of applicant pool and the availability of funding. Funding must be used to complement and leverage other resources (cash and in-kind support such as donations, volunteers) to support the project.

FUNDING TERM

Funds for each project will be allocated for a one-year term, from February 2026 to February 2027. There is no funding available for multi-year projects. Projects must be delivered within the one-year timeframe.

ELIGIBILITY

Registered charitable organizations and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for this fund. This includes but is not limited to community/environmental organizations, resident/tenant/neighbourhood associations, business improvement area boards of management/chambers of commerce, local Environmental Advisory Committees, academic institutions, and school boards.

Organizations must meet the following criteria to receive funding:

- Have a mandate that benefits the Region's residents and/or business communities

- Operate within the boundaries of York Region and/or provide services to residents/businesses of the Region
- Be incorporated as a non-profit organization or registered as charity by the Canada Revenue Agency for the purposes of the Income Tax Act (Canada)
- **Commercial general liability (CGL) in the amount of \$5 million, and any other insurance coverage deemed necessary by the Region, and proof of coverage acceptable to the Region. Coverage(s) must be secured prior to the Region issuing any of the grant funding**
- Comply with the Ontario [Human Rights Code](#) in hiring practices and in the provision of all services
- Comply with relevant federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations including [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
- Not be in unresolved litigation with the Region or affiliated with an entity engaged in unresolved litigation with the Region. “Unresolved litigation” means any unresolved dispute between the Region and any other party or related party adverse in interest, including third party and cross-claims, where a legal proceeding has been commenced for an injunction, a mandatory order, a declaration, or the recovery of money

Collaboration between organizations is encouraged. All partners must meet the eligibility criteria.

Organizations must submit only one application form. Collaborative applications with two or more eligible organizations will be considered, however one organization must serve as the applicant and the Region will enter into an agreement with only one of the organizations/applicants. Collaborative proposals should clearly define roles of each organization and any funding amounts to be transferred by the applicant to the collaborator.

INELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations are not eligible for funding or collaboration:

- For-profit organizations (businesses should consider applying to the Region’s Innovation Fund)
- Organizations acting in the capacity of a funding body, fundraising drives or events
- Organizations that have political affiliations

- Building managers and property owners
- Individual residents
- Grant making organizations
- Government, or government-based organizations (except academic institutions and school boards)

ELIGIBLE PROJECT COSTS

Project budget requested for funding must be between \$5,000 and \$25,000 (CAD). Funding can only be used for eligible direct personnel and non-personnel project costs for the proposed project. Eligible projects will be funded **up to 80 per cent of the total costs of the project** to a maximum of \$25,000 (CAD).

Direct personnel costs for delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project:

- Management and coordination – up to 50% of staff salaries for time allocated to the proposed project

Direct non-personnel costs:

- Purchased services from contractors or consultants (up to a maximum of 15% of these costs) specifically relating to the delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project (i.e. communication, translation etc.)
- Workshop and meeting costs incurred related to the delivery of the project
- Supplies and materials purchased to use in the delivery of the project
- Travel costs incurred by employees and volunteers, that are directly related to the project
- Capital costs for repairs and renovations (up to 15 % of total funding amount requested)

Restricted and ineligible costs:

- Applications will not be considered for the following:
 - Purchase of property
 - Religious or political activities or proselytizing

- Event sponsorships and fund-raising activities
- Funds must not be used to support overhead and administration costs (e.g. accounting, legal fees, rent, utilities, etc.)
- Up to 50% of the funding request may be used for direct personnel costs for any project related position, including Project Management/Coordination staff time
- Up to 15% of the funding request may be allocated to purchased services from contractors or consultants, including professional consultant fees or contractor and honoraria associated with the project
- Funding must be used to complement and leverage other resources (cash and in-kind support such as donations, volunteers), with a minimum of 20% of eligible direct personnel and non-personnel costs required for the project funded by other resources. A higher score will be given to applicants that leverage funds from other sources up to 50% of eligible direct personnel and non-personnel costs required for the project

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process includes two stages:

1. The Preliminary Application form must be completed and submitted to York Region for review by the deadline. Region staff will review these applications, based on established evaluation criteria, and the most suitable applicants from the pool, as determined by the Region in its sole discretion, will then be invited to submit a Detailed Application
2. The Detailed Application will be sent directly to shortlisted applicants to be completed and submitted for review by the Fund Review Committee

Please note:

- Applicants are encouraged to contact the coordinator of the Circular Economy Initiatives Fund by email at SM4RTLiving@york.ca if they have questions or need further clarification
- Incomplete applications will be disqualified
- Each applicant can only submit one application per year. If more than one application is submitted by the same applicant, only the application submitted first will be reviewed

HOW TO APPLY - PRELIMINARY APPLICATION

The Preliminary Application form involves completing the following:

Organization/Community Group: Provide the legal name and contact details of your charity or non-profit organization.

Contact Person: Provide the name and contact details of the individual that will be your organization's key contact and project lead for this project. *All contact information will be used for funding application purposes only.*

Location of proposed project. Is there a specific community or municipality, or is it region-wide? Provide the specific location(s) where the project will take place.

Anticipated project start and end date: Provide the proposed start and end date of the project. All approved projects are expected to take place in 2026, must be completed within one year of the start date and no later than February 2027. If your project needs to start later than February 2026, please explain why.

What is the amount of funding being requested from the Region? Tell us how much money you are requesting through the Circular Economy Initiatives Fund. This should be between a minimum of \$5,000 and a maximum of \$25,000 and may be no more than 80 per cent of the total costs of the project.

What is the total budget for this project? Tell us how much you are budgeting for the entire project. This is the sum of your funding request from the CEIF and all other funding sources your group/organization may be directing towards this project. Other funding sources refer to monetary donations, other grants or funding your group/organization has been awarded for the proposed project or any financial contributions from any project partners that may be working with you. You should have additional funding sources of a minimum of 20% of eligible costs, as described under Eligible Project Costs above.

Other funding sources do not have to be confirmed at the time of the submission of the Preliminary Application. However, if you are approved by the Region, in its sole discretion, to receive funding through the CEIF, the other funding sources must be confirmed at the time of

signing the funding agreement. If the other funding sources are not confirmed at that time, the Region will not proceed with signing the agreement or funding the project.

Project summary: In one paragraph, provide an overview of your proposed project. Use the provided questions to guide your response.

Explain how the project aligns with the objectives of the Circular Economy Initiatives Fund:

Describe how the intended outcomes of your project satisfy one or more of the core objectives of the Circular Economy Initiatives Fund as outlined in the ‘Fund Objectives’ section of this Application Guidelines document.

Are you working with any partner organizations for this project? Indicate whether you plan to collaborate with any other organization to deliver this project. If so, state the name of the organization and provide an overview of their role in the project.

Would you be willing to collaborate with another organization if a similar project was submitted through the CEIF application process? State whether you would be open to collaborating with another organization that has a similar project idea. The Region reserves the right to request that applicants with similar project proposals consider making a collaborative submission.

Do you consent to receiving future circular economy updates from York Region? Indicate whether you wish to receive email updates on York Region’s circular economy plans and programs in the future. Your response to this question will not affect your application and your consent can be withdrawn at any time.

SUBMITTING THE PRELIMINARY APPLICATION

- Please complete the application form by the submission deadline: **Sunday, September 14, 2025 at 11:59 p.m.**
- HARD COPY SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please do not send a printed version of your application. Thank you for helping us reduce waste!
- If the Region determines that a Preliminary Application is incomplete, the Region may reject the application in its sole discretion. The Region is not required to seek clarification or further information from any applicants

- The Region accepts no responsibility for any reason whatsoever, including computer system failures of either the Applicant or the Region's service provider, if the Applicant is unable to submit its Preliminary Application before the Preliminary Application Submission Deadline, and the Applicant agrees that the Region shall have no liability for delays caused by internet/network traffic, degraded operation or failure of any computer system element, including, but not limited to, any computer system, power supply, telephone or data connection or system or software or browser of any type whatsoever
- It is the sole responsibility of the Applicant to ensure they can access and exchange data with the Region's service provider's computer systems electronically and that they allow sufficient time to successfully access and share data with the Region's service provider's computer systems, having regard to the possibility of delays caused by internet/network traffic. Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring that they plan their access to the Region's service provider's computer/servers, so that the Applicants can reach the Region's service provider's computers/servers, and submit their Preliminary Applications, before the Preliminary Application Submission Deadline

Next steps:

- York Region staff will review the Preliminary Applications based on established evaluation criteria and notify all applicants of the final decision in relation to the Preliminary Application. Applicants selected to proceed to **Step 2 - Detailed Application Stage** will be notified via email in **October 2025**
- Please note that an invitation to move on to the Detailed Application stage does not constitute an approval of an organization's application and nor does it provide an agreement to fund a project
- All funding is subject to availability in the Region's budget, as the Region determines in its sole discretion
- The Region reserves the right to reject any or all Preliminary and Detailed Applications. In addition, the Region also reserves the right to approve a lower funding amount than the amount requested in any application

IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE

Role of the Fund Recipient

- Successful funding recipients will be required to submit quarterly reports and a final report including a summative evaluation of their project
- Evaluations will determine whether funding recipients have:
 - adhered to the project plans submitted during the application phase; and
 - made progress towards or achieved the Circular Economy Initiatives Fund goals and objectives
- Funding recipients will be provided with standardized reporting requirements and will be required to enter into a written agreement in form and content satisfactory to the Region in its sole discretion as a condition of a funding approval; the Region will not provide funds to any recipient who refuses to enter into such an agreement. Funding recipients will also be asked to provide photos or video documentation of their project activities that may be used by the Region in various promotions
- The Region reserves the right to seek awards and recognition by other organizations or bodies in collaboration with successful applicants/projects

Acknowledgement of Funding

Funding recipients must acknowledge the financial assistance provided by York Region in program materials and signage, including any promotional materials used in project activities. This requirement will be discussed in greater detail after a funding decision is made and incorporated into the above-mentioned agreement.