

Clause 15 in Report No. 4 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on March 24, 2016.

15

The Community Investment Strategy Process
For Funding Community Agencies

Committee of the Whole recommends:

1. Receipt of the presentation by Lisa Gonsalves, Director, Strategies and Partnerships.
2. Adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated February 18, 2016 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services:
 1. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the United Way Toronto and York Region and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for information.

Report dated February 18, 2016 from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services now follows:

1. Recommendation

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the United Way Toronto and York Region and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for information.

2. Purpose

This report outlines the Community Investment Strategy's annual funding processes, and the steps and timelines for 2017 allocations.

The Community Investment Strategy Process For Funding Community Agencies

3. Background

In 2002, Council established a community investment fund to support the delivery of community services and programs for low income residents. Services are provided to York Region residents through a range of projects implemented by community service agencies.

In February 2013, Council approved a new Community Investment Strategy designed to expand the range of services funded and promote the development of service capacity in the community. The goal of the Strategy is to improve the wellbeing of low and moderate income residents.

The Strategy's purpose is to invest in community services that address human service priorities as outlined in Regional strategies. It was also designed to align with and support the objectives of the Human Services Planning Board's Making Ends Meet Initiative and the York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy.

The Strategy is guided by the following core principles:

Accountability

Regional funding allocations include processes to ensure that funding is used as approved.

Transparency

Information about the criteria and process for funding, as well as the results are publicly available.

Responsiveness

The Region will consult with stakeholders regarding emerging community needs and ensure that its investments are responsive.

The Strategy has three investment streams which direct the flow of funds

Investments are made through three funding streams:

- a) A Community-based Services Stream for social service programs/services that directly addresses gaps in human services and align with regional investment priorities.
- b) An Organizational Development Stream for developing and strengthening the organizational capacity of agencies in the human services sector.
- c) An Innovation and Collaboration Stream to promote innovative projects and multi-agency partnerships.

The Community Investment Strategy Process
For Funding Community Agencies

The Strategy's four results align with the priorities of the Region

The Strategy is designed to contribute to four results that enhance human services for low and moderate income residents in York Region.

The four results are:

- **Economic Independence:** Residents have and keep jobs and have financial stability. This includes employment supports such as sector-specific skills training, job placement and retention, basic life skills and financial literacy.
- **Housing Stability:** Residents live in affordable, adequate and suitable housing. This includes supports for residents experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness such as outreach services, seasonal shelters, wrap around supports and landlord tenant awareness.
- **Social Inclusion:** Residents are connected and can engage in communities. This includes programs that assist residents to make community connections and prevent social isolation.
- **Community Health:** Residents are healthy and are able to make healthy choices. This includes programs that focus on healthy eating and food safety, smoking cessation and mental health supports.

4. Analysis and Options

An annual two-stage call for proposals process is used to allocate funding

Each year there is a two-stage call for proposals with investment terms of one-year and multi-year funding (up to three years).

In the spring, agencies are invited to submit Expressions of Interest (Stage One). Applicants are required to demonstrate how their projects fit with one of the result areas of the Strategy. They are evaluated based on published evaluation criteria that are weighted based on overall importance. Agencies with successful Expressions of Interest move to Stage Two of the process and are invited to submit a full application that includes a detailed work plan and budget. On average, each year the Region receives 100 Expressions of Interest with about 60 moving forward to Stage Two.

At both stages of the process individual notification is provided to each applicant.

The Community Investment Strategy Process For Funding Community Agencies

At the Expression of Interest stage successful agencies receive specific feedback on their proposals in preparation for Stage Two. Notification is also provided to unsuccessful agencies at this stage. Because this occurs mid-year this gives unsuccessful agencies time to pursue other funding options or make other plans.

Following Stage Two, agencies that are unsuccessful are given the option of a feedback meeting to discuss their proposal to provide them with a better understanding of the selection process and address questions that they may have. Consultation also takes place with United Way Toronto and York Region and the Ontario Trillium Foundation to ensure that funding recommendations complement and do not duplicate other funding activities in the Region.

This process has been used since the establishment of the Strategy and feedback from community agencies has been well received. A similar process is underway for the 2017 funding cycle, as outlined in Attachment 1.

The 2017 funding process will be implemented as follows:

Release of the Call for Expressions of Interest (Stage One)	April 2016
Closing of the Expression of Interest	May 2016
Selection Process for the Expressions of Interest	May - June 2016
Release of the Stage Two Call for Proposals	August 2016
Closing of the Stage Two Call for Proposals	September 2016
Selection Process for Stage Two Proposals	September - October 2016
Report to Council on Recommended Projects for 2017 Funding	November 2016

In adherence with the tendering process through Supplies and Services, published submission deadlines are strictly adhered to with no exceptions.

At each stage of the funding process, the total amount of requests for funding always exceeds the funding available in the Strategy's budget. Therefore, not all projects that meet the funding priorities of the Region can be funded even though they may have merit. This process ensures that the stronger proposals which most closely align with the Region's priorities are funded.

The Community Investment Strategy Process For Funding Community Agencies

5. Link to key Council-approved plans

The Community Investment Strategy directly aligns with key York Region strategies and initiatives including:

- The *Corporate Strategic Plan 2015-2019*
- The Human Services Planning Board's Making Ends Meet Initiative
- The York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy

6. Financial Implications

The Community Investment Strategy is managed within the current approved budget of the Community and Health Services Department. In 2016, the Community Investment Strategy provided \$5,538,023 to community agencies. Approximately \$2 million of the 2016 funding is invested in multi-year projects and about \$3.5 million funding for one year projects. The proportional distribution of funding between one year and multi-year projects may vary from year to year, based on the number of approved multi-year projects.

Based on the approved budget outlook, the 2017 budget remains at \$5,538,023. In 2018 the total amount available will be approximately \$5.7 million including \$175,000 in additional funding in the approved outlook for 2018, subject to budget approval.

7. Local Municipal Impact

In 2017, the Community Investment Strategy will continue to fund community services for residents throughout York Region.

8. Conclusion

The Community Investment Strategy benefits residents and agencies in York Region. It also enhances the Region's service system by increasing the capacity of service providers.

The process used to allocate funding to community agencies under the Community Investment Strategy has been developed and refined with the participation of the Supplies and Services Branch of the Region. It adheres to the funding principles of accountability, transparency and responsiveness.

The Region has received positive feedback on this process from participating agencies.

The Community Investment Strategy Process
For Funding Community Agencies

More information on the Community Investment Strategy is available on the Region's web site at www.york.ca/cis.

For more information on this report, please contact Lisa Gonsalves, Director, Strategies and Partnerships Branch at extension 72090.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

February 18, 2016

Attachment (1)

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

Steps in the Community Investment Strategy 2017 Funding Process

Steps in Process	Stage One (April - June 2016)	Stage Two (August - November 2016)
Call Process	<p>The Supplies and Services Branch manages the release of the Call for Expressions of Interest which includes guidelines and application templates.</p> <p>The guidelines provide detailed information on the funding requirements, set out the steps to apply for funding, and provide information on the evaluation process and criteria.</p>	<p>A similar Call for Proposals process is followed, but it is directed only to Expressions of Interest that qualify for Stage Two.</p>
Promotion	<p>The Call is advertised through direct e-mails to agencies, various media outlets, the Region's web site, and the use of social media so that all interested agencies are aware of the funding opportunity and given equal opportunity to apply for funding.</p>	<p>At Stage Two, the Call for Proposals is directed only to agencies that have been successful in Stage One.</p>
Applicant Supports	<p>The following supports are provided to applicants.</p> <p>This year applicants will be offered a proposal writing course before the release of the call for Expressions of Interest in April. This will assist them to improve the quality of their applications.</p> <p>Information meetings are held where staff outline the details about the current priorities in the Strategy and provide guidance on how to complete the application. A dedicated telephone line and a Community Investment mailbox give the applicants the opportunity to ask additional questions.</p>	<p>An information meeting is also held in Stage Two targeted to applicants with proposals that have qualified for Stage Two.</p> <p>In addition, applicants are also given the opportunity to receive individual feedback on their Expression of Interest.</p>

Steps in Process	Stage One (April - June 2016)	Stage Two (August - November 2016)
Application Process	Each applicant is required to indicate how the proposed project meets the Region’s funding priorities and requirements. Applications must indicate how the services provided by the project support or contribute to meeting the results of the Strategy and which priority areas will be addressed by the project. Applications are required to provide an estimated project budget. There is also the opportunity to apply for either one-year or multi-year funding.	At Stage Two, a more extensive application that includes a work plan and a more detailed budget breakdown is required. Applicants are also required to provide either Audited Financial Statements or a Review Engagement Report.
Evaluation Criteria	<p>The Stage One criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Population (based on low and moderate income) - 20% • Fit with Community Results - 20% • Gap identified/explained - 20% • Alignment with Regional Strategies: Making Ends Meet and/or the York Region Immigration Settlement Strategy - 15% • Project Results - 20% • Budget - 5% <p>Each criterion is weighted to reflect its relative importance in the overall process to ensure that each application is assessed against the same criteria which are set out in the application guidelines.</p>	<p>The Stage Two criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency Capacity and Effectiveness - 20% • Agency Financial Management - 10% • Gap Identified/ explained - 20% • Project Benefits - 20% • Project Methodology and Activities - 20% • Project Cost and Budget -10% <p>As in Stage One each of the evaluation criteria are weighted to reflect its relative importance in the overall process to ensure that each application is assessed against the same criteria which are set out in the application guidelines.</p>

Steps in Process	Stage One (April - June 2016)	Stage Two (August - November 2016)
Evaluation	<p>A Selection Committee comprised of at least nine staff in the Community and Health Services Department with the subject matter expertise in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment services • Child and family programming • Public health • Housing stability • Paramedic services <p>Each application is reviewed and scored against the established criteria and the Selection Committee makes recommendations for applications to move forward to Stage Two.</p>	<p>A similar assessment process is followed in Stage Two. The Committee reviews and scores each application. The recommendations are made to approve funding based on score and available funds.</p> <p>In addition, at Stage Two a financial analysis of each applicant is undertaken by an independent licenced public accountant.</p> <p>Consultation with external funders, United Way Toronto and York Region and the Ontario Trillium Foundation to ensure that funding recommendations complement and do not duplicate other funding activities in the Region.</p>
Recommendations	<p>In Stage One, through an internal approval process, Expressions of Interest that meet the criteria and score thresholds will move on to Stage Two.</p>	<p>In Stage Two, projects and funding amounts are recommended for approval through a report to Council. The Council report also includes multi-year projects that will continue to receive funding.</p>

The Community Investment Process for Funding Community Agencies

Presentation to

Community and Health Services Committee

Lisa Gonsalves, Director of Strategies and Partnerships Branch, Community and Health Services
March, 3, 2016



The Community Investment Strategy

Today's presentation will provide:

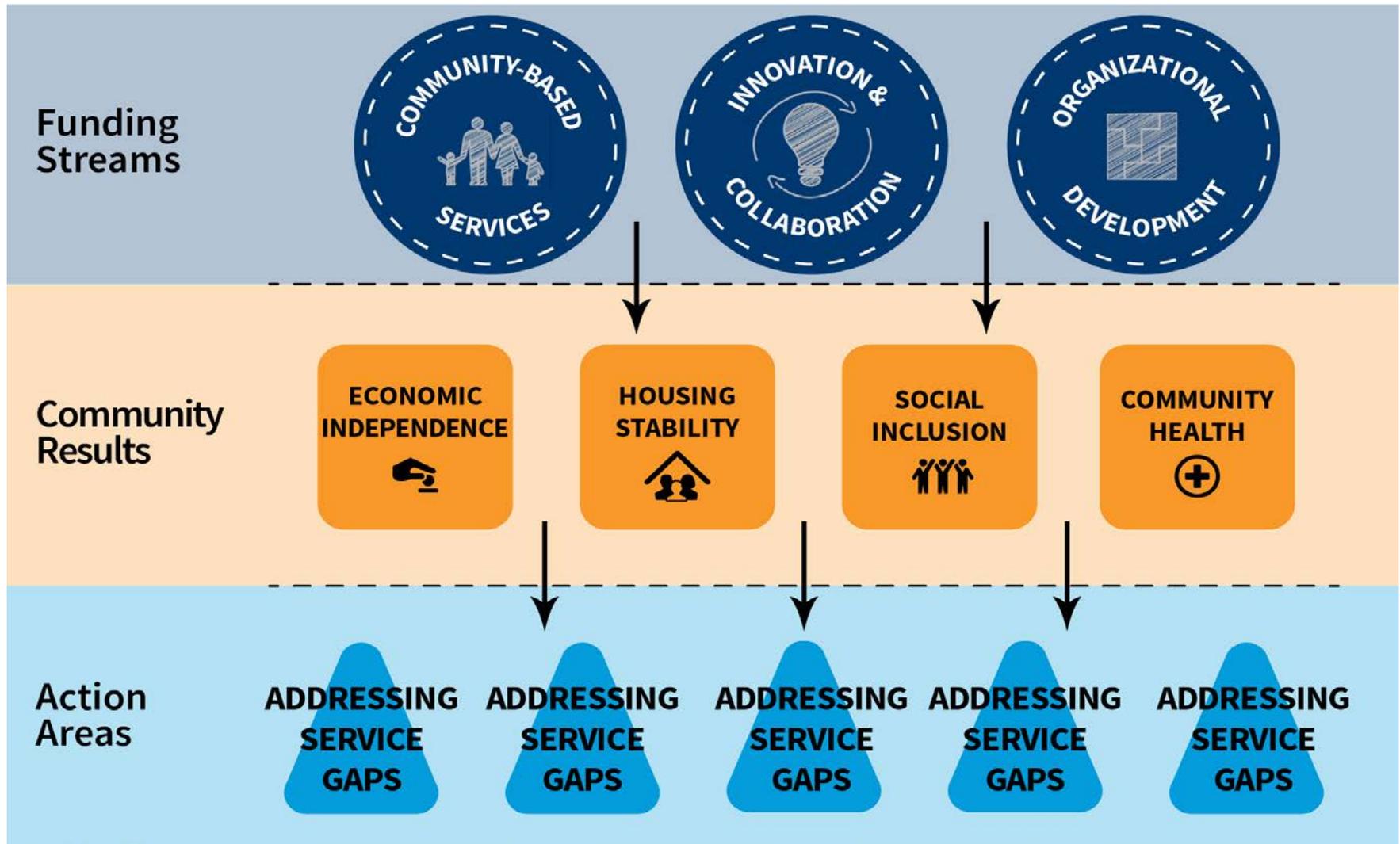
- An outline of the Community Investment Strategy
- An overview of the annual Call for Proposals
- Key dates in the 2017 process

The Community Investment Strategy

- Supports York Region Human Services goals and priorities
- Funds community-based programs and services that complement and enhance the Community and Health Services Department's core services
- Helps build service capacity in the community

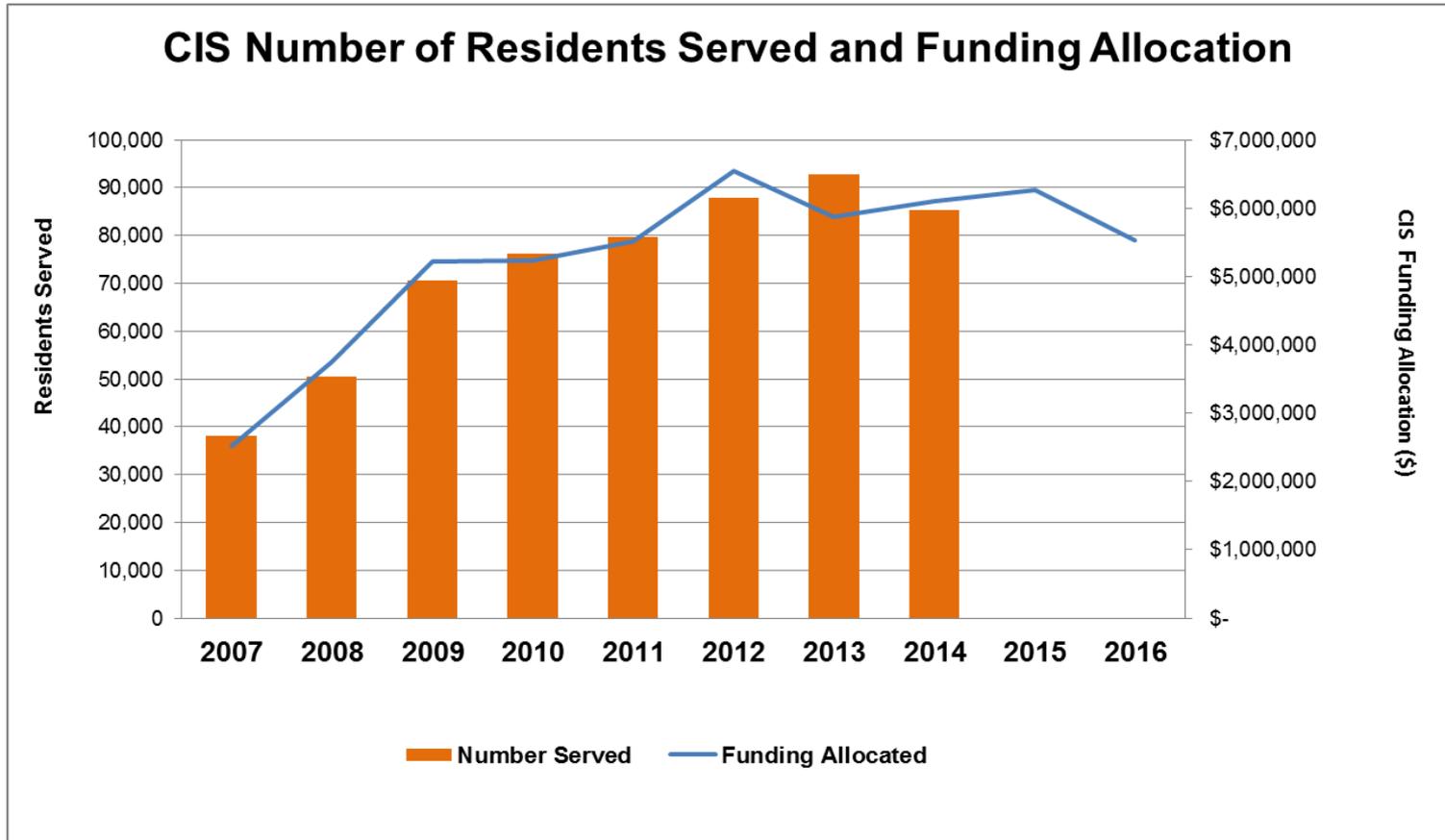


How We Direct Funding



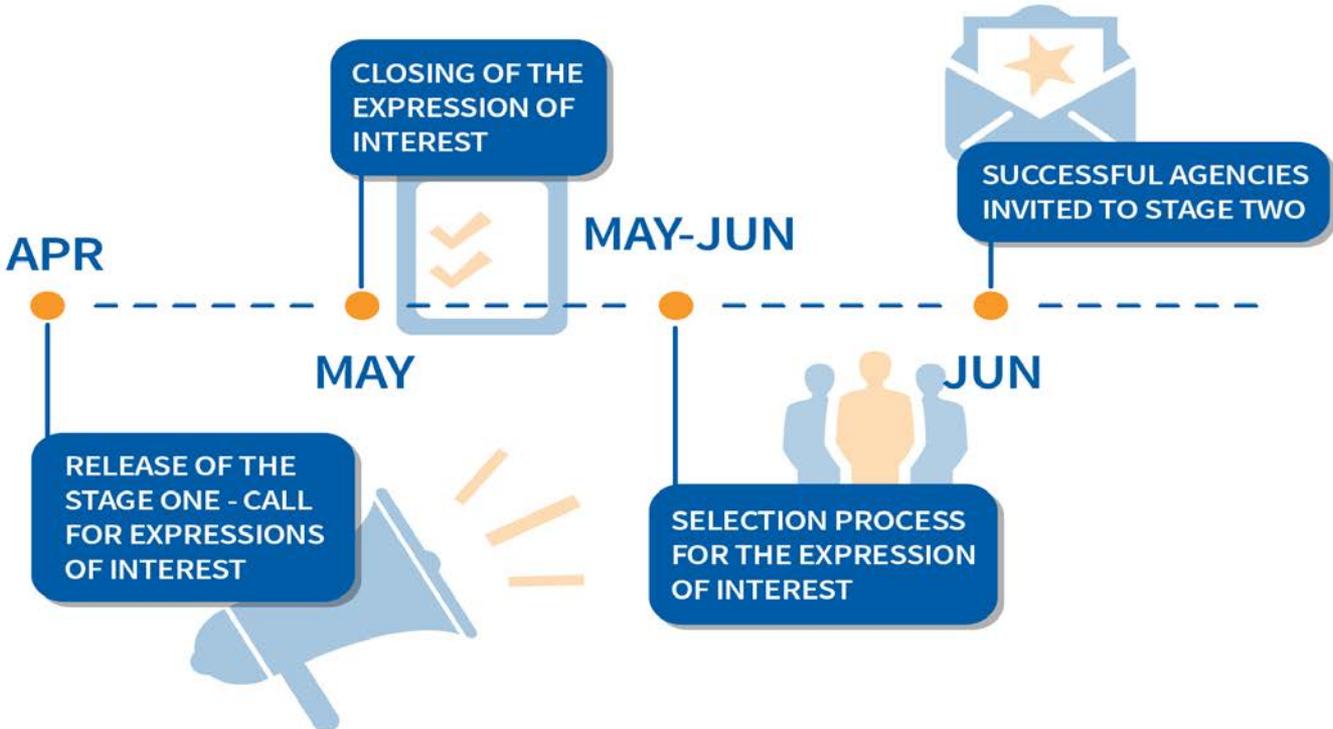
The Community Investment Strategy

Number of Residents Served and Funding Allocation 2007 – 2016

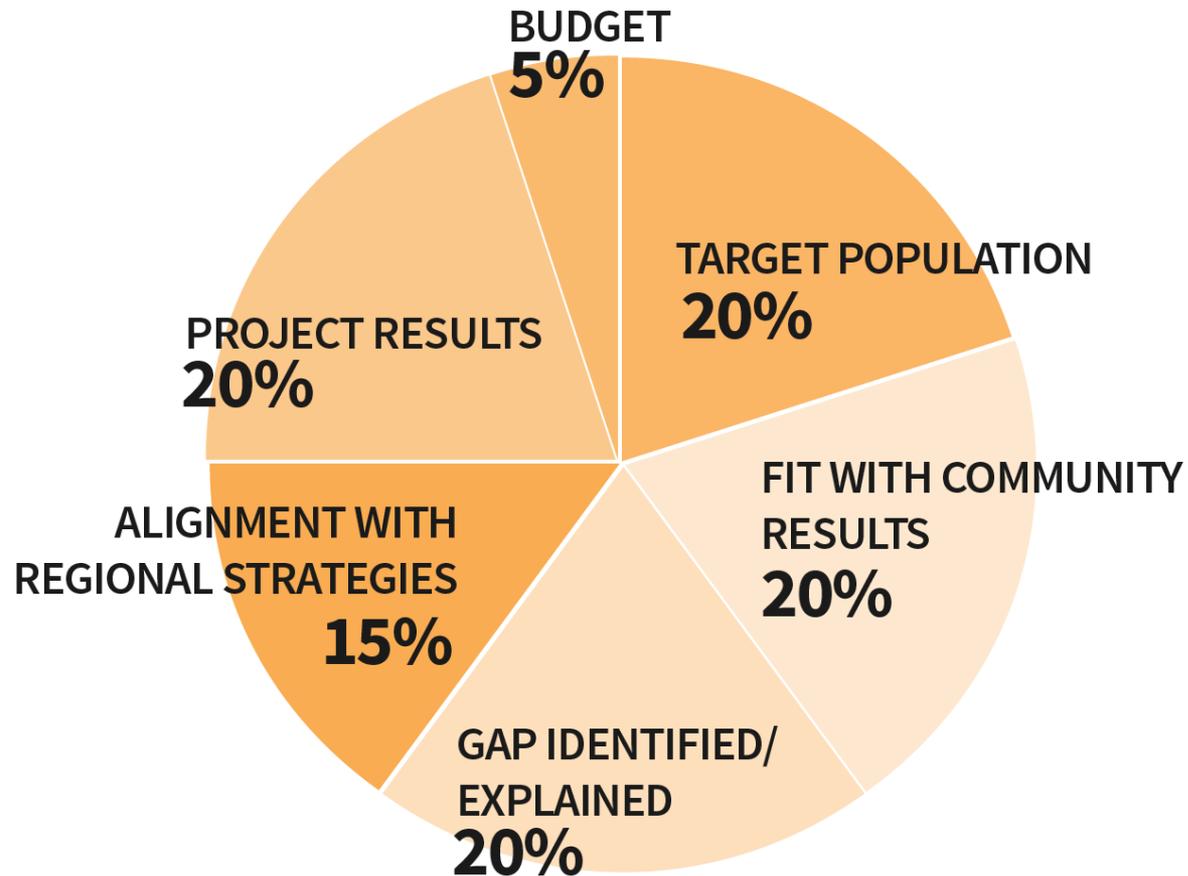


The numbers served for 2015 are currently being compiled.
The 2016 numbers served will be available in early 2017.

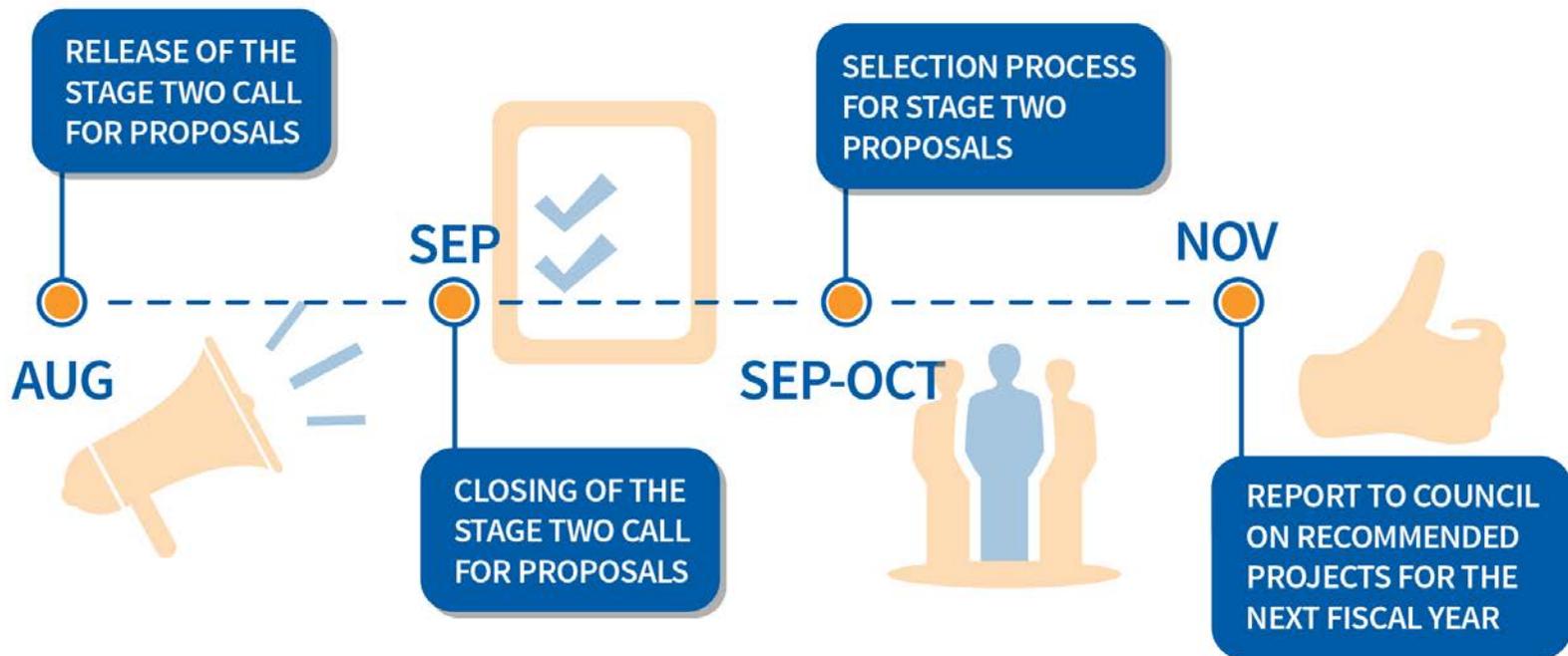
Stage One - Expression of Interest



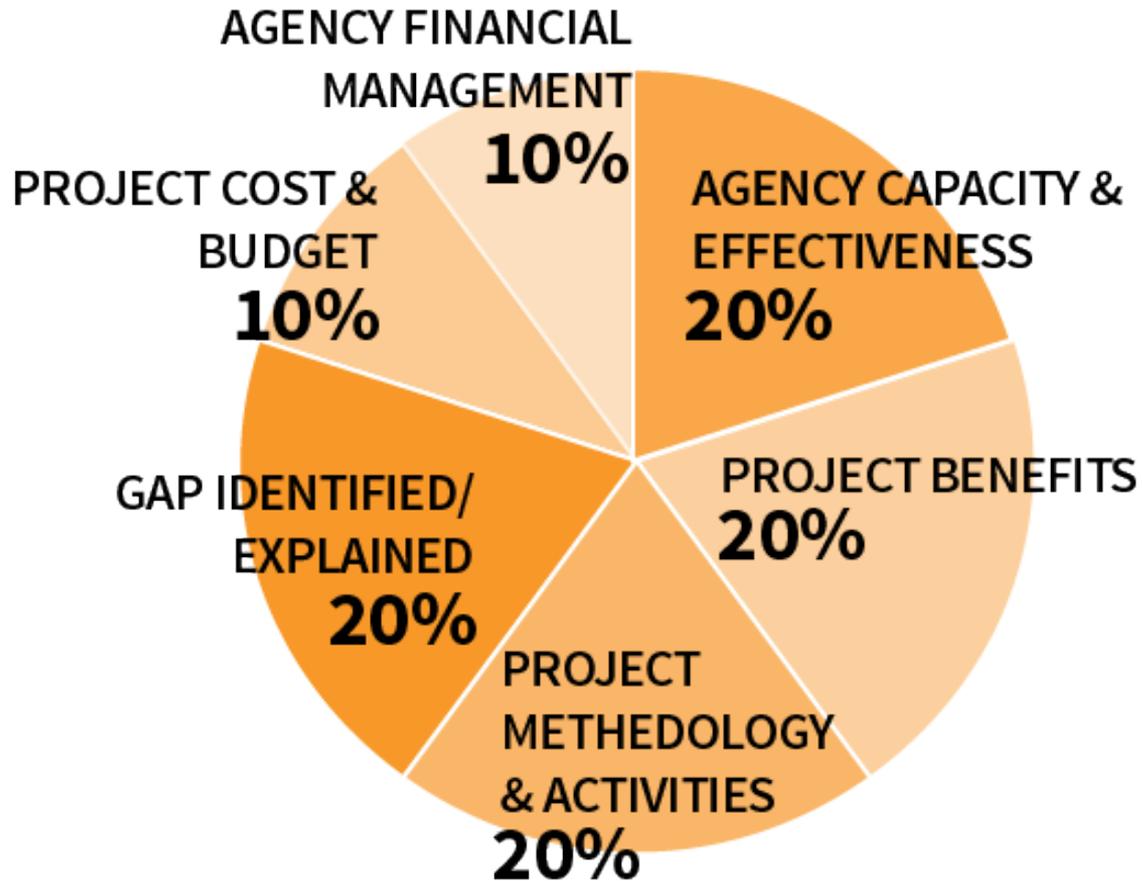
Stage One - Evaluation Criteria



Stage Two Applications



Stage Two Evaluation Criteria



More Information on the Community Investment Strategy

- Community Investment Strategy web page on Region's Web site york.ca/cis
- Community Investment Mailbox communityinvestments@york.ca
- Dedicated Phone line – 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72079

Community Investment Strategy Video

[\[Click here to view the video on YouTube\]](#)



Thank you

