

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES FUND

2015-17 Program Stream Guidelines



Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Health Promotion Implementation Branch
Health Promotion Division

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1. Introduction

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (“the Ministry”) is dedicated to fostering a culture of health and wellness that will support Ontarians in making educated, informed decisions about their care as outlined in the *Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care (2015)*, the next phase of Ontario's plan for changing and improving the health system. The Healthy Communities Fund (HCF) - Program Stream aligns with and supports the Action Plan by funding projects intended to improve access to health promotion services, connect people to coordinated services in their own communities, inform and support people so they can make healthy decisions and behaviour changes, and protect the public health care system by providing value for money and helping to improve the health and wellbeing of Ontarians.

Since 2009-10, the HCF grant program has provided \$13.8M in grant funding to 81 community organizations for the delivery of programs that benefit populations which face health disparities arising from the broad, social determinants of health and do not have equitable access to health promotion programming in their communities. The social determinants of health are factors that influence our health and include income and social status, social support networks, education and literacy, employment/working conditions, social environments, physical environments, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, healthy child development, biology and genetic endowment, health services, gender and culture ([Public Health Agency of Canada Social Determinants of Health](#)).

In 2015-17, the HCF program stream will continue to fund community-based non-profit organizations for programs and services that improve health and wellness in their communities.

2. Program Scope

Objectives

HCF funds community-based projects that:

- provide direct services intended to improve the health and wellness of populations facing greater health inequities;
- create opportunities to reduce health disparities between population groups;
- provide services that are tailored to local/regional needs and realities; and
- are evidence-based and demonstrate value for money through measurable results including positive impact to the health and wellness of Ontarians.

Funding Priorities

HCF prioritizes projects that address specific health promotion and chronic disease prevention areas to improve the health and wellness of Ontarians.

Eligible projects must address one or more of the following five funding priorities:

1. Healthy eating

2. Physical activity (including active transportation)
3. Mental health promotion
4. Injury Prevention
5. Substance and/or alcohol misuse

The following section provides examples of potential areas of focus under each funding priority below. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, and other proposed areas of focus may be considered.

1. Healthy Eating

Healthy eating environments and food security - increase access to healthy food, limit the availability and promotion of unhealthy food, and/or increase access to nutrition and healthy eating information.

Food skills and food literacy – increase knowledge and skills necessary to prepare nutritious meals (e.g. meal planning, food preparation, cooking, nutrition, food safety and storage, label reading, and Canada’s Food Guide).

2. Physical Activity:

Access to physical activity – improve opportunities for people to be physically active, improve social and physical environments, and increase knowledge of guidelines for physical activity and sedentary behaviour in order to foster individual behaviour change.

Active Aging – increase and promote physical activity and movement amongst seniors.

Active transportation – promote, create, improve and maintain active and safe human powered transportation such as walking, running and cycling.

3. Mental Health Promotion

Empowerment and Resiliency – improve the protective factors that help people exercise control over their lives and to be resilient (e.g. social support/inclusion, coping with stress or adversity, self-esteem, problem-solving, conflict management, positive parent-child interactions, and pro-social behavior).

Stigma and discrimination – address the factors that contribute to negative attitudes (prejudice), negative behavior (discrimination), isolation, bullying and/or violence against all individuals, including those with mental health and addiction problems.

4. Injury Prevention

Predicting and Preventing injuries – reduce frequency, severity, and impact of preventable injuries by fostering safe environments and providing knowledge and education about common types, causes, and prevention of injuries by age group.

5. Substance/Alcohol Misuse Prevention:

Personal skills – develop skills to prevent /reduce binge drinking, substance/alcohol misuse and build awareness of, and the capacity to apply, Canada’s Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines.

Activities

Project activities should emphasize direct service delivery to change health behavior and promote healthy choices and improved longer term health outcomes at the individual level. Research, resource development, training, capacity building and awareness/social media campaigns can support these activities, but should not be the main focus of the project.

Target Populations – Health Equity

Project proposals should identify the specific target populations or communities of focus in their project and apply a health equity lens to their proposed activities. Social determinants of health disproportionately impact certain populations – resulting in increased barriers to achieving and maintaining health and wellness. By targeting specific populations or communities, HCF projects improve health equity and reduce avoidable health disparities between population groups.

Project proposals should define a specific target population group or groups, and take into consideration the following factors:

- 1. Populations facing greater health inequities** – these may include, but are not limited to, Aboriginal people, LGBTTTIQ, new Canadians, homeless/street-involved, persons with disabilities, people who experience violence or trauma and people in contact with the justice system.
- 2. Life Stage** - Preconception and infancy; Early childhood; Childhood; Adolescence; Adulthood; Older Age
- 3. Setting** – Home; community; school, workplace, etc.

Project Performance Measures

Projects must reflect and include appropriate performance measures to track and evaluate achievement of defined deliverables and intended outcomes/impact of project activities. Project performance measure should include:

Outputs – measurable results of activities such as number of people reached, number of hours of education, number of skills taught, number of interactions.

Outcomes – measurable change in people’s attitude, knowledge, or behaviours related to the area of focus.

Proposals should also indicate the organization’s methodology for **Data Collection** to support performance measurement and assessment of outcomes.

Evidence

Project proposals must incorporate and reflect evidence that supports the linkages between the project approach and activities and the intended impact to health promotion priorities and target populations. Evidence may include, but is not limited to, expert opinion, academic literature, best practices, case reports, surveys, studies, and systematic / jurisdictional reviews.

3. Funding

Use of funds

HCF program funding is intended to provide non-capital support for the creation of new health promotion program opportunities for individuals and populations who are disproportionately impacted by the broader, social determinants of health.

Terms and Conditions - Organizations funded under HCF will be required to enter into a Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) with the Ministry, which will include the Terms and Conditions of receiving funds, the project description, project funding, approved objectives and deliverables, the recipient's reporting requirements, and the Ministry's payment schedule.

Project funding - HCF funding may only be used for direct services and administration associated with the specific project. Funding cannot be used to support, subsidize or replace existing programs. Funding cannot be used for central organizational administrative costs such as salary and benefits for senior executive(s) of the organization, human resources, office management, and professional fees outside of the specific project.

Other ineligible uses of funds include:

- Annual general meetings, operating deficits, membership fees, fundraising activities, advocacy, committee and political meetings, or religious activities;
- Workplace accommodation or other accessibility measures already required under the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- Costs covered by other government funding;
- Activities that could be deemed discriminatory, as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- One-time events, festivals, conferences or tournaments;
- Contingency or unexplained miscellaneous costs;
- Re-granting activities (e.g., using HCF funds to provide grants to other organizations);
- Marketing and promotional activities that are not specifically related to the project;
- Activities that take place outside of Ontario;
- Infrastructure or capital expenses including the renovation, construction or transformation of permanent spaces, parks or grounds; furniture, fixtures or other non-portable equipment such as refrigerators, stoves, and exercise equipment.

Funding Amount and Duration

Approved HCF projects will be eligible for up to two years of funding for activities conducted across the 2015-16 and 2016-17 fiscal years.

4. Selection Process

Eligibility

HCF funding is available for organizations and communities that meet the following criteria:

- Non-profit, non-governmental, community based service provider organizations that are incorporated and have operated for at least one (1) year; and/or
- Aboriginal Regional Organizations and Political Territorial Organizations (PTOs).

Partnerships - Organizations are encouraged to consider opportunities to partner with other organizations that may enhance or support program delivery (planning, development, implementation and evaluation). While partnerships are not mandatory, additional consideration will be given to proposals that include partnerships that help connect people to coordinated services.

Public Health Units, hospitals, universities/colleges, schools or school boards, municipalities or other government agencies, boards or commissions may be identified as project partners, but are not eligible to directly receive HCF funding.

Statement of Interest

The Ministry will issue a call for Statements of Interest (SOI) from eligible service provider organizations to pre-screen potential projects for funding. The SOI includes high level information on the populations reached, the project activities, the evidence, proposed outcomes and estimated budget. Based on a review and assessment of the SOIs, successful organizations will be invited to submit a full project proposal.

Project Proposals

The Ministry will invite full project proposals from selected organizations based on review of SOIs. Project proposals will include information on the organization's capacity to manage funding and deliver programming, detailed information on the populations served, project activities, project budget, evidence, deliverables and proposed outcomes. Based on a review and assessment of the project proposals, the Ministry will select projects to be recommended for funding.

Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be assessed based on their alignment with the objectives and funding priorities of the HCF Program Stream. In addition, the Ministry will assess all project proposals using the following evaluation criteria (in no particular order):

- The organization's capacity to manage funds, complete the program and achieve results;
- The potential impact of project activities on identified target populations;
- Value for money -- program outcomes compared with program cost;
- Program resources (financial, human, and other);
- Sustainability or lasting impact – a plan for ensuring resources are in place to continue the work after the HCF project funding ends;
- The soundness of the program design, including its evidence base and evaluation plan;
- The strength of program partnerships with other organizations; and
- Equitable geographic distribution of available funds across the province.

Approval of Funding

Approval for funding takes into consideration the amount requested, assessment of the information provided in the project proposal, alignment with HCF funding priorities, and overall demand for funding. The Ministry anticipates that more proposals will be received than can be supported with the available HCF funding. Submission of a proposal does not guarantee funding.

The Minister has sole discretion over the final approval of all HCF funding.

5. Contact Information

For any questions please contact the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Health Promotion Implementation Branch through email: HCFProgram@ontario.ca.