

OTF Investment Summary Report 2025/2026 Seed Cycle

Prepared for the Board of Directors,
November 13, 2025
2025-2026 Seed Cycle (August 20, 2025 deadline)
Ontario Trillium Foundation Community Investments

OTF Investment Summary Report 2025/2026 Seed Cycle

Introduction

OTF's Seed stream supports the best quality services and programs to effectively build healthy and vibrant communities across Ontario. Funded projects cross six funding priorities and focus on four stream objectives. OTF's funding priorities support projects that foster physically active lifestyles, help people build stronger connections and a deeper sense of belonging in their communities, support participation in the conservation and restoration of the environment, enrich lives through arts, culture and heritage, support youth to develop stronger social, emotional, and leadership skills, and enable economically vulnerable people to meet their basic needs and/or strengthen their financial stability.

The Seed stream is designed to fund projects that help organizations build resilience and enhance their ability to deliver programs and services that directly benefit community members. Eligible organizations can apply for grants between \$10,000 and \$100,000 for up to one year in support of projects that:

- Create or adapt organizational strategy to build resilience and capacity to deliver programs and services.
- Prepare for the future by developing or adapting digital technology to deliver programs and services.
- Enhance staff and/or volunteer skills to deliver programs and services.
- Design and/or pilot an innovative program or service to address a community need.

This report provides an overview of the Seed funding round for the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

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Schedule 1: Executive Summary

1.1 Cycle highlights:

- This round, **1,706 applications** were received **requesting \$123.6M** in funding.
 - This represents a slight decrease in applications received (-7%) and dollars requested (-8%) from the previous Seed round in 2024/25 fiscal year when 1,832 applications were received requesting \$134.6M.
- Overall, the **demand rate was \$7.04**, 15% lower than the previous Seed round in 2024/25 fiscal year which had a demand rate of \$8.29. Although this round's demand rate is slightly lower than 2024/25, it remains well above the historical average for Seed.
- **257 grants** valued at **\$17.5M** are being recommended by the 16 Grant Review Teams for approval by the OTF Board of Directors.
 - This represents \$1.3M larger investment than the 2024/25 Seed round in which \$16.2M was invested in 246 Seed grants.
 - *NOTE: Catchment allocations for each granting stream were set, within Board approved targets, by the individual Grant Review Teams for their catchment.*
- The **approval rate was 15%**, comparable to 2024/25 Seed round (13%) but lower than the historical average, due to the continued trend toward higher demand rates of the last 2 rounds.
- Of the total applications submitted, 664 applications (39%) were eligible for funding. Of those, 378 (22%) were reviewed by GRT, after which **121 (7%) were below the funding threshold** – representing fundable projects that could not be funded. 1,042 applications (61%) were declined due to organizational or project ineligibility.
- Projects serving a community falling into a **Lived-Experience demographic** (People living in low income, Newcomers/Refugees, People with disabilities and People living with mental health challenges and addictions) **represented 47% of the funds recommended** for approval. Additionally, 20% of funds are supporting a particular Identity group, 14% support a specific Language group and 10% support a specific Gender group.
- Over **7% of the funding recommended for approval was to very small organizations** with annual budgets <\$100k, while 20% was to small organizations with annual budgets between \$100-500k – this is in line with the 2024/25 Seed round.
- 92% of Grant Review Team volunteers scored all their assigned applications, higher compared to the last Seed granting round (86%), suggesting a consistently high engagement and commitment from volunteers.

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1.2 Sign-Offs

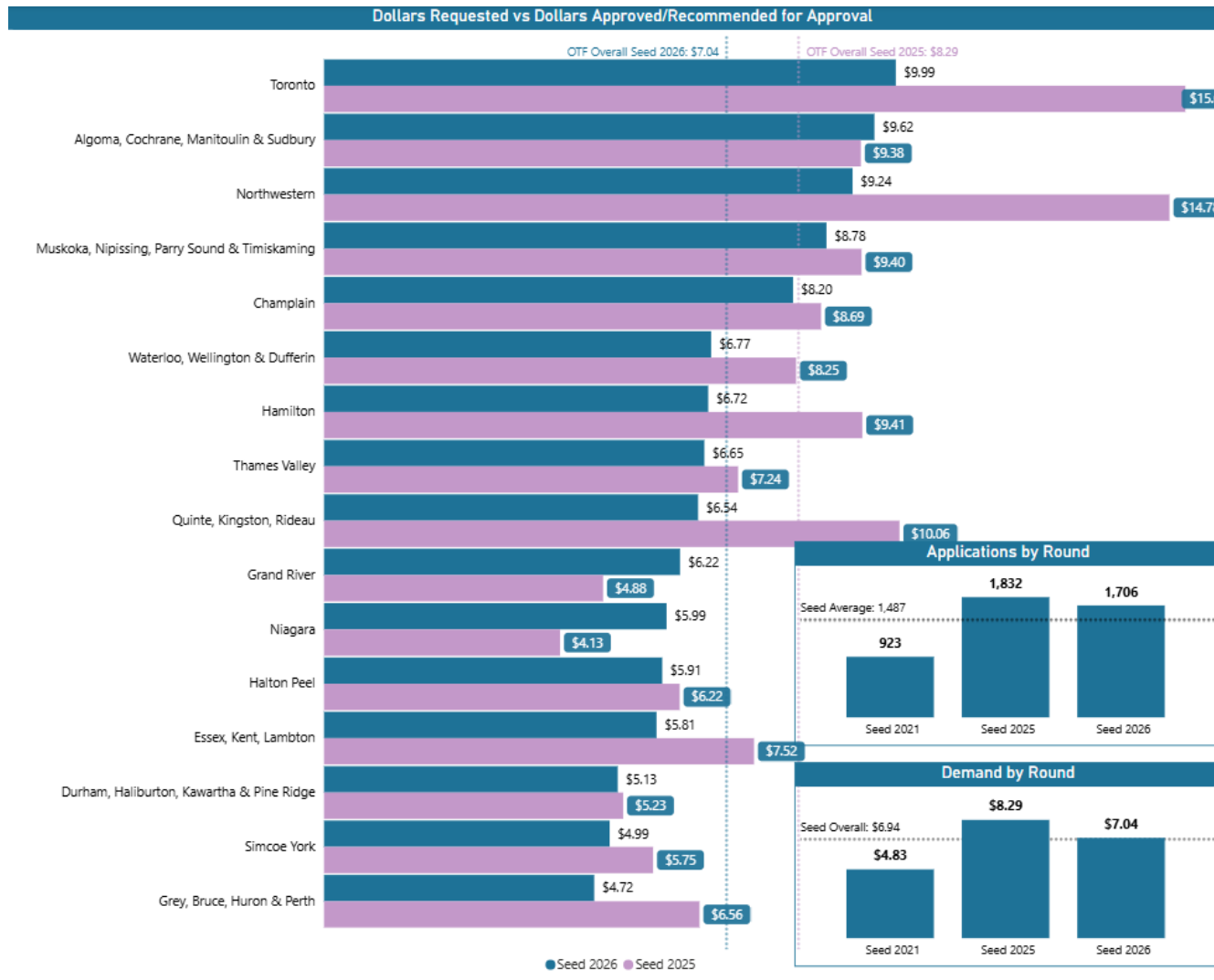
Sign-Off from Chairs: Following each GRT meeting the Chair or Acting Chair signed off on the recommendations of their GRT.

Compliance with OTF Policy: During and following the application assessment period and the GRT meeting period, the Vice-President, Granting has reviewed granting policy compliance, compliance with objectives of the funding stream, and granting process compliance with Regional Directors. The VP, Granting also attended four GRT meetings. The VP, Granting confirms that all recommended grants are within the granting policies, stream expectations and grant-making processes of the Foundation. As well, the VP, Granting confirms that to date no new information has surfaced that would suggest the need to alter any of the current recommendations made by the 16 GRTs.

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Schedule 2: Supporting Figures

2.1 Demand Overview

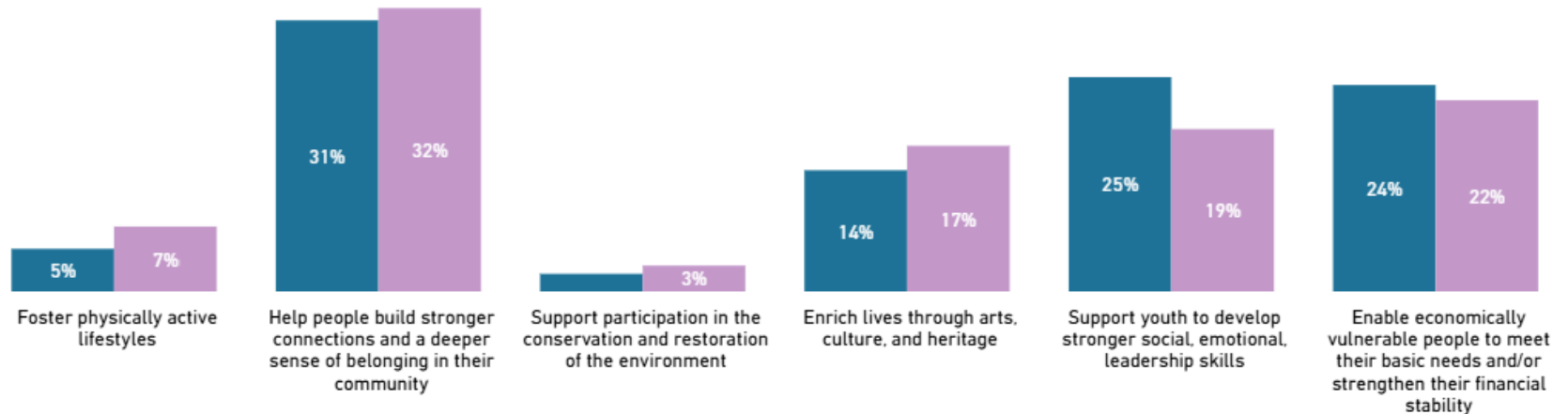


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2.2 Funding Priorities

Dollars Recommended for Approval - Funding Priority

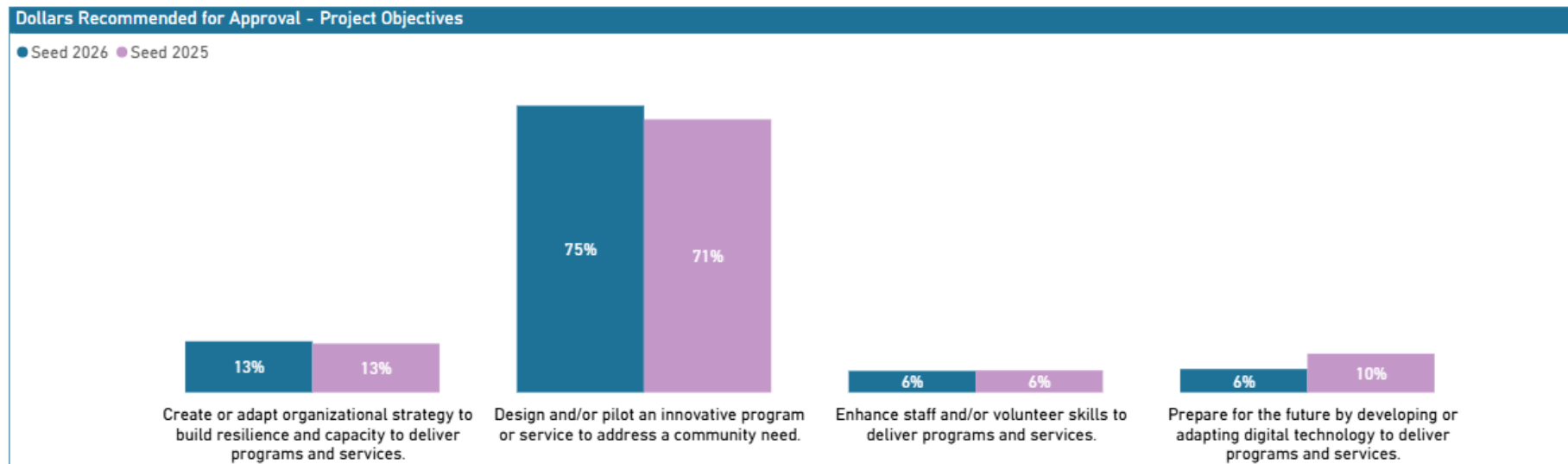
Seed 2026 Seed 2025



Funding Priority	Applications Recommended for Approval	Amount Recommended for Approval
Foster physically active lifestyles	14	\$857,200
Help people build stronger connections and a deeper sense of belonging in their community	79	\$5,456,100
Support participation in the conservation and restoration of the environment	5	\$354,000
Enrich lives through arts, culture, and heritage	43	\$2,437,900
Support youth to develop stronger social, emotional, leadership skills	60	\$4,312,300
Enable economically vulnerable people to meet their basic needs and/or strengthen their financial stability	56	\$4,155,200

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2.3 Project Objective



Project Objectives	Applications Recommended for Approval	Amount Recommended for Approval
Create or adapt organizational strategy to build resilience and capacity to deliver programs and services.	34	\$2,346,400
Design and/or pilot an innovative program or service to address a community need.	187	\$13,160,000
Enhance staff and/or volunteer skills to deliver programs and services.	19	\$991,700
Prepare for the future by developing or adapting digital technology to deliver programs and services.	17	\$1,074,600