

**OTF Investment Summary Report  
Resilient Communities Fund Round 4**



Prepared for the Board of Directors,  
July 7, 2022

Resilient Communities Fund Round 4 (April 6, 2022 deadline)  
Ontario Trillium Foundation Community Investments

# OTF Investment Summary Report

## Resilient Communities Fund Round 4



### Introduction

As the initial disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic begins to wane, nonprofit organizations in Ontario are returning to operating at a higher capacity than the previous two years. Throughout the pandemic, investments in infrastructure, strategic planning, and staff training have enabled organizations to navigate challenging operating conditions to continue to serve the needs of their communities.

However, the road to a full recovery is expected to be protracted and after two years of operating in the variable conditions of a pandemic, many organizations still find themselves struggling to generate revenue and maintain staffing and volunteer levels in line with those needed for pre-pandemic operations, while continuing to experience higher than normal demand. As government relief programs come to an end, the strain on the funding landscape for the non-profit sector is also compounded by high inflationary forces, a tight labour market, and downward trends in charitable donations. Nonetheless, the nonprofit sector continues to show resilience and ingenuity as a critical sector, integral to supporting the quality of life for Ontarians.

As Ontario marches towards recovery, the services and programs provided by the nonprofit sector remain crucial for rebuilding and maintaining the health and vibrancy of this province, supporting both the social and economic fabric of Ontario. The Resilient Communities Fund (RCF) aims to provide support for nonprofits to adapt, plan, and increase their ability to carry out this essential work and secure their viability for the long term.

### **The Resilient Communities Fund (RCF)**

In the Spring of 2020, OTF created the Resilient Communities Fund to help nonprofits navigate the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund focuses on supporting community nonprofit organizations, Indigenous communities, small municipalities, and charitable organizations to recover from and adapt to severe disruptions caused by the pandemic.

The needs for recovery and resilience are variable across different organizations and different sectors. Many organizations impacted by the pandemic are now seeking to expand successful programs and services that were adapted earlier in the pandemic by hiring and re-engaging staff and volunteers. Others are focused on adapting or adding new programs to meet the changing needs of the community due to COVID-19. Many still, are creating plans and putting activities in place to ensure long-term success of the organization.

To meet the changing context of the pandemic and the changing needs of the nonprofit sector, the Resilient Communities Fund was adapted in spring of 2022. To assist organizations in their ongoing recovery efforts, the latest round of the RCF awards eligible organizations a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$200,000 for up to 2 years. RCF Rounds 1 to 3 awarded eligible organizations between \$5,000 and \$150,000 for up to 1 year to help adapt the delivery of their programs and services in the face of the pandemic. The outcomes for the latest RCF round were also adjusted to recognize the changing realities and needs of the sector and to support organizations to:

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- Develop and implement medium to long-term plans to address new organizational needs related to COVID-19
- Provide supports to staff and volunteers to adapt to organizational changes
- Adapt or add new program and service delivery to meet the changing needs of the community
- Expand previously adapted programs and services to meet the changing needs of the community
- Meet public health guidelines, safely deliver programs and services and/or prepare for future disruptions through the purchase of necessary equipment and/or technological infrastructure

By investing in projects through the RCF, we expect to see increased capacity for more organizations to build resiliency and adapt the way they work with an eye toward financial viability and long-term sustainability.

### Community Investments 2022-2023

The 2022-2023 fiscal year represents a shift towards a more typical funding year for OTF. The previous round saw OTF disperse its entire funding allocation for the year in one funding round. At \$96M, it was the largest round of funding in OTF's history. This year, the granting allocation will be split between two RCF funding rounds, and, after a two-year hiatus, the return of the Capital stream to support organizations and their infrastructure projects.

The current round is the fourth round of RCF since its launch in May 2020. The funds will be used to support organizations whose work aligns with OTF's six Action Areas (Active People, Connected People, Inspired People, Green People, Promising Young People, and Prosperous People). The following report will provide a summary and analysis of recommendations of the Grant Review Teams for the April 6, 2022 deadline of the Resilient Communities Fund.

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### Schedule 1: Executive Summary

#### 1.1 Cycle highlights:

- This round, **\$28M is available to be disbursed**, less than a third of what was available in the previous round and 60% of what was available in RCF Round 1 and RCF Round 2 (\$96M in RCF Round 3, \$42M in RCF Round 2 and \$41M in RCF Round 1).
- The **demand rate is \$6.35** requested for every dollar recommended for approval (16% of all dollars requested are being recommended for funding). This higher demand rate is due to the decreased disbursement available, while dollars requested has remained in line with previous RCF rounds.
- **1587 applications** were received this cycle, **requesting \$180M** for organizational recovery and rebuilding initiatives. This is almost identical to the dollars requested in Round 3 in December 2021, despite being a much smaller funding allocation. It also represents a 20% decrease in dollars requested from Round 2 in March 2021, and a 20% increase in dollars requested from Round 1 in November 2020.
- The Grant Review Teams are **recommending 279 projects for approval, totalling \$28.3M**. This is the lowest number of approvals out of all the RCF rounds, largely driven by a smaller funding allocation.
- **64% of dollars recommended for approval were for salaries. This is up from an average of 35% for the previous rounds. Conversely, only 6% of recommended dollars will go towards capital purchases, down from an average of 23% for the previous rounds.** This may be a result of the different outcomes identified for RCF Round 4 compared with Rounds 1 to 3 and also suggests that organizations are now more focused on staffing as they prepare to increase the delivery of their programs and services.
- **Grants recommended for projects serving Francophones had the highest approval rate of all demographic groups at 27%** (compared with a 18% overall approval rate)
- Compared to previous rounds, more **organizations are reporting higher operating capacities. 74% of recommended funds are going to organizations operating at 70% or higher capacity**, compared to 66% in RCF Round 3, 45% in RCF Round 2 and 49% in RCF Round 1.
- **51% of recommended grants chose to expand previously adapted programs and services as a grant outcome, while 24% identified procuring equipment and or technological infrastructure as a grant outcome.** 49% also chose to adapt or add new programs and services to meet the changing needs of the community due to COVID-19.
- **Organizations serving underhoused and homeless populations received 10% of the recommended grant dollars**, up from an average of 5% from the previous three rounds.

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### 1.2 Noteworthy Grants

Below, we highlight some of the initiatives that are being recommended:

#### **Increase food security for an Indigenous population in Ottawa**

With a Resilient Communities Fund grant of \$65,600 over a 12-month period, Tungasuvvingat Inuit will undertake a feasibility study to support planning and growth of their Food Security Program, including the potential to build a food security centre in Vanier, Ottawa. Engaging the Inuit community, the feasibility study will identify a culturally relevant food program delivery model, a communications strategy, a capital plan and potential funding resources. The strategy will respond to the needs of the urban Inuit population and growing Inuit population living outside of Ottawa with respect to food security.

#### **Tailor programming to ensure equitable access for young adults with developmental disabilities**

Through a grant of \$107,300 over 2 years, Crossing All Bridges will build its resiliency by offering both virtual and in-person programming to young adults with developmental disabilities living in Branford and Brant County. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization found that some youth had greater success with online programming while others were unable to participate. Many participants have not returned to in-person programming because of safety concerns related to living with aging family members, which is impacting the organization's financial health. This grant will provide staffing and technology resources to allow more youth to receive support tailored to their needs by offering a mix of both online and in-person programming.

#### **Bring art to a Francophone community in West Nipissing**

With a Resilient Communities Fund grant of \$139,400 over 2 years, the Conseil des Arts de Nipissing Ouest (CANO) will rebuild their financial stability and organizational resilience to continue to support the Francophone community in the West Nipissing area. The funding will help the organization to transform their arts programming and improve their communications and fundraising tools and approaches.

#### **Expand a program to feed nutritious meals to people in Kingston**

Martha's Table provides nutritious meals to people facing barriers in Kingston, Ontario. With a grant of \$44,100 over 12 months from OTF, they will be able to expand their previously adapted program of delivering meals on weekends. The COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in food insecurity for vulnerable populations and Martha's Table saw an increase in demand for its services. In addition to food insecurity, many people still cannot leave their house or be in public spaces and are facing isolation. Martha's Table's meal delivery program has helped to perform brief wellness check-ins and strengthened the connections with the community. This grant will help expand the meal delivery program by adding 75 new participants per day during the weekend, totaling 7800 per year.

#### **Develop a program to economically empower racialized women in Kitchener-Waterloo**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, 1.5 million racialized women lost their jobs. Surveys show a labour market gap among women of different ethnicities with South Asian & Black women having the highest unemployment rates. With a \$91,400 grant over a 12-month period from the Resilient Communities Fund, the Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo will design a culturally responsive economic strengthening program for racialized women in the Kitchener-Waterloo

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region. The program will provide racialized women from the Black, Turkish, Farsi/Dari-speaking, Arab, and South Asian communities with crucial skills to participate in the labour market. Skills such as job search strategies, interview preparation, resume building, and starting home-based businesses will be among the topics covered. This program will help ensure a strong, equitable, and sustainable economic recovery from COVID-19 impacts for racialized women in the region. The goal of the pilot program is to develop employment support training for a minimum of 60 women over the course of the year.

### 1.3 Sign-Offs

Sign-Off from Chairs: Each GRT Chair has signed off on the recommendations of their GRT.

Compliance with OTF Policy: The Vice-President, Community Investments has reviewed granting policy compliance. The Vice-President, Community Investments confirms that all recommended grants are within the granting policies of the Foundation.

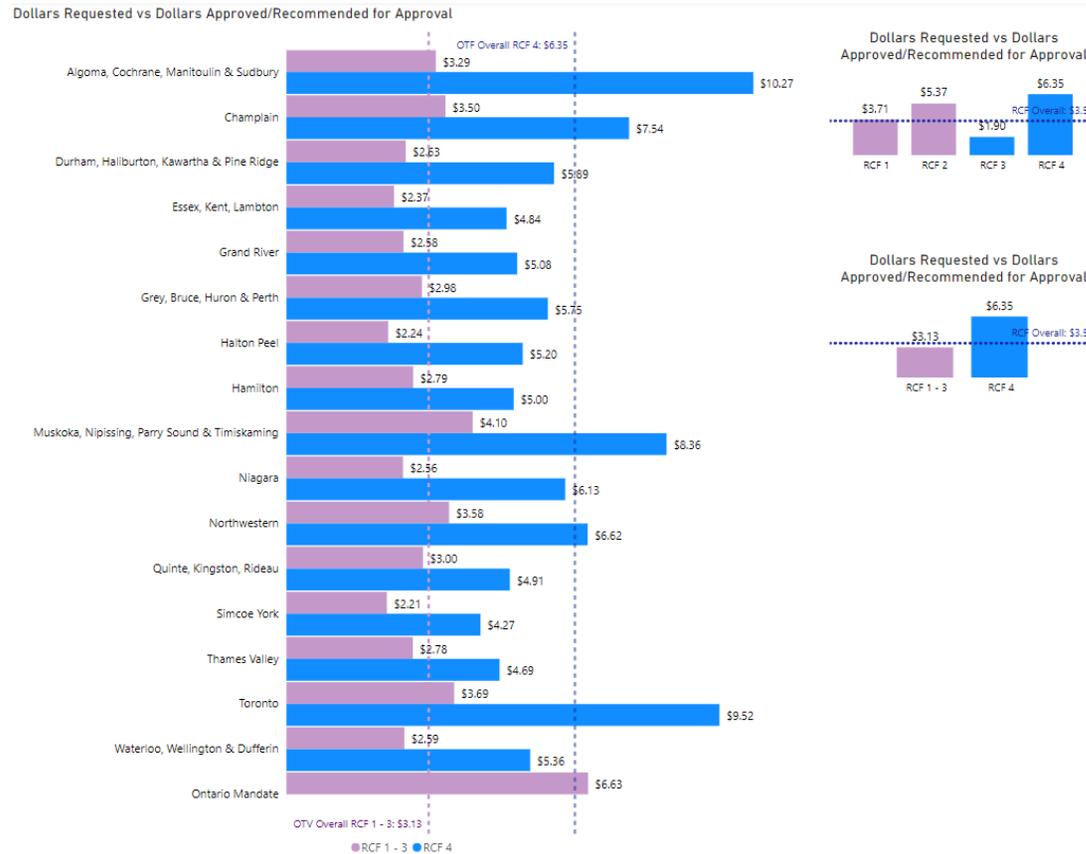
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### Schedule 2: Resilient Community Fund Investments

#### 2.1 Demand Overview

The demand ratio has increased significantly for all catchments in RCF Round 4 compared to RCF Round 3 due to the decrease in available funding. The average demand ratio has risen to \$6.35, up from \$1.90 in RCF Round 3 and \$5.37 in RCF Round 2<sup>1</sup>. The average funding allocation for each of these rounds was considerably higher than for RCF Round 4. This round, ACMS has the highest demand ratio at \$10.27, up from an average of \$3.29 for the previous three rounds. Toronto has the second highest demand ratio at \$9.52, up from an average of \$3.69 for the RCF Rounds 1 to 3. MNPST and Champlain have the third and fourth highest demand ratios, at \$8.36 and \$7.54, respectively.



<sup>1</sup> To increase the comparability between RCF Round 4 and the preceding three rounds, the demand ratios for Rounds 1 to 3 have been combined as an average value across the three rounds

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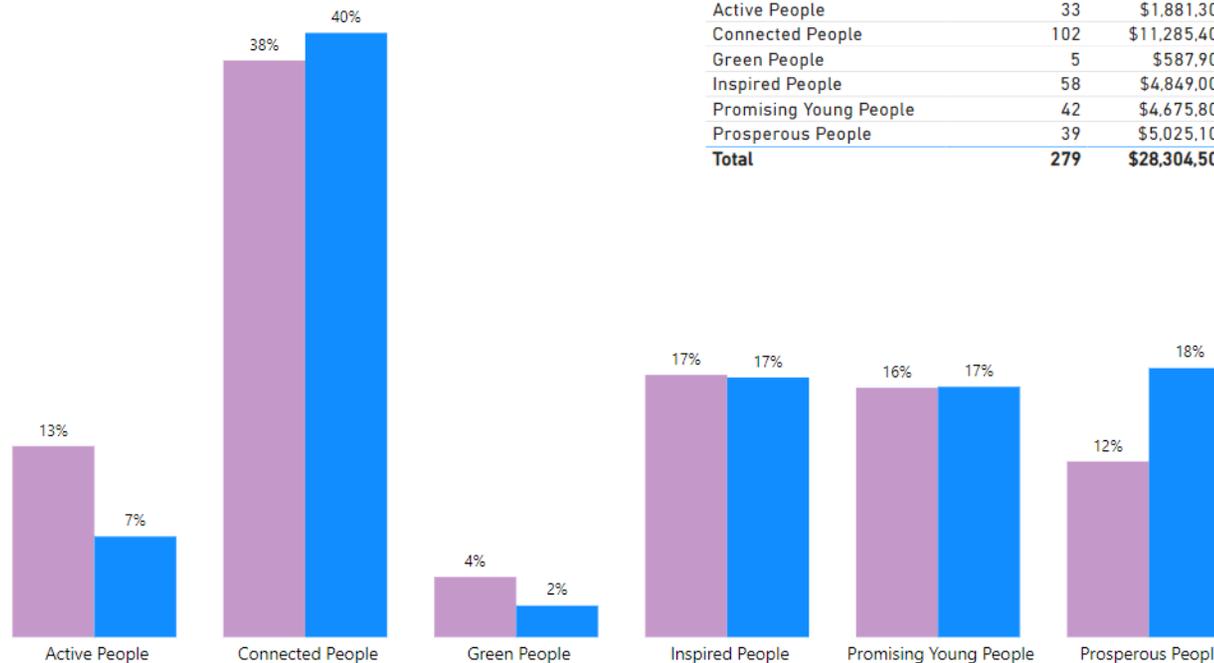
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### 2.2 Action Area Overview

Organizations whose mandate aligned with the Connected People Action Area received the highest share of recommended investments at 40% in RCF Round 4, similar to previous rounds, where the average amount recommended was at 38% of all dollars recommended for approval. Prosperous People (18%), Promising Young People and Inspired People (both at 17%) received similar percentages of recommended investments. Organizations that align with the Green People Action Area remain the smallest share of the Action Areas with the smallest proportion of dollars recommended, as well as smallest proportion of dollars requested. Organizations who align themselves with the Active People Action Area saw a 50% decrease in the amount of dollars recommended for approval this round compared to the average of the previous three rounds, while organizations aligned with the Prosperous People Action Area saw a 50% increase in the dollars recommended for approval this round. This change is out of step with demand from these Action Areas, however, as dollars requested by organizations aligned with the Active People Action Area only decreased by 20% compared to the average of the previous three rounds, while the dollars requested by organizations aligned with the Prosperous People Action Area did not change from the average of the previous three rounds.

Dollars Approved/Recommended for Approval by Action Area

● RCF 1 - 3 ● RCF 4



Action Area	Recommended for Approval	Amount Recommended
Active People	33	\$1,881,300
Connected People	102	\$11,285,400
Green People	5	\$587,900
Inspired People	58	\$4,849,000
Promising Young People	42	\$4,675,800
Prosperous People	39	\$5,025,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>\$28,304,500</b>

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### 2.3 COVID-19 Impacts on Organizations

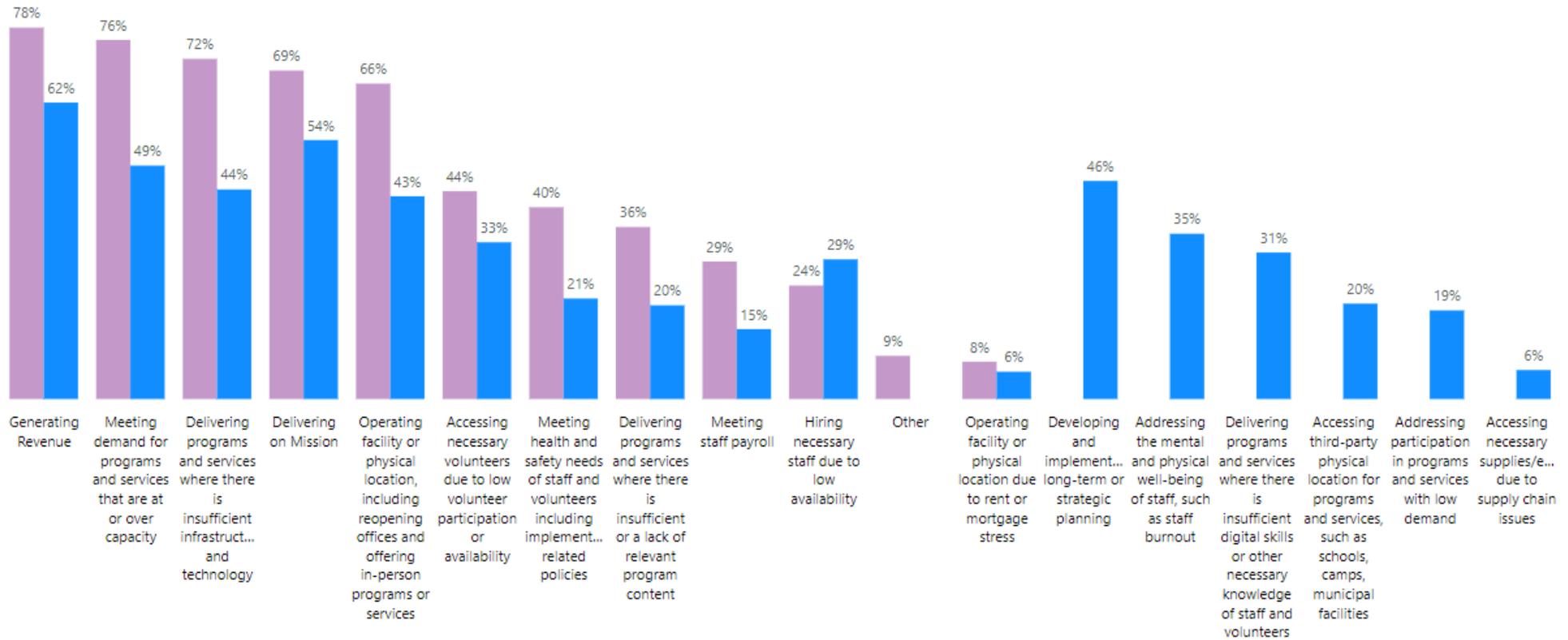
For RCF Round 4, applicants had a larger selection of COVID-19 impacts to choose from than the previous three rounds. As such, a decrease from some of the impacts available for selection in the previous rounds can be attributed to applicants prioritizing some of the new impacts available this round. Generating revenue is still the most prevalent impact of COVID-19 for organizations, but a smaller percentage now list it as an impact of COVID-19, down from an average of 78% in Rounds 1 to 3 to 62% in Round 4. In addition, fewer organizations list meeting demand for programs at or over capacity and delivering programs where there is insufficient technology as an impact this round suggesting the necessary transitions to virtual operations have been completed by many organizations at this stage in the pandemic. Instead, 29% of grants recommended for approval list hiring staff due to low availability as an impact of COVID-19 this round, up from an average of 24% the previous three rounds. We also see a higher percentage of dollars being awarded to organizations operating at 90% or higher of their capacity. Additionally, 35% of grants recommended for approval list the well-being of staff as an impact this round, indicating organizations are now concerned about overworking their current staff and are looking to hire more people to ease their burden. This is consistent with an increase in the percentage of recommended dollars being used for salaries as reported in section 2.4. Additionally, 46% of recommended grant recipients identified that COVID is impacting their organization's development and implementation of long-term and strategic planning.

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### Type of COVID Impact

● RCF 1 - 3 ● RCF 4



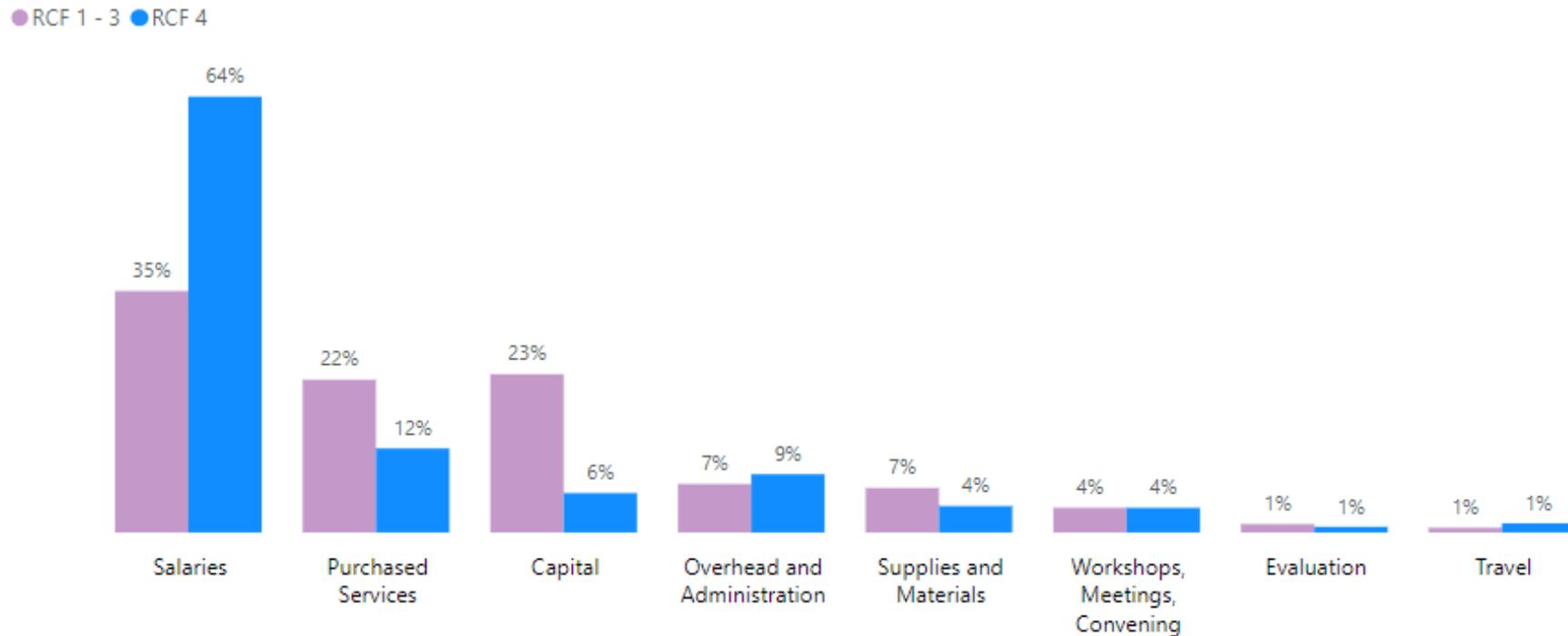
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### 2.4 Budget Line Requests

Top budget line requests across all catchments focused on salaries, while capital requests saw a sharp decrease. The shift in focus towards salaries can be attributed to a need for organizations to increase staffing levels as they prepare to increase their operations. The percentage of dollars awarded being used for salaries has increased from an average of 35% in RCF Rounds 1 to 3 to 64% this round. Conversely, budget line requests for investments in capital have dropped from an average of 23% of dollars awarded to 6% and purchased services have dropped down to 12% from 22%. These changes are in line with demand, as the percentage of dollars requested for salaries has also risen this round, up from an average of 34% to 57%. Dollars requested for capital and purchased services have decreased from averages of 23% and 21% to 8% and 15%, respectively.

### Dollars Approved/Recommended for Approval by Budget Category



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### 2.5 Project Outcomes<sup>2</sup>

Half of the applications recommended for approval list “expand previously adapted programs and services to meet the changing needs of the community...” – the most frequently identified outcome. Similarly, half of the applications recommended for approval list “developing and implementing medium to long-term plans” as a key grant outcome. One-quarter (24%) of recommended applications listed the purchase of equipment or technological infrastructure as a grant outcome in line with a significant decrease in capital requests in the budget shown in section 2.4.

Grant outcomes still vary across the different Action Areas. Organizations aligned with the Active People Action Area still list capital purchases as a key outcome of their grant, with 67% of grants recommended for approval listing purchasing capital as a key grant outcome. This is further supported by the higher proportion of dollars awarded for capital purchases in the budget line requests for organizations in the Active People Action Area (21 % of dollars awarded). Organizations aligned with the Inspired People Action Area, on the other hand, are more focused on expanding previously adapted programs, with 75% of grants recommended for approval listing that as a key outcome. Organizations aligned with the Promising Young People and Connected People Action Areas place the highest emphasis on developing plans for the long-term with 75% and 67% listing that as a key outcome, respectively. Aside from Active People, organizations aligned with the other Action Areas have placed a diminished importance on the purchase of new capital and are instead focused on expanding current offerings or making long-term plans.

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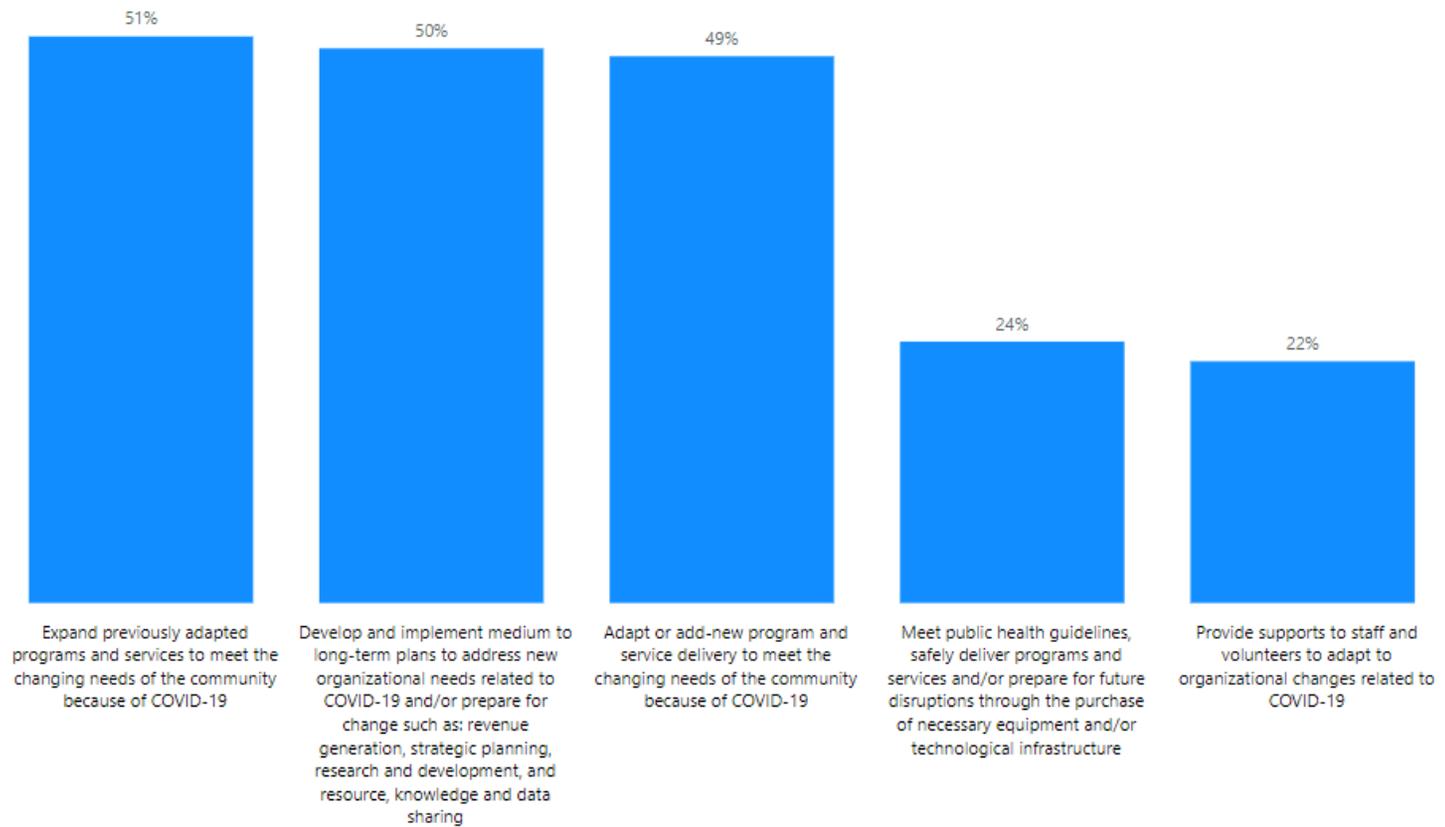
<sup>2</sup> For this round, applicants had a new selection of outcomes to choose from that were not available in the previous rounds. It is therefore not appropriate to directly compare outcomes selected this round with previous rounds. However, important trends can still be observed.

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### Type of Outcomes

● RCF 4

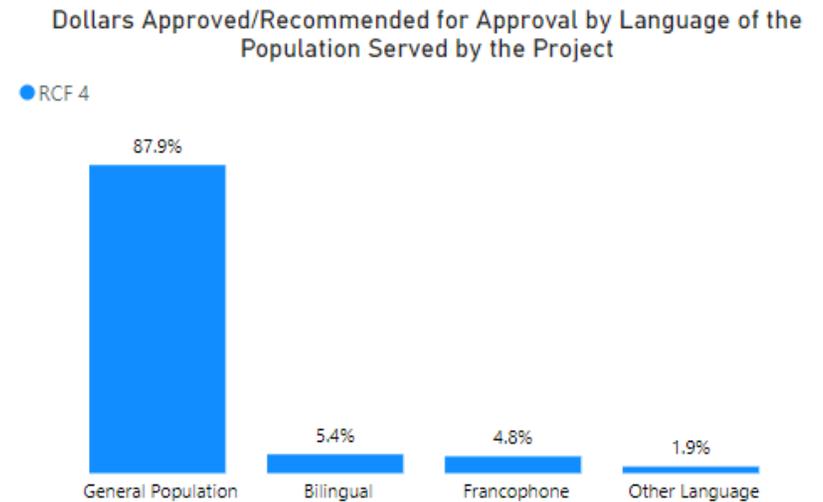
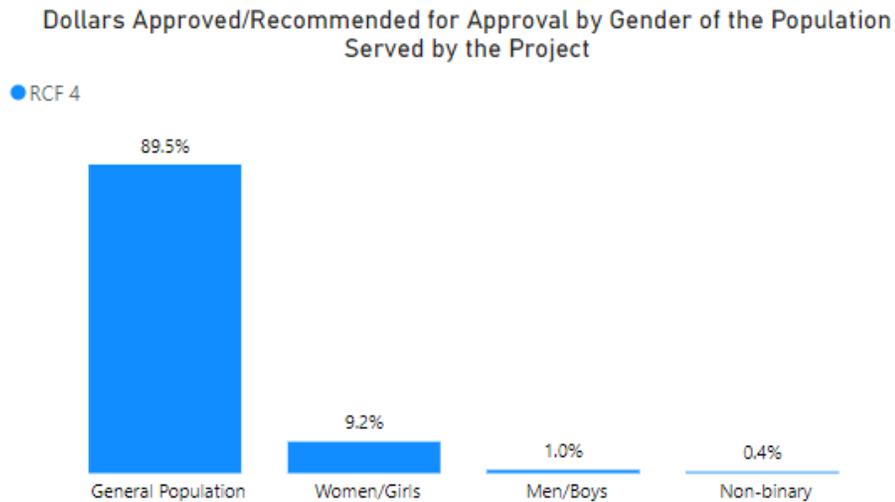


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### 2.6 Populations Served and Community Size

For RCF Round 4, two new questions were added to the application related to the gender and language of the population served. These two characteristics are now their own dimension and are separate from the identity of populations served by the project – this means that rates are not directly comparable between current and previous rounds. Projects serving Francophone populations saw a rise in the percentage of dollars recommended for approval, now at 6% of dollars recommended for approval, which is up from an average of 3%<sup>3</sup>. These projects had an approval rate of 27%, which was higher than the average approval rate of 18%. 9% of dollars recommended for approval will be for projects that specifically benefit women/girls.



<sup>3</sup> To increase comparability across rounds, the percentage of dollars recommended for approval to Francophone serving organizations this round has also been calculated using the same methodology as in previous rounds. Previous rounds calculated the number of projects serving the Francophone population by using the combination of the organization's primary language, the language the application was submitted in, and the population served selected by the organization. This results in a percentage different than that presented in the visual for dollars recommended for approval by population language. Data from the visual only shows only the dollars recommended for approval based on the language choice selected by the applicant.

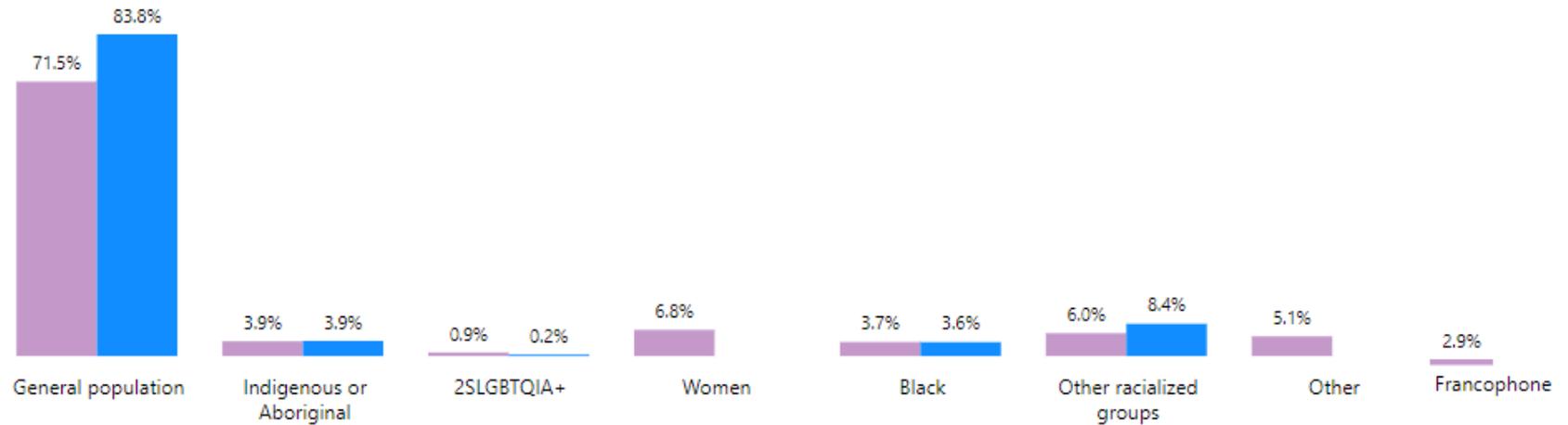
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Projects that serve Black populations continue to have the lowest approval rates among all identity groups (7% approval rate compared with 17% approval across all groups). The largest drop-off from these organizations comes at the organization assessment stage, where over 40% of applications for Black serving projects were declined due to incomplete or outdated financial statements.

Dollars Approved/Recommended for Approval by Identity of the Population Served by the Project

● RCF 1 - 3 ● RCF 4



*Note: Data for the women and Francophone identity groups is not shown for RCF Round 4 in this chart. These two identity characteristics have been moved to their own separate questions in the application; the data for applications recommended for approval by gender and language can be found on the previous page.*

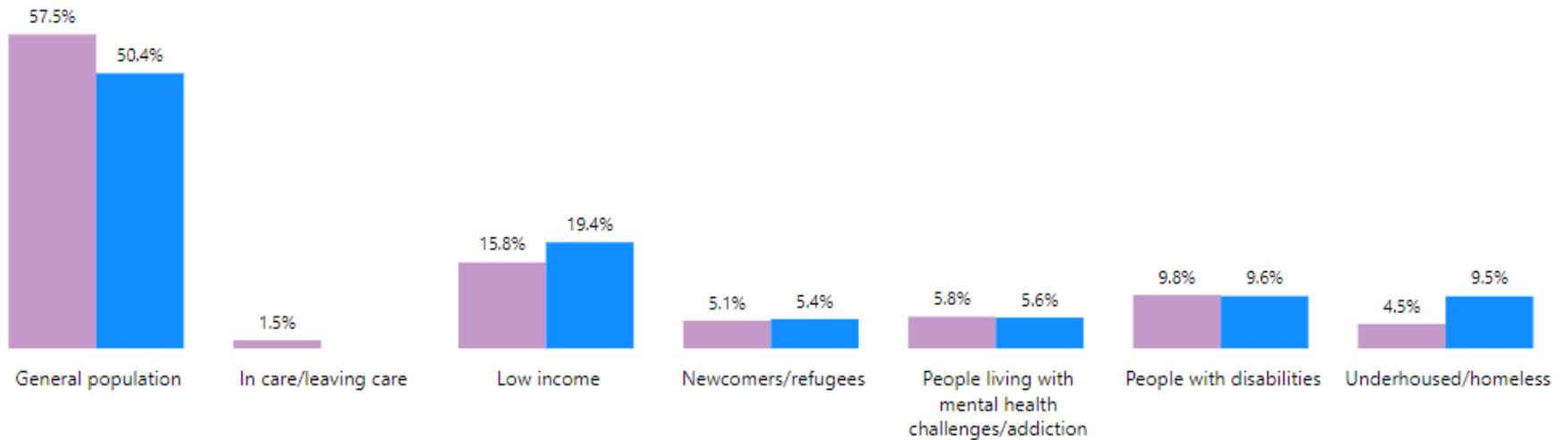
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Similar to RCF Rounds 1 to 3, the largest share of recommended dollars went to projects that serve the general population. Projects serving underhoused and homeless populations saw an increase in the percentage of dollars recommended for approval this round, up from an average of 5% to 10%. Additionally, projects serving low-income populations also saw a rise in the percentage of dollars recommended, up from an average of 16% to 20%.

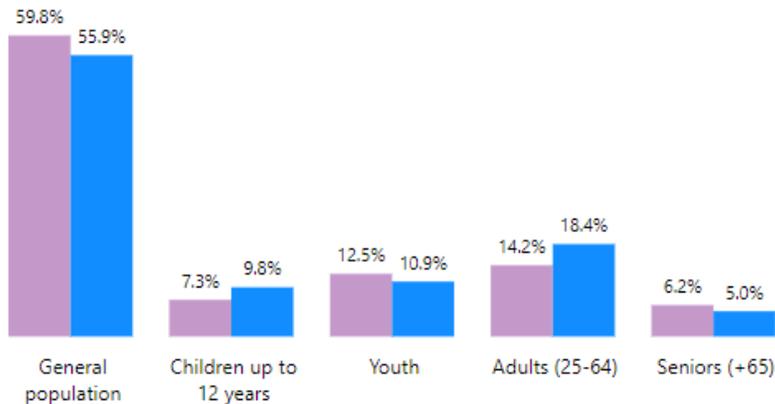
### Dollars Approved/Recommended for Approval by Lived Experience of the Population Served by the Project

● RCF 1 - 3 ● RCF 4



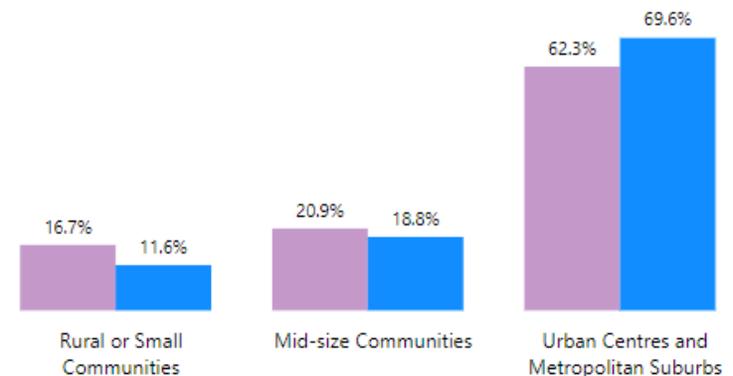
### Dollars Approved/Recommended for Approval by Age Group Served by the Project

● RCF 1 - 3 ● RCF 4



### Dollars Approved/Recommended for Approval by Community Size Served by the Project

● RCF 1 - 3 ● RCF 4

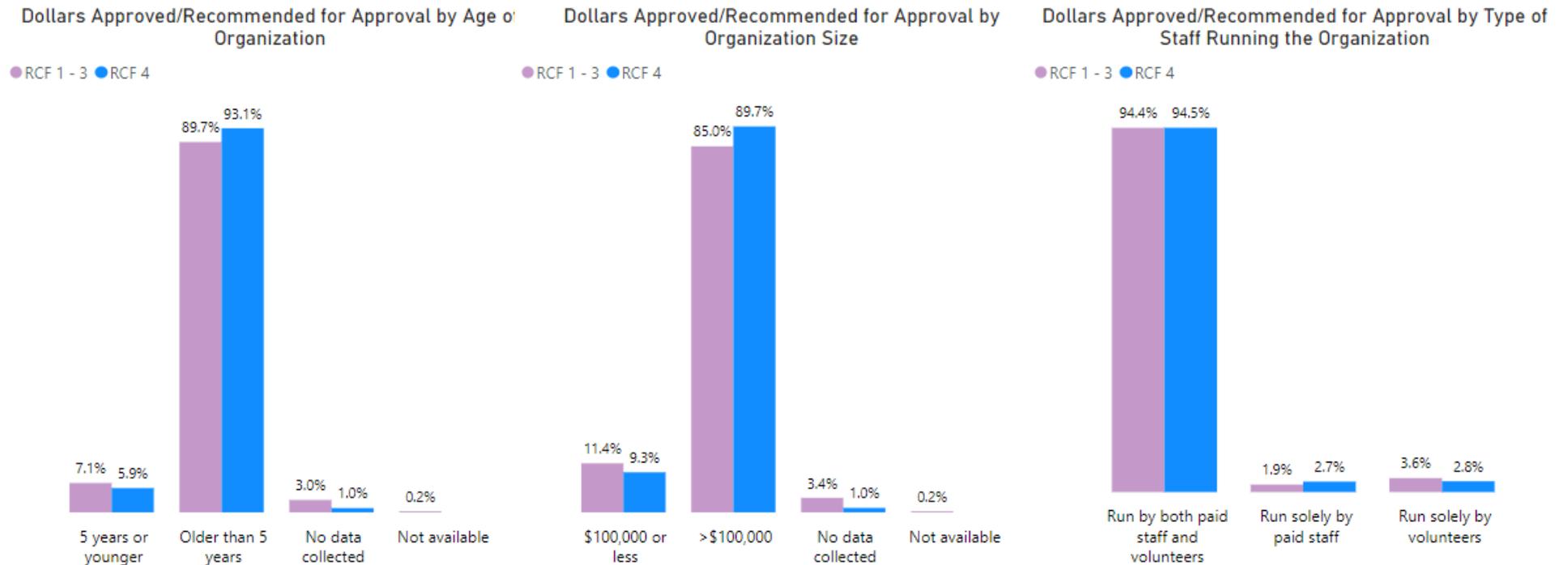


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### 2.7 Organizational Characteristics

Organizations younger than 5 years still struggle to have their applications approved when compared to their more established peers. Only 7% of applications by organizations younger than 5 years were approved, compared to 90% by organizations older than 5 years. This is a continuation of a trend observed across all 3 rounds of the Resilient Communities Fund. Consistent with previous rounds, projects submitted by organizations with annual revenues less than \$100,000 were less likely to pass the organizational assessment stage than their higher revenue peers (77% for organizations with revenues less than \$100,000 and 88% for organizations with more than \$100,000 in revenue). The difference was especially stark among organizations that serve Black populations or other racialized groups. Once more, organizations staffed by both volunteers and paid staff make up the bulk of dollars requested and awarded for OTF. Organizations run solely by paid staff had an approval rate of 23%, higher than the overall rate of 18%, while organizations run solely by volunteers had an approval rate of 8%.



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### Schedule 3: Concluding remarks

\$28.3 million of OTF's granting allocation for 2022/23 is being delivered through this fourth round of the Resilient Communities Fund. The fund was modified to support grants up to two years and up to a \$200,000 limit, enabling the delivery of programs and services that respond to community needs arising from COVID-19. A total of 1,587 applications requesting \$180M were received for the April 2022 deadline. The operating capacities, RCF outcomes selected, and budget line requests of applicants tells of a sector that is looking to ramp up operations as public health guidelines relax, while the sustained demand for RCF and COVID-19 impacts suggest the sector is doing this in the face of continued resource strains. A larger percentage of organizations list salaries as a budget line item than in previous RCF rounds, while fewer list capital. The funds from RCF continue to help organizations throughout this difficult time and position them for success in the near future. Grant Review Teams are recommending 279 projects totalling \$28.3M for approval, approving 18% of requests.