Local Poverty Reduction Fund – General Stream

2017 Call for Proposals Application Guide

Poverty Reduction Strategy Office,
Ministry of Community and Social Services

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ontario.ca/povertyreduction

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Table of Contents

PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Local Poverty Reduction Fund ("the Fund"). We are excited to work with you to make a real and lasting impact on people"s lives by helping them to realize their potential.

This 2017 Call for Proposals Application Guide ("the Guide") is issued by the Ministry of Community and Social Services ("the ministry") for the purpose of supporting groups interested in showcasing and evaluating innovative, community-driven solutions to poverty.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide interested organizations ("applicants") with a background on the Fund, the eligibility requirements and Fund criteria, as well as strategic directions for Round Three. Applicants are asked to read the Guide and application instructions carefully prior to submitting an application.

Looking Back to Last Round of Applications:

When the Fund was launched in 2015, the Fund targeted and focused on social policy and delivery by supporting several long-term outcomes, including the development of a robust body of evidence to inform government decision-making. In addition, overarching goals were to strengthen community partnerships, reduce poverty rates, and improve service outcomes for clients.

So far, we have invested over $28.9M in 71 projects in more than 30 communities across the province. For more information on the funded projects from round 1 please visit: https://www.ontario.ca/page/local-poverty-reduction-fund-2016-successful-applicants, and for information on the round 2 funded projects please visit: https://www.ontario.ca/page/local-poverty-reduction-fund-successful-applicants.

Key Client Groups 2015-2016:

The majority of the Fund projects are serving more than one client group, with an emphasis on youth, single parents and children, and persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Key Project Themes 2015-2016:

The Fund projects are diverse in nature; however, there are some clear themes, with respect to program delivery and type.

Skills Development	Focused on the development of key job skills, life skills, or increasing skill sets of employees delivering services to clients
Support Worker/Case Management/Client Navigator	People providing a specific support to a client or connecting them to a service
Hubs/1 Stop Shop/Personalized Programs	A range of services provided in one location, continuum of personalized supports delivered in one place
Housing Stability/Housing First/Transitions	Programs with a core focus on preventing homelessness, stabilizing housing, or reducing transition from institutions into homelessness
Employment Supports	Programs that offer a range of services to help increase employment outcomes for clients (mentoring, coaching, resume writing, workshops, job fairs)
Education	Enhancing academic performance, securing credentials, participation in post-secondary studies

Looking Forward to Round 3

In Round 3 we will continue to focus on the community level, but desire to capture a more focused range of projects that add to and complement rather than duplicate those projects already underway through Round 1 and Round 2.

Projects related to entrepreneurship, affordable transportation, employment programs for persons with disabilities, and social enterprise models are examples of initiatives that have not been widely funded through the Fund.

Our existing evidence base could also be bolstered through support for projects that serve the following client groups: seniors, unattached persons aged 45-64, rural Indigenous persons, newcomers and persons with disabilities.

Homelessness Stream

In 2016 funding was dedicated for homelessness related projects of up to $10M for 2016 and 2017. In 2016, $6.7M was invested on homelessness-related initiatives, with a remaining up to $3.3M left in this commitment for 2017. Target projects focus on: enumeration of those who are homeless, breaking the cycle of homelessness, prevention of homelessness, transition planning and service re-design.

Indigenous Stream

In 2016 the Indigenous Stream was created for Indigenous-led projects with a minimum $2M funding commitment. More than $4.5M was invested in Indigenous-led projects, in 2016.

A minimum of $2M will be committed to projects from the Indigenous Stream in 2017. For more information, please see: https://www.ontario.ca/page/local-poverty-reduction-fund

New in 2017

As part of our provincial commitment to increase physical and economic access to nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate food; in 2017, up to $5M will be committed to food security related projects. More details can be found on page 13.

The General Stream application and related supporting materials are available at: http://www.otf-lprf.ca/

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

The General Stream of the Fund is offered in partnership with the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). As in 2016, OTF will be responsible for supporting applicants at all stages of the application process, including outreach, coaching, and technical problem solving. They will also continue to manage contracts for successful grantees.

If interested in applying, you will need to submit your application through OTF"s online portal. For more information on how to submit your application, and the application due date, please look for updates on:

- The OTF website at:

www.otf-lprf.ca – English

www.fto-filrp.ca – Français

Late applications will not be assessed.

You are encouraged to review the application questions and Guide, draft responses, form partnerships (including identifying a third party evaluator), and use the application supports being made available by OTF.

Applicants will be informed of successful proposals, in writing, in fall, 2017, and given approval for funding subject to a funding agreement with OTF. Projects may start and funding may begin as soon as fall 2017.

Projects can be funded for a possible duration of up to three years. All funding granted would be subject to applicable reporting, performance and accountability requirements under a project funding agreement.

Please contact OTF for more information at:
- LPRF@otf.ca
- 1-800-263-2887

Eligible Organizations

Eligible applicants include not-for-profit corporations, registered charities, municipal governments, District Social Services Administration Boards and other public bodies (e.g., universities, colleges, and school boards), First Nations, Metis, Inuit communities/organizations, as well as organizations serving urban Indigenous People).

Note: Indigenous-led communities and organizations are welcome to apply for funding through the General Stream. However, they may also apply for through the Indigenous Stream. There is a separate application form and Guide for applicants wishing to apply to the Indigenous Stream.

Social enterprises that are either a registered charity or not-for-profit organization are eligible to apply.

Individuals, for profit, and non-legal entities are not eligible to apply. Applicants may, however, collaborate with such entities in connection with a proposed project (See "Partnerships" section).

Single Applicant Requirement

Partnering and collaboration are important aspects of this Fund and your proposal will be scored based on the partnership approach presented. However, each application must be submitted by a single applicant. If an application is selected for funding, this single legal entity will be the signatory to the funding agreement entered into with OTF and will be identified as the grant recipient.

Notwithstanding any partnerships or collaborations that are identified in the application as sharing, in any way, any role or responsibility related to the project, the applicant / grant recipient will assume full responsibility and liability for those organizations under the funding agreement for the project.

Multiple Applications

Organizations may submit, participate or collaborate in more than one proposal but should consider how multiple projects would be managed. Organizations should demonstrate that they have sufficient capacity to implement parallel evaluations, including clear roles within the organization for leading each project. Applications should describe clearly how the proposals are distinct from each other, as well as the links between them, where possible, for example, in their partnership relationships.

Note: in the spirit of providing organizations across Ontario the opportunity to measure their initiative, and for the purpose of building a broad body of evidence, submissions from applicants that have already been funded through the LPRF more than once, may have their application set aside in favor of another meritorious proposal.

Supports For Applicants

Like in 2016, support will be provided through a variety of methods, including:

1. **Webinars** – to clarify the funding process and increase awareness of the Fund
2. **Regional workshops** – themed events across the province to address common questions and the opportunity to work with coaches on individual applications
3. **One-on-one coaching –** to support applicants to complete their proposals.

OTF will be conducting outreach, informational webinars, workshops, and other support opportunities, to help you with your application.

For more information about these supports, and to find out how to submit your application online, you can do the following:

- Check the website at:
  - o www.otf-lprf.ca – English
  - o www.fto-filrp.ca – Français
- Contact OTF at LPRF@otf.ca or at 1-800-263-2887

PROGRAM CRITERIA

When completing sections 1, 2 and 3 of your application (Project Overview, Business Case and Evaluation Approach) you will provide information required to assess the idea for your project. You are requested to describe the program/service that you want to demonstrate and evaluate its potential for an impact on poverty and your plan to conduct the evaluation.

When completing sections 4 and 5 of your application (Partnerships and Organizational Capacity, Project Delivery and Sustainability) you will provide information required to assess your ability to deliver the proposed project through partnerships that support the program/service and evaluation, and the organizational capacity, delivery plan and sustainability plan that would support the project.

The Budget is the final section, and it asks for information on the cost of the project. Here you need provide information to help assess the request for funding to support the evaluation approach and any incremental program or service costs that would be needed for the project.

Applicants should carefully review the following program criteria and ensure their application addresses the requirements outlined below.

Section 1: The Project Overview

Applicants must provide an overview of their project and its focus. In this section, you are required to provide the following:

- A brief description of the project, highlighting how it is a local, innovative, community-driven program/service that focuses on preventing and/or transitioning people out of poverty.

- How the proposed project differs from the projects that have already received funding through the Fund.

- The program"s client group focuses on at least one identified target population that is disproportionately affected by poverty. For example, women, single parents and children, youth, people with disabilities, people from racialized communities, visible minorities, seniors, and First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous people, people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

- How the proposed program or intervention is innovative, keeping in mind that "innovative" does not necessarily mean "new." Rather, innovative can include programs that have been in place for several years, but is an unconventional or an unfamiliar approach to addressing the issue in your community.

- Some programs working with vulnerable populations may have the goal of alleviating the effects of poverty but do little to transform the lives of individuals or communities. The Fund will support projects that make a substantial difference in peoples" lives by testing and implementing new and innovative solutions to poverty.
    - You may find it useful to describe your proposal in contrast to "services as usual" in your community, describing the limitations of existing approaches and how your organization will address the problem differently.

- How at least one of the 11 indicators noted in the PRS relates to the program or service provided under the proposed project, including an explanation of the causal pathway between the program or service and an impact on the identified indicator(s). The list of indicators can be found on page 14.

Homelessness Related Proposals

For 2017, up to $3.3M is left from the $10M commitment for homelessness related projects.

Organizations submitting homelessness related proposals should describe how their proposed project will:

- Advance Ontario"s long-term goal of ending homelessness, including the goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years.
- Support provincial action to reduce youth homelessness, Indigenous homelessness and homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems, such as hospitals, domestic violence shelters; correctional and youth justice services; and child welfare.

The following areas of homelessness will be considered for the dedicated homelessness funding:

- **Homelessness Enumeration:** evaluation of the effectiveness of the existing and new enumeration methods to collect homelessness data and measure the reduced rates of homelessness for priority populations; comparison of different enumeration methods or use of an integrated enumeration framework (i.e. a combination of data approaches); enumerating hidden homelessness.
- **Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness:** evaluation of programs and services that aim to break the cycle of homelessness by moving people out of homelessness and providing them access to timely and appropriate housing solutions and supports.
- **Homelessness Prevention:** evaluation of programs and services that aim to prevent people at risk of homelessness to become homelessness and focus on diversion, coordinated service provision and improved service access.
- **Homelessness Transition Planning**: evaluation of programs and services that support and improve transition of people from provincially-funded institutions and service systems and result in the increased service access to appropriate services.
- **Service Re-design:** evaluation of new program/service models that support transformation of the housing and homelessness system to address the shifting needs of the homeless populations and the need for organizations and service providers to change to meet them, for example, transforming emergency shelter services towards transitional housing; focusing on portable and coordinated supports.

Ontario

Note: Proposals that focus on short-term alleviation efforts that have no impact on long-term outcomes for people who are homeless will not be considered (e.g., temporary shelter programs).

Food Security Related Proposals

Up to $5M will be dedicated to food-related projects that support long-term, poverty reduction efforts. Like all other proposals, food security projects must show through their proposed Theory of Change, how their food security intervention would impact one or more indicators under the PRS.

Proposals that focus on short term hunger alleviation efforts (such as emergency food programs and snack programs) that put food in the hands of individuals, but do not address long-term poverty reduction efforts, and clearly articulate the anticipated impact on a PRS indicator, are not eligible for funding.

To be successful, food security-related proposals must focus on interventions that impact more than physical access to food. Proposals should highlight how their proposed interventions also increase other assets or skillsets related to food security but which support broader poverty reduction efforts. These assets and skillsets include: social inclusion, the transmission of cultural food skills, access to housing and other supports, and improved prospects for employment or increased individual and household incomes.

Ideally, these projects will include, and be led by communities or individuals most at risk of food insecurity, such as Indigenous communities, single mothers, people on social assistance, people with disabilities, new immigrants and people from racialized communities.

Applicants may benefit from considering academic literature that situates food security in a broader social context to assist in developing their theory of change and articulating their anticipated impact on long term poverty reduction goals.

Indicators

The government has identified 11 indicators to help track our efforts on poverty reduction strategy.

1. Birth Weights
2. School Readiness (Early Development Instrument)
3. Educational Progress (combined Grade 3 and Grade 6)
4. High School Graduation Rates
5. Low Income Measure (LIM50)
6. Depth of Poverty (LIM40)
7. Ontario Housing Measure
8. Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
9. Long-Term Unemployment
10. Poverty Rates of Vulnerable Populations
11. Homelessness

Applicants are welcome to identify other relevant measures, in addition to identifying one of the eleven identified in the PRS. The government is interested in other relevant targets and indicators as they relate to the topic and that reliably capture the impact or progress made and applicants are encouraged to include those as well.

The Government of Ontario recognizes that an individual project under the Fund would not by itself move provincial indicators reported under the PRS. We are interested to hear from applicants about the theory of how their program/service, if applied across the province, could have an impact on the provincial target and indicators and how progress could be made if adopted and implemented more broadly. In addition, applicants would score higher if they include an explanation of how desired program outcomes (short, medium, long-term) could also be measured by one of the indicators.

Section 2: Business Case - Rationale and Existing Evidence

You are required to provide a business case for your proposed project. The business case must outline the theory of change and program theory for the given program/service. The business case must also outline the rationale for the given program or service, highlighting how it is supported by available research and evidence and why it is important in the proposed host community. We are looking for explanations of any existing correlations, relationship tendencies, or causal linkages between various characteristics of poverty and the proposed project.

Proposals should be founded in research; evidence from other jurisdictions or established best practices that would point to the potential effectiveness of an idea for preventing, or lifting people out of poverty.

The business case should include, wherever possible:

- Brief description of relevant research reports and data on the poverty issue the program or service aims to address

- Relevant case studies in other jurisdictions, or environmental/jurisdictional scans related to the issue/proposed project

- Assessment of poverty landscape in your community, trends and/or patterns, as well as poverty reduction efforts, including those provided by other programs or services with a focus on a similar/same target population

- Analysis of how your proposed program or service responds to the needs of your community and is supported by the sources of evidence

- Potential relevant quantifiable analysis of the costs and dollar value of poverty addressed or avoided, or the benefits of the program or service provided to the relevant target population.

Please attach a list of citations of available research and evidence used to support the business case with your online application but not the research documents themselves.

Ontario

Section 3: Evaluation Approach

For the purpose of this Fund, an evaluation consists of the systematic collection and analysis of evidence that has the potential to provide valuable information about how a program operates, what program (or service) functions should be continued or modified, how program clients are affected by the program, and whether the needs of a community are being met. Results of an individual evaluation could also provide valuable insight into how findings relate within similar programs, whether programs are geared towards youth, employment, or homelessness, etc. and also would help us build a collective knowledge base. [1]

The type of evaluation approach you use will depend on the program/service being evaluated. For the purpose of this Fund, only two types of evaluations will be considered:

1. **Program Impact** – also called an outcome evaluation - the purpose is to assess the effectiveness of a program in producing change on direct outcomes.
2. **Process** - a process evaluation focuses on the types and quantities of services delivered, the beneficiaries of those services, the resources used to deliver the services, the practical problems encountered, and the ways such problems were resolved.

Please refer to the Program Evaluation Reference and Resource Guide for examples and information on these types of evaluation.

Applicants can focus on evaluating an existing program that is already providing a service to clients that aims to prevent or tackle poverty and improve social inclusion, or evaluate a new program based on a proven example from another jurisdiction. Proposals of this kind would need to incorporate any anticipated incremental program costs[2] and how an evaluation could be feasible given the timeframe.

One of the ways in which proposals will be assessed is on the extent to which applicants can demonstrate a strong evaluation approach that clearly outlines the question(s) the project will address, and the relevant experimental and control variables it will use to measure project impact on poverty.

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[1] The benefits of evaluation include: to improve knowledge and understanding of program effects, to highlight the impact programs/services have on client outcomes, to better understand the client profile and target population, and to demonstrate a reliable and valid analysis to inform future programming, or to form new partnerships with funders, governments, philanthropists, fundraisers, or private entities.
[2] Please see the section on eligible costs. Capital investments are out of scope for this Fund. Other program costs, where required, to demonstrate and evaluate an intervention may be eligible for funding.

Ontario

Strong proposals will also identify the type of methodology required to assess program impact/effectiveness, including a description of the program goals and objectives and will highlight the current program metrics and indicators used and/or required to perform the evaluation.

As a result, the proposed evaluation approach should address each of the following:

- The intended question an evaluation would help answer.

- Any existing evidence that demonstrates the program"s impact on client outcomes, and how the proposed evaluation would strengthen existing knowledge on program effectiveness/efficiency. E.g. an existing program evaluation.

- The program"s desired outcomes, in the short, medium and long-term.

- The program metrics that have been identified, such as input and output measures.

- Program"s causal linkages, how they relate to the program"s goals and objectives and how/why the program/service is deemed to have an impact on the target population. An existing program logic model could be provided to illustrate how the program is intended to work.

- Method/approach required to evaluate the research question and identify measures for the different program elements and their relationship to client outcomes. Where appropriate, also include a description of any potential factors that should be controlled to better understand the causal effect of the program/service compared to other, external factors.

- Quantitative and qualitative research methods and data collection instruments required to perform the evaluation; use of quantitative data is mandatory.

- Identify the required experimental or non-experimental design where relevant, examples include: the use of randomized control studies, use of comparison groups, pre- and/or post-test analysis, and/or surveys, and/or complemented by qualitative methods such as focus groups and key informant interviews.

In support of this section of the application, applicants are encouraged to share any relevant program logic models that could form the basis of the proposal, if available. For more information on evaluation, you may wish to refer to the Program Evaluation Reference and Resource Guide.

Third Party Evaluator

In this section applicants are required to identify who (i.e., what individual/institution) will be performing the evaluation. If an evaluator has not been yet assigned on to the project, applicants are encouraged to describe how they will identify and engage an evaluator. Clarity about who will evaluate and how they will perform the evaluation will strengthen the proposal.

An evaluator engaged by a successful applicant and supported through the project is expected to be external to the organization and responsible for developing and implementing an evaluation framework for the project. It is our view that a third party, arms-length evaluator will help ensure that an evaluation can be fully implemented, apply a methodology that addresses internal and external validity, and support impartiality in the project findings.

Engaging an evaluator early in the process will help you to complete this section of the application. If you do not have a third party evaluator in mind and would like assistance to find one, please contact OTF as early as possible so that they can provide you with resources and supports. Contact OTF by:

- Email at: LPRF@otf.ca
- Phone at: 1-800-263-2887

The qualifications of an evaluator might include, but are not limited to the following:

- Academic: Professor and/or appointee at a recognized university or other research institute with a background in qualitative and quantitative research methods and knowledge of applied methods and evaluation research.

- Practitioner: An accredited evaluator (see evaluationcanada.ca/roster-credentialed-evaluators), or a practitioner who can demonstrate knowledge, skills and experience with quantitative and qualitative research methods and program evaluation. Local public health units, larger non-profit organizations and specialist evaluation enterprises also have evaluation experts on staff.

By submitting an application, applicants agree that if their project is selected for funding, information about the project will be publicly shared for the benefit of other communities and organizations. Such information includes key findings, evaluation results and data, and the lessons learned. Personal information about individuals will not be collected or shared.

Public use could include: sharing lessons learned and best practices, contributing to evidence-based policy and program design and delivery in the social services sector, supporting Ontario"s Open Data initiative and supporting further research and analysis based on data and findings from the Fund"s projects. Please see section on Privacy and Personal Information.

Section 4: Partnership and Collaboration

You are required to describe and detail the partnerships and collaborations that would support your project. Applications that highlight the key partnerships they are leveraging to maximize the benefits of their project and provide stronger service integration will score higher. Similarly, proposals that include a variety of new and enriched arrangements that cover areas such as financial/in-kind contributions, capacity building, or training in addition to service delivery will also score higher.

Evidence suggests that single service arrangements using a siloed approach may not be the best way to support client outcomes. Increasingly, robust partnerships, service integration and wrap-around services are showing an impact, especially for clients with complex needs.[3]

Applicants should describe partnerships by including:

- The names of key organizations that you will partner with to deliver the program/service and how the partnership may be different or unique in contributing to innovative program/service delivery and on the impact it will have on your clients.

- Note that partnerships themselves may be innovative. Within this section of your description, please include details about how your project will engage the private sector, or other organizations with whom you do not currently interact.

- How your partnership approach is moving towards service integration.

- The specific benefits of the partners involved, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the network of partners in the project, as well as any accountability towards program performance, risk, and use of project funding.

- Organizations that submit homelessness related projects must include a letter of support from the local service system manager (Consolidated Municipal Service Manager/ District Social Services Administration Board) stating that they are aware of and supportive of the proposed project. We encourage organizations to connect with their local municipality early in the process.

  - The letter should state that your local municipality is aware of and supportive of your proposed project.

[3] Browne G., Byrne C, Roberts J, Gafni A, Whittaker S. When the bough breaks: Provider-initiated comprehensive care is more effective and less expensive for sole support parents on social assistance. *Social Science and Medicine*, December 2001; 53(12):1697-1710.

Ontario

- Information on how partnerships are leveraging other resources (e.g., other funded partnership arrangements, networks, local partnership arrangements, or communities of practice) that are relevant to the proposal. This could include a description of how partnerships are building on other work applicants have done that is funded by either the Ontario government, or projects funded by other orders of government and/or funding bodies. This should include the dollar value of funding and in-kind contributions that will be leveraged from partners, if the application is selected for funding.

- In this section you are not asked to list every single partnership – rather, the focus should be on quality over quantity. Here you should highlight how each partnership will impact the clients participating in your project, and how the partnership is different, unique and unusual and will strengthen your project.

Section 5: Project Delivery and Sustainability Plan

Project Delivery

Applicants are required to provide a project delivery plan that includes the following:

- Overall project timelines (expected start and end date).

- Chronological list of major project tasks to be completed, with clearly articulated outputs and proposed start/end dates for each task. The finalization of the proposed evaluation plan and partnership should be included in this list of project tasks.

- Identification of staff members (including their position and credentials) and/or participating organizations responsible for major tasks.

- Risk assessment that identifies potential risks to successful project delivery, and includes mitigation strategies for each identified risk.

- Project performance measurement plan which describes how the success of the proposal will be assessed. Note: these are not the performance measures required for the actual evaluation.

Sustainability

Every project must have a plan to address sustainability of services for clients after the end of the Local Poverty Reduction Fund grant funding. The plan must show how the applicant will ensure that new services provided to individuals during the duration of a funded project will continue to be made available to individuals who continue to need that service following the end of the project.

Funding will only be provided for project proposals with a clear sustainability plan that includes one or more of the following approaches[4]:

- Fully phases out the program, including an identified risk mitigation plan;

- Identifies an alternative source of funding to continue the program once the Fund ends (not just mention a plan to find alternate funding); or,

- Identifies how you will adjust the program structure or program offering to address any potential service gaps for individual clients at the end of the project.

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[4] Project proposals that will evaluate an existing program or service should identify how the program is sustained.

Project Budget

Applicants are required to provide a project budget to help substantiate and assess the funding request.

The budget plan should show the expected incremental expenditures for which funding is requested and it should include the costs of an evaluation under these expenditures. Please carefully review the section on eligible and ineligible expenses below for more information.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to combine funding sources in support of their project. The proposed budgets should fully disclose continued or anticipated cash or in-kind contributions from lead or participating organizations, and any relevant funding sources for ongoing or existing streams of programs or services that are being leveraged as part of the project proposal. Securing in-kind contributions will strengthen your application.

Note: As a condition for funding, you may be asked to adjust the scope/value of your project and or budget. This supports efficient use of funding dollars,

To reduce your budget request you could be required to:
- Reduce the sample size
- Review the direct personnel costs and the number of staff listed to run the project
- Reduce the number of components to the project (i.e. instead of doing 5 different components consider doing one or two as a pilot and then adding more once a successful evaluation has been completed)

The total funding and associated costs being requested must be, in their entirety, net new and incremental costs for your organization and your partners. They must also be exclusively for the purposes of executing our Local Poverty Reduction Fund project and its evaluation.

All costs must be fully compliant with the requirements of the Fund 2017 Call for Proposals Application Guide, and any costs outlined in the final budget that are ineligible will be neither recognized nor funded under the project agreement with the Ontario Trillium Foundation as the project rolls out.

You will be required to affirm your understanding of, and compliance with these requirements as a condition of your application.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

An inter-ministerial committee will review and assess the applications against the eligibility requirements and program criteria and make recommendations for project funding.

Project proposals would need to meet the following eligibility requirements in order to be scored and considered for funding.

- The proposal was submitted by a single, eligible applicant;

- The project proposal focuses on at least one of the target populations laid out in the PRS;

- The intervention in the project proposal can be related to at least one of the PRS indicators;

- You have a proposed evaluation approach and are willing to share your evaluation results;

- Your application contains a sustainability plan for the end of grant funding and a budget to support the funding request; and,

- A letter of support from your local service system manager is included for homelessness-related proposals.

Ontario

If all of the eligibility requirements are met, an applicant's proposal will be scored based on the following criteria and weights:	

1. Project Proposal
Projects are:
 	
• Focused on at least one target population under the PRS
 	
• Innovative, local, community-driven program/service
 	
• How the program is connected to at least one indicator under the PRS
 	
• Focused on preventing or lifting people out of poverty including meeting the government"s goal to end homelessness. Projects wishing to be eligible for the up to $3.3M homelessness funding should focus on one or more of:
 	
    o Enumeration of those who are homeless
 	
    o Breaking the cycle of homelessness
 	
    o Prevention of homelessness
 	
    o Transition planning
 	
    o Service re-design
 	
• Projects wishing to be eligible for the $5M food security funding must show through their proposed Theory of Change, how their food security intervention would impact one or more indicators under the PRS.
 	
    o Proposals that focus on alleviation efforts that have no impact on long-term outcomes for people who are experiencing food insecurity (e.g., emergency food program and meal and snack programs) will not be considered.
	15%

Ontario

2. Business Case: Evidence and Rationale • Provides proposed program theory / potential impact from program or service • Provides evidence for the program theory through correlations, relationship tendencies, or causal linkages between various characteristics of poverty and the proposed project • Includes evidence drawn from literature review and interjurisdictional examples or environmental scans • Includes community snapshot of poverty issues explaining benefit and impact of proposed project in the host community • Documents any potential costs avoided / benefits provided as a part of the proposed project	15%
3. Evaluation Approach, including identified third party evaluator and sustainability plan • Demonstrates evaluation approach that clearly addresses identified question using a process and/or impact evaluations • Clearly outlines causal linkages between program inputs and desired outcomes (including defined short, medium, long-term outcomes) • Use of quantitative research methods • Documents those factors outside the program that may potentially be responsible for affecting client outcomes Qualified third party evaluator is engaged or there is a plan to identify and work with a third party evaluator	30%
4. Partnership and Collaboration • Variety of new / strengthened partnerships making a contribution to the project (where possible include quantifiable financial or in-kind contributions) • Establishment of partnerships with the private sector, or others outside of the applicant"s sector • Proposed benefits of partnerships to clients • Partnerships moving towards community or service integration, not duplication • Show how partnerships differentiate rather than duplicate services in the host community	20%

Ontario

5. Project Delivery, Organizational Capacity and Sustainability • Demonstrates capacity to deliver project including to deliver service and conduct the evaluation through project plan, and history of activity in service area and organizational profile • Identifies risks to delivery and mitigation strategies • Has a well-articulated sustainability plan for when grant ends	20%

Regional Representation

Efforts will be made to select projects that address Ontario"s diverse demographics and geography, including but not limited to covering populations in urban, rural/remote, and northern locations.

Target Population

Funding decisions may also include consideration of the degree to which different target groups as described in the PRS are represented. Clients least represented in current projects are seniors, unattached persons aged 45-64, rural indigenous persons, racialized minorities and persons with disabilities.

GRANT SIZE

The budget for a project will depend on the scope and size of the evaluation, the number of clients involved, whether the project is new or modified and the duration of the evaluation and data required.

The Fund supports a range of small to medium sized projects. It is anticipated that the grant sizes could range from thousands of dollars to hundreds of thousands in some circumstances. The following are general estimates of the cost range of evaluation projects, taking into consideration that the evaluation component will use approximately[5] 15%-25% of the total budget, while "evaluation only" projects may have up to 100% of the project budget directed solely to evaluation. Projects that fall outside these parameters need to provide an explanation as to why this is the case in the "Budget" section of the application:

- **Small/Medium scale, short-term evaluation of single/multi-service organization evaluating an existing service/program:**

  $25,000 - $100,000

- **Large scale, long-term evaluation of complex multi-service organization that is adding a new component to an existing service:**

  $100,000 - $500,000

- **Large scale, long-term evaluation of complex multi-service organization that is creating a net new service:**

  $500,000 - $1,000,000

Funding cannot be requested to „backfill" expenses currently funded through existing government grants or other sources. Program costs would be permitted if they relate to „net new" activity. An example might be where a service provider intends to add a new approach to case management, or a new form of counseling, as a way of increasing the effectiveness of an existing benefit or service. In this case, the incremental cost of the new case management, or counseling would be an eligible expense under the project grant, while the existing benefit or service would continue to be funded from its pre-existing funding source and would not be an eligible expense under this funding grant.

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[5] We realize that some applicants will be working with an external evaluator that will be conducting the evaluation voluntarily, or as "in-kind" support. This explanation should be highlighted where applicable with an estimated dollar value attributed to the in-kind evaluation support

> Ontario

It is critical that you confirm that all budget related costs of your proposed project align with the eligibility criteria.

All applicants are strongly encouraged to combine funding sources in support of their project. In-kind contributions not only reflect collaboration and partnerships – a main goal of the Fund - but it also creates the opportunity for other projects to be considered for funding, which will result in an increase of evidence, knowledge and ultimately, reduced poverty rates.

Although no commitment to award funds is being made in this Guide, the ministry may, at its discretion, choose to fund proposals that range in duration from short-term (e.g., 12-18 months) to longer-term projects (e.g., 18-36 months).

Ontario

USE OF FUND DOLLARS

The use of funds and eligible costs will be governed by a project funding agreement. The following information is provided to assist organizations in preparing their applications.

Eligible Costs

Costs that are reasonable and necessary for the successful completion of the project are admissible with the exceptions noted below. These costs would need to be supported by acceptable documentation.

The ministry anticipates that it may consider funding activities such as the following:

- Program costs as they relate to „net new" or incremental activity, (e.g. the proposed evaluation will look at desired outcomes for a different set of clients who have not historically received program/services).

- Program or service delivery directly related to demonstrating the service to be evaluated, including staff salaries and benefits.

- Costs related to the evaluation:

    o Staff time to collect data, conduct analysis and report writing (including salaries and benefits);

    o Costs/expenses related to conducting an evaluation, including the cost of hiring a third party evaluator; and/or

    o Demonstrated increased expenses based on the evaluation project (e.g. a direct incremental cost for insurance resulting from the evaluation project).

- Administrative expenses including net new or incremental project activity (including the evaluation/assessment of the project) that results in time-limited expenses not already accounted for through other sources of funding. Reimbursement of identified administration expense claims will ultimately be subject to appropriate documentation of the expenses and their relation to the completion and success of the project.

- Other new, time-limited costs, directly related to the project that are not already accounted for through other sources of funding.

Ineligible Costs

Costs and expenses that do not directly[6] support the project, are not eligible for funding and should not be included as part of the project budget. Examples of ineligible costs include the following:

- Interest expenses incurred on operating loans

- Professional organization fees paid on behalf of staff for membership in professional organizations

- Property tax expenses

- Fundraising expenses

- Capital loans

- Mortgage financing

- Reserve funds capital costs (this includes expenses amortized for longer than the grant duration, including the construction of new facilities)

- Profit making activities

- Budget deficits

- Start-up costs (exceptions may be made if directly related to the evaluation)

- Research projects without an evaluation component

- Special events, such as tournaments, conferences, receptions, festivals, parties

- Publications and information management systems, including community newspapers, video, Web site production

- Legal challenges, costs and settlements

- Public relations and fundraising costs

- Costs covered by other government funding

- Donations

- Bonuses, gifts and honoraria (except if part of the evaluation; for example, to thank persons participating in a survey)

Capital costs may be a need for some communities however, funding of capital costs is beyond the size and scope of the Local Poverty Reduction Fund and will not be funded. We encourage applicants to seek funding from alternate sources in order to fund capital costs.

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[6] Costs and expenses that indirectly relate to the project should be clearly outlined and articulated to determine permissibility.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Project funding, if approved, will be provided to grant recipients under a funding agreement between the grant recipient and OTF.

Grant recipients will be responsible for managing and executing their projects under the funding agreement with OTF. The funding agreement will set out the terms and conditions governing the payment of the grant, and may include:

- project budget;

- project management;

- communication strategies for monitoring and reporting requirements, including annual progress reporting, audits and financial reports;

- milestone and performance measures;

- mode and schedule of payment; and,

- contract termination and corrective action.

Successful grant recipients will:

- be accountable to OTF for all monies and project components, and will be considered to be the final decision-making authority among partners for the project under the funding agreement.

- manage their project plan to meet financial and accountability reporting requirements and deliverables, as identified in the funding agreement.

- engage and manage relationships with their third party evaluator.

- be responsible for the receiving, administering, and allocating funds to any participating organizations in accordance with the requirements of their agreements.

- be responsible for measuring results and reporting on their performance as required by their funding agreement.

- be required to submit regular reporting that will be used by OTF to assess the progress of implementation, as well as compliance with financial and auditing requirements, as required by the funding agreement.

The funding agreement may require the grant recipient to develop formal agreements and/or memorandums of understanding with any project partners to whom funding may be flowed for the purpose of meeting project objectives or addressing obligations.

OTF will review all reporting and monitoring to ensure compliance with the funding agreement and its terms and conditions.

It is anticipated that funding will be allocated in installments according to a specific payment schedule and program phases. The payment of funding installments will be dependent on the grant recipient meeting all program and reporting requirements under the funding agreement with OTF.

FURTHER INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

No Commitment to Fund

The ministry:

- Makes no commitment to fund any applicant;

- May choose which applicants to fund, if any, at its sole and absolute discretion; and

- Shall not be responsible for any cost or expenses incurred by any applicant, including any costs or expenses associated with preparing and submitting responses to this Call for Proposal.

Distribution of the Application Guide

The Call for Proposal and Guide will be made available on the OTF website at http://www.otf.ca/what-we-fund/investment-streams/local-poverty-reduction-fund, and on the PRS website at https://www.ontario.ca/page/local-poverty-reduction-fund. They will also be distributed widely by email.

Conflict of Interest

No Conflict of Interest:

A successful applicant would be required to carry out the program and use the funds received from the ministry pursuant to the program without an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest may include a situation where an applicant or any person who has the capacity to influence the applicant"s decisions, has outside commitments, relationships or financial interests that could, or could be seen to, interfere with the applicant"s objective, unbiased and impartial judgment relating to the program and the use of the funds.

Disclosure to the ministry and OTF

The applicant shall:

a) disclose to the ministry and OTF, without delay, any situation that a reasonable person would interpret as either an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest; and

b) comply with any terms and conditions that the ministry and/or OTF may prescribe as a result of the disclosure.

Confidentiality

Please note that the ministry is subject to the <u>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</u>. The Act provides every person with a right of access to information in the custody or under the control of the ministry, subject to a limited set of exemptions.

Applicants are advised that the names and addresses of funding recipients, their partnered organizations, the amount of funding provided, and the purpose for which funds are provided is information that the ministry may make available to the public.

Additionally, the ministry and OTF may share application information with others for the purpose of evaluating proposals, assessing eligibility and administering the Local Poverty Reduction Fund.

Privacy and Personal Information

Applicants must be mindful of their obligations under relevant legislation when preparing and implementing their grant and evaluation proposals to ensure they are complying with all requirements of law, including but not limited to all obligations with respect to the collection, protection, use and disclosure of personal information.

The applicant is responsible for complying with, and ensuring their partners and evaluator comply with, all ethical and legal requirements relating to privacy, confidentiality and security of the information, including the obligation under any funding agreement that may be entered into, when carrying out their activities in connection with the proposed project, including but not limited to all evaluation and reporting activities.

Ontario

As part of the project/implementation plan, applicants will be asked to finalize their arrangement with the third party evaluator in an agreement. The agreement should include conflict of interest, privacy and security of information provisions, and describe the evaluation approach and methodology. Grant recipients will be expected to ensure the necessary rights are obtained to use the data and information as contemplated in this Guide and any funding agreement that may be entered into.

Rights of the Ministry

In submitting an application, the applicant is deemed to have acknowledged that the ministry or OTF may:

a) communicate directly with any applicant or potential applicants;

b) at its sole discretion, accept applications for consideration that are not strictly compliant with the requirements outlined above;

c) verify with any applicant or with a third party any information set out in an application;

d) make changes, including substantial changes, to this Guide and related documents including the application form by way of new information on the designated website;

e) cancel this application and Call for Proposal process at any stage of the application or evaluation process;

f) reject any or all applications in its sole and absolute discretion; and

g) fund legal entities for similar projects regardless of whether these entities have submitted an application in response to this Guide.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2014, the Ontario government moved forward with renewed efforts to prevent and reduce poverty with the launch of the second Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). The PRS focuses on four key pillars: continuing to break the cycle of poverty for children and youth, moving towards employment and income security for vulnerable groups, ending homelessness and investing in what works by using evidence to measure success.

In October 2015, the Ontario government made a number of commitments to advance the long-term goal of ending homelessness in response to the recommendations from the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness. The government is moving ahead by setting an ambitious target of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years and taking action in the areas of youth homelessness, Indigenous homelessness and homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems.

The fourth pillar focuses on the need for evidence of poverty interventions that work and investing in the right supports. It recognizes that poverty is a complex issue and resources are limited. The Ontario government has committed to measuring success through 11 indicators to help ensure that our investments are making a difference (further information about the indicators can be found on page 9). Ontario is committed to evidence-based decision making to inform program and policy design and delivery, and the Fund has been designed to support that direction.

During engagement to develop the PRS, the government heard from municipal and community partners about the value of tapping into local, community-driven solutions - like the ones that will be identified through this Call for Proposals - and fostering collaborative partnerships across Ontario. One of the responses to the feedback received is the establishment of the Fund.

The Fund helps grant recipients to strengthen their efforts in poverty reduction by providing funding to showcase and evaluate their innovative programs that prevent and/or reduce poverty and demonstrate positive outcomes for vulnerable groups, such as women, single parents, people with disabilities, youth, newcomers, visible minorities, seniors and First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous people.

We want to get the best possible results for the people working hard to leave poverty, and so we must work together to do that. Through this Fund we encourage partnerships and collaborations to support your programs/interventions, whether through in-kind contributions or other innovative partnership arrangements.

So far, we have invested over $28.9M in 71 projects in more than 30 communities across the province. For more information on the funded projects from round 1 please visit: https://www.ontario.ca/page/local-poverty-reduction-fund-successful-applicants, and for information on the round 2 funded projects please visit: https://www.ontario.ca/page/local-poverty-reduction-fund-2016-successful-applicants We realize that some evaluation results may show limited impact on client outcomes and this could give applicants an opportunity to strengthen program interventions to make the programs work better for clients.

Research shows that evidence-based programs are succeeding in addressing some tough societal challenges and resulting in improved client outcomes. A report prepared by the Mowat Centre to help inform Ontario"s PRS, *Realizing Our Potential,* provides a summary of proven approaches to alleviating poverty in a variety of jurisdictions[7].

Further Information

Please go to the OTF website at http://www.otf.ca/what-we-fund/investment-streams/local-poverty-reduction-fund, or the Poverty Reduction Strategy website at https://www.ontario.ca/page/local-poverty-reduction-fund for updates on the Fund and related initiatives.

If you cannot find the information you need on the website and have questions about the Fund, please reach out to:
- LPRF@otf.ca or
- 1-800-263-2887

White, A, Dragicevic, N and Granofsky, T. 2014. *What works? Proven Approaches to alleviating poverty*. Toronto: Mowat Centre.