

ACTION AREA: PROMISING YOUNG PEOPLE

Second Cycle Granting Highlights



In its second granting cycle, the Ontario Trillium Foundation is investing in **51 initiatives totalling over \$10 million to support the positive development of over 1,000,000 of Ontario's children and youth.** As with the last granting cycle, diverse mechanisms and platforms, such as engagement with the arts, physical activity, gender based programming, and the use of youth advisory committees, will support meaningful youth engagement and social emotional development of children and youth. Many of the initiatives will also result in strong and healthy relationships through parenting, mentoring, after school programming, and the enhancement of youth centres.

Approximately 24% of the number of grants recommended this granting cycle in [Promising Young People](#) will result in the civic engagement of diverse youth populations such as rural, low income, Aboriginal, Francophone, racialized and new immigrant youth. One of these initiatives is the “Une Journée d'Information pour une Vie d'Action” (JIVA) program of Youth Ottawa. JIVA will provide 6,000 Francophone youth with an experience based learning civic education program that will empower them to create solutions for challenges facing their community. Evidence from the English program this is modeled after suggests that 67% of youth engaged in the program implement a community action project. The initiative will support youth who do not have access to civic development educational opportunities, and aims to increase the civic identities, civic behaviours and civic competencies of Francophone youth in Ottawa, aged 15-18, by at least 30%.

To date, OTF has invested \$22.4 Million in 103 initiatives to achieve the outcomes of the Promising Young People action area.

Alignment with Government Priorities

The Promising Young People priority outcomes are strategically aligned with the direction of the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services in giving children and youth the opportunity to thrive and successfully transition into adulthood. The investments made through OTF granting support evidence-based outcomes identified in the Stepping Up report, as well as four of the five pillars of the Enhanced Youth Action Plan. The fifth pillar of the Enhanced Youth Action Plan, Working Together, Building on Success, is supported through OTF's Prosperous People action area. The Promising Young People action area is also aligned with some of the priorities of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, especially around 'achieving excellence and ensuring equity: realizing our kids' potential.'

Background

Evidence shows that to become healthy and productive adults, children and youth need specific set of skills, relationships and experiences to support their transition to different life stages. Children and youth with strong social and emotional skills are more likely to have fewer behavioural problems, experience less emotional distress (e.g. anxiety and depression), and exhibit prosocial behaviours. Youth who are engaged, and those with strong emotional and social skills, experience improved outcomes in education, health, income, and employment. They are; more physically active; exhibit fewer risky behaviours; more likely to finish high school; and more connected to family, friends, and community. Apart from these well documented positive outcomes, social emotional learning initiatives have also been shown to produce a significant economic return of \$11 per dollar invested.

Schools today are therefore looking beyond academics to integrate social emotional learning in the classroom, and employers are changing hiring processes, focusing more on the social and emotional competencies of candidates. There is also a growing recognition that youth who volunteer and take on leadership roles further sharpen their social and emotional skills. Currently in Ontario, though 58% of youth volunteer, many still face challenges to meaningful participation in their communities.

The Promising Young People Action Area is designed to foster the positive development of Ontario's children and youth so that they have a better chance for success in life. This is consistent with the research and priorities established by the Government of Ontario. OTF investments will focus on two Priority Outcomes: more children and youth have emotional and social strengths; and more youth are meaningfully engaged in the community.