



Community Grants – 2024 Funding Guidelines

About the Program

Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) is focused on ensuring our communities are equitable, connected, and sustainable; and people are thriving. We are dedicated to assisting those most impacted by inequalities, and supporting organizations that work to remove barriers, build community, and increase opportunities for Waterloo Region residents across our three cities and four townships.

WRCF is focused on improving [social infrastructure](#) in Waterloo Region. We define social infrastructure as the system of organizations, spaces, and experiences that enable people to connect with each other, the bridges necessary to build trust and civic participation, to create a sense of belonging and wellbeing. It's the system that enables sustainable widespread community development.

In 2024, WRCF's Community Grants funding will support organizations that deliver initiatives that respond to four core themes:

- Fostering inclusion
- Breaking down barriers to community participation
- Creating opportunities for engagement
- Developing collaborative relationships between individuals, groups, organizations to strengthen and broaden "community"

Grant Overview

- Applications open February 27, 2024 and close April 2, 2024 at 9:00 am (EST)
- Approximately \$650,000 in total funding is available in 2024

Note: \$566,000 of the funds available are from the WRCF Community Fund and are eligible to be distributed to organizations located anywhere in Waterloo Region. \$84,000 of the funds available are from the Cambridge Community Fund and the North Dumfries Community Fund and are eligible to be distributed to organizations located in Cambridge or North Dumfries. The Trinity United Church Legacy Fund is partnering with WRCF again in 2024 and is providing additional funding.

- Initiatives must be focused on improving social infrastructure within the four core themes
- There are two granting levels for funding:
 - Level 1 - up to \$10,000
 - Level 2 - \$10,001 - \$40,000
- 30% of the funding awarded may be used towards general operating expenses



- Funding must be used between July 1, 2024 and July 31, 2025 for expenses incurred over the same period

Note: Due to the limited amount of funding available, only one application per organization will be considered, and partial funding may be provided. Organizations that apply for funding may also be a fiscal partner for other organizations that are applying for funding.

Organization Eligibility

- Organizations must be located in Waterloo Region and providing services and/or programming to individuals in Waterloo Region, including Cambridge, Kitchener, North Dumfries, Waterloo, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich
- The types of organizations that can apply for funding include:
 - Registered charitable organizations
 - Qualified donees recognized by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) *
 - Non Profit organizations through a partnership with a fiscal partner. This partnership allows WRCF to provide the fiscal partner with the funding on your behalf. If you plan to partner this way, they would be your organization's "fiscal partner" for this funding. If you want more information about how this works, you can find information about qualified donees, fiscal partners, and/or download the fiscal partner form [here](#)

* Note: Municipalities, hospitals, and organizations that operate as a school (private and public; elementary, secondary, or post-secondary) are not eligible to apply

- If you have an outstanding evaluation report from a previous Community Grant, you will need to submit it prior to applying. If your initiative received funding from WRCF's Community Grants last year, you may apply again for the same initiative, but provide the progress of your initiative to date in your application.
- Applying organizations must be able to provide financial statements that show their financial viability for the duration of the initiative, and an initiative budget that is viable, balanced, and reasonable. (Note: If your organization is applying with a fiscal partner, reach out to grants@wrcf.ca and we can help you determine which financial information can be theirs and which would be linked to your organization)

Eligible Initiatives - What will be funded through WRCF's 2024 Community Grants?

In 2024, WRCF's Community Grants will support initiatives that improve social infrastructure in Waterloo Region by addressing the following four core themes:

- Fostering inclusion



- Breaking down barriers to community participation
- Creating opportunities for engagement
- Developing collaborative relationships between individuals, groups, organizations to strengthen and broaden “community”

Note: Initiatives are not required to fit within all these themes. However, the themes have been chosen with the intent that they are intertwined aspects of improving social infrastructure. Community Grant reviewers will be evaluating applications across all four themes, and those with the ability to make a difference in several will generally rank higher.

Examples of eligible initiatives are provided in Appendix A.

Priority will be given to applications that:

- Include evidence that the voices of people with lived experiences have been included in the decision making, development, and/or delivery of the initiative. We will also ask how people with lived experiences will be included in the evaluation of the impact.
- Demonstrate measurable high impact. Things to consider:
 - How will members of our community benefit from this funding?
 - How will members of our community be supported?
 - Demonstrate a meaningful usage of an equity lens in the management of the initiative.
 - Demonstrate meaningful equity practices within your organization, including a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, truth and reconciliation.

Eligible Expenses

- People costs (wages, support to staff and volunteers, mental health and wellness, honoraria, consulting fees, etc.)
- Materials and supplies necessary for the execution of the initiative
- Equipment purchase, rental, lease, and maintenance necessary for the execution of the initiative
- Costs associated with using a space for the execution of the initiative
- Administration costs
- Technology costs
- Printing and communication (including marketing)
- Community outreach and engagement
- 30% of the funding awarded may be used towards general operating expenses

Ineligible Expenses

*Please note: the Community Grants Committee may make granting decisions outside the “Eligible” criteria in unusual circumstances and in response to demonstrated emergencies or special needs affecting an organization.



- Applications that do not demonstrate a connection to any of the four core themes of social infrastructure as defined
- Funds to support children and youth attending a camp. If you are interested in funding for camp subsidies, please refer to [The Waterloo Region Record – Lyle S. Hallman Foundation Kids to Camp Fund grant stream](#)
- Any expenses associated with the attendance at or any costs related to the registration fees for seminars, conferences, workshops, tours, or other travelling expenses
- Major capital expenses – like costs towards a structure, renovations, vehicles
- Events that occur annually, other than first-year funding
- Events such as festivals, concerts, and parades (these types of initiatives may be eligible within [other grant streams](#))
- Sponsorships, fundraising events, or campaigns
- Activities outside of Waterloo Region
- Funding of other endowment funds
- Political or religious activities
- Gifts, prizes, awards
- Funding individuals
- Research
- Expenses incurred prior to July 1, 2024, and after July 31, 2025

How we will be assessing your application

- Applications must align with WRCF's mission, vision, and values
- The initiative should support one or more of the four core themes of social infrastructure, as defined above
- The organization is financially stable as evidenced from the submitted financial documents and the initiative budget is financially viable, balanced, and appears reasonable
- The organization demonstrates the ability to achieve the articulated objectives of the proposal within the stated timeframe
- The impact of the initiative has been clearly articulated in the short term and where possible long term
- Evidence that the organization has made efforts to attract and support diverse members of community

As part of the application review process, applicants will be contacted by a member(s) of the Community Grants review committee to gain clarity about your application.

Can we apply for multiple grants?

Organizations may submit only one application. Organizations who are qualified donees can be fiscal partners for other organizations.



When will we hear about our application?

You can expect communication about the status of your application by late June 2024.

What are the reporting responsibilities for selected initiatives?

A grant evaluation report that illustrates the impact delivered by the initiative is a condition of receiving funding. The evaluation of a grant from WRCF's Community Grants funding will help WRCF understand the impact your grant had on its intended purpose. The final report is due by **August 31, 2025** but can be submitted prior to the due date if applicable. Access to the online evaluation form will be provided to successful applicants upon receiving their Grant Agreement.

How do we submit an application?

Applications to WRCF's Community Grants will be submitted online [here](#). If you prefer to submit a verbal application, please contact us (by emailing grants@wrcf.ca) no later than March 18, 2024 at 3:00 pm (EST) to set up a time to do this.

Readiness Checklist

Ready to apply? Check all the boxes before beginning to prepare an application for funding from Community Grants:

- Our organization is a qualified done, or our organization is working in partnership with a qualified done, and meets the eligibility criteria provided above
- We have read the Funding Guidelines and have an eligible proposal
- We are prepared to submit one application before the closing date of **April 2, 2024**

Once you have checked all those boxes, we'll look forward to receiving your application at [WRCF Community Grant Application](#)

Important Dates:

Application Opens: February 27, 2024
Application Closes: April 2, 2024 (9:00 am EST)
Decisions Announced: June 2024



Appendix A

Here is a list of examples of possible eligible initiatives to help you as you are considering applying:

- Facilitating community conversations on civic engagement and resilience building
- Developing and running an initiative to encourage those with lived experience in the services provided by your organization to participate as volunteers with your organization
- Language supports for existing programming
- Costs associated with improving accessibility to spaces and programs for individuals with physical disabilities
- Bike sharing programs for individuals who do not have accessible transportation options
- Engaging youth from your organization/community in a program to support seniors
- Cultural cooking and sharing classes
- Creation of a community garden, and corresponding initiative to engage community to work together to maintain and cultivate the space
- Bringing local artists together with members of a neighborhood to create murals in public spaces for all to enjoy
- Expanding the demographic reach of current programming through collaboration with other organization(s)
- Moving services into other parts of the region through the use of shared spaces (e.g., a rural community centre)
- Buddy program for community members to support one another
- Social and recreational programming for individuals living in supportive housing or Affordable Housing
- Practical Equity learning community workshops that foster relationship building in neighborhoods
- Safe space circle conversation and counselling for gender diverse youths and their peers.
- Housing and life support programs for young adults living with developmental disabilities who are transitioning from post-secondary school
- Elders gathering for communal knowledge sharing

Disclaimer:

WRCF is dedicated to upholding professional, ethical, and regulatory standards as we work to deliver on [our vision and mission, while staying true to our values](#). We expect partners and organizations we fund to share our commitment to these standards. By applying for funding through WRCF, you are indicating that your organization complies with the regulatory requirements to work with your population(s), and within the legal and ethical framework appropriate for your organization.