



City Enrichment Fund (CEF) 2026

Environment Program Area Handbook





City Enrichment Fund

Environment Program Handbook

Objective

The Environment program area invests in action-oriented initiatives that:

- Protect, rehabilitate, or enhance the natural environment
- Provide residents and visitors to Hamilton with access to natural spaces
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Address the challenges and/or build resilience to the impacts of climate change
- Strengthen the local environmental sector or local environmental organizations

All programs funded through the Environment Program will support Hamilton's community vision, Our Future Hamilton. [Learn more about Our Future Hamilton.](#)

There are two active streams within the Environment Program:

- Capacity Building
- Projects & Programs

Requests above \$15,000: Total funding received from all sources within the City of Hamilton cannot exceed 30% of the project budget.

Requests below \$15,001: Funding requests can now exceed 30% of the program / project budget but cannot be 100% of the proposed project. Additionally, applicants must demonstrate additional funding / revenue sources. Funding amounts for individual grants are dependent on the City Enrichment Fund budget approved by Council for the current budget year.

Note: Audited Financial Statements are required for grant requests greater than or equal to \$30,000.

How to apply for a grant:

- Read the **City Enrichment Fund Guidelines** and the **Environment Handbook** for details about the program, stream objectives, eligibility, and criteria.
- Refer to the **Environment Program Application** section on pg. 9-14 of this handbook to review the expectations for each question.
- Attend an optional workshop led by program staff to learn more about the City Enrichment Fund and Environment Program area guidelines.
- Create an organizational profile and submit application(s) online at: <https://cityofhamilton.smapply.io/>
- Upload all relevant attachments. Use the checklist on pg. 13-14 of this handbook to confirm that you have submitted all attachments.
- Provide any additional information to program staff as requested throughout the application and adjudication/scoring process.
- Returning applicants must submit the final report from their most recent year of CEF funding before receiving further funding for the program.

Capacity Building Stream

Objective

To strengthen the relevance, responsiveness, effectiveness, and resilience of Hamilton's environmental organizations.

Description

The Capacity Building funding stream provides grants to environmental organizations to support capacity building strategies, organizational development projects, and professional development programs with a view to building administrative and management capacity.

Capacity Building Guidelines

These guidelines are in addition to the general City Enrichment Fund guidelines and eligibility criteria.

Available Funding	• Up to 30% of the eligible project or program budget up to a maximum of \$25,000; including capital improvement or equipment costs of up to \$8,000 that clearly contribute to building the organization's capacity • If your program/project budget is below \$15,001, you may request more than 30% of your proposed project/program budget. However, you cannot request 100% of your program/project budget and must demonstrate additional funding/revenue sources.
Eligibility	• Successful applicants are eligible to receive Capacity Building <u>every year</u> • Not-for-profit environmental organizations whose mandates align with the objectives of the CEF Environment program • The program activities must occur in Hamilton and must benefit the local community • Groups of two or more organizations facing similar organizational challenges may collaborate on capacity building projects

Ineligible Applicants	• Groups that do not have an environmental mandate • Groups that have not submitted a final report for CEF grants received for previous project(s) • Foundations; political parties/organizations; for-profit groups and ventures; individuals; and religious organizations (except in cases where the applicant demonstrates clear boundaries between religious activities and the budget of the proposed program) • Organizations whose activities come under the jurisdiction of other departments or agencies of the City of Hamilton or other governments (i.e. school boards, post-secondary institutions, social service organizations, hospitals, business improvement associations)
Eligible Activities/Expenses	• Retaining external expertise or consultants to collaborate with the applicant on a specific capacity building project or program, including the external experts, consultants, or coaches' fees and travel costs within Ontario • Organizational and human resource assessment, change management, and similar processes • Board development and improved governance practices • Mentorship, coaching, job shadowing, and professional development • Business development programs aimed to build the capacity of the applicant to generate fee-for-service revenues • Capital improvement or equipment expenses of <u>up to \$8,000</u> that clearly contribute to building the organization's capacity (CEF staff will contact the applicant to request more information about the organization's existing assets or equipment, the current condition of the assets or anticipated lifespan of the asset and the upgrades required) • Professional development fees and travel for participation in seminars, training sessions, or workshops within Ontario (please provide a description of the event or session, such as a copy of the agenda or programme, as an attachment to your application and demonstrate how participation in the session will enhance the organization's capacity) • Mentor and job shadowing honoraria and travel costs • Fees related to the use of licensed organizational development tools and related costs • Staff costs to participate in, or coordinate, the capacity building program

Ineligible Expenses	• Ongoing operating costs (including staff time not directly related to the proposed capacity-building program) • Research and publications • Undergraduate, post-graduate or other academic and professional training that does not enhance the capacity of an organization to provide programming or services aligned with funding priorities • Capital project planning studies • Retroactive activities • Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)
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Assessment Criteria	All applicants must be able to demonstrate good use of public funds. Applications to the two stream areas will be assessed separately. Capacity Building stream applications will be assessed by the following assessment criteria and weighting: 40% Organizational Capacity as demonstrated by: • Stable organizational leadership (board of directors), established organizational policies and procedures, financial sustainability, and concise strategic plan • How the organization's mandate aligns with the objectives of the Environment program area • A clear vision for how the capacity building initiative will enable the organization to develop and / or respond to the changing needs of the environmental sector The ability to generate earned and private sector revenue (if applicable) or ability to create and enact long-term plans to achieve financial stability 35% Program Merit as demonstrated by: • A clear description of the proposed capacity building initiative that explains how the initiative will further the organization's reach / impact and provide greater benefits to the community • The initiative's relevance to the community and current challenges or issues • The initiative's potential to add to the unique identity of Hamilton by providing new, improved, or innovative ways for the public to participate • A detailed project plan that includes a balanced and realistic budget • The initiative's potential to equip the organization to create strong and successful relationships and partnerships within the community 25% Community Impact as demonstrated by: • Comprehensive and clearly described outcomes that are SMART • Alignment to the community vision
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Projects & Programs Stream

Objective

To support projects and programs that promote clean air, water, and soil, protect, and enhance biodiversity, provide access to natural spaces, and address the challenges of climate change, either by reducing greenhouse gas emissions or by building resilience to climate change impacts.

Description

The Projects & Programs Stream of funding supports activities that provide opportunities for the people of Hamilton to enjoy and actively participate in initiatives that promote clean air, water, and soil, protect, and enhance biodiversity, provide access to natural spaces, and address the challenges of climate change.

Projects & Programs Guidelines

These guidelines are in addition to the general City Enrichment Fund guidelines and eligibility criteria.

Available Funding	• Up to 30% of the eligible project or program budget up to a maximum of \$35,000 per project. • If your program/project budget is below \$15,001, you may request more than 30% of your proposed project/program budget. However, you cannot request 100% of your program/project budget and must demonstrate additional funding/revenue sources.
Eligibility	• Not-for-profit environmental organizations whose mandates align with the objectives of the CEF Environment program • The program activities must occur in Hamilton and must benefit the local community • Groups of two or more organizations are encouraged to partner on collaborative initiatives

Ineligible Applicants	• Groups who do not have an environmental mandate • Groups that have not submitted a final report for CEF grants received for previous project(s) • Foundations; political parties/organizations; for-profit groups and ventures; individuals; and religious organizations (except in cases where the applicant demonstrates clear boundaries between religious activities and the proposed program budget) • Organizations whose activities come under the jurisdiction of other departments or agencies of the City of Hamilton or other governments (i.e. school boards, post-secondary institutions, social service organizations, hospitals, business improvement associations) • Activities that promote existing City of Hamilton programs
Eligible Activities/Expenses	• Eligible projects and programs include, but are not limited to, those that will increase public participation in environmental initiatives, and that will achieve measurable outcomes • Expenses related to activities taking place within Hamilton • Salaries and wages directly related to the project • Project administrative costs including insurance, permit fees, copyright fees, etc. (except any fees related to alcohol) • Transportation within Ontario to and from program activities by organizers, participants, staff, and volunteers • Consultants, instructors, and experts' fees • Equipment and facility rentals • Materials and supplies directly related to the project • Capital assets up to a maximum of \$2,000 per item if <u>no more than 30%</u> of the total amount of funding provided by the City is used for capital asset costs • Marketing, promotion, and audience development costs • Costs of recruiting, training, supporting, and recognizing volunteers • Translation of material aimed at the public or as appropriate for the project • Program evaluation activities

Ineligible Expenses	• Expenses not directly related to the program or expenses of activities that take place outside of Hamilton • Ongoing operations not related to the program (e.g. salaries, wages, travel, supplies, material, minor capital assets, fundraising, marketing, governance, website development and other costs related to ongoing operations) • Purchase of equipment and capital expenses over \$2,000 per item and/or not directly related to the project • Development of proposals or applications • Alcohol and associated expenses required to provide alcohol (permit fees, police, fencing, etc.) • Expenses related to competitions (e.g., purchase of prizes, expenses of jury members) • Deficit reduction • Programs or activities that have already taken place • Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)
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Assessment Criteria	All applicants must be able to demonstrate good use of public funds. Applications to the two stream areas will be assessed separately. Projects & Programs stream applications will be assessed by the following assessment criteria and weighting: 25% Organizational Capacity as demonstrated by: • Stable organizational leadership (board of directors), established organizational policies and procedures, financial sustainability, and concise strategic plan • How the organization's mandate aligns with the objectives of the Environment program area • The ability to generate earned and private sector revenue • A successful track record in project and/or program planning and delivery • Organizational capacity is demonstrated through concise organizational profile, workplan, volunteer plan, financials, etc. 45% Program Merit as demonstrated by: • The project or program's potential to: directly protect, rehabilitate, or enhance the natural environment; raise awareness of environmental issues affecting the Hamilton community; directly protect Hamilton residents, businesses, and/or organizations from the impacts of climate change (adaptation projects); and/or, reduce GHG emissions within Hamilton • A balanced and realistic budget • The program relationships and partnerships with other community organizations and/or initiatives • The program's potential to provide new, improved, or innovative ways for volunteers and members of the public to participate • An effective workplan that considers all necessary resources for implementation – volunteers, staff, time, materials, etc. • The quality and quantity of the proposed activities 30% Community Impact as demonstrated by: • Comprehensive and clearly described outcomes that are SMART • Alignment to the community vision
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Environment Program Application

Applicants are to apply through the
[Survey Monkey Apply Online Platform](#)

- The applicant is responsible for providing all the information and attachments requested.
- The City Enrichment Fund will make decisions regarding eligibility based solely on the information provided in the application.

Page: Application Information Form

Select the CEF Program Area ('Environment') and applicable stream ('Capacity Building' or 'Projects & Programs')

- 1. Applicant contact information:** List the person to be contacted for clarifications and updates on the status of the application.
- 2. Applicant Email:** the provided email address is where all City Enrichment Fund communications will be sent.
- 3. Do you have an additional contact person for your organization:** If yes, provide additional contact information details.
- 4. Organization/Applicant Full Name:** Please provide the name of the organization that is applying.
- 5. Is the Organization/Applicant Legal Name different than above?** If yes provide different name.
- 6. Should your application be successful under what name are you able to deposit funds? Legal names of organizations will be made public:** Ensure name provided is able to receive deposits.
- 7. Organization Established Date:** Provide the date that the organization was formed/incorporated.
- 8. Organization/Applicant Address:** Organizational address information.
- 9. Is your mailing address different from your Organization/Applicant address?** If yes, include additional address information.
- 10. Legal Status of Organization (select all that apply).**
 - Not-for-profit
 - Registered charity
 - Individual artist or collective → *NOTE: The "artist" option is not applicable for Environment program applicants*
 - Unincorporated group with not-for-profit goals and governance structure
- 11. Registration Number:** If the registered as a not-for-profit or registered charity, applicants will be prompted to include registration numbers.
- 12. Is your organization's head office located in the city of Hamilton?** Yes, No, Not Applicable.

Page: Program Information Form

Page 1:

- 1. Confirm that you are applying in the correct Program Area:** Environment. If you are seeking to apply to a different program area return to the “Program” page of the Grant Portal and select the correct program area.
- 2. Is this application for a returning program?** To be considered returning, a program or service must be delivered by the same organization and have received funding through the same CEF program area and stream. Please note if your organization received funding through the appeals process, but not the recommendations process in 2024 it is not considered a returning program.
- 3. Environment Stream: Please Identify which Program Area your application is applying under.** Options are Capacity Building or Projects & Programs as outlined above.

Page 2:

- 4. Program Name:** Enter the name of the program, project or service this application is requesting funding for.
- 5. Provide a brief summary of your program (60 words max.)**
 - This description will be published as part of your organization’s City Enrichment Fund Application Summary Report to Council (this is a public document).
 - This is your program “elevator pitch” – use it as an opportunity to generate interest in your program.
- 6. Organization mandate or mission statement** (Approx. 200 words)
- 7. Provide a brief history of your organization or brief artistic biography – include important milestones and/or any changes to the organization's direction over time. Include anything important for us to know about your organization.** (Approx. 250 words)
- 8. Provide a detailed description of your program (Approx. 1000 words)**
 - What makes your program important?
 - Describe your programming theme and objective, format, location, activities, and anticipated schedule for the year of delivery. What elements make your program unique?
 - If the application is for a returning program, describe any “lessons learned” from previous years. How have past successes or challenges shaped this year’s program? Include your evaluation method (e.g. surveys, in-person interviews, participation rates, etc.).
 - How will this program further your organization’s reach/impact and provide greater benefits to the community?
- 9. Specify how funding from the City Enrichment Fund will be used.** (Approx. 500 words)
 - Your description should relate to the details provided in your programming description and the proposed budget.
 - Be specific on which of your expenses will be funded using CEF funding and why these expenses are important to the success of the initiative.

10. Describe how this program can be scaled should the total funding request not be received. The City Enrichment Fund does not guarantee that successful applicants will receive their full grant request. Applicants are asked to confirm how they will adapt to funding amounts below request level.

11. Describe the outcome of your program to your organization and/or to the community as a direct result of your project. Provide three measurable outcomes.

- What is your desired outcome/goal and how will you measure your success in achieving each outcome/goal?
- Ensure that your outcomes and measures are SMART (specific; measurable; attainable; realistic/relevant; timely). Click [here](#) for a guide to Constructing Grant Performance Measures (Outputs and Outcomes).
- See the sample outcomes and measures in the table below.

Example Outcomes for Environment Program Applications

OUTCOME	MEASURE
Increased online/social media presence to expand our audience reach and increase direct communication with our target audience.	• <i>[percent]</i> increases in Facebook engagement metrics <i>[likes, comments, shares]</i> between <i>[start date]</i> to <i>[anticipate end date]</i>. • Publish <i>[anticipated number]</i> blog posts during program duration with an average <i>[number]</i> of views on each post. • <i>[percent]</i> of all organization staff complete training program to enhance their online/digital competency by <i>[date]</i>.
Increased recognition of sustainability efforts and progress in Hamilton	• Increase in number of organizations participating in sustainability program from <i>[current number]</i> to <i>[anticipate number]</i> by <i>[program end date]</i>. • Increased number of businesses recognized at annual Evening of Recognition from <i>[previous year number]</i> to <i>[anticipated number for program year]</i>.
Increase membership to demonstrate organizational momentum and help attract new members.	• Retain <i>[number]</i> of current year members • Enroll <i>[number]</i> new members to see a <i>[% increase]</i> in membership. • Increase revenue by average of <i>[membership cost/per member/per year]</i> over the next 3 years.
Add to local tree canopy to improve local air quality and reduce carbon from the atmosphere	• Host at least <i>[number]</i> tree planting events between <i>[program dates]</i>. • Plant at least <i>[number]</i> native tree species at each planting event to add at least <i>[number]</i> trees to the local tree canopy and remove an estimated <i>[amount]</i> tonne of carbon from the atmosphere.

- Perform regular maintenance visits on an *[annual/biannual, etc.]* basis to ensure trees reach maturity/target lifespan of *[number]* years.

12. Describe both formal and informal program partnerships. How do these relationships enhance your program activities? (Approx. 300 words)

- How are others contributing to the success of your program? This may include partnerships with provincial and national organizations, community outreach groups, other not-for-profits, for-profit organizations, neighbourhood associations, etc.
- How will you collaborate with them and how do these relationships help to ensure the program meets its goals and objectives?

13. List the team members that will ensure your program is well managed and achieves your desired goals. Include a brief explanation of how their expertise/specialization will make your program a success. (Approx. 300 words)

- This may include staff, members of the Board of Directors, and volunteers.
- What are each team members' skills, education, experience, knowledge and how will their skills (etc.) contribute to the success of the program?

Page 3:

14. How does this program enrich the city? (Approx. 300 words)

- Explain why the program is needed and how the need for the program was identified (i.e. through citizen feedback, survey results, etc.).
- Additional research, studies and reports can be uploaded with your application (in your response, please provide the relevant section/page number of the attachment).
- What will be the changes in the community if this program/project is delivered?
- If your organization implemented a similar initiative in the past, what would make this year's program different or better?

Review the City of Hamilton's Community Vision that aligns with this program.

[Please click here for a copy of Our Future Hamilton Community Vision](#)

15. Which of our community priorities align with this program (select up to three that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Culture and diversity | ☐ Healthy & Safe Communities |
| ☐ Economic Prosperity & Growth | ☐ Clean and Green |
| ☐ Community Engagement and Participation | ☐ Built Environment and Infrastructure |

16. Describe how your program is aligned with the community priorities checked above (Approx. 125 words)

- Each Our Future Hamilton community priority includes "Key Directions" and "Signs of Success."

- Describe how your program fits into the “Key Directions” and “Signs of Success” of each priority you identified in your response to Question 1 above.

17. Describe how this funding will help your organization develop for the future, prepare for emerging challenges and/or create new, innovative programming opportunities that are relevant to the environment sector. (Approx. 300 words)

This question is mandatory for those in the Capacity Building Stream only.

18. There are a number of strategies within the City of Hamilton designed to meet environmental goals. Please identify which if any your project helps to support:

- Hamilton Climate Action Strategy: Climate Mitigation or Climate Adaptation
- Community Energy & Emissions Plan
- Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan
- Clean & Green Strategy
- Hamilton Urban Forest Strategy
- Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan
- None of the Above

Page: Multi-Year Funding Form

There is no intake for Multi-Year Funding (MYF) for this year.

- There is no intake for MYF applications during this application cycle.
- The City Enrichment Fund is piloting a 3-year multi-year funding program which offered returning A rated CEF applicants with an option to receive a 3-year funding commitment.
- The 3-year pilot period began with the 2025 CEF cycle, with qualifying MYF grantees receiving a commitment of funding for years 2 and 3, 2026 and 2027, respectively.
- If the pilot is converted to a permanent program the next intake for MYF funding will be fall 2027 for programs or projects beginning in 2028.

Page: Organizational Capacity Form

Organizational Capacity (mandatory).

- Complete the chart that shown on the application form to indicate which of the relevant policies your organization has in place and when they were implemented, reviewed, or updated.

Page: Attachments

Organization Attachments

1. Board of Directors list (mandatory)

- List of the current Board of Directors or Committee members, including number of years of service to your organization, expertise, and role of each member.

2. Staff list (mandatory)

- Include job titles, specialization, length of time with the organization, and whether full or part-time for all staff that are connected to the program.

3. Most recent audited financial statements (mandatory for all applications except those with requests exceeding \$15,001)

- Audited financial statements are mandatory for requests of \$30,000 or greater. [Financial statements must be prepared in accordance with the Canadian generally accepted accounting principles \(GAAP\) as set out in the CPA Canada Handbook – Accounting.](#)
- Unaudited financial statements will be accepted if audited financial statements are not available or if request is less than \$30,000.

Program Attachments

1. Marketing documents, program information brochures, or pamphlets (optional)

Include support material that will help the assessors evaluate your application (e.g. project plans, reports, or studies, fundraising and marketing materials, etc.)

2. Program specific material (mandatory)

- Provide a copy of your organization's **Strategic Plan (mandatory)**.
- Include any additional support materials **(optional)**

Page: Budget Information:

- Grant requests for greater than \$15,000 can be no more than 30% of the Total Eligible Program Budget (cash only, excludes in-kind). See *Budget Summary* tab line 22.
- Grant requests for less than \$15,000.
- It is important that submitted budgets are balanced (program expenses match program revenues). Provide comments for programs that present a budget deficit or surplus on line 28 of the *Budget Summary* tab. **(accessed through your online account)**.
- Please note that this budget is used by all CEF programs. Use the most appropriate line items provided in addition to the "other" spaces available.

Revenue

Column B	Column C	Column D
Provide the program revenue budget for the request year	Provide the program revenue budget from the previous year, or the last year the program was delivered. You can only leave this blank if this is the first year that the program was delivered.	Provide a brief explanation of line items, such as: ○ Confirm government funding, sponsorship, etc. ○ Provide a breakdown of a line item (<i>e.g. annual membership fee x number of members</i>) ○ Provide notes for significant variances between the previous and request year

Expenses

Column B	Column C	Column D
Provide the anticipated program expense budget for the request year.	Provide the program expense budget from the previous year or the last year the program was delivered.	Provide a brief explanation of line items, such as: ○ Breakdown of a line item (<i>e.g. staff hourly rate x number of hours to be worked</i>) ○ Provide information on new expense items ○ Provide notes for variances between columns B and C (<i>i.e. Anticipating an increase of external consultant's hourly rate</i>)

In-kind

Provide the estimated volunteer hours and value of other in-kind contributions. The total in-kind value will automatically be reflected on the program revenue.

Page: IDEA Form

Please note that these questions are not used for adjudication scores but rather for data collection only

- 1. In an effort to help us understand how IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility) groups are currently supported through City Enrichment Funds, please identify the target population for the specific program you are apply to for this application. Please check all that apply.**
- 2. In alignment with the City's IDEA goals, please indicate whether any members of your organization's governance structure (i.e., Board of**

Directors, Administrative Board, or Board of Trustees self-identify with any of the following groups by checking all that may apply, understanding that a member may represent more than one of these groups.

Page: Declaration Form

Applicants must agree to all items on the Declaration form in order to submit the application and sign off on the grant submission.

After you apply

- CEF staff will contact you by email or phone to confirm the details in your application and ensure your application is complete.
- If your application receives a passing score (above 60%), your score and recommended level of funding will be presented to the City of Hamilton Grants Sub-Committee for review and approval in spring 2026.
- You will receive confirmation of funding by email. The email will include instructions to receive your funding and a timeline of when funds will be released.
- CEF funding must be used in the same year that it is awarded.
- You must acknowledge the City of Hamilton's support through CEF in your program materials and promotion.
- You must complete a Final Report and submit it to CEF staff by February of the following year. A template will be provided by CEF staff after you have received confirmation of funding. In the Final Report, you are required to provide the following information:
 - The anticipated vs. actual program budget
 - Examples of any marketing materials, supporting documents, photos, etc. that help tell the story of your initiative and its impact
 - The measurable outcomes and measures included in your application. You must report on how your initiative achieved this goal by describing the direct or indirect impact of your program or project on your organization or the community.
 - Describe any unanticipated changes made to the delivery or implementation of the program
 - Describe your learnings from this initiative and provide recommendations to improve this initiative if you were to initiate it again, or if you were going to provide advice to others considering a similar initiative.
- Organizations that do not provide complete Final Report(s) for each program that receives CEF funding will not be eligible to apply for future CEF grants.