

**OTF Investment Summary Report
Resilient Communities Fund Round 7**



Prepared for the Board of Directors,
January 31, 2024

Resilient Communities Fund Round 7 (October 25, 2023 deadline)
Ontario Trillium Foundation Community Investments

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Introduction

To support nonprofits in their work during challenging times, OTF created the Resilient Communities Fund (RCF) in the Spring of 2020. The fund focuses on supporting community nonprofit organizations, community registered charities, Indigenous communities, and small municipalities to help them recover and build capacity, resilience and sustainability.

The RCF stream awards successful organizations a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 per year for up to 2 years. RCF grants support organizations as they:

- Develop new approaches to generate revenue
- Start new activities and adapt continued activities to meet community need
- Adjust strategies and plans
- Plan for future challenges

By investing in projects through the RCF, OTF expects to increase the capacity of organizations to build resilience and adapt the way they work with an eye toward financial viability and long-term operational sustainability. This report will provide key highlights of RCF Round 7, which will be the final round of RCF.

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Schedule 1: Executive Summary

1.1 Cycle highlights:

- This round, **\$26.3M is available to be disbursed**. The total represents approximately 30% of the 2023-2024 granting funds.
- **2,060 applications** were received this cycle, **requesting \$232M**. This is a 74% increase in the amount of dollars requested from the previous round which recorded \$134M in requested funds from 1213 applications, and the second highest number of applications received in any RCF round.
- Grant Review Teams are **recommending 251 applications totaling \$26,277,600 for approval**. This is a 15% decrease from the previous round of RCF in which 295 projects were recommended for approval. This represents an approval rate of **12%, the lowest of any RCF round and a 12-percentage point decrease** from RCF Round 6 which had an approval rate of 24%. This is also 13-percentage points lower than the overall approval rate of RCF across all 7 rounds, which stands at 25%. The lower approval rate is caused by a sharp increase in the amount of funding requested by organizations.
- Grant Review Teams are also recommending **910 applications totaling \$106,259,800 for decline**, representing 44% of all applications.
- Prior to full assessment of applications, **899 were determined to be ineligible** to move forward for scoring due to not meeting eligibility criteria, not meeting financial or governance criteria, or not aligning with RCF expected outcomes.
- The **overall demand rate is \$8.83** requested for every dollar recommended for approval, which is the **highest demand rate across all RCF rounds**. This is a 106% increase in the demand rate from RCF Round 6, which had a demand rate of \$4.29. Demand is higher across all catchments, with Toronto, QKR, and ACMS having the highest demand rates (\$13.00, \$11.34, and \$11.11, respectively).
- **91% of Grant Review Team volunteers completed all of the scoring activities assigned to them** for RCF Round 7, which continues to indicate a high level of engagement.

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1.2 Noteworthy Grants

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

Strengthen awareness, knowledge, and opportunity for 2SLGBTQIA+ French-speaking seniors in the Greater Toronto Area

With OTF's investment of \$198,800 over 24 months, La Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario (FARFO) will implement the Pride Network for Francophone 2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors in Greater Toronto, a new program seeking to strengthen awareness, knowledge and opportunity for targeted French-language support services that are currently lacking and/or underrepresented in this community. Building stronger connections and a deeper sense of belonging, The Network will provide opportunities for 100 Francophone 2SLGBTQIA+ seniors to participate in 18 in-person consultation and awareness activities to share resources on and knowledge of a variety of themes, including awareness of mistreatment, housing options, and community services available in French.

Adapt wellness programming for bereavement services in Dufferin County

With OTF's investment of \$117,600 over 2 years, Hospice Dufferin will adapt wellness programming for bereavement services to include peer support groups, gentle exercise, social and educational programming in a hybrid format (virtual and in-person) for clients & caregivers and community partners living in Dufferin County (reaching all rural & urban communities). Recently, there was an 83 percent increase in bereavement clients requesting counselling focusing on mental and physical wellness. In response, staff and volunteers will be trained on updated health and safety policies to deliver each wellness program (ie. yoga).

Hire staff and develop new programming at an insectarium in Sault Ste Marie

Entomica Insectarium in Sault Ste Marie is a world-class nature museum and science centre that features thousands of live and mounted insects from around the world. It is one of only four Insectariums in Canada, and the only Insectarium in Ontario. Entomica serves as the primary science-based organization and natural history museum in Sault Saint Marie and Algoma district. With OTF support of \$70,200 over 18 months, they will hire staff to develop and implement new programming and secure new funding partnerships to ensure their sustainability.

Engage the local community with Indigenous art and cultural programming in Brantford

Through this grant of \$73,100 over 12 months, the Woodland Cultural Centre will recruit and train new volunteers from Brantford and Six Nations who will help to leverage the organization's exceptional Indigenous arts and cultural programming and facilitate the delivery of more and larger events while building stronger community engagement. The project will also provide new wellness supports for staff who deal daily with the highly emotional work of educating visitors about the traumatic events that took place at the former residential school where the Centre is located. These new supports will include both traditional Indigenous healing practices and contemporary wellness workshops which will increase staff job satisfaction, reduce burnout, and decrease staff turnover.

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Improve volunteer engagement to better serve at-risk girls in the Durham region

Girls Inc of Durham provides research-based support and mentoring programs in high-priority neighbourhoods for over 1,300 at-risk girls per year. Programs are delivered in school, after school and through summer camps with the support of volunteer mentors with a focus on providing girls with the knowledge and skills to set goals, overcome obstacles and see themselves as leaders in their communities. As a result of the pandemic, Girls Inc Durham lost 50% of their program volunteers (from 220 to 117 volunteers), significantly impacting the number of programs that can be effectively delivered, and the number of girls who can benefit. With OTF support of \$93,900 over 2 years, Girls Inc will develop a comprehensive and sustainable volunteer strategy that will reduce volunteer turnover and enhance capacity to support at-risk girls and young women in Durham Region. The project will be led by a project team that will include 2 Board volunteers, 5 program volunteers, and staff. Consultation with all Board and program volunteers will inform the development of the volunteer strategy (recruitment, training, retention and support plans) which will be pilot tested in year 1, and fully implemented in year 2. The project will enable Girls Inc to recruit and train 25 new volunteers in year 1, and 75 new volunteers in year 2, with a turnover rate of less than 10%.

Increase access to quality food for people across the Halton region

With OTF support of \$197,600 over 2 years, Food for Life will continue to expand its previously adapted program of delivering over 5 million pounds of good surplus rescue food in strategic locations across Halton Region. Additionally, through a Community Impact Worker, the grant will facilitate food provision and food selections that are aligned to local needs as well as enable the provision of wrap around supports and services to improve economic and health outcomes for individuals and families.

1.3 Sign-Offs

Sign-Off from Chairs: Following each GRT meeting the Chair or Acting Chair signed off on the recommendations of their GRT.

Overall, 251 applications totaling \$26,277,600 are being recommended to receive funding and 910 applications totaling \$106,259,800 are being recommended for decline.

Compliance with OTF Policy: During and following the application assessment period and the GRT meeting period, the Vice-President, Community Investments has reviewed granting policy compliance, compliance with objectives of the funding stream, and granting process compliance with Regional Directors. The VP, Community Investments has also attended three GRT meetings and confirms that all recommended grants are within the granting policies, stream expectations and grant-making processes of the Foundation. As well, the VP, Community Investments confirms that to date no new information has surfaced that would suggest the need to alter any of the current recommendations made by the 16 GRTs.

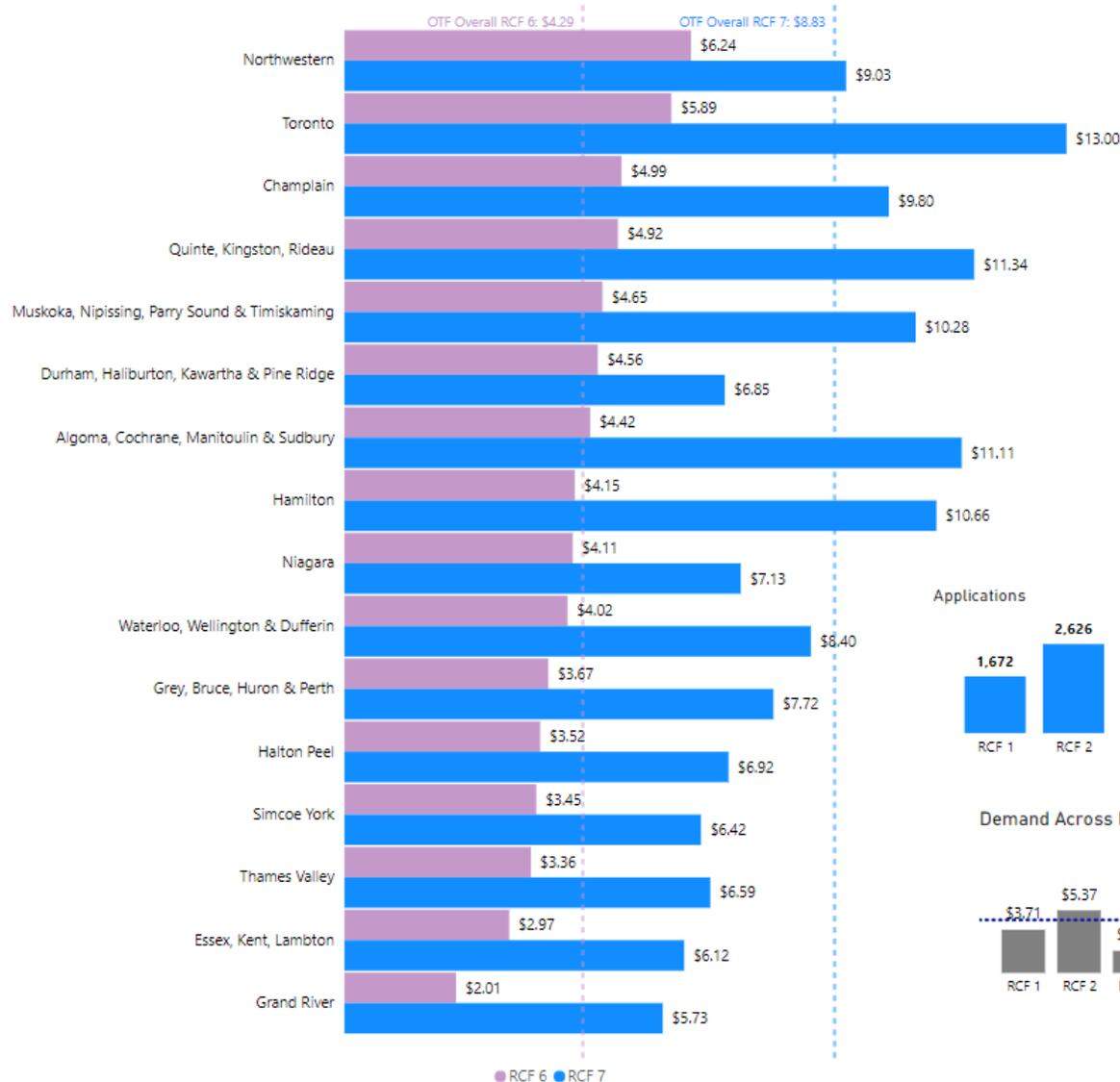
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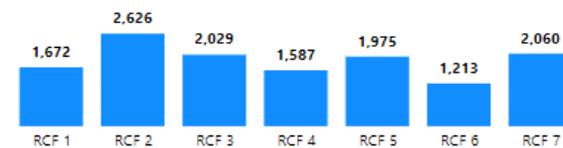
Schedule 2: Supporting Figures

2.1 Demand Overview

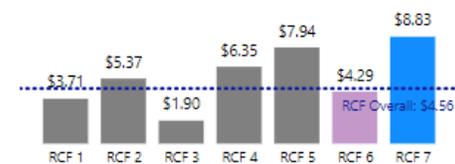
Dollars Requested vs Dollars Approved/Recommended for Approval



Applications



Demand Across Rounds



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2.2 Grant Outcomes

● RCF 6 ● RCF 7

