

# Community Economic Development Fund

TABIA Presentation – 2026



Funded by:  
Federal Economic Development  
Agency for Southern Ontario

Financé par :  
Agence fédérale de développement  
économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario

Canada



# Program Overview

The Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF) supports high-impact, community-driven economic development projects across Toronto that strengthen local economies and build community wealth. Community wealth building refers to place-based approaches to economic development that use existing strengths, talents, and assets to enhance local ownership and control of economic well-being.

Applicants must demonstrate an established connection with their community and propose projects that enhance economic resilience, support local businesses, and improve neighborhood vitality.

This program is funded by the Government of Canada through the [Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario \(FedDev Ontario\)](#).

# Program Objective

Through CEDF, this program will fund community economic development projects, programs, or activities led by or in partnership with local stakeholders that aim to improve economic conditions in a way that benefits residents, supports local businesses, creates equitable opportunities, and reinvests resources back into the community.

## **The program goals are to:**

- Foster inclusive economic growth
- Enhance local economic resilience and sustainability
- Encourage collaborative partnerships for economic development
- Promote community wealth building and economic development
- Develop and strengthen the economic capacity of community organizations and BIAs

# Eligibility

**The Community Economic Development Fund is available to the following organizations:**

1. Toronto Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)
2. Not-for-profit organizations including Business Associations and Registered Charities with strong local business involvement.

**All applicants must solicit feedback on their proposal form the Program Manager PRIOR to applying, through one of the following ways:**

1. Attend a 1-on-1 consultation
2. Share a draft proposal via email for feedback

**Please Note: For profit businesses including sole proprietorships, partnerships and corporations are not eligible to apply.**

# Funding Available

Applicants may request **\$100,000 to \$300,000** in funding but must demonstrate the ability to contribute at least 50% of the requested grant amount. The contribution can include a combination of financial and in-kind contributions.

- Financial contributions are all expenses not covered by the grant but directly related to the delivery of the project. This may also include salaries/compensation of staff of the organization for hours assigned to the project.
- In-kind contributions are non-monetary resources that the applicant or other sources provide to support the project. Examples are labour costs not incurred thanks to volunteers, donated goods, and donated services. In-kind contributions (up to a maximum of \$27 per hour for in-kind volunteering) are limited to 50% of the matching contributions or 25% of the total project budget).

# Project Budget Template

Applicants are expected to submit a project budget using template provided by the City of Toronto. Project budgets should include:

- The template is broken down into 2 key categories with 6 sub-categories under project costs and 2 sub-categories under project administration
  - Project Costs** is where we you will list expenses related to the delivery of your project within sub-categories like Professional and Consultant Fees, Venue and Facilities, Equipment and Technology Rental, Materials and Supplies, Marketing and Promotion, and other project costs.
  - Project Administration** features two sub-categories:
    - The first sub-category, **Administration and Personnel** is where you will costs associated with staff time dedicated to the delivery of this project.
    - The second sub-category, **Other Administration Costs** is where you may include any other project administration cost that doesn't fall within staff or personnel related costs (e.g. an admin Fee).

Community Economic Development Fund				
Fill out the items below that pertain to your project	CEDF Grant	Cash Contribution	In-kind Contribution	Budget Notes (Optional)
<b>Project Costs</b>				
Professional and Consultant Fees (subject matter exeperts, facilitators, marketing, communication and web development consulstants)				
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

# Eligible Projects

The Community Economic Development Fund encourages projects within a wide scope of parameters including **but not limited to:**

- **Main Street Activations** - Drive foot traffic, economic activity, and community engagement through events, pop-ups, and public space programming.
- **Community Placemaking** - Enhance the identity, safety, and appeal of neighborhoods through public realm improvements, beautification, and cultural initiatives.
- **Community Planning and Engagement** - Strengthen local economic ecosystems by supporting strategic planning, community-led initiatives, and capacity-building for organizations that support local economies and enhance neighborhood vitality.
- **Inclusive Economic Development and Equity Initiatives:** Reduce barriers and create opportunities for equity-deserving entrepreneurs and businesses through projects that expand participation, provide access to resources, or foster co-ownership, collaboration, or mentorship.

*Collaborative/Joint Projects will be accepted and encouraged.*

*Applicants can submit multiple projects but only one project will be funded per organization.*



# Project Examples

- 1. Business Incubation:** Provide short-term retail space for entrepreneurs, prioritizing businesses led by equity-seeking founders or those offering products/services that fill gaps or align with local needs and neighbourhood's character.
- 2. Pop-up and Adaptive Use Spaces:** Convert vacant storefronts or underused properties into short-term hubs for testing new retail concepts, experiential shopping, or small production spaces to activate the main street while providing opportunities for new and existing businesses.
- 3. Data-Driven Main Street Activation:** Leverage data and market research (foot traffic, business performance, consumer behavior) to implement targeted initiatives that strengthen local businesses and activate the main street.
- 4. Capacity-Building Programs:** Improve the operational capacity of business support organizations (e.g., Business Improvement Areas or other not-for-profit organizations) or equity-seeking entrepreneurs looking to strengthen their businesses.
- 5. Retention of Legacy Businesses:** Support long-standing local businesses that contribute to the cultural or economic identity of a neighbourhood by providing succession planning or business continuity strategies to strengthen their long-term viability.

# Ineligible Projects

**The following types of projects do not qualify for funding under this program:**

- Projects which are eligible for funding under other City of Toronto BIA Financial Incentive Programs, such as [Streetscape Improvement Program](#), [Outdoor Mural & Street Art Program](#), [Streetscape Master Plan Program](#), or [Transit Expansion Construction Mitigation Grant Program](#)
- Project-related services completed prior to grant application approval
- Projects that are unable to be completed within project timelines
- Any activity that would not comply with the [City's anti-harassment and discrimination policies](#)
- Projects located outside of Toronto

# Program Guidelines

*Refer to page 2 to 3 on the application form.*

## Proposals

- A written proposal in PDF format, between 15-20 pages in length.
  - Note: Please provide a detailed proposal within your submission that fully reflects the criteria and items set out in the program guidelines.
- Applicants are required to provide a comprehensive written description of their proposal, including how the project will have a positive impact on the targeted community. Proposals must clearly demonstrate the economic impact on the local community.
- Proposals must demonstrate that all necessary licenses/permits and approvals for the proposal will be obtained and knowledge on how to obtain necessary approvals.
- Projects should be feasible within the resources and timelines available to applicant.
  - All projects must be fully completed with final reports submitted by November 2027.
- Detailed budget with cost estimate(s) for all aspects of work using the CEDF budget template.

# Scoring Matrix

Scoring will be completed by a committee review panel consisting of a mix of City of Toronto staff.

Please use the scoring matrix here to guide your application and ensure the following criteria is addressed throughout your proposal.

CEDF Selection Criteria	
<b>Alignment With Program Goals</b>	The applicant demonstrates a clear and compelling project vision and evidence of an established relationship with the local community, with a proposal that meaningfully advances hyper-local community economic development in the targeted area.
	The project helps build community wealth by strengthening local businesses and assets, creating more economic opportunities for people in the community, and ensuring that economic benefits stay local, making the neighbourhood's economy stronger and more sustainable over time.
	The project strengthens the local business ecosystem by improving the ability of community organizations and BIAs to support businesses, and by creating meaningful and accessible opportunities for diverse and underrepresented businesses to grow and succeed.
<b>Economic and Community Impact</b>	The application demonstrates a well-informed understanding of historic and current economic challenges in the targeted area and provides a clear, relevant strategy to address them through long-term inclusive economic development.
	The project will address key community challenges, reduce barriers for equity-deserving businesses and residents, and foster long-term inclusive economic development.
	The project promotes tangible economic outcomes, such as support local businesses and entrepreneurs, job creation or retention, increased foot traffic, customer engagement, or local spending.
<b>Measurement &amp; Evaluation</b>	The project promotes broader community benefits, including vibrancy, safety, and the activation or improved use of public spaces.
	The proposal includes clear, appropriate and realistic metrics to measure success. The plan should include detailed plan for how data will be collected and tracked throughout the duration of the project.
<b>Feasibility</b>	The project demonstrates how collected data and feedback will be used to assess outcomes, inform continuous improvement, and guide future programming.
	The applicant has provided a clear plan to execute the project, and it can be completed in the stated timeline. Things to consider: permitting requirements benchmarks and contingencies, funds allocated to safety and security.
	The applicant demonstrates the organizational experience and capacity to successfully deliver similar initiatives.
	The applicant's proposed budget is detailed and appropriate based on the project. Any excess or deficit is explained. The applicant has provided budget notes. The project has diverse revenue sources to cover the 50% not provided for by this grant and a revenue generation strategy (if applicable and needed)

# How to Learn More & Apply

- Attend a webinar **Wednesday March 5 at 1pm and April 9 at 1pm**
- Applications will be **accepted until 4:00pm April 23, 2026.**
- To apply please visit <https://www.toronto.ca/business-economy/business-operation-growth/business-incentives/community-economic-development-fund/>
- For updates on future rounds of funding, [subscribe to the Business TO newsletter.](#)





# COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

MORE INFO:

[Community Economic Development Fund – City of Toronto](#)

CONTACT:

Omer Ismail

[cedf@toronto.ca](mailto:cedf@toronto.ca)