

Program Area Details

Agriculture:

The Agriculture (AGR) program area received 17 applications for the 2024 funding cycle, the same number of applications that was received in 2023. The program continues to focus its funding on supporting annual agriculture events, ongoing programming such as farmers markets, and increasing education and building the awareness of the agricultural community in Hamilton.

The quality of applications continues to improve through the ongoing effort to streamline the application process and staff’s ongoing supports to applicants. Staff will continue to work directly with all applicants to help them strengthen their applications and promote the program to potential applicants.

Arts:

The Arts program area received 103 applications for the 2024 intake period, a 37 percent increase from 2023. Through the Creation & Presentation for Professional Artists stream, 53 applications were received in support of new projects. The Arts program continues to focus on both emerging and established organizations and professional artists providing funding through operational, festival, capacity development, and artist project grants. Applicants across the arts sector continue to adapt their operations, programming, and projects to respond to the long-lasting impacts of the pandemic.

During the 2024 intake, staff held 3 information sessions, in addition to 1 one-to-one drop-in session, reaching a total of 42 potential applicants. Of the information sessions, two were held virtually, with one in-person session in partnership with community partner, Centre[3].

The Arts program continues to adjudicate applications with an arms-length process and engaged an external facilitator to support staff. Adjudication took place across five unique adjudication teams consisting of 11 external and two staff adjudicators. The Arts Program Manager is committed to working with the community to increase transparency and access to the program.

Communities, Culture and Heritage:

The Communities, Culture and Heritage (CCH) program, which continues to celebrate the diverse people and places that make up Hamilton, received 76 applications, noting a total of 27 new applicants, and an increase of 22 percent from 2023. This program recommends funding to both new and established programming that engages the public and offers opportunities for Hamiltonians to be reflected in unique cultural and



community programming. During the 2024 intake, staff held one virtual information session and 1 one-to-one drop-in session, reaching a total of 16 potential applicants. Additionally, the CCH Program Manager met with 36 applicants providing additional support and guidance. CCH applications were assessed across four adjudication teams comprised of three external community members and nine staff adjudicators. The CCH Program Manager is dedicated to collaborating with Hamilton's diverse cultural community to improve future applications and provide transparency and access to the City Enrichment Fund.

Community Services:

The Community Services (CS) program area supports programs that address priority issues in the community such as: food security, access to housing, sexual abuse/violence of children/adults, community programs for child and youth, helping seniors age in place, community capacity building, counselling, and programs that directly serve equity seeking groups. The CS program adopts a continuous improvement approach, using program feedback resulting in updating the guidelines, increased alignment COH strategies and Council priorities. All applicants were requested to demonstrate both their willingness and their progress towards Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging.

Staff supported applicants through two information sessions and offered one-to-one sessions for new applicants within the Emerging Needs & Program Innovation stream.

In 2024 the Community Services program area received 137 applications, a 15 percent increase from 2023 marking the highest number of applications to date, with a total request of \$5,287,518. This year's total 29 new applications, through the Emerging Needs and Program Innovation stream, represents a CS benchmark with a 47 percent increase in applications, reflecting the ongoing urgent and consistent demand for human services to meet escalating community need. Staff worked with 17 adjudicators across six teams made up of staff and community reviewers. A total of six external community reviewers brought unique perspectives and experiences from the homeless, youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities sectors and identified areas to improve accessibility of the grant portal.

Applicants to the Community Services program area of the City Enrichment Fund continue to provide programs vital to supporting the human services sector.

Digital:

The objective of the Digital program area is to support organizations, events and activities that increase efforts to achieve digital equity, promote digital inclusion, and spur greater adoption of broadband among underserved populations.

Beginning in 2022, Digital is a two-year pilot program with \$75,000 in funds allotted per year. In the inaugural year of the program, 4 out of 5 applications received funding. Throughout the first year, it was learned there is an overwhelming need for digital equity-related funding sources, especially due to the unexpected and immediate need for digital service solutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the second year of the program, 13 applications were received. The applications received display a wide range of initiatives that bridge the digital gap ensuring residents have access to the resources, opportunities and skills needed to thrive in our increasingly digital world including: senior and youth workshops, digital literary programs, French digital training, and digital infrastructure and skill development for new affordable housing. The applications also ranged across a variety of groups including youth, older adults, immigrant women, low-income groups, and racialized Canadians.

The pilot period provided a number of key takeaways and future opportunities for impactful program development in the Digital program.

Environment:

A total of 14 applications were received in the Environment program area this cycle representing a minor decrease by two applications compared to 2023.

The Environment area saw an equal number of new and returning programs to CEF, showing development in the community regarding environmental initiatives. Staff supported applicants through a virtual information session and one-to-one applicant drop-in sessions. Staff continue to engage with environmental organizations throughout the year, working with both known and potential applicants to ensure CEF continues to receive applications in support of initiatives that will build the strength of Hamilton’s environmental sector.

Sport & Active Lifestyles:

In 2024, the Sport and Active Lifestyle (SAL) program grew to 70 successful applications. This is an increase from 44 successful applications in 2023. SAL applicants demonstrate enthusiasm for the sector. The community values the Community Enrichment Fund and its ability to provide funding relief for the many different projects that help children, adults and families across the City of Hamilton participate in sport. The groups are excited to put these plans into action for fantastic growth in 2024.