

City Enrichment Fund (CEF) Program Area Details



Agriculture:

Total Applications	New/Returning	Increase or Decrease
15 Applications (all passing)	15 Returning 0 New	2 Application decrease
Multi-Year Funding (MYF)	Intake Support	Request Total
10 MYF Applications 3 Successful	1 Information Session 8 one-on-one calls	\$154,374

The Agriculture (AGR) program area received fifteen applications for the 2025 funding cycle, two fewer applications than the 2024 total. One organization did not return as they ceased operations. The AGR program continues to focus its funding on supporting annual agriculture events, ongoing programming such as farmers markets, and increasing education and awareness of the agricultural community in Hamilton.

The quality of applications continues to improve for some, while others have remained consistent since last year. Staff will continue to work directly with all applicants to help them strengthen their applications and promote the program to potential applicants.



Arts:

Total Applications	New/Returning	Increase or Decrease
105 Applications (96 passing)	41 Returning, 64 New	3 Application increase
Multi-Year Funding (MYF) (MYF)	Intake Support	Request Total
33 Applications for MYF 21 Successful	4 Information Sessions 26 one-on-one calls	\$4,718,085

The Arts program area received 105 applications consisting of 39 % returning applicants and 61% new applicants in 2025. Through the Creation & Presentation for Professional Artists stream, fifty applications were received in from new applicants in support of the development of public facing new artist projects. The Arts program area continues to focus on both emerging and established organizations and professional artists providing funding through operations, festivals, capacity development for arts organizations, and professional artist project grants. Amidst an increasingly challenging economic

environment, applicants continue to deliver their operations, programs, and projects demonstrating the resilience of the Arts sector.

During the 2025 intake, staff held three information sessions in partnership with community organizations and eighty-two one-on-one applicant support calls, reaching a total of 128 potential applicants. Two of the information sessions were held virtually. The arts organizations virtual session was held in partnership with the Hamilton Arts Council. One session for professional artists was held in-person in partnership with community partners, Hamilton Artists Inc., and Hamilton Festival Theatre co. 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 fourteen external adjudicators and one staff adjudicator. Staff is committed to working with the community to increase transparency and access to the program.

To address past inequities in program area investments, a one-time Arts budget investment through the Municipal Accommodation Tax is being recommended. This will ensure that new applicants receive adequate support while maintaining 2024 CEF and Bridge funding levels, avoiding reductions for returning applicants due to a high number of 2025 new applicants and requests in the Arts, combined with existing bridge funding commitments (totaling \$190,669). This investment supports the shared goals of Tourism and Culture’s Tourism Strategy and the CEF Arts Festivals and Capacity streams.



Communities, Culture & Heritage:

Total Applications	New/Returning	Increase or Decrease
93 Applications (86 passing)	49 Returning 44 New	19 Application increase
Multi-Year Funding (MYF)	Intake Support	Total Requests
26 MYF Applications 20 Successful	1 Information Session 38 one-on-one calls	\$1,478,683

The Communities, Culture & Heritage (CCH) continues to celebrate the diverse people and places that make up Hamilton. In 2025 the CCH program area received ninety-three applications, representing a 25% increase from 2024 as well as an approximate \$300,000 increase in requests. CCH supports both new and established programming that engages the public and offers opportunities for Hamiltonians to be reflected in unique cultural and community programming. Continuous improvement enhancements were applied to the funding maximum levels within the Events & Established Activities and New Projects streams to better align applicant and CCH program objectives. As a result of this change, scores within CCH improved and most applicants to the Events & Established Activities stream now apply within the more appropriate funding category.

During the 2025 intake, staff held one virtual information session as well as seventy-one one-on-one calls to provide additional support and guidance, reaching a total of eighty-five potential applicants. CCH applications were assessed across four adjudication teams comprised of four external and eight staff adjudicators. Staff is committed to collaborating with Hamilton's diverse cultural community to strengthen future applications and provide transparency and access to the City Enrichment Fund.



Community Services:

Total Applications	New/Returning	Increase or Decrease
144 Applications (137 passing)	122 Returning 22 New	8 Application increase
Multi-Year Funding (MYF)	Intake Support	Total Requests
105 MYF Applications 60 Successful	2 Information Sessions 38 one-on-one calls	\$5,463,083

The Community Services (CS) program area supports both established returning and new emerging programs that address priority human services in the city of Hamilton. Applicants were supported through two information sessions, thirty-eight 1-1 consultations, and a detailed “How to Complete the Form Video”. Hybrid CS adjudication teams (10), reviewed 144 applications, bringing unique perspectives and experiences from the homeless, youth, seniors, community capacity building, and persons with disabilities sectors.

The total 2025 CS request was \$5,463,083 a 3% increase compared to 2024. Funding for CS totaling \$3,078,463 accounts for 56% of the total CS request amounts.

CS provides funding across seven streams with all new applicant programs applying to the Emerging Needs stream. The new funding requests in Emerging Needs reflect the ongoing urgent and consistent demand for food security/housing programs and the need to support essential community capacity programs. This is consistent with trends in the returning established CS program areas.

Through the shift to sector-based funding, the 2025 recommendations address consistent challenges raised by CS applicants. Due to shifting CEF funding formulas between 2022-2024, applicants advocated for a return to a more stable program specific funding rationale with less fluctuation annually in terms of both approach and final recommendations. Stable funding has also been achieved for CS applicants through MYF. A total of 105 CS applicants applied to the MYF program, with 60 or 57% approved. Further, staff addressed applicant concerns regarding fluctuating CEF funding levels by recommending funding at the 2024 Bridge level for returning applicants.

Applicants to the CS program area of CEF continue to provide vital programs critical to strengthening the city of Hamilton’s human services sector and local social safety net.



Digital:

Total Applications	New/Returning	Increase or Decrease
10 Applications (8 passing)	6 Returning 4 New	3 Application decrease
Multi-Year Funding (MYF)	Intake Support	Total Requests
6 MYF Applications 4 Successful	1 Information Session 45 one-on-one calls	\$135,800

In 2025, the Digital (DIG) program area of the City Enrichment Fund was formally established as a permanent initiative after a successful two-year pilot launched in 2022. Designed to support organizations and activities that drive digital equity, promote digital inclusion, and spur broadband adoption among underserved populations, this program reflects a strong commitment to meeting critical digital needs.

In the latest funding round, the program received ten applications, with eight projects recommended for funding. These approved initiatives highlight several key trends. First, there is a strong emphasis on comprehensive digital literacy training. Projects are equipping participants with foundational computer skills, online navigation abilities, and digital safety practices. Second, many proposals incorporate culturally adaptive elements by offering digital resources that support language learning, cultural orientation, and community connection. A third notable trend is the strategic targeting of diverse population groups. Some initiatives empower youth through digital programming, opening doors to technology careers, while others provide accessible technology workshops for seniors to enhance social connectivity and self-sufficiency. In addition, there are tailored efforts that offer specialized training in digital tools and online business development to support marginalized demographics.

Collectively, these trends underscore a deliberate commitment to bridging digital divides through innovative, inclusive, and community-focused strategies, positioning the City Enrichment Fund as a leader in building a digitally resilient future in an increasingly connected Hamilton.



Environment:

Total Applications	New/Returning	Increase or Decrease
13 Applications	5 Returning 8 New	1 Application decrease
Multi-Year Funding (MYF)	Intake Support	Total Requests
5 MYF Applications 4 Successful	1 Information Session 8 one-on-one calls	\$250,001

A total of thirteen applications were received in the Environment (ENV) program area this cycle representing a minor decrease by one application compared to 2024. However, the Environment area saw an increase in new programs applying 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 and support City environmental based strategies.



Sport & Active Lifestyles:

Total Applications	New/Returning	Increase or Decrease
83 Applications (82 passing)	54 Returning 29 New	13 Application increase
Multi-Year Funding (MYF)	Intake Support	Total Requests
1 MYF Application 1 Successful	2 Information Sessions 40 one-on-one calls	\$653,860

In 2025, the Sport & Active Lifestyle (SAL) program grew by eighty-two successful applications. This is an increase from seventy successful applications in 2024. SAL applicants demonstrate enthusiasm for the sector. The Sport for Development/Inclusion stream experienced the highest number of applications in both 2024 and 2025 cycles, with 33% of total successful applications from this stream. This trend demonstrates an increase in new sports groups providing opportunities for underrepresented groups to participate in sport and recreation activities. The groups are excited to put these plans into action for fantastic growth in 2025.