

2026 City Enrichment Fund Administrative Updates

The City Enrichment Fund (CEF) program is managed with a continuous improvement lens. Each year staff assess CEF to apply administrative improvements across all areas of the program. All updates will be communicated and shared widely to all potential applicants during the intake window. The following table outlines the incoming CEF program updates to better serve applicants and enhance program operations.

Update	Rational and Impact
<p>Application intake closing – date clarity.</p> <p>October 1 – November 17</p>	<p>In 2025 November 15 falls on a Saturday, to ensure adequate applicant support, intake for the 2026 period will be shifted to the closest business day after November 15. All applications for projects taking place in 2026 must be received by 4:00 pm on Monday November 17, 2025.</p> <p>Moving forward when a CEF deadline falls on a weekend or statutory holiday, it will be extended to the following working day.</p> <p><i>Status: In Progress</i></p>
<p>Program Area Updates</p>	<p>Communities, Culture & Heritage (CCH):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective 2026, the CCH Events & Established Activities – Small category will be limited to a maximum of two total applications from a single organization. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This change does not impact currently funded returning applicants and is therefore being implemented within the 2026 CEF cycle. ○ The existing limit of one application within the Large category remains unchanged. ○ This update supports the long-term sustainability of the CCH program area and ensures continued access for new applicants. <p>Community Services (CS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update evaluation criteria for the Emerging Needs and Program Innovation stream to place greater emphasis on the organizational capacity section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organizational Capacity: 38% ○ Program Merit: 24% ○ Community Impact: 38% <p>Sport & Active Lifestyles (SAL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective 2027, (CEF cycle beginning in Q4 2026) organizations may only receive funding from the Capacity

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	<p>Building stream every other year, and projects must be substantially different than those they have previously received funding for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This update is consistent with the CCH, ARTS, and CS, Capacity Building streams where funding is limited to every other year to ensure broad access, and emphasize the one-time internal facing nature of these projects. ○ This update will be phased-in beginning with awareness and communication to all current and future applicants to ensure that organizations are provided a period of adjustment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective 2028, (CEF cycle beginning in Q4 20267) SAL applications will be limited to three applications per organization per year (with the exception of the Capacity Building stream as this provides internal facing project support). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The SAL program has experienced a significant increase in requests, up by 80% or from 46-83 applications over the last 2 years. ○ By limiting the number of applications, this update is designed to continue the support for new applicants. ○ This update will be phased-in to provide a period of adjustment to impacted organizations and to ensure adequate awareness and communication is provided. ○ During the interim applicants may still apply to more than three applications per year. ○ This change does not impact an organization's ability to submit in other program areas for different programs when eligibility is met. i.e., an organization applying to both CS and SAL. <p><i>Status: In Progress</i></p>
Appeals Guidelines Updates	<p>The Appeals Process guidelines will be updated to clarify that an appeal may be submitted, regardless of rating, if a procedural error was made resulting in an error to the recommendation of funding.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If returning groups are recommended funding in error as new organizations. • If a returning organization's prior year funding is not accurate.

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	<p>This change will ensure that applicant needs can be met promptly in the event of a staff error.</p> <p>Additional changes to Appeals Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations are currently not permitted to receive appeals funding in two consecutive years. To ensure consistency across CEF, the appeals language will be updated to clarify that applicants to the Creation & Presentation (C&P) stream are not eligible to receive appeals funding in two consecutive grant cycles. • While C&P applicants are only eligible to apply every other year, this still constitutes two consecutive grant cycles within their stream. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example: An artist applies in Year 1 and receives funding through the appeals process. They are not eligible to apply in Year 2. If they apply again in Year 3 and seek an appeal, they would be ineligible, as this would represent two consecutive appeals in the C&P stream's grant cycle. <p><i>Status: In Progress</i></p>
Budget Form and Application Forms Improvements	<p>Technical updates to improve user experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automations to restrict funding requests exceeding stream maximums. • Additional checkbox to ensure applicants are submitting signed Audited Financial Statements when required. • Improve CSS wrapping on Grant Portal to better reflect City of Hamilton branding. • Improve visibility of required tasks to applicants throughout application process through using pre-requisite settings in Grant Portal. • Limiting the number of City of Hamilton Strategic Priorities that can be selected within the application to ensure applicants are speaking most directly to the priorities they are helping to address. <p><i>Status: In progress</i></p>
Program Handbook Updates	<p>Update guidelines and handbooks to provide clearer and consistent language overall including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve definition of Capital “Equipment” as opposed to program expenses. • Improved clarity on eligible expenses, in particular specialized equipment in the SAL accessible sports stream.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handbook and General Guideline updates to reflect all changes made via this report. <p><i>Status: In Progress</i></p>
R. R. McCann Family Foundation Update	<p>On July 11, 2025, the R. R. McCann Family Foundation signed an acknowledgement and release committing to provide matching funds to registered charitable organizations receiving CEF Funding from the Digital program area, with an annual commitment up to \$50,000.00 in 2025, 2026 and 2027.</p> <p>CEF is appreciative of these matching grants to CEF recipients, and the impact this granting will have on the growth of Digital equity in Hamilton.</p>