

Upstream Fund Terms of Reference

Upstream Fund Overview

The Upstream Fund is a council approved \$2.1 million annual fund to support community-led initiatives in Waterloo Region that align with the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (CSWP). This fund uses a community-based funding model and focuses on upstream initiatives that improve social and economic systems to decrease barriers and improve support that allow people to achieve their full potential. Achieving full potential includes social and economic factors that influence people's health, such as education, income, environment, food security, housing, and employment.

The concept of Upstream is about prevention. It is about changing systems that distribute wealth, power, and decision-making. For the 2023 year, the Upstream funding process will be paired with the Community Capacity Building Fund. The Community Capacity Building Fund is a council approved \$2.0 million annual fund to improve the social and economic health and wellbeing of First Nations, Inuit and Métis; African, Caribbean, and Black identifying; racialized and other communities disproportionately affected by systemic inequity.

Goals of the Fund

The concept of Upstream is broad, as it can include reforming fundamental social and economic structures and systems that distribute wealth, power, opportunities, and decision-making. This can further include a variety of initiatives focused on achieving optimal health and wellbeing that exist on a continuum. The more upstream the action, the greater the impact on a population level as it is more focused on prevention. Middle and downstream approaches typically focus more on reducing risk or changing the effects of causes. Taken together these approaches form a continuum of opportunities where change can be made.

Upstream approaches allow us to address many priorities and issues simultaneously while potentially requiring fewer resources.

Fund Priorities

The CSWP is a local community developed framework that also explores and offers a powerful, local interpretation of the concept of upstream or root causes into tangible actions to move forward. The CSWP will be used to further anchor initiatives, actions, and programs with a local context and allocate priorities for funding. The local CSWP Framework is rooted in the upstream concepts and focuses on the local priorities of Truth and Reconciliation, Anti-Hate, Anti Racism, Anti-Oppression and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Upstream funding process will prioritize initiatives that align with the CSWP areas of focus:

- Truth and Reconciliation:

- Acknowledging and restoring Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination
- Honouring and respecting Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, traditions, customs, and ceremonies
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:
 - Recognizing, acknowledging, and confronting the nature of structural and cultural discrimination against First Nations, Inuit and Métis, Black, African, Caribbean, and other equity deserving* groups facing exclusion based on attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers, based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed etc.
- Self-Determined Communities:
 - Supporting communities in defining and pursuing their own future; representing their own; and practice, preserve and promote their own value systems and traditions without being made to lose their sense of identity and worth.
 - Shifting power to community, trusting community to know their needs and how to best meet them.
- System Accountability and Action:
 - Fostering systems that are designed and structured in a manner consistent with the aspirations of the community and centre wellbeing.
- Equitable Access to Basic Needs:
 - Ensuring culturally specific and trauma-informed care and services that influence social determinants of health.
 - Social determinants of health include: Education, Employment Health and Mental wellness, Housing, Food Security, Early years, Income/ Employment, Ability.
- Circles of Support:
 - Creating a sense of security, support, acceptance, identity and inclusion
 - Recognizing and honouring the various supports and networks within communities
 - Creating physical and psychological space for communities

In addition to community priorities outlined in the CSWP, and community calls for action, the Upstream fund is built upon and guided by the principles outlined in Appendix A.

Funding Process: The Three Step Model

The three-step model of the Upstream Fund aims to add value at each step for potential funding participants and the broader community regardless of whether an organization

receives funding dollars. Our hope is that everyone who participates in the process leaves with something useful such as a new relationship, collaborator, resource or platform to champion their work. This funding and investment program goes beyond granting funds and focuses on supporting capacity building. The three-step model provides more flexibility for the community to make decisions about what they believe is needed most in the communities that they serve. Each year this model will be reviewed using ongoing evaluation, learning and engagement.

For more information about the Upstream funding process, see Appendix B.

2023 Funding Cycle

Funding Available for 2023 cycle

For the 2023 funding cycle, approximately \$663,000 will be allocated, as a portion of the funds were allocated with the 2022 decisions. In 2023, the following funds are available for new 1-year proposals.

Please note there is no maximum amount to the funding requests.

Eligibility of Applicants

The Upstream community funding model is open to all community organizations working on upstream initiatives within Waterloo Region. However, the fund will prioritize grassroots community organizations that have historically been, and continue to be, excluded from funding opportunities. This includes groups and organizations led by and serving:

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis
- African, Caribbean and Black identifying
- Communities and equity deserving* groups facing exclusion based on attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers, based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed etc.

*Equity-deserving refers to groups who experience barriers in access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination. These groups actively seek social justice and reparation.

To receive funding, groups must be one of the following:

- A not-for-profit corporation, incorporated under federal or provincial legislation (a "Corporation")
- Un-incorporated group or initiative that partners with via an incorporated sponsoring agency that is a Corporation and who will sign the funding agreement

- Un-incorporated group or initiative that designates one individual applicant to sign the funding agreement.

Please note, sponsoring Corporations or individuals will accept responsibility under the funding agreement, including but not limited to reporting on the funds received.

If you might be interested in finding a sponsoring organization and would like help, please feel free to email Upstream Team at upstream@regionofwaterloo.ca

Organizations who do not have charitable status or are not formally incorporated as a not for profit may still apply.

The following groups are not eligible for Upstream Funds:

- 2022 recipients with 2-year agreements
 - Recipients with 1-year agreements are eligible to apply for this cycle*
- For profit organizations
- Other levels of government (e.g., municipal, provincial, federal)
- Public Sector Institutions (e.g., Hospitals, School Boards, Post-Secondary Institutions, Children’s Aid Society, Community Care Access Centres)
- Political organizations
- Organizations whose activities may breach the Ontario Human Rights Code or Charter of Rights
- Social Enterprises
- Activities already funded by Region of Waterloo or other funding agencies

*2022 (1 and 2 year) recipients are eligible to submit new initiatives for 2023 funding.

Eligible Expenses

Upstream Fund support flexibility to use funding where it is needed the most to effectively deliver programs, services and build organizational capacity and sustainability. Therefore, the funds can be used for a wide variety of purposes. Some examples include:

- Existing/ongoing or new projects, programs, and services related to upstream community work
 - Equipment and operating costs related to the proposal (e.g., space rental, salaries, supplies, events, etc.).
 - Organizational capacity building (e.g., board training) related to the proposal
 - At minimum the funds must:
 - Support the community in Waterloo Region
- Ineligible expenses include:
 - Capital Construction.

- b. Work beyond the scope of this fund.
- c. For profit work.
- d. Programs that other levels of government have legislated responsibility for funding. This includes government mandated programs such as school board educational programs, public health programs, provincially mandated services or social assistance programs and health care services.
- e. Debt or debt financing (e.g., deficit reduction, depreciation or financing charges, costs incurred before the grant).
- f. Work that is fully funded.
- g. Expenses funded in previous cycle that overlap with this cycle

Timeline

Step 1: Open call and engagement via Community Collaborative events

- In-person and virtual collaborative events for the open call (mid-April to Mid-May)
- Upstream applications are open (April 15 to May 15)
- Call for proposals is open (March 22 to April 17)

Step 2: Decision making via Community Change Committee

- Community Change committee reviews nominations and selects new members for the Community Change Committee vacancies (May 1 to May 14)
- Community Change Committee reviews applications and makes funding decisions (May 15 to June 15)

Step 3: Sharing stories on learning and impact

- Community Change Committee reviews applications and makes funding decisions (May 15 to June 15)
- On-going support and capacity building for successful 2023 recipients.

Submitting an Application:

- The application process will be open between April 15 to May 15, 2023. There are no limits on the amount of funding a group can request.
- The application will be short and simple with multiple ways to apply, including by:
 - an online platform
 - phone, virtual, or in person conversation
 - A paper submission

- A video submission
- Regional staff support will be available to anyone interested in applying. Regional staff may follow up with questions on proposals.

This process will support community-learning, champion and recognize important work and to improve the overall process for community in future Upstream Fund rounds. This trust-based fund aims to minimize barriers, particularly, for organizations that are often excluded from these funds due to onerous reporting and tracking requirements.

Requirements of Successful Applicants - Funding Agreements:

Successful applicants will be subject to a Funding Agreement with the Region of Waterloo. Reporting requirements will be proportionate with the complexity and size of the funds allocated, however, Region staff will work with each successful applicant to determine how best to track progress, and report program impacts.

Applicants requesting greater than \$100,000 will be required to submit an annual audit to the Region of Waterloo. Smaller request will submit a Review Engagement.

Up to 50% of the cost of the review engagement can be included in proposals for Upstream funding.

Appendix A - Guiding Principles

The following principles approved by Regional Council have guided the structure, engagement, and decision-making processes for the Upstream Fund.

- a) **Respond to the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (CSWP) framework**
By anchoring the policy firmly in the CSWP framework, this gives us actionable opportunities that respond to current needs identified by community related to upstream initiatives.
- b) **Support community-led change initiatives**
Community-centered models, led by community organizations and supported by systems, is the best way to move forward for meaningful change. Opportunities from designing the process to making the decisions enable community organizations to self-determine, mobilize, and make meaningful contributions and impacts to the health and well-being of community members.
- c) **Explore and try new models of participatory governance with community**
This principle underlines the opportunity to explore ways community engagement can support the design of the fund and play a key role in decision-making and the allocation of the funds. A community-led, system-supported approach to implementation of the funding program will include community representation at the decision-making table, ensuring equitable access to information about funding opportunities, providing application and system navigation support (as relevant), having transparent and coordinated review processes, and ensuring accountability in monitoring and reporting is based on success measures identified by the community.
- d) **Community Capacity, Collaboration and Knowledge Creation**
This initiative provides a unique opportunity for the Region, alongside system partners and community, to work together to build effective models to tackle complex challenges. Regional staff will work with the community to develop the funding process and create opportunities for collaboration. The process will be continually evaluated and evolve as new learnings are shared.
- e) **Building strategic alignment between other funding/investment**
It is important that this new fund strategically align with other grants and funding streams that exist within the Region. Specifically, the administration of this fund will align with the funding investments led by the Immigration Partnership. Initiatives will be coordinated and recommended between the funds as appropriate to ensure funding opportunities are best utilized and maximized.

Appendix B - Upstream Three Step- Model

Step 1 Open Call and Engagement: Community Collaborative Events

Open call is an opportunity for outreach and engagement with community groups and organizations interested in the funding opportunity. This part of the process will include Community Collaborative events/spaces (virtual and in-person) that encourage collaboration between organizations, resource sharing, and increase knowledge about the breadth of work happening in the community.

For 2023 funding year, these events will be held across Waterloo Region throughout mid-April until mid-May 2023.

Step 2 Decision Making: Community Change Committee

A community nominated and Regionally supported decision-making group (herein referred to the Community Change Committee) will evaluate applications and make decisions on funding allocations. The Community Change Committee will use a trust-based approach, Upstream priorities, and community identified priorities (through Community Safety Wellbeing Plan (CSWP), ongoing consultations and the Community Collaborative Events) to assess the funding applications and allocate funds for Upstream Fund and aligned funding opportunities.

Role of the Community Change Committee:

- This model acknowledges that the community best understands their strengths, assets, and needs. The Community Change Committee will determine how the funding will be allocated using the program guidelines set out in these terms of reference.
- The Community Change Committee will develop a selection process that follows the principles of funding, which includes:
 - Ensuring community priorities are met
 - Work supports the Upstream and Community Capacity Building mandates
 - Funds are allocated fairly across municipalities based on submissions received
- The committee will be responsible for:
 - Reviewing applications and making final funding decisions
 - Sharing the outcomes of their review with the community and council

The Committee will be made up of community members who, together, have the following knowledge, experience and skills in the areas of:

- The local community, its needs and goals
- Upstream as a concept as a means to achieve community change
- Granting and building organizational capacity
- Truth and Reconciliation, Anti-Hate, Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism

An external community facilitator with granting and community building experience will support and facilitate the process from selection to allocation of funds by the Community Change committee.

Approach to select Community Change Committee (CCC) members:

- The CCC will be made up of. Up to 8 members of the 2022 committee along with new members identified through an application process.
- The call for applications for CCC members will be promoted widely across Waterloo Region.
- New CCC members will be chosen by the Community Facilitator and a panel of returning Committee members.
- The community facilitator will guide the CCC discussion and decision-making process based on the definitions of the Upstream Fund and Community Capacity Building Fund terms of reference, as well as, CSWP and community priorities.
- The Region will provide support and context, but all funding decisions will be made by the CCC.

Step 3 [Sharing stories of Impact and Learning](#): Reporting processes can be time consuming and resource intensive for many organizations. Successful submissions will need to engage in a community based participatory research approach. Reporting for the Upstream Fund will focus on learning and allow organizations to share their impact through multiple different ways (e.g., written format, interview, focus group). At minimum, individuals/organizations will be asked to provide information about their work including the population groups they supported and how, as well the impact achieved.

External expertise will be engaged to support impact evaluation and reporting around the Upstream Fund process and outcomes. This resource will provide support to fund participants, staff and the community to learn and improve the process for subsequent years. This support will be essential in conducting a fulsome community led assessment on the outcomes of the funding and related impacts as well as sharing the findings with Council and the community.