

Toronto's Workforce Funder Collaborative Call for Proposals 2024

I. About Us:

[Toronto's Workforce Funder Collaborative](#)¹ (Funder Collaborative) is a group of philanthropic organizations that have combined efforts and resources to advance systemic change that creates a more equitable labour market and economy across the Greater Toronto Area by investing in workforce development. Launched in 2020, we are incubated by the Community Foundations of Canada.

The Funder Collaborative is interested in supporting organizations that want to address deep rooted systemic workforce development problems. We hope to invest in organizations that are interested in deep and sustained engagement with the Funder Collaborative to create or enhance existing programs that lead to systems change and include principles of equity, collaboration, innovation, and learning.

II. Strategic Framework:

Through a nine-month evaluation and planning process, the Funder Collaborative has revised its strategic framework. The Strategic Framework has four main elements.

1. Investment Strategies:

We will continue to support and invest in organizations through planning grants, implementation grants, and applied research grants.

- a. Planning Grants: *Planning grants are meant for organizations that are interested in exploring a systems-change question and how it affects the work they are doing and their ecosystem.*
- b. Implementation Grants: *Implementation grants are meant for organizations that are interested in expanding their systems change work in workforce development. The assumption is that they have either been engaged in systems change work or have done the initial planning and are now ready to implement this work.*
- c. Applied Research: *Applied research grants are focused on answering a very specific question that focuses on workforce development systems change within GTA. These grants are meant to include diverse perspectives and partners in their research to offer recommendations that are implementable. We are consciously trying to avoid funding research and papers that have no actionable next steps.*

2. Investee Partners:

We will continue to invest in non-profit organizations that are qualified or non-qualified donees. In addition, we encourage partnerships with other organizations like employers, education and training institutions, unions, member associations, chambers of commerce, and other non-profit organizations that are supporting the work of non-profit organizations and creating systems change.

¹ Our founding funders are: The Counselling Foundation of Canada, Metcalf Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way Greater Toronto, JP Morgan Chase & Co., and TD Ready Commitment. WES Marian Assefa Fund joined us in Summer 2020 and Definity Insurance Foundation is our newest funder partner and joined us in October 2022.

3. Investment Sectors:

We are interested in advancing systems change in workforce development across all sectors and industries. We welcome applications from organizations working in new and innovative sectors such as blockchain.

4. Field-Building Activities

We strongly believe that sharing what we are learning is important to build the field. This includes all stakeholders within the philanthropic and non-profit sector. As such, we hope to create peer networking opportunities to learn and grow together. In addition, capacity building and technical assistance will continue to be the cornerstone of our work and will be woven throughout the life cycle of our funding.

III. Systems Change Approach:

The Funder Collaborative's system change approach is simple – help organizations address the root cause of the problems they are solving for. Often this is where systems need to change. By solving for the problem at the root level, systems change happens. While systems change at the policy and advocacy level is welcome, we do not want to unfairly place the burden of that on non-profit organizations. Instead, we feel by helping non-profit organizations address problems and systems change at the core, we can assist in strengthening their ecosystem and partnerships (e.g.: participants, partners, stakeholders, government entities) so they can create sustainable solutions to pressing workforce development problems in GTA. Simply stated, we are interested in supporting organizations that are able to scale deep from systems change perspective.



The **outcome/impact** of Funder Collaborative investment is a "fuller" tree that can attract additional funding from the government and private sector to expand the systems change work beyond the ecosystem. Enabling either a lateral or a vertical growth.



Funder Collaborative investment to strengthen the roots of the organization and create system change at the ecosystem level in which you are operating.

Here are some examples of workforce development problems we have seen organizations challenged by during their **planning stages**.

- ❖ “There is lack of people of colour in the construction sector. We think it is because of the barriers they face to get in the industry or once on the job. But we are unsure what exactly the problem is and would like to explore that so we can create the right solution.”
- ❖ “We have many employer relationships, but we have no structure to our partnerships. This is a problem because when jobs are available, participants are not, and when participants are available, jobs are not. We are constantly searching for new employers. How do we change this?”
- ❖ “There is a shortage of early childhood education workers. We have foreign-trained workers, but they are not eligible to work as early childhood education workers. How do we re-credential foreign trained early childhood education workers through prior learning assessments?”
- ❖ “Young Black women are leaving the creative media sector at a faster rate than anticipated. We want to explore what are the reasons for this. Is it lack of social capital? Is it a retention challenge? Is it just the nature of gig economy?”

Here are some examples of workforce development problems we have seen organizations challenged by for **implementation**.

- ❖ Testing a new hiring model with employers that encourages more people of colour being hired and retained in jobs
- ❖ Implementing an employer engagement strategy that focuses on relationship building and then scaling it to other employer partners
- ❖ Addressing job quality issues that will enable better working conditions, higher pay and benefits for workers in the supply chain and warehousing sector

IV. Funding Opportunity:

In 2024, the Funder Collaborative will select and support:

- ❖ Up to **10 organizations** through a **12-month planning grant**. Applicants can request up to **\$50,000** for planning grants.
- ❖ Up to **4 organizations** through a **up to 3-year implementation grant**. Applicants can request up to **\$250,000** for implementation grants.

Grant applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through out the year with clear cut-off dates for application to be considered for each quarter. We will accept applications through our [online system](#) on a quarterly basis.

Submission Date	Decision Date	Program Start Date
March 18, 2024	April 22, 2024	May 1, 2024
May 15, 2024	June 15, 2024	July 1, 2024
August 15, 2024	September 15, 2024	October 1, 2024
November 15, 2024	December 15, 2024	January 1, 2025

Organizations selected for **Planning Grants** will explore a systems-change question and how it affects the work they are doing and their ecosystem. Through capacity-building, consulting, and technical support from the Workforce Funder Collaborative’s staff and consultants, these organizations will

develop a comprehensive understanding of the problem and possible solutions from a systems change lens.

Organizations selected for **Implementation Grants** will expand their systems change work in workforce development. The assumption is that they have either been engaged in systems change work or have done the initial planning and are now ready to implement this work. Through thought partnership, capacity-building, consulting, and technical support from the Workforce Funder Collaborative’s staff and consultants, these organizations will implement a cohesive program model.

In preparation for your applications, the Funder Collaborative will offer 20-minute ideation calls. You can click [here](#) to schedule these calls. There will also be a webinar on **Wednesday, February 29th at 2 pm** to share information about the call for proposals and answer questions. Please click [here](#) to register for the webinar.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must be:

- Qualified and non-qualified donees
- Located and work in the Greater Toronto Area
- Experienced in implementing workforce development programs/initiatives
- Able to commit to engaging with the Funder Collaborative’s staff or consultants on a monthly basis to brainstorm and ideate together

Application Key Dates:

Key Activities	Key Dates
Call for Proposal Release	February 14, 2024
Ideation Calls (20 minutes)	Any time
Informational Webinar	February 29, 2 pm
Application Deadline	March 18, 2024
Decisions and Notifications	April 22, 2024
Program Start Date	May 1, 2024

To attend the informational webinar, please register [here](#). A confirmation and link to the webinar will be sent to you upon registration.

Benefits and Features:

Here’s why we think you should apply for funding from the Funder Collaborative:

- Focus on systems change vs. outputs/outcomes
- Opportunity to ideate, engage in thought partnership with the Funder Collaborative
- Access to consultants and subject-matter experts
- Opportunity to network with your peers in GTA
- Opportunity to be part of a grantees-only learning circle that meets quarterly
- Opportunities to participate in discussion sessions with peers and funders
- A safe, no-judgement zone where you can ask questions, share best practices, and brainstorm together
- Provide and receive real-time feedback, gain contextualized perspective, and ideate systems-change work together with the Funder Collaborative

Call for Proposals:

Applications should be submitted online through <https://twfc.smartsimple.ca/>. Please carefully review the deadlines for each quarter while submitting your application. Applications received before the cut-off date for the said quarter will be reviewed that quarter. Applications received after the cut off date will be reviewed the following quarter. For your convenience, deadlines for each quarter are noted below.

Submission Date	Decision Date	Program Start Date
March 18, 2024	April 22, 2024	May 1, 2024
May 15, 2024	June 15, 2024	July 1, 2024
August 15, 2024	September 15, 2024	October 1, 2024
November 15, 2024	December 15, 2024	January 1, 2025

Please send any questions related to the application to grants@workforcecollaborative.ca.

Questions:²

Section A: Organizational Information: (Page limit: 1 page)

1. Name of the organization
2. Lead Staff Name
3. Lead staff contact information (address, phone number, email)
4. Charitable number (if applicable)
5. Target sector/industry
6. Amount requested

*Section B: Proposal Information for **planning grants**:*

1. Organizational Information:
 - Provide a summary of your history with workforce development.
2. Problem:
 - What is the workforce development problem (that is systemic to the sector/industry/ecosystem/your organization) you want to identify/address through this planning grant?
 - Why is it important for you to address this problem?
 - i. Why is this important for your community (e.g.: job seekers and workers)?
 - ii. Why is this important for your stakeholders (e.g.: other partners, employer partners, government(s))?
 - Who are your partners/stakeholders in solving for this problem? What is their role?
 - i. Are there any partners/stakeholders not engaged that you would like to include? Why are they not engaged yet?
 - ii. Please articulate whether the success of this proposed exercise is dependent on collaboration or other interdependencies with external stakeholders, and if so, how these dependencies may impact the overall effectiveness of the program/solution?

² Questions for **implementation** and **planning grants** are slightly different. Please review the appropriate section based on the grant stream you are applying for.

- What do you hope to accomplish at the end of the planning grant? (For example: a roadmap to next steps, program design, white paper, etc.)
 - i. What positive outcomes do you anticipate from addressing this issue?

3. System Change:

- What systems do you want to change? (e.g.: breaking down of silos between partners/stakeholders, improved understanding of clients needs and barriers, more sustainable funding, improved employer relationships)
- Why do you need to change these systems? (e.g.: make our work more efficient, better serve our clients, address inequities, have sustainable program models, stronger economic and community development)

4. Funder Collaborative Support:

- How can the Workforce Funder Collaborative best support you? In addition to funding, what types of support are you interested in (check all that apply):
 - Strategizing
 - Brainstorming
 - Consulting
 - Networking
 - Connections to other partners
 - Capacity building
 - Technical assistance
 - Access to research
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Other (please define)

- Are you currently being supported by any of the Funders below for the same project that you are applying for funding from The Funder Collaborative?
 - Counselling Foundation of Canada
 - Definity Insurance Foundation
 - Metcalf Foundation
 - JP Morgan Chase
 - TD Bank Ready to Commit
 - WES Mariam Assefa Fund
 - United Way Greater Toronto
 - Ontario Trillium Foundation

- If yes, please explain how the funding from the Funder Collaborative is different from the funding you are receiving from the Funders above.

Section C: Proposal Information for **implementation grants**:

1. Organizational Information:

- Provide a summary of your history with workforce development.

2. Problem:

- Provide an overview of the problem you are trying to solve for. Share the planning work you conducted that led you to this solution.

3. Solution:

- What is the workforce development solution (that is expected to create systems change) you are interested in implementing?
- What positive outcomes do you anticipate from addressing this issue?
- Why is it important for you to implement this solution?
 - i. Why is this important for your community (e.g.: job seekers and workers)?
 - ii. Why is this important for your stakeholders (e.g.: other partners, employer partners, government(s))?
- Who are your partners/stakeholders in solving for this problem? What is their role?
 - i. Are there any partners/stakeholders not engaged that you would like to include? Why are they not engaged yet?
- Please articulate whether the success of the proposed solution is dependent on collaboration or other interdependencies with external stakeholders, and if so, how these dependencies may impact the overall effectiveness of the program/solution?

4. System Change:

- What systems are you hoping to change through the proposed solution? (e.g.: breaking down of silos between partners/stakeholders, improved understanding of clients needs and barriers, more sustainable funding, improved employer relationships)
- Why do you need to change these systems? (e.g.: make our work more efficient, better serve our clients, address inequities, have sustainable program models, stronger economic and community development)

5. Budget:

- Complete the table below:

Line Item	Amount (total requested)
Staff salaries and benefits	
Consultants	
Program Activities	
Indirect Costs or Administrative Costs	
Other Costs (please define)	
Total	

- Please include a budget narrative.

6. Funder Collaborative Support:

- How can the Workforce Funder Collaborative best support you? In addition to funding, what types of support are you interested in (check all that apply):
 - Strategizing

- Brainstorming
- Connections to other partners
- Capacity building
- Access to research
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Other (please define)

- Are you currently being supported by any of the Funders below for the same project that you are applying for funding from The Funder Collaborative? Counselling

Foundation of Canada

- Definity Insurance Foundation
- Metcalf Foundation
- JP Morgan Chase
- TD Bank Ready to Commit
- WES Mariam Assefa Fund
- United Way Greater Toronto
- Ontario Trillium Foundation

- If yes, please explain how the funding from the Funder Collaborative is different from the funding you are receiving from the Funders above.

V. Scoring Methodology

Grant reviewers will use the following scoring methodology to review your application.

Review/Score Sheet for Planning Grants

1. Organizational Information:

- Does the applicant have past workforce development experience that will help lead this project to success?
 - i. Yes (5)
 - ii. Somewhat (3)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

2. Problem:

- Does the applicant have a clear understanding of the problem they are trying to solve/identify?
 - i. Yes (5)
 - ii. Somewhat (3)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

- Does the applicant clearly identify why it is important to address this problem for their community and stakeholders?
 - i. Yes (10)
 - ii. Somewhat (6)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

- Does the applicant clearly identify who the partners and stakeholders are?
 - i. Yes (5)
 - ii. Somewhat (3)
 - iii. No (0)
- Does the applicant effectively articulate whether the success of the proposed exercise is dependent on collaboration or other interdependencies with external stakeholders, and if so, do they provide a clear explanation of how these dependencies may impact the overall effectiveness of the program/solution?
 - Yes (5)
 - Somewhat (3)
 - No (0)

Comments:

- Does the applicant articulate what they hope to accomplish through this grant? In other words, has the applicant articulated envisaged positive outcomes through this planning grant?
 - i. Yes (5)

- ii. Somewhat (3)
- iii. No (0)

Comments:

3. System Change:

- Does the applicant clearly identify what systems they want to change with respect to the solution they are implementing?
 - i. Yes (7)
 - ii. Somewhat (4)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

- Does the applicant provide a clear understanding of the need for systems change?
 - i. Yes (10)
 - ii. Somewhat (6)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

4. Funder Collaborative Support:

- Is the applicant funded by one or more TWFC (The Workforce Funder Collaborative) funders in the same project they are applying for funding from TWFC?
 - i. Yes (0)
 - ii. No (5)

5. Overall:

- Do you recommend funding this organization for planning grant?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. May be
 - iii. No
- Please give two reasons in support of your answer.
- What outstanding questions do you have for this group?
- Any other comments:

Review/Score Sheet for Implementation Grants

1. Organizational Information:

- Does the applicant have past workforce development experience that will help lead this project to success?
 - i. Yes (5)
 - ii. Somewhat (3)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

2. Problem:

- Does the applicant provide a clear overview of the problem they are aiming to solve? Furthermore, do they effectively share the planning work/thought process that led them to the solution they want to implement?
 - i. Yes (5)
 - ii. Somewhat (3)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

3. Solution:

- Does the applicant clearly identify the solution they are interested in implementing?
 - i. Yes (5)
 - ii. Somewhat (3)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

- Does the applicant clearly articulate anticipated positive outcomes resulting from addressing the identified problem through this implementation grant?
 - i. Yes (5)
 - ii. Somewhat (3)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

- Does the applicant clearly identify the need to implement the solution for the community and their stakeholders?
 - i. Yes (10)
 - ii. Somewhat (6)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

- Does the applicant clearly identify who the partners and stakeholders are?
 - i. Yes (5)
 - ii. Somewhat (3)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

- Does the applicant effectively articulate whether the success of the proposed exercise is dependent on collaboration or other interdependencies with external stakeholders, and if

so, do they provide a clear explanation of how these dependencies may impact the overall effectiveness of the program/solution?

- Yes (5)
- Somewhat (3)
- No (0)

Comments:

4. System Change:

- Does the applicant clearly identify what systems they want to change with respect to the solution they are implementing?
 - i. Yes (7)
 - ii. Somewhat (4)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

- Does the applicant provide a clear understanding of the need for systems change?
 - i. Yes (10)
 - ii. Somewhat (6)
 - iii. No (0)

Comments:

5. Funder Collaborative Support

- Is the applicant funded by one or more TWFC (The Workforce Funder Collaborative) funders in the same project they are applying for funding from TWFC?
 - i. Yes (0)
 - ii. No (5)

6. Overall:

- Do you recommend funding this organization for implementation grant?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. May be
 - iii. No
- Please give two reasons in support of your answer.
- What outstanding questions do you have for this group?
- Any other comments: