



SPARK COMMUNITY ACTION GRANTS

GUIDELINES

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OVERVIEW

WHAT IS spark?

Spark is a United Way-led initiative that brings together community-minded women who contribute their time, effort and resources with a goal of making our city measurably better. Collectively, members of spark have decided to invest in Community Action Grants (CAG) to fund projects and initiatives in priority neighbourhoods within Ottawa. Spark recognizes the power of women to drive change in our community. As such, applications ought to focus on initiatives, projects or programs that specifically seek to support, empower or engage women and young women residing in Ottawa's priority neighbourhoods. Priority is given to initiatives that follow a social enterprise model.

CAGs are intended to give residents an opportunity to have direct input and influence into the improvement of their neighborhoods. The funds provide for projects with neighbourhood-wide benefits where traditional funding opportunities such as civic events funding, etc., are not usually available. It is a collaborative approach to supporting residents' engagement at the neighbourhood level. CAGs provide residents and community groups an opportunity to develop their community action plans and local initiatives in an effort to build healthy and strong neighbourhoods.

FUNDING PROCESS

WHEN ARE APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED?

Spark CAGs are allocated twice per year in the spring and fall. It can take 3-4 weeks to review grant applications and applicants are encouraged to leave room for the review process while planning their initiatives. Resident groups/community organizations can submit an application for any of these calls. Please refer to our website for deadlines.

HOW ARE FUNDING DECISIONS MADE?

Funding decisions are made by representatives of the spark Women's Giving Initiative, a community volunteer presently involved with United Way Ottawa, United Way Ottawa representatives and in consultation with other funding partners when needed.

HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be completed online in the Agency Portal which can be found at <https://uwco.smartsimple.ca>. The application checklist (page 8) provides details on what must be completed in the portal. Hard copies or emailed applications or attachments are no longer accepted. If you are unable to use an online tool, please connect with your sponsoring agency. Sponsoring organizations must open the application and provide a log-in to the resident group applying for funding.

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ELIGIBILITY

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Any neighbourhood-based organization (in an identified priority neighbourhood*), that is working with service providers to improve their neighbourhood, is eligible for a grant of up to \$3,000. The grant application must be submitted by the local Community Health/Resource Centre¹, Community House² with a charitable status, the Social Planning Council³ or any charitable organization on behalf of the community organization. **This application is to be completed by the resident groups/community organizations in consultation with staff from sponsoring organization.** A neighborhood-based organization is one:

- With a majority of its members residing or doing business in a recognized neighborhood;
- Whose purpose, at least in part, is to improve residents' quality of life in that area;
- That may include residents and representatives from schools, businesses, and other institutions operating in that neighborhood.

PRIORITY NEIGHBOURHOODS

Priority neighbourhoods are identified by Community Health and Resource Centres in consultation with community members, stakeholders and service providers in light of their experience as well as available data, the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study and other related sources of fact-based information. Neighbourhoods currently identified as priority neighbourhoods are currently being supported by the Community Development Framework partners and United Way under the Strong Neighbourhoods Priority Goal. To identify whether your neighbourhood is considered a priority, please contact your local Community Health and Resource Centre.

¹ Visit this link to find out the Community Health or Resource Centre serving your neighbourhood: <http://www.coalitionottawa.ca/>. Please get in touch with the Community Developer to work on your idea for the CAG.

² Visit this link to find more about your Community House:
http://ottawacommunityhouses.com/Community_Houses.html

³ <http://www.spcottawa.on.ca/>

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UNITED WAY GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The Community Health/Resource Centre, Community House or Social Planning Council, or any charitable organization sponsoring the project must meet all the following criteria:

- Be a registered charity (with its own RR number)
- Maintain a volunteer board that meets regularly
- Host an Annual General Meeting
- Have financial statements that have been audited by a licensed public accountant

WHAT ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

CAGs are intended to support priority neighbourhoods to mobilize and engage residents and work closely with service delivery partners in implementing community action plans. Eligible projects include (but are not restricted to) resident-led initiatives that will:

- Encourage women in the community to be the driving force for change
- Increase social interaction
- Reduce isolation
- Improve community safety
- Build local skills
- Engage residents in projects that will benefit their community
- Community gatherings that promote engagement and interaction of residents. Examples:
 - Multicultural, social or educational activities
 - Activities or projects developed and led by women and/or young women to address common needs in their neighbourhoods
 - Projects that engage residents in building strong neighbourhoods. *Examples:*
 - Community assessment and local planning
 - Local initiatives that improve neighbourhoods such as community clean-up days, community gardening, mural, art and beautification projects

OTHER CRITERIA

- The activities proposed by the applicant must benefit residents in the City of Ottawa boundaries.
- The applicant's primary focus and mandate must be within the social services sector.
- The proposal submitted by the applicant must clearly support stated priority goal(s).
- The applicant (or partnering sponsor organization, in the case of sponsored applicants) must be financially solvent.
- The applicant must carry sufficient liability insurance to cover the program/project seeking United Way funding.
- **Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.**

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UNITED WAY GENERAL INELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Activities that are not directly related to resident engagement
- Election campaign events
- Bingo nights or fund raising activities
- Office administration costs (staffing ; rental; utilities etc)
- Alcoholic beverages
- For-profit organizations or ventures, non-profit organizations sponsoring for-profit organizations
- Existing or ongoing programs/services
- Projects that conflict with existing United Way funding criteria. (e.g. **Costs Ineligible for Funding noted in the Other Eligibility Criteria section of this guide**)

COSTS INELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING :


- Retirement of debts or budget deficits.
- Costs for capital equipment or expenses related to construction, or the development of facilities.
- Wage subsidies for program participants.

APPLICANTS INELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING:

- Registered charitable organizations sponsoring for-profit organizations or for-profit ventures, with the exception of social enterprise or non-profit community economic development activities.
- Hospitals or medical treatment programs.
- Educational institutions and organizations, including school boards, schools, universities, colleges and parent-teacher associations.
- Faith-based organizations that require an adherence to or promotion of a religious faith as a condition of receiving supports or services.
- Political parties.
- Fundraising events or organizations, service clubs and foundations that act primarily to raise funds for distribution to other organizations, with the exception of foundations that are raising funds for directly related organization.
- Organizations whose policies or practices contravene the Ontario Human Rights Code.

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Accessing the Application in Smart Simple:

- In order to avoid any internet browser issues, it is recommended that you use  Google Chrome to access the [Portal](#).
- Once the sponsor organization has a login and password, more people can be added to the organization profile, by clicking '*create new contact*' while logged into the portal. Each individual needs to be added in the portal in order to be able to view and edit the application. Click '*activate*' to send contacts a password.
- Only one person at a time can edit the application. It works similar to how things would on a shared drive. If one person logs in and opens the request they can make changes. If another person logs in with a different user name, they would be able to open the document, but not make changes (e.g. read only). It is not possible to get around this by two people logging into the document using the same user name. This will result in lost information as the document won't save properly.

Resident groups/community organizations:

1. Identify and contact your sponsoring organization regarding your interest in submitting a CAG.
2. Provide your name and email to your sponsoring group so you may be added to the Sponsoring Group's portal.
3. Once you have received your password, login to the [portal](#) using your email address.
4. Scroll down to the bottom to find the Spark application section of the portal. You do not need to access or edit other parts of the portal including 'Update Organization details'.
5. Click on Create new spark proposal. Give your program/project a name right away to avoid confusing it with other group's applications.
6. Save frequently; keep a copy of your work offline to avoid losing any information.
7. Upload your signature page.
8. Hit submit when you are finished.

Sponsoring Organizations:

- Applicant sponsor organizations that have previously submitted a proposal to United Way Ottawa in the past four years can access their account using the same login (email address) and password. If you have forgotten your password, you can easily reset it from the Agency Portal login page.
- Applicant sponsor organizations that have not previously used the Agency Portal will have to first register through the portal in order to obtain a username and password. To do so, navigate to the bottom of the screen and next to New Applicant? click on "*Click Here to Register.*" Once you have filled out and submitted the online form, you will receive an email with your login information.
- Once logged in, add Resident groups/community organizations members to your Agency's portal, so that they may have access to their application. (click *create new contact*)
- Add your Executive Director (or equivalent) as a contact in your portal. (click *create new contact*)
- Complete the *Update Organization Details* section of the portal including responding to eligibility related questions.
- Upload the eligibility documents (see page 8) in the application of at least one of the resident groups/community organizations you are supporting.

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APPLICATION CHECKLIST

IMPORTANT: Use this checklist to ensure the application is complete.

In the tab called 'Eligibility documents & Signatures' upload one copy of the following:

- Sponsoring Organization:** A current list of Board/Executive members, positions, names and phone numbers of the Sponsoring Community Health/Resource Centre, Community House or Social Planning Council or charitable organization
- Sponsoring Organization:** *Proof of commercial general liability insurance (minimum \$2M) from the sponsoring Community Health/ Resource Centre, Community house or Social Planning Council or charitable organization.
- Resident groups/community organizations:** Signature page with signatures of the organization sponsoring the project and from a member of the neighbourhood-based organization.

**Not required for agencies currently in receipt of United Way Ottawa Funding.*

In addition:

- Resident groups/community organizations:** Complete and submit the *spark* Community Action Grant application found in the portal at the link 'Create a *spark* Community Action Grant application'
- Sponsoring Organization:** Complete/Update the requested information and respond to the questions found in the Organization Details section of the agency portal.

Please note that agencies receiving funding will be asked to submit the following:

- A project timeline upon receipt of funding
- Photos/video of project activities or access for United Way to collect photos/video of project activities
- Outcome summary for their community action plan or initiative along with evaluation results

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- DO consult with CAG Staff at UW about your project ideas and application
- DO consult with the sponsoring organization prior to developing your application
- DO demonstrate neighborhood involvement from shaping of the project idea to implementation
- DO be extremely clear with your budget numbers. Describe services, items and quantities specifically
- Do demonstrate collaboration and partnership and residents involvement
- Allow at least four weeks for proposal review and funds release
- DO include budget for: Childcare, food, and public transportation (if needed)

If your questions cannot be resolved by referring to the guidebook, please contact us by email at spark@unitedwayottawa.ca or call 613 898 6915.