Local Poverty Reduction Fund

# 2015 Call for Proposals Application Guide

Poverty Reduction Strategy Office, Treasury Board Secretariat

May 13, 2015

ontario.ca/povertyreduction

Ontario

Copies of this Application Guide can be obtained from: ontario.ca/povertyreduction

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# PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Local Poverty Reduction Fund ("the Fund"). We are excited to work with you to make a real and lasting impact on people's lives and helping them to realize their potential.

This 2015 Call for Proposals Application Guide ("Application Guide") is issued by the Treasury Board Secretariat ("the ministry") for the purpose of identifying groups interested in receiving grants to showcase and evaluate innovative, local, community-driven solutions to poverty - with a focus on preventing or lifting people out of poverty. The ministry is interested in supporting organizations to showcase their approaches to poverty, their delivery models and partnership arrangements, as well as to **evaluate** their innovative interventions that are showing **improved outcomes** for those disproportionately affected by poverty.

The purpose of this Application Guide is to provide interested parties with information on the background on the Fund, the eligibility requirements and Fund criteria, as well as other considerations. Interested organizations ("applicants") are asked to read this Application Guide carefully and are invited to submit an application in accordance with these instructions.

> Please note: Proposed amendments to the *Poverty Reduction Act, 2009* have been introduced in the Legislative Assembly as part of Bill 91, *Building Ontario Up Act* (Budget Measures), 2015, Provision of funding is subject to the enactment of these amendments.

# SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Application submission begins on May 13, 2015 and closes on June 10, 2015.

Please submit your completed application form no later than 11:59 pm on June 10, 2015 via prso@ontario.ca. Late applications will not be assessed.

Applicants would be informed of successful proposals, in writing, in Summer 2015, and given approval for funding subject to a project agreement. Projects may start and funding may begin as soon as Fall 2015.

The application form can be downloaded at: www.ontario.ca/povertyreduction. Kindly read the application guide carefully before completing the application form.

Those applicants that participated in the Expression of Interest (EOI) phase are encouraged to incorporate relevant aspects of the EOI application and feedback

received on individual project proposals into their Call for Proposal application.

Participating in the EOI phase was not a pre-condition for submitting an application for this Call for Proposal.

We encourage you to submit your application as early as possible as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office will be ready to review applications starting early in the process.

Any questions about the application process may be submitted to prso@ontario.ca.

**Note:** Aboriginal communities and organizations are encouraged and welcome to access the Fund as engagement continues on matching the Fund to the needs of Aboriginal communities

**Future Application Intakes**
This Fund is new and the 2015 application cycle will be a learning year for both the ministry and the sector. A government fund focused on demonstrating and evaluating innovative ideas is a new approach and we want to work with a wide range of partners to make the Fund a success.

It is anticipated that the Fund will have three rounds, one in 2015, 2016 and 2017, for applications to be submitted, reviewed and potentially funded. Projects could be funded for a possible duration of up to three years to provide enough time for programs/services to demonstrate results. Any funding granted would be subject to applicable reporting, performance and accountability requirements under a project funding agreement.

# SINGLE APPLICANT REQUIREMENT

Partnerships are an important aspect of this Fund and proposals will be scored based on their partnership approach. However, each application must be submitted by a single applicant. If an application is approved, this single legal entity would also be the signatory to the funding agreement and be identified as the grant recipient. Notwithstanding any partnership arrangements that are identified in the application as sharing, in any way, any role or responsibility related to the project, the applicant / grant recipient  would assume full responsibility and liability for those organizations pursuant to a funding agreement for the project.

# MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS

Organizations may submit, participate or partner in more than one proposal but should

consider how multiple projects would be managed.  Organizations should provide evidence of having sufficient capacity to implement parallel evaluations, including clear roles within the organization for leading each project. Applications should describe clearly how the proposals are distinct from each other, as well as the links between them, where possible, for example, in their partnership relationships. It may be of value to evaluate more than one program/service in the context of the tangible benefits of receiving services through an integrated approach versus a single-tiered approach.

Organizations can also consider applying to the Call for Proposals anticipated in 2016 and 2017 if they have multiple programs they wish to evaluate.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## About the Strategy

In 2014, the Ontario government moved forward with renewed efforts to prevent and reduce poverty with the launch of the second Poverty Reduction Strategy, *Realizing our Potential* ("the PRS"). The PRS focuses on four key pillars: continuing to break the cycle of poverty for children and youth, moving towards employment and income security for vulnerable groups, ending homelessness and investing in what works by using evidence to measure success.

The fourth pillar focuses on the need for evidence of poverty interventions that work and investing in the right supports. It recognizes that poverty is a complex issue and resources are limited. The Ontario government has committed to measuring success through 11 indicators to help ensure that our investments are making a difference (further information about the indicators can be found on page 9). The government is committed to evidence-based decision making to inform program and policy design and delivery, and the Fund has been designed to support that direction.

During engagement to develop the PRS, the government heard from municipal and community partners about the value of tapping into local, community-driven solutions - like the ones that will be identified through this Call for Proposals - and fostering collaborative partnerships across Ontario. One of the responses to this feedback is the Fund.

It is anticipated that the Fund will help grant recipients to strengthen their efforts in poverty reduction by providing funding for applicants to showcase and evaluate their innovative programs that prevent and/or reduce poverty and demonstrate positive outcomes for vulnerable groups, such as women, single parents, people with disabilities, youth, newcomers, visible minorities, seniors and First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Aboriginal people.

We want to get the best possible results for the people working hard to leave poverty, and so we must work together to do that. Through this Fund we encourage partnerships and collaborations to support your programs/interventions, whether through in-kind contributions or other innovative partnership arrangements.

We expect that the projects supported through the Fund would result in a range of programs that could identify a variety of outcomes for people in poverty, depending on the program scope. The range could be from improved access to services, to skills development, and improved social and economic inclusion and well-being. We also realize that some evaluation results may show limited impact on client outcomes and this could give applicants an opportunity to strengthen program interventions to make the programs work better for clients.

Research shows that evidence-based programs are succeeding in addressing some tough societal challenges and resulting in improved client outcomes. A report prepared by the Mowat Centre to help inform Ontario's PRS, *Realizing Our Potential,* provides a summary of proven approaches to alleviating poverty in a variety of jurisdictions[1].

# PROGRAM CRITERIA AND APPLICATION

The first component of your application (Project Overview, Business Case and Evaluation Approach) collects information to help assess the idea for your project by describing the program/service you want to demonstrate and evaluate its potential for an impact on poverty and your plan to conduct the evaluation.

The second component of your application (Partnerships and Organizational Capacity, Project Delivery and Sustainability) collects information to help assess your ability to deliver the proposed project through partnerships that support the program/service and evaluation, and the organizational capacity, delivery plan and sustainability plan that would support the project.

The third component, a project budget, collects information to help assess the request for funding to support the evaluation approach and any incremental program or service costs that would be needed for the project.

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[1] White, A, Dragicevic, N and Granofsky, T. 2014. What works? Proven Approaches to alleviating poverty. Toronto: Mowat Centre.

Applicants should review the following program criteria and ensure their application addresses the requirements outlined below.

# Eligible Organizations

The application asks you to provide basic information about your organization.

Eligible applicants include not-for-profit corporations, registered charities, municipal governments, District Social Services Administration Boards and other public bodies (e.g., universities, colleges, and school boards). The government especially welcomes applications from Aboriginal Peoples (including, First Nations, Metis, Inuit communities/organizations, as well as organizations serving urban Aboriginal People).

Social enterprises that are either a registered charity or not-for-profit organization are eligible to apply.

Individuals, for profit, and non-legal entities are not eligible to apply. These parties may, however, participate as partners in a proposal (See "Partnerships" below).

# The Project Overview

Applicants must provide an overview of their project and its focus.  In this section, applicants are required to demonstrate and describe the following:

- A local, innovative, community-driven program/service that focuses on preventing and/or transitioning people out of poverty.

- The program's client group, focusing on one of the PRS' identified target populations that is disproportionately affected by poverty (women, single parents and children, youth, people with disabilities, newcomers, visible minorities, seniors, and First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Aboriginal people).

- How at least one of the 11 indicators noted in the PRS relates to the program or service provided under the proposed project, including an explanation of the causal pathway between the program or service and an impact on the identified indicator(s).

# Indicators

The government has identified 11 indicators to help track our efforts to reduce poverty:[2]

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[2] Note: an indicator on homelessness is currently in development by Ontario's Expert Panel on Homelessness. Further information on the indicators can be found on pages 44-47 of the Poverty Reduction Strategy: *Realizing Our Potential*.

1. Birth Weights

2. School Readiness (Early Development Instrument)

3. Educational Progress (combined Grade 3 and Grade 6)

4. High School Graduation Rates

5. Low Income Measure (LIM50)

6. Depth of Poverty (LIM40)

7. Ontario Housing Measure

8. Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

9. Long-Term Unemployment

10. Poverty Rates of Vulnerable Populations

11. Homelessness (in development)

Applicants are welcome to identify other relevant measures, in addition to outlining at least one identified in the PRS. The government is interested in other relevant targets and indicators as they relate to the topic and that reliably capture the impact or progress made.

The Government of Ontario recognizes that an individual project under the Fund would not by itself move provincial indicators reported under the PRS. We are interested to hear from applicants about the theory of how their program/service, if applied across the province, could have an impact on the provincial target and indicators and how progress could be made if adopted and implemented more broadly. In addition, applicants would benefit from explaining how desired program outcomes (short, medium, long-term) could also be measured by one of the indicators.

# Business Case

The application asks you to present a business case for your proposed project. The business case will help to identify and assess the research and evidence that support the impact or potential impact of different programs or services, and their role in a proposed host community/agency.

Proposals should be founded in research; evidence from other jurisdictions or established best practices that would point to the potential effectiveness of an idea for preventing, or lifting people out of poverty. The business case should outline what the literature states about the rationale, program theory, or theory of change, for the given program/service. Here we are looking for explanations of any existing correlations,

relationship tendencies, or causal linkages between various characteristics of poverty and the proposed project.

Proposals must outline the rationale for the given program or service, and highlight how it is supported by the available research and evidence available and why it is important in the proposed host community. The business case should aim to include, wherever possible:

- Brief description of relevant research reports and data on the poverty issue the program or service aims to address

- Relevant case studies in other jurisdictions, or environmental/jurisdictional scans related to the issue / proposed project

- Assessment of poverty landscape in the community, trends and/or patterns, as well as poverty reduction efforts, including those provided by other programs or services with a focus on a similar/same target population

- Analysis of how the proposed program or service responds to the community needs and is supported by the sources of evidence.

- Potential relevant quantifiable analysis of the costs and dollar value of poverty addressed or avoided, or the benefits of the program or service provided to the relevant target population.

Please include a list of available evidence used to support the business case.

# Evaluation Approach

The application asks you to describe your proposed evaluation approach for the project.

For the purpose of this Fund, an evaluation would be the systematic collection and analysis of evidence that has the potential to provide valuable information about how a program operates, what program (or service) functions should be continued or modified, how program clients are affected by the program, and whether the needs of a community are being met. Results of an individual evaluation could also provide valuable insight into how findings relate within similar programs, whether programs are geared towards youth, employment, or homelessness, etc. and also would help us build a collective knowledge base. [3]

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[3] The benefits of evaluation include: to improve knowledge and understanding of program effects, to highlight the impact programs/services have on client outcomes, to better understand the client profile and target population, and to demonstrate a reliable and valid analysis to inform future programming, or to form new partnerships with funders, governments, philanthropists, fundraisers, or private entities.

The type of evaluation approach would depend on the program/service being evaluated. Some organizations may be in a position to benefit from a program evaluation to measure effectiveness; others might require a process evaluation to assess the program delivery or impact on a target population. Higher scores will be given to proposals for program process evaluations or program impact evaluations, or a combination of both. Please refer to the [Program Evaluation Reference and Resource Guide](#) for examples and information on evaluation.

Evaluations may focus on existing programs. Other applicants may wish to evaluate a new program based on a proven example from another jurisdiction. Evaluations of this kind would need to bear in mind the anticipated incremental program costs[4] and how an evaluation could be feasible given the timeframe.

One way proposals will be evaluated is the extent to which applicants can demonstrate a strong evaluation approach that clearly outlines the research question to be addressed, and the relevant experimental and control variables. Strong proposals will also identify the type of methodology required to assess program impact/effectiveness, including a description of the program goals and objectives and will highlight the current program metrics and indicators used and/or required to perform the evaluation

**As a result, the proposed evaluation approach should provide, where available, a general overview of the following:**

- The intended research question an evaluation would help answer.

- Any existing evidence that demonstrates the program's impact on client outcomes, and how the proposed evaluation would strengthen existing knowledge on program effectiveness/efficiency.

- Program's desired outcomes, in the short, medium and long-term.

- Program metrics that have been identified, such as input and output measures.

- Program's causal linkages, how they relate to the program's goals and objectives and how/why the program/service is deemed to have an impact on the target population. An existing program logic model could be provided to illustrate how the program is intended to work.

- Method/approach required to evaluate the research question and identify dependent and independent variables. Where appropriate, also include a description of any potential variables that need to be controlled to determine the causal effect of the program/service.

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[4] Please see the section on eligible costs; new programs requiring capital investments are out of scope for this Fund. Other program costs, where required, to demonstrate and evaluate an intervention may be eligible for funding.

- Quantitative and qualitative research methods and data collection instruments required to perform the evaluation; use of quantitative data is mandatory.

- Identify the required experimental or non-experimental design where relevant, examples include: the use of randomized control studies, longitudinal data analysis, use of comparison groups, pre and/or post-test analysis, and/ or surveys, and/or complemented by qualitative methods such as focus groups and key informant interviews.

In support of this section of the application, applicants are encouraged to share any relevant program logic models that could form the basis of the proposal, if available. For more information on evaluation, you may wish to refer to the Program Evaluation Reference and Resource Guide.

# Third Party Evaluator

One way proposals will be assessed is in how they describe partnership with a third party evaluator. Applicants are asked to describe who (e.g. what institution) would be performing the evaluation. If an evaluator partnership has not been yet been established, applicants are encouraged to describe the process they would use to identify and engage an evaluator. Clarity about who would evaluate and how they would perform the evaluation will strengthen the proposal.

The evaluator supported through the Fund project is expected to be external to the organization and tasked with developing and implementing an evaluation framework for the project. A third party, arms-length evaluator would: help ensure an evaluation can be fully implemented, apply a methodology that addresses internal and external validity, and support impartiality in the project findings.

If an evaluator has been identified, applicants should note the qualifications of the third party evaluator tasked to perform the evaluation. In this case, qualifications include, but are not limited to:
- Academic: Professor and/or appointee at a recognized university or other research institute with a background in qualitative and quantitative research methods and knowledge of applied methods and evaluation research.

- Practitioner: An accredited evaluator (see www.evaluationcanada.ca), or a practitioner who can demonstrate knowledge, skills and experience with quantitative and qualitative research methods and program evaluation.

Applicants should confirm that, if a project is funded, they would share key findings, evaluation results and data, as well as the lessons learned for public use. Public use includes: sharing lessons learned and best practices, contributing to evidence-based policy and program design and delivery in the social services sector, supporting

Ontario's Open Data initiative and supporting further research and analysis based on data and findings from the Fund's projects. Please see more information on protection of privacy and information on page 23.

# Partnership and Collaboration

The application asks you to describe and detail the partnerships that would support your project.

Evidence suggests that single service arrangements using a siloed approach may not be the best way to support client outcomes. Increasingly, robust partnerships, service integration and wrap-around services are showing an impact, especially for clients with complex needs.[5]

Applications that show partnerships with a wide variety of players are required. This could involve community organizations, academics, municipalities, foundations, social enterprise, business or other service providers, etc.

It is expected that all applicants would work to form new partnerships and/or strengthen existing partnerships across the sector, or cross-sectorally, in support of the proposal. Applications that highlight the key partnerships they are leveraging to help maximize the benefits of their program or service and address stronger service integration will score higher. Similarly proposals that include a variety of new and enriched arrangements that cover areas such as financial/in-kind contributions, capacity building, or training in addition to service delivery will score higher.

Applicants should describe partnerships by including:
- The names of key organizations that partner to deliver the program/service and how the partnership may be different or unique in contributing to innovative program/service delivery.

- How partnership approaches are moving towards service integration.

  - This should include identifying the specific benefits of the partners involved, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the network of partners in the project, as well as any accountability towards program performance, risk, and use of project funding

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[5] Browne G., Byrne C, Roberts J, Gafni A, Whittaker S.  When the bough breaks: Provider-initiated comprehensive care is more effective and less expensive for sole support parents on social assistance.  *Social Science and Medicine*, December 2001; 53(12):1697-1710.

- Information on how partnerships are leveraged or other funded partnership arrangements, networks, local partnership arrangements, or communities of practice that are relevant to the proposal. This could include a description of how partnerships are building on other work applicants have done that is funded by either the Ontario government, or projects funded by other orders of government and/or funding bodies.

# Project Delivery, Organizational Capacity and Sustainability Plan

The application asks you to describe elements of your organization, project plan and sustainability plan that are key to assessing how likely it is that your project could be delivered as described.

## Project Delivery

You should provide a project delivery plan that covers phases of the project and that includes the following:
- Overall project timelines (expected start and end date).

- Chronological list of **major project** tasks to be completed, with clearly articulated outputs and proposed start/end dates for each task. The finalization of the proposed evaluation plan and partnership should be included in this list of project tasks.

- Identification of staff members (including their position and credentials) and/or participating organizations responsible for major tasks.

- Risk Assessment that identifies potential risks to successful project delivery, and includes mitigation strategies for each identified risk.

- Project performance measurement plan which describes how the success of the proposal will be assessed (note: these are not the performance measures required for the actual evaluation).

## Organizational Capacity

Applicants should describe the organizational capacity to carry out the proposal. One way proposals will be evaluated is the extent to which the Applicant has the capacity to work with partners to perform an evaluation and their history in the provision of services to clients in the target populations identified for the purposes of the Fund.

Applicants should also describe their current financial position, governance structure and the number of board members in support of their organizational capacity.

Applicants should also include audited financial statements as an appendix to the application.

# Sustainability

Every project must have a plan to address the end of the Local Poverty Reduction Fund grant funding.  The plan must show how no individual provided with a new service during the duration of an evaluation, and who continues to need it, is left without it at the end of the project funding agreement.

  Funding would not be provided to project proposals without a clear sustainability plan that either[6]:

- Fully phases out the program, including an identified risk mitigation plan;

- Identifies an alternative source of funding to continue the program once the Fund ends; or,

- Identifies how the applicant will adjust its program structure or program offering to address any potential service gaps at the end of the project.

# Budget

The application form asks you to provide a project budget to help substantiate and assess the funding request.

The budget plan should show the expected incremental expenditures for which funding is requested. These incremental expenses would include the costs of an evaluation. Please see the section on eligible expense below for more information.

Applicants are encouraged to combine funding sources in support of their project. Budgets should also fully disclose continued or anticipated cash or in-kind contributions from lead or participating organizations, and any relevant funding sources for ongoing or existing streams of programs or services that are being leveraged as part of the project proposal.

# ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

An inter-ministerial committee will review and assess the applications against the eligibility requirements and program criteria and make recommendations for project funding.

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[6] Project proposals that will evaluate an existing program or service should identify how the program is sustained.

As discussed above, project proposals would need to meet the following eligibility requirements in order to be scored and considered for funding.

- The proposal was submitted by a single, eligible applicant;

- The project proposal focuses on at least one of the target populations laid out in the PRS;

- The intervention in the project proposal can be related to at least one of the PRS indicators;

- You have a proposed evaluation approach and are willing to share your evaluation results; and

- Your application contains a sustainability plan for the end of grant funding and a budget to support the funding request.

If all of these areas are addressed, an applicant's proposal would be scored based on the following criteria and weights:

| Criteria | Weights |
|---|---|
| **Project Proposal**<br>Projects are:<br>• Focused on at least one target population under the PRS<br>• Innovative, local, community-driven program/service<br>• Focused on preventing or lifting people out of poverty<br>• Connected to at least one indicator under the PRS | 15% |
| **Business Case**<br>• Provides proposed program theory / potential impact from program or service<br>• Provides evidence for the program theory through correlations, relationship tendencies, or causal linkages between various characteristics of poverty and the proposed project<br>• Includes evidence drawn from literature review and interjurisdictional examples or environmental scans<br>• Includes community snapshot of poverty issues explaining benefit and impact of proposed project in the host community<br>• Documents any potential costs avoided / benefits provided as a part of the proposed project | 15% |
| **Evaluation Approach, including identified third party evaluator and sustainability plan** | 30% |

| | |
|---|---|
| • Demonstrates evaluation approach that clearly addresses identified research question (process and impact evaluations are preferable)<br><br>• Documents proposed experimental and control variables<br><br>• Clearly outlines causal linkages between program inputs and desired outcomes (including defined short, medium, long-term outcomes)<br><br>• Use of quantitative research methods<br><br>• Formal partnership with qualified third party evaluator or plan to identify and secure the third party evaluator | |
| **Partnership and Collaboration**<br>• Variety of new / strengthened partnerships making a number of contributions (where possible include quantifiable financial or in-kind contributions)<br><br>• Proposed benefits of partnerships to clients<br><br>• Partnerships moving towards community or service integration<br><br>• Show how partnerships differentiate rather than duplicate services in the host community | 20% |
| **Project Delivery, Organizational Capacity and Sustainability**<br>• Demonstrates capacity to deliver project including to deliver service and conduct the evaluation through project plan, and history of activity in service area and organizational profile<br><br>• Identifies risks to delivery and mitigation strategies<br><br>• Has a well-articulated sustainability plan for when grant ends | 20% |

# Considerations

After individual proposals have been submitted and scored, the following considerations may be applied before final funding decisions are made. These are not formal scoring criteria.

# Regional Representation

The government  would attempt to have projects be regionally represented to address Ontario's diverse demographics and geography, including but not limited to covering populations in urban, rural/remote, and northern locations.

# Target Population

Funding decisions may also include consideration of the degree to which different target groups as described in the PRS are represented.

# GRANT SIZE

It is anticipated that the Fund will provide a total of $50 million over six years. Individual grant sizes would depend on the type of projects and evaluation methods proposed.

The budget for an evaluation would depend on the scope and size of the evaluation, the number of clients involved, the duration of the evaluation and data required.  Any new or incremental program costs required to demonstrate the idea you are evaluating may also be funded.

Overall the Fund is looking to support a range of small to medium sized projects. It is anticipated that the grant sizes could range from thousands of dollars to hundreds of thousands in some circumstances. Generally, the following are estimates of the cost range of evaluation projects:

- **Small/Medium scale, short-term evaluation of single/multi-service organization with complex client  needs**:

  $25, 000 +

- **Large scale, long-term evaluation of complex multi-service organization:**

  $100, 000 +

Although no commitment to award funds is being made in this guideline, the ministry could, at its discretion, fund a proportion of proposals that range from short-term (12-18 months) to longer-term projects (18 months up to 3 years).

# USE OF FUND DOLLARS

The use of funds and eligible costs would be governed by a project funding agreement, but the following information is provided to assist organizations in preparing their applications.

# Eligible Costs

Costs deemed reasonable and necessary for the successful completion of the project

are admissible with the exceptions noted below. These costs would need to be supported by acceptable documentary evidence.

The ministry anticipates that it  may consider funding for such activities as:

- Program costs as they relate to 'net new' or incremental activity, (e.g. the proposed evaluation will look at desired outcomes for a different set of clients who have not historically received program/services).

- Program or service delivery directly related to demonstrating the service to be evaluated, including staff salaries and benefits.

- Costs related to the evaluation:

    - Staff time to collect data, conduct analysis and report writing (including salaries and benefits);

    - Costs/expenses related to conducting an evaluation, including the cost of hiring a third party evaluator; and/or

    - Demonstrated increased expenses based on the evaluation project (e.g. a direct incremental cost for insurance resulting from the evaluation project).

- Other new, time-limited costs, directly related to the project that are not already accounted for through other sources of funding.

# Ineligible Costs

Costs and expenses that do not directly[7] support the project would not be eligible for funding and should not be included as part of the project budget, including the following:

- Interest expenses incurred on operating loans

- Professional organization fees paid on behalf of staff for membership in professional organizations

- Property tax expenses

- Fundraising expenses

- Capital loans

- Mortgage financing

- Reserve funds Capital costs (defined as expenses amortized for longer than the grant duration, including the construction of new facilities)

- Profit making activities

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[7] Costs and expenses that indirectly relate to the project should be clearly outlined and articulated to determine permissibility.

- Budget deficits

- Start-up costs (exceptions may be made if directly related to the evaluation)

- Research projects without an evaluation component

- Special events, such as tournaments, conferences, receptions, festivals, parties

- Publications and information management systems, including community newspapers, video, Web site production

- Legal challenges, costs and settlements

- Public relations and fundraising costs

- Donations

- Costs covered by other government funding

- Bonuses, gifts and honoraria (except if part of the evaluation; for example, to thank persons participating in a survey)

# ACCOUNTABILITY

Project funding, if approved, would be provided to grant recipients under a funding agreement.

Any grant recipient would be responsible for managing and executing their projects under the funding agreement. The agreement would stipulate the terms and conditions governing the payment of the grant, and may include:

- project budget;

- project management;

- communication strategies for monitoring and reporting requirements, including annual progress reporting, audits and financial reports;

- milestone and performance measures;

- mode and schedule of payment; and,

- contract termination and corrective action.

Successful grant recipients would:

- have all final accountability to the ministry or its designate for all monies and project components, and  would be considered to be the final decision-making authority among partners for the project under the funding agreement.

- manage their project plan to meet financial and accountability reporting requirements and deliverables, as identified in the funding agreement.

- engage and manage relationships with their third party evaluator.

- be responsible for the receiving, administering, and allocating funds to any participating organizations in accordance with the requirements of their agreements.

- be responsible for measuring results and reporting on their performance as required by their funding agreement.

- be required to submit regular reporting that would be used by the ministry or its designate to assess the progress of implementation, as well as compliance with financial and auditing requirements, as required by the funding agreement.

The funding agreement may require the grant recipient to develop formal agreements and/or memorandums of understanding with any project partners to whom funding may be flowed for the purpose of meeting project objectives or addressing obligations.

The ministry or its designate would review all reporting and monitoring to ensure compliance with the funding agreement and its terms and conditions.

It is anticipated that funding would be allocated in instalments according to a specific payment schedule and program phases. The payment of funding instalments would be dependent on the grant recipient meeting all program and reporting requirements under the agreement.

# FURTHER INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

## No Commitment to Fund

The ministry:

- Makes no commitment to fund any applicant;

- May choose which applicants to fund, if any, at its sole and absolute discretion; and

- Shall not be responsible for any cost or expenses incurred by any applicant, including any costs or expenses associated with preparing and submitting responses to this Call for Proposal.

# Distribution of the Application Guide

The Call for Proposal and Guide will be made available on the PRS website at www.ontario.ca/povertyreduction and distributed widely by email.

# Conflict of Interest

**No Conflict of Interest:**
A successful applicant would be required to carry out the program and use the funds received from the ministry pursuant to the program without an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.

**Conflict of Interest Includes:**
   a) the applicant; or

   b) any person who has the capacity to influence the applicant's decisions, has outside commitments, relationships or financial interests that could, or could be seen to, interfere with the applicant's objective, unbiased and impartial judgment relating to the program and the use of the funds.

**Disclosure to the ministry and or its designate**
The applicant shall:
   a) disclose to the ministry and or its designate, without delay, any situation that a reasonable person would interpret as either an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest; and

   b) comply with any terms and conditions that the ministry and/or its designate may prescribe as a result of the disclosure.

# Confidentiality

Please note that the ministry is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The Act provides every person with a right of access to information in the custody or under the control of the ministry, subject to a limited set of exemptions.

The applicant is advised that the names and addresses of funding grant recipients, their partnered organizations, the amount of funding provided, and the purpose for which funds are provided is information that the ministry may make available to the public.

Additionally, the ministry may share application information with others for the purpose of evaluating proposals, assessing eligibility and administering the Local Poverty Reduction Fund.

# Privacy and Personal Information

Applicants must be mindful of their obligations under relevant legislation when preparing and implementing their grant and evaluation proposals to ensure they are complying with all requirements of law, including but not limited to all obligations with respect to the collection, protection, use and disclosure of personal information.

The applicant is responsible for complying with, and ensuring their partners and evaluator comply with, all ethical and legal requirements relating to privacy, confidentiality and security of the information, including the obligation under any funding agreement that may be entered into, when carrying out their activities in connection with the proposed project, including but not limited to all evaluation and reporting activities.

As part of the project/implementation plan, applicants would be asked to finalize their arrangement with the third party evaluator in an agreement, including but not limited to conflict of interest, privacy and security of information provisions, and details of the evaluation approach and methodology. Grant recipients would be expected to ensure the necessary rights are obtained to use the data and information as contemplated in this Application Guide and any funding agreement that may be entered into.

# Rights of the Ministry

In submitting an application, the applicant is deemed to have acknowledged that the ministry or its designate may:

a) communicate directly with any applicant or potential applicants;

b) at its sole discretion, accept applications for consideration that are not strictly compliant with the requirements outlined above;

c) verify with any applicant or with a third party any information set out in an application;

d) make changes, including substantial changes, to this Application Guide and related documents including the application form by way of new information on the designated website;

e) cancel this application and Call for Proposal process at any stage of the application or evaluation process;

f) reject any or all applications in its sole and absolute discretion; and

g) fund legal entities for similar projects regardless of whether these entities have submitted an application in response to this Application Guide.

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q1: Can money from the Fund be used to deliver program services or only for evaluation-related expenses?**

- The Fund will use an application based process and approved grants may be used to support both program and evaluation costs as would be outlined in the grant agreements.

- The fund would support program services so long as the program or service meets the other criteria, including a strong evaluation component, a focus on community partnerships and a sustainability plan. Our aim is to support innovative local, solutions and help community organizations evaluate their programs. Using the evidence gathered from these programs, we would work to apply best practices across the province and focus on funding programs that are proven to work and that can be used widely.

- Money received from the Fund should not be used to 'backfill' expenses currently funded through existing government grants or other sources. Program costs would be permitted if they relate to 'net new' activity, for example the evaluation will look at outcomes for a different set of clients who have not historically received services. A second example might be where a service provider intends to add a new approach to case management, or a new form of counselling, as a way of increasing the effectiveness of an existing benefit or service. The incremental cost of the new case management, or counselling would be an eligible expense under the project grant, while the existing benefit or service would continue to be funded from its pre-existing funding source.

**Q2: What is the role of private-sector?**

- Partnership is one of key criteria for applying to the Fund. Private-sector organizations could partner in funded projects in many ways, for example through in-kind supports, financial contributions, providing evaluation expertise, or by providing jobs and apprenticeship opportunities. Private sector organizations cannot be the Applicant for funding.

**Q3: What types of organizations are eligible to apply?**

- Not-for-profit organizations, registered charities, broader public sector organizations such as municipal governments, district social service administration boards (DSSAB) as well as Aboriginal communities and organizations can apply for the fund.

- For example, social enterprises are welcome to apply as long as they are either a registered charity or not-for-profit organization. Broader public sector

organizations such as universities, colleges and school boards are also welcome to apply.

**Q4: What is the expected size of the grants? How long can a project last?**

- Grant sizes would depend on the type of project and evaluation methods proposed. Applicants would be required to provide an estimate of necessary funding based on the type of project and evaluation they are proposing.

- We would consider grant proposals lasting up to three years to provide enough time for the evaluation to be completed. Some projects may require less time, so we are also looking to support one or two year projects.

**Q5: Small agencies may not have the capacity or time for evaluation. How will the government include them in the fund?**

- We are emphasizing partnership and collaboration as a way to encourage smaller agencies to apply. Organizations with less capacity to evaluate can partner with larger ones that have greater resources and relevant expertise. A partnership like this can strengthen an application for both the larger and smaller organization.

- The Poverty Reduction Strategy Office is looking at ways to increase access to networks of academic and other evaluation experts to support smaller agencies in their evaluation.

- It's also anticipated that there would be three Calls for Proposal – in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Organizations that need more time to build partnerships and find an evaluator would have other opportunities to access the Fund.

**Q6: What do you mean by evaluation?**

- To us, evaluation means systematically collecting and using evidence to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of a program. The type of evaluation would depend on the application. Some organizations may benefit from doing a program evaluation to measure effectiveness; others might propose a process evaluation to assess the program delivery or impact on a target population.

- We are asking for proposals to clearly outline how they would evaluate the project, how it could demonstrate outcomes, and how it relates to the PRS indicators.

**Q7: Can an organization or municipality submit more than one proposal?**

- Yes, an organization may submit more than one proposal. However, final decisions will take into account a number of factors, including geography, so that projects that receive funding are representative across the Province. Organizations should consider how they would manage multiple projects and provide evidence that they have sufficient capacity to implement parallel

evaluations, including clear roles within the organization for leading each project. Applications should describe clearly how the proposals are distinct from each other as well as the links between them, where possible, for example in their partnership relationships. Organizations could also consider applying to the anticipated Call for Proposals in 2016 and 2017 where they have several programs they wish to evaluate.

**Q8: Would the Fund support the development of a new initiative (e.g., a pilot project) provided that all other criteria are met?**

- Yes. In their Call for Proposals, organizations will need to demonstrate as part of their business case that there is at least emerging evidence of a program or service's effectiveness or that it has been shown to work in another jurisdiction. The evaluation supported by the Fund would then use different measures to assess whether the program was operating successfully at its new site in Ontario.

# Further Information

Please go to the Poverty Reduction Strategy website for updates on the Fund and related initiatives: www.ontario.ca/povertyreduction

If you cannot find the information you need on the website and have questions about the Fund, please contact Poverty Reduction Strategy Office directly at: PRSO@ontario.ca