

Social Investment Fund

Applicant Guide

Revised October 2011

The Social Investment Fund (SIF) was established in 2004 to support community initiatives that contribute to improving the quality of life for Toronto Community Housing tenants and building strong and healthy communities.

Toronto Community Housing's mission is to provide affordable housing, connect tenants to services and opportunities, and work together to build healthy communities.

The SIF Grant Advisory Committee is committed to ensuring funds are granted to innovative projects that advance our mission and [Community Management Plan](#).

Requests must be made to the SIF Grant Advisory Committee using a **Social Investment Fund Grant Application Form**. Incomplete applications, or proposals submitted in alternate formats, will not be considered.

All grant applications are evaluated by members of the SIF Grant Advisory Committee and are presented to board members who sit on the Tenant and Community Services Committee. Granting decisions are made based on guidelines from Toronto Community Housing's Board of Directors.

To make sure funds are used properly, we ask for regular reports to confirm that approved goals are being met. The SIF Grant Advisory Committee will also report on the status of approved granting activities at board meetings. A summary of past projects supported by SIF grants can also be found on our website: www.torontohousing.ca/sif

Guidelines

The goal of the *SIF Grant Application Form* is to give the SIF Grant Advisory Committee an accurate picture of the project and make sure all parties involved share a mutual understanding of the goals, requirements and expectations.

All initiatives must demonstrate how they support one or more of these three [Community Management Plan](#) strategies:

- Successful Tenancies
- Economic Development
- Empowered Tenants

Two funding streams to consider

1. ***If you are a member of a tenant group,***
you can apply for the Ideas and Innovation Grant (up to \$10,000).
2. ***If you represent a community organization,***
you can apply for the Investment Grant (starting at \$25,000). This grant funds projects of up to \$25,000 per year for up to three years of funding to a maximum of \$75,000.

Costs to consider when proposing how to budget SIF issued funds:

- **Project expenses:** including materials, food, stationary and transportation.
(For more information on the types of expenses to include in the proposal please contact the SIF program coordinator.)
- **Staffing:** including people needed to coordinate project activities and deal with administrative tasks.

Up to 50% of the proposed budget can be used for coordinating staff expenses; and up to 10% for project administration staff expenses (such as bookkeeping, fund administration and trustee fees).

For example, if you apply for a \$25,000 grant, \$12,500 (or 50%) is the maximum amount that can be used for project staffing expenses. Likewise, trusteeship or administrative fees cannot be more than \$2,500 (or 10% of the budget).

Eligibility

All successful applications must:

- Demonstrate direct tenant involvement in program design and implementation
- Demonstrate citizen-based input and leadership in building tenant capacity.
- Define how members involved will manage the project and account for appropriate use of funds issued.
- Demonstrate a built-in mechanism for evaluation and documentation of the project, including testimonials, pictures, videos, and measurable impacts.

All successful **stream one** (*Ideas and Innovation Grant*) applications must:

- Be submitted by Toronto Community Housing tenants, or youth groups, associations or grassroots groups that are tenant-based.
- Identify a trustee/sponsor who will be financially responsible for the funds. The trustee must be a charity or nonprofit. If you need help finding a trustee, please contact staff at least two weeks before submission.
 - Include an agreement specifying the terms and conditions of the trusteeship arrangement. A signed copy (including signatures of the applicant group members and the trustee) must be submitted with the application form for the application to be considered complete.
- Demonstrate support from a community agency or Toronto Community Housing staff member in the implementation of the proposed initiative.
- Demonstrate that the tenant group existed and worked together at least six months before applying for the grant.

All successful **stream two** (*Investment Grant*) applications must:

- Be submitted by or in partnership with a community organization based in Toronto and have a minimum of three years of experience in working on with low-income communities, visible minorities, communities of ability, or other underrepresented tenant constituencies.

The SIF Grant Committee does not consider *grant application forms* that are –

from:

- individuals
- for-profit organizations
- groups currently benefitting from a SIF grant

or include activities that:

- are religious
- political or of a partisan/advocacy nature
- can be funded through a Toronto Community Housing Tenant Council or Operating Unit budget

When do I apply?

Send complete applications on or before **Monday, November 7, 2011.**

The Review Process

Complete applications submitted to the SIF program coordinator on or before November 7, 2011 will be reviewed by the SIF Grant Advisory Committee.

During the review process, decision-makers use five areas of criteria to determine which proposals receive funding. Please review them on page five.

Applicants may be contacted during the review process with requests to clarify or provide further information.

Formal recommendations made by the SIF Grant Advisory Committee will be presented to members of Toronto Community Housing's Board of Directors who sit on the Tenant Community Services Committee.

All applicants will be notified in writing as to whether their project has been approved within 30 days of the Tenant Community Services Committee meeting.

The review process can take up to four months.

Approved Funding Procedures

Applicants approved for funding will receive a letter of agreement stating project deliverables, timelines, reporting due dates and a schedule for cheque releases.

To receive the first cheque, sign the letter of agreement and send it back to the SIF program coordinator.

Upon receipt of the signed letter of agreement, funds will be issued to the applicant group or trustee.

The second (and all remaining) cheques are issued after receiving and evaluating progress reports. The number of progress reports required and due dates for submission are outlined in the letter of agreement.

Project Criteria: how do you know if your project is a strong candidate for a SIF grant?

1. Does it have community-wide impact?

- Project must demonstrate a clear need or community issue to be addressed and what it would change or improve in the specified Toronto Community Housing community(ies) A community can be all tenants in a neighbourhood or tenants across neighbourhoods.
- Projects must demonstrate clear and tangible impacts both on project participants and the larger community.
- Priority is given to under-represented communities such as communities with less funding and fewer resources.
- Projects must demonstrate skills development and capacity building for tenants.
- Must be free or low cost for all tenants and tenants and the majority of project participants must live in Toronto Community Housing.
- Communicate its project activities and outcomes to the community and local staff.

2. Is it aligned with Toronto Community Housing's mission and Community Management Plan?

- Projects must demonstrate how they have connected with local staff and tenants in the development of the grant.
- Socially Inclusive – Shows how the project includes different people and brings people together to work on a community issue.
- Project should be Innovative: Tests new or creative ways to solve community problems and builds new partnerships or strengthens existing partnerships.
- Must support Toronto Community Housing's Community Management Plan in advancing community health, including: Successful Tenancies; Economic Development; and Empowered Tenants

3. Is it accountable and achievable?

- Detailed work plan must be included, with clear deliverables per activity for all applicants.
- Clear timelines must be included and within the organization's capacity to implement.
- For **stream 1** projects, project lead must be a Toronto Community Housing tenant on a lease.

4. Does it use resources (people, money and time) effectively?

- Must demonstrate in-kind contribution and volunteer opportunities (letters of support are strongly recommended).
- Encourages community support, including participation of other funding partners.
- The project should show how it has potential for lasting impact in the community or how it will be a stepping stone for alternate funding.
- All streams need to detail in the proposal how the group will manage the project and be accountable for the grant funds.
- SIF will not fund significant capital expenses or budget deficits.
- Evidence of Strong Cost to Benefit Ratio (demonstrate change in short time frame, and able to execute with minimal resources).
- Must demonstrate why SIF funds are necessary for project implementation.

5. Does it demonstrate an opportunity for lasting change?

- Clear articulation of a sustainability plan, where applicable to ensure lasting impact.
- Have community support, including participation of funding partners that contribute financial or in-kind support, and/or volunteer time.
- Involve partnership and cooperation with other community groups.

Instructions for completing the grant application form

There are two *grant application forms*, one for each stream. Each application includes nine parts. These documents are designed to provide the SIF Grant Committee with a detailed and accurate overview of the project.

Please answer all questions and information requested in all fields. Incomplete *grant application forms* will not be considered.

Submission procedures

You can send your applications by email to sif@torontohousing.ca, or by mail on or before November 7 to:

Social Investment Fund
Toronto Community Housing
931 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M4W 2H2

Please print clearly.

Questions?

Please call Nadia Gouveia, Social Investment Fund program coordinator at 416-981-4090 or send an email to nadia.gouveia@torontohousing.ca