

Circular Food Innovators Fund

Application Guidelines

2026-2027

Table of Contents

1 Fund Overview.....	4
1.1 Background	4
1.2 Purpose.....	4
1.3 Objectives.....	5
1.4 Definitions.....	5
1.5 Funding	5
1.5.1 Available-Funding.....	5
1.5.2 Funding Distribution	6
1.5.3 Limitations.....	6
1.5.4 The Term of the Funding.....	7
1.6 Key Dates.....	7
2 Eligibility	7
2.1 Projects	7
2.1.1 Eligible CFIF Projects.....	7
2.1.2 Eligible Green Workforce Projects.....	8
2.1.3 Ineligible Projects	9
2.2 Applicants.....	9
2.2.1 Eligible CFIF Applicants	9
2.2.2 Eligible Green Workforce Applicants	11
2.2.3 Ineligible Applicants.....	11
2.3 Expenses	11
2.3.1 Eligible CFIF Expenses.....	11
2.3.2 Eligible Green Workforce Expenses	13
2.3.3 Ineligible Expenses	13
3 Application Process	14
3.1 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Applications	15
3.2 Other Considerations:.....	15
4 Evaluation Process.....	16
4.1 Review of CFIF Project Applications	16
4.2 Review of Applications for Additional Funding for Green Workforce Development..	17
4.3 Notification.....	18
5 Obligations of Grant Recipients and Project Implementation.....	18
5.1 Fund Agreement.....	18
5.2 Receiving Funding	19



5.3	Reporting.....	19
5.4	Group Kick-off Meeting.....	20
5.5	Site Visit	21
5.6	Recipient Roundtable Reporting (if requested)	21
5.7	Project Case Studies (if requested)	21
5.8	Photographs/Videos	21
5.9	Acknowledgement of Funding	21
5.10	Repayment of Funds.....	22
6	Contact.....	22

ABOUT THIS GUIDE: This guidance document was developed to provide instructions on how to apply to the City of Toronto's Circular Food Innovators Fund. Please read the guidelines to ensure your organization and project are eligible for funding.

1 Fund Overview

1.1 Background

As the largest city in Canada, Toronto's people and businesses are significant consumers of materials and goods, a majority of which end up in landfills that are quickly approaching capacity. A circular economy refers to a society-wide approach to production and consumption that aims to eliminate landfill waste and maximize resources by recovering as much as possible from used products. Transitioning to a circular economy not only supports sustainability, but also sparks innovation, creates jobs, addresses climate change and reduces costs related to waste management.

The City of Toronto (the City) has been working on its circular economy transition since Toronto City Council set an aspirational goal in 2016 to work towards zero waste and to make Toronto the first municipality in the province of Ontario with a circular economy. Building on this work, in November 2025, Toronto City Council adopted its first [Circular Economy Road Map](#), which sets out a vision for Toronto's circular economy transition over the next 10 years through several strategic directions and actions to support waste reduction and sustainable consumption in Toronto, with a focus on addressing wider consumption behaviours that generate waste.

The City has also developed a [Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy](#) (the Reduction Strategy). The primary goal of the Reduction Strategy is to reduce the use and disposal of specific single-use and takeaway items, regardless of the material and waste stream they are managed in. The Reduction Strategy supports recommendations established in the City's Long-term Waste Management Strategy and is a vital component of Toronto's overall circular economy transition.

Working towards a circular economy is not a goal that the City can achieve on its own. This transformation will require participation and innovation from all participants in the economy. The business community can play a critical role by providing the products and services that people need to make sustainable consumption choices and participate in a more circular economy at home and at work.

1.2 Purpose

The City introduced the Circular Food Innovators Fund (CFIF) in 2024 to support market-ready business solutions that help to achieve a more circular food system for Toronto residents and businesses. The initial funding round (2024-2025) focused on supporting reuse system solutions that eliminate food packaging waste prior to exploring expanded support for other kinds of circular food solutions. Building on the [success of the projects](#) funded in the initial funding round, the City is launching a new funding round in 2026. This round will continue to focus on reuse system solutions while also offering additional green workforce development funding for a limited number of projects that will contribute to building workforce capacity in Toronto's green and circular food economy.

1.3 Objectives

CFIF will continue to support local small businesses (both for-profit and not-for-profit) in implementing reuse systems that replace single-use and takeaway items with reusable foodservice ware that is collected, washed and redistributed for further use. Proposed CFIF Projects must implement a new reuse system or demonstrably enhance an existing reuse system to be eligible for funding.

Additionally, organizations that receive funding for a CFIF Project may be eligible to access additional funding for a green workforce development project (Green Workforce Project) that will develop and/or deliver targeted workforce development activities in areas relevant to the reuse systems and circular food economy focus of CFIF.

1.4 Definitions

For the purposes of CFIF, the following definitions apply:

Reuse system: A reuse system is a business model in which reusable foodservice ware, provided to customers by a business for the delivery or takeaway consumption of food and beverage products, is collected, cleaned and redistributed back for reuse by the business. Reusable foodservice ware includes plates, bowls, cups, trays, glasses, straws, stirrers, condiment cups and utensils that are made of durable materials to stand up to frequent washing and reuse. A reuse system can be operated by a service provider or can be operated by a business selling food or beverage products for delivery or takeaway consumption. A reuse system may include not only the reusable foodservice ware itself, but also the infrastructure, such as collection bins and cleaning facilities, and enabling technology, such as mobile applications to coordinate reverse logistics of reusable foodservice ware or barcode tracking systems for the reusable foodservice ware.

Green workforce development: Green workforce development refers to activities that build worker skills, develop training resources and strengthen employment pathways needed to support Toronto's green and circular food economy. This includes efforts that help train staff to adapt to reuse systems and initiatives that enable circular innovators to design and scale training programs, curricula or workforce collaborations for broader green and circular food sector benefits. These green workforce development activities must build skills or employment pathways for Toronto residents related to reuse systems or sustainable practices in Toronto's food and beverage sector at large and do not need to be explicitly tied to the delivery of the proposed CFIF Project.

1.5 Funding

1.5.1 Available-Funding

The City will consider **funding requests for CFIF Projects starting at \$5,000 and up to a maximum of \$35,000 per applicant**. A maximum of \$250,000 of funding is available for CFIF Projects. The final number of successful grant applicants will be dependent on

the number of applications received, the merits of each application and the approved total funding available for the second intake of applications for CFIF, among other considerations.

The City will consider **funding requests for additional Green Workforce Projects starting at \$500 and up to a maximum of \$5,000 per applicant**. This amount would be in addition to the funding that the applicant receives for their CFIF Project. An additional maximum of \$25,000 of funding is available for Green Workforce Projects.

1.5.2 Funding Distribution

The distribution of funding to successful applicants will be as follows:

- (i) **Successful for-profit applicants** may be funded up to 75 per cent of the total costs of the proposed CFIF Project to a maximum grant of \$35,000.
For-profit applicants must demonstrate an ability to contribute at least 25 per cent of the total project costs through a combination of financial and/or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions to the project budget must be essential to the proposed project. The City has discretion to reject a proposed in-kind contribution to the project budget. Examples of eligible in-kind contributions could include the donation of office space or equipment essential to the project.
- (ii) **Successful not-for-profit applicants** may be funded up to 100 per cent of the total costs of the proposed CFIF Project to a maximum grant of \$35,000.
- (iii) **Successful applicants (both for-profit and not-for-profit) of the green workforce development funding** may be funded up to 100 per cent of the total costs of the proposed Green Workforce Project for green workforce development activities to a maximum of an additional \$5,000.

For all successful applicants (both for-profit and not-for-profit), 50 per cent of the total grant value will be awarded to the successful applicant following the submission of a signed Fund Agreement with the City at the outset of the CFIF Project (and Green Workforce Project, if applicable). The final 50 per cent of the grant funds will be disbursed at the conclusion of the CFIF Project (and Green Workforce Project, if applicable) when a final report (including receipts for expenditures) is submitted and accepted as complete by the City.

1.5.3 Limitations

The City will not guarantee that the total amount requested by a successful applicant will be granted. The decision to fund all or part of an applicant's proposed project(s) will depend on its alignment with the City's strategic priorities, assessment criteria and overall demand for funds, among other considerations.

Where the total funding requested from the City by an applicant for the proposed CFIF Project exceeds \$35,000, or for the proposed Green Workforce Project exceeds \$5,000, the applicant will be required to provide information on the other sources of funding that they have secured to implement the project(s). In this scenario, other funding sources must be confirmed at the time of the application. Funding from the City of Toronto is one-time, project-specific funding and should not be considered an annual source of funding by the applicant.

1.5.4 The Term of the Funding

Funds for each project will be allocated for activities that take place within a term of approximately one-year, which is anticipated to be from June 2026 to June 2027. Eligible expenses must be incurred within this period, and not prior to signing a Fund Agreement with the City.

1.6 Key Dates

Stage	Key Dates (2026-2027)*
Application portal opens	January 5, 2026
Information sessions hosted by the City of Toronto (virtual)	January 26, 2026 February 18, 2026
Application submission deadline	March 1, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.
Notification to applicants	May 2026
Fund Agreement signing and project start	June 2026
Disbursement of initial 50% of funding	Following execution of Fund Agreement with the City
Group kick-off meeting (virtual)	Two weeks following execution of the Fund Agreement
Interim report deadline	December 1, 2026
Site visit (in-person or virtual)	January – February 2027
Project end	12 months after project starts
Final report deadline	13 months after project starts
Disbursement of final 50% of funding	Before December 31, 2027

** Dates subject to change*

2 Eligibility

2.1 Projects

2.1.1 Eligible CFIF Projects

Proposed CFIF Projects must implement a new reuse system, or demonstrably enhance an existing reuse system, that enables the elimination of single-use and takeaway items in Toronto and helps achieve a more circular food system for Toronto residents and businesses.

The goal of CFIF is to support businesses to implement projects that will increase the

uptake of reuse systems in the food sector within one year. As such, projects are eligible if they deploy market-ready or already in-market solutions. The City will not be funding projects that are pre-market, including ideation, prototyping and proof of concept stages of development, or that are primarily about education and outreach initiatives.

Eligible projects may deploy reuse systems:

- where food or beverages are being provided for takeaway consumption, which may include food and beverages distributed by vendors at public markets and events; or
- where food or beverages are being provided for delivery, which may include catering services.

Projects must adhere to all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws. Projects must not rely on use of and/or access to City facilities, equipment, infrastructure or City staff knowledge and expertise. If any approvals and/or permits are required to implement the project, these must be obtained before any funds are provided. The City will not assist applicants in any approval or permit processes.

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Propose an innovative or unique solution
- Deliver additional community benefits related to the food system, such as food insecurity, advancing equity (e.g., providing senior-focused co-benefits such as age-friendly container design, accessible drop-off infrastructure or targeted outreach for older adults), delivering environmental outcomes, and/or supporting local economic development.
- Include sustainment plans to keep the project running after the funding term has finished
- Have a well-defined approach for promotion to encourage participation in the reuse system
- Are being put forward by an organization that has not previously received CFIF funding

2.1.2 Eligible Green Workforce Projects

Applicants that receive funding for a CFIF Project may be eligible for an additional \$500 to \$5,000 each to complete a Green Workforce Project that will develop and/or deliver targeted workforce development activities in areas relevant to the reuse systems and circular food economy focus of CFIF.

Green Workforce Project activities should focus on building transferable skills or creating employment pathways that advance Toronto's circular food economy, particularly in reuse systems and sustainable practices across the food and beverage sector. These activities must go beyond internal Standard Operating Procedures or content required for CFIF Project implementation and instead deliver sector-wide skill

development, structured learning opportunities, or resources. Activities do not need to be explicitly tied to the delivery of the proposed CFIF Project but should contribute to broader workforce capacity in the sector.

To be considered for this additional funding, applicants must first submit an application for an eligible CFIF Project (outlined in Section 2.1.1 Eligible CFIF Projects above) and then clearly demonstrate in their application how their proposed Green Workforce Project aligns with CFIF's goal of achieving a more circular food system in Toronto.

Eligible green workforce development activities could include but are not limited to:

- Skill-building or upskilling in environmentally sustainable practices, technologies or systems;
- Training and work-based learning related to the food and beverage reuse sectors; or
- Creation of employment pathways in the circular economy.

2.1.3 Ineligible Projects

Ineligible CFIF Projects and Green Workforce Projects include:

- Solutions that are pre-market, including ideation, prototyping, and proof of concept stages of development
- Projects that aim to implement or improve reuse systems for retail goods and foods, such as pre-packaged or bulk food or beverage products
- End-of-life management of organic waste at the household level
- Compostable, biodegradable, or recyclable products positioned as alternatives to plastic or polystyrene foam single-use products ([learn more](#))
- Research and development
- Scientific studies
- Consumer education
- Solutions already approved for funding from one or more City of Toronto funding/grant programs in same year of funding
- Lobbying or advocacy on behalf of for-profit entities
- Engaging in a partisan political activity, including political advocacy campaigns
- Unproven technologies

2.2 Applicants

2.2.1 Eligible CFIF Applicants

The following applicants are eligible for funding:

- For-profit businesses, including business-to-business and business-to-consumer organizations
- Registered charitable and not-for-profit organizations, including Business

Improvement Areas and academic institutions

Applicants must meet the following criteria to receive funding:

- The applicant must be a business (for-profit or not-for-profit) that provides at least one of the following services, or must be a Business Improvement Area or academic institution that is working with a business that provides at least one of the following services:
 - food and beverage products for takeaway consumption, which may include food and beverages distributed by vendors at public markets and events; or
 - food and beverage products for delivery, which may include catering services; or
 - reuse system infrastructure for food businesses.
- The business must be a small for-profit business (i.e., less than 99 full-time employees) or a not-for-profit business run by a charity or another organization
- The business receiving funds must either:
 - be physically located within the boundaries of Toronto;
 - declare in writing to the City that the funding will be used to support a Project implemented within the boundaries of Toronto if the Recipient's corporate address is located outside of Toronto; or
 - be an urban off-reserve Indigenous-led organization which may also provide culturally-based programming outside the boundaries of Toronto.
- Any services funded through CFIF must take place within the boundaries of Toronto, except for services being delivered by urban off-reserve Indigenous-led organizations which may also provide culturally-based programming outside the boundaries of Toronto
- For-profit businesses must provide proof of their legal name and that they are an active business
- Not-for-profit organizations must have and provide proof of legal not-for-profit or charitable status or be an urban off-reserve Indigenous-led organization
- Business Improvement Areas must indicate under which Bylaw number they are established

Previous CFIF recipients are eligible to apply, provided that the proposed CFIF Project is demonstrably different from that which was previously funded, either in its objectives, goals, and/or anticipated impacts. For example, by targeting a new geographic area of Toronto or an equity-deserving group, or by introducing new methods, technologies or approaches. As part of the application process, applicants that have previously been awarded CFIF funding will be required to include a brief comparison outlining how the new proposal differs from their prior CFIF-funded project.

The City encourages submissions from businesses owned by women, visible minorities, Indigenous peoples and people with disabilities.

2.2.2 Eligible Green Workforce Applicants

Funding for a Green Workforce Project is only available to those applicants who are eligible and successful in receiving funding for their CFIF Project.

2.2.3 Ineligible Applicants

Ineligible applicants include:

- Recipients of the 2024-2025 intake of CFIF that are looking to fund the same project
- For-profit educational institutions
- Owners of a business franchise
- Building managers and property owners
- Individuals
- Resident, neighbourhood and business associations
- Community groups including youth and school groups, service clubs and parent councils
- School boards
- Grant-making organizations
- Organizations allied with political parties
- Chambers of commerce

2.3 Expenses

2.3.1 Eligible CFIF Expenses

Funds can only be used for costs associated with the direct delivery of the proposed CFIF Project described in the submitted application.

Eligible costs for a CFIF Project include:

Eligible Cost	Description	Use Limit
Project Materials and Supplies	Project materials and supplies, including product inventory (e.g., reusable containers) and equipment rental or purchase (e.g., washing stations)	Up to a maximum of 100% of total funding for CFIF Project
Subscription Services	Project-specific subscription services (e.g., licensing an app to support use of reusable containers)	Up to a maximum of 100% of total funding for CFIF Project
Capital Costs	Capital costs for renovations required as part of the proposed project	Up to a maximum of 50% of total funding for CFIF Project
Direct Staff Costs	Direct staff costs for the delivery, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the proposed project (e.g. salaries)	Up to a maximum of 50% of total funding for CFIF Project
Purchased Services	Direct non-staff costs for purchased services from contractors and consultants for project delivery, web design, translation, communications and/or marketing campaign services for the proposed project	Up to a maximum of 15% of total funding for CFIF Project
Fees/Honoraria	Direct non-staff costs for fees/honoraria for professional skills instructors that are directly tied to proposed project's implementation	Up to a maximum of 15% of total funding for CFIF Project
Overhead Costs	Overhead costs directly tied to the proposed project (e.g., room/facility and event rental fees)	Up to a maximum of 15% of total funding for CFIF Project
Marketing Costs	Marketing costs directly tied to promoting the proposed project, including advertising and communication tools and materials (e.g., website, printing and distribution of marketing materials); excludes "Subscription services".	Up to a maximum of 15% of total funding for CFIF Project
Public Transportation	Stipends and public transportation costs incurred by volunteers directly related to implementing the proposed project	Up to a maximum of 15% of total funding for CFIF Project

2.3.2 Eligible Green Workforce Expenses

Additional funding for the Green Workforce Project can only be used for costs directly tied to the design and/or delivery of workforce development, upskilling or training activities described in the submitted application that support the goal of CFIF to achieve a more circular food system for Toronto residents and businesses.

Eligible costs for a Green Workforce Project include:

Eligible Cost	Description	Use Limit
Training Content and Materials	Development of manuals, guides or digital resources to help staff understand reuse systems (i.e., sanitation, logistics, waste reduction)	Up to a maximum of 100% of total funding for Green Workforce Project
Curriculum or Credential Development	Creation of micro-credentials, short courses or structured training pathways in partnership with colleges, training providers or workforce organizations	
Hands-on Training Infrastructure	Purchase of equipment or supplies needed to train staff (i.e., sanitization kits, reusable container washing systems, mock training stations)	
Partnered Training Delivery	Payments to workforce agencies, community organizations or innovation partners contracted to design and deliver training or employment-related components	
Staff Upskilling and Cross-training	Internal “train-the-trainer” programs, staff certifications or cross-training to expand staff skills to include reuse logistics	
Accessibility Supports	Translation, adaptive formats or other measures that improve training access for equity-deserving groups	
Evaluation and Knowledge Sharing	Development of metrics, case studies or playbooks documenting workforce outcomes and lessons learned for the sector	
Other	Expenses not included above that the City approves of through the evaluation process and that are materially necessary to implement the proposed Green Workforce Project	

2.3.3 Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses for CFIF Projects and Green Workforce Projects include, but are not limited to:

- Any cost incurred prior to the receipt of a letter of acceptance in the CFIF program and prior to entering into a Fund Agreement with the City
- Expenses and equipment unrelated to the intent described in the application form

- Costs associated with the regular operation of the business (i.e., costs not associated with the direct delivery of the proposed project(s))
- Overhead costs (e.g., utilities) that cannot be accurately attributed to the proposed project(s), as the City does not fund regular operating expenses
- Funding of staff positions or volunteer honorariums not related directly to the proposed project(s)
- Organic waste/recycling collection services
- Event sponsorships and fundraising activities
- Direct financial compensation for the Board of Directors, individuals or families
- Disbursement of City funds to provide additional grants/funding to other parties (i.e., regranting)
- Fees and expenses for memberships, courses, conferences not directly related to the development or delivery of the proposed project(s)
- Fees and expenses for personal vehicles, maintenance and parking as well as long-term rental of vehicle
- Religious or political activities or proselytizing
- Deficit or debt repayment
- Purchase of property
- Hospitality (e.g., food, refreshments, alcohol)
- Gifts

The City may amend the project budget submitted as part of the application process to remove any ineligible expenses.

3 Application Process

During the application period, interested parties can submit their proposed project(s) and funding request by completing the online application form on the [City of Toronto's webpage](#).

The application form will require the following information:

- Contact information for the applicant(s) and the organization(s) applying for funding
- Description of the proposed project(s), including a Project Plan using the template provided
- Information about the impact your project(s) will make and how your project(s) will be funded, including a Project Budget using the template provided
- Documentation to confirm the legal name of your organization, copies of any permits required, and declarations that your organization is eligible for funding

For applicants interested in submitting a proposed Green Workforce Project, the application form will also require a description of the proposed project that will build workforce capacity in Toronto's green and circular food economy, including how the proposed green workforce development activities align with CFIF's goal of achieving a more circular food system in Toronto. The aforementioned Project Budget and Project

Plan files will also need to include information for the Green Workforce Project.

A Word document version of the online application form is available on [the City of Toronto's webpage](#). This document can be used as a workbook to plan out your responses before making your official submission. **Applications will only be accepted through the online application form on the [City of Toronto's webpage](#), which will be open from January 5 to March 1, 2026. Word documents or submissions in any other form will not be accepted.**

3.1 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Applications

The City acknowledges that applicants may choose to use AI tools when preparing their applications. While AI tools can be a helpful resource, they should be used as a supporting tool and not a substitute for the applicant's own expertise and voice. Applicants are encouraged to also consider potential risks associated with these technologies which may include data protection and intellectual property breaches, bias, and the submission of identical answers between different applications.

During the application process, applicants will be asked to disclose if AI tools were used in developing their application and will be required to acknowledge that all information submitted as part of their application is accurate, true and reflects their organization's project, and capacity to complete the project, as described in this application.

If using AI tools, applicants are strongly advised to:

- Personalize their application to reflect their unique perspective, experience, and project goals.
- Review all AI-generated content for accuracy, relevance, and compliance with the program requirements and eligibility criteria outlined in this document.
- Ensure originality and authenticity, as applications that appear generic or lack personal input may be less competitive.
- Confirm organizational capacity and ability to deliver any commitments or ideas generated with AI assistance.

3.2 Other Considerations:

- During the application period, the City will host two virtual information sessions to answer questions about the Circular Food Innovators Fund, including the additional funding available for green workforce development projects.
- Applications will not be accepted after the application deadline of March 1, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.
- Incomplete applications will be disqualified.
- Applicants can only submit one application per funding round. If more than one application is submitted by the same applicant, only the application submitted first will be considered.
- Staff will endeavour to respond to all inquiries but cannot guarantee that questions posed less than one week from the application deadline will be responded to before the deadline.

- Applicants must submit a completed application form and confirm that all information provided in the application form and related attachments is true, correct and complete, as verified by an authorized official of the organization.
- If an applicant needs to revise their application after submission (i.e. revision to same project proposal previously submitted), they may do so after obtaining written permission via email from the City (circulareconomy@toronto.ca). The revised application must be received by the submission deadline. Otherwise, the previous submission will be evaluated.

4 Evaluation Process

The decision to fund all or part of an applicant's proposed project(s) will depend on alignment with the City's strategic priorities, assessment criteria, and overall demand for funds from applicants, among other considerations.

After the application period has closed, all applications and supporting documentation will be reviewed to ensure they meet all eligibility criteria. If City staff require further clarification on the application to ensure it can be comprehensively evaluated, applicants may be contacted by City staff during the evaluation stage. The request for clarification does not indicate that the applicant has been selected to receive funding.

4.1 Review of CFIF Project Applications

Eligible applications will then undergo a technical review to ensure the proposed CFIF Project meets eligibility criteria, followed by a detailed evaluation by a Fund Review Committee.

The Fund Review Committee will be comprised of City staff from a variety of City Divisions with expertise in the circular economy, the food system, local economic development and other relevant subject areas and will use the evaluation criteria outlined below to assess CFIF Projects.

Program Alignment (20%)

- The applicant provides a clear, concise and compelling project description with either demonstrated or strong potential to implement a new reuse system, or demonstrably enhance an existing reuse system
- The applicant is proposing an innovative or unique solution
- The applicant has clearly demonstrated how the proposed project aligns with and advances the City of Toronto strategic priorities, including but not limited to the City's [10-Year Circular Economy Road Map](#) and the City's [Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-Year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy \(2025-2035\)](#)

Project Impact (30%)

- The applicant has a clear project plan that is realistic to implement within a one-year timeframe

- The project has a high likelihood of generating significant reduction in single-use and takeaway items in Toronto
- The applicant has a well-defined approach for promotion that will enable significant participation in the proposed reuse system
- The applicant has a well-defined plan for continuing the reuse system after City funding is complete
- The project and/or organization delivers additional community benefits related to the food system, such as food insecurity, advancing equity (e.g., providing senior-focused co-benefits such as age-friendly container design, accessible drop-off infrastructure or targeted outreach for older adults), delivering environmental outcomes, and/or supporting local economic development

Financial Feasibility (25%)

- The applicant's proposed budget is appropriate based on the project
- The organization has sufficient funds and/or other funding sources to cover any additional project costs over and above what the City will be covering

Organizational Capacity (25%)

- The applicant has strong organizational capacity to plan and deliver their project
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to comply with the Circular Food Innovators Fund reporting guidelines (including required and optional metrics) and related program requirements
- The applicant has a well-defined approach for identifying and mitigating potential risks to the project's completion

4.2 Review of Applications for Additional Funding for Green Workforce Development

Applicants that are successful in receiving funding for their CFIF Project and that also included a Green Workforce Project as part of their application will be evaluated by the Fund Review Committee based on their potential to deliver measurable workforce development outcomes and build workforce capacity in Toronto's green economy, with a focus on reuse systems and sustainable practices in the food and beverage sector.

The Fund Review Committee will use the evaluation criteria outlined below to assess Green Workforce Projects.

Program Alignment (20%)

- The applicant provides a clear, concise and compelling project description and goals with either demonstrated or strong potential to build workforce capacity in Toronto's green and circular food economy
- The applicant has clearly demonstrated how the proposed green workforce development activities align with the Circular Food Innovators Fund's goal of achieving a more circular food system in Toronto

Project Impact (30%)

- The applicant has clearly demonstrated how the proposed project will achieve one (or more) of the following objectives:
 - Deliver targeted training and upskilling initiatives for staff in the field of circular food practices and innovation.
 - Develop comprehensive, high-quality training resources to advance knowledge and application of circular food practices and innovation.
 - Facilitate structured work-based learning opportunities that promote practical experience in circular food innovation.
 - Establish sustainable career pathways to support future workforce development in the circular food innovation sector
- The applicant has well-defined and feasible learning objectives that reflect thoughtful planning and relevance to the scope and goals of the proposed project, explicitly identifying the specific skills targeted for development
- The applicant has a clear project plan that is realistic to implement within a one-year timeframe

Financial Feasibility (25%)

- The applicant's proposed budget is appropriate based on the project
- The organization has sufficient funds and/or other funding sources to cover any additional project costs over and above what the City will be covering

Organizational Capacity (25%)

- The applicant has strong organizational capacity to plan and deliver their project
- The applicant demonstrates the ability to comply with the green workforce development add-on funding reporting guidelines (including commitment to work with the City to determine required metrics to collect and report on) and related program requirements

4.3 Notification

All applicants will be notified of final funding decisions. All decisions concerning eligibility and funding amounts will be final and not subject to appeal.

5 Obligations of Grant Recipients and Project Implementation

5.1 Fund Agreement

Grant recipients will be required to enter into a Fund Agreement with the City of Toronto that sets out the applicable terms and conditions that will govern use of the funds. The City will not provide funding to any recipient who refuses to enter into such an agreement. The terms of the Fund Agreement are non-negotiable.

A template Fund Agreement is publicly available on the [City of Toronto's webpage](#). Questions about the Fund Agreement can be directed to City staff prior to the

application closing period by emailing circulareconomy@toronto.ca or calling 416-396-4699.

By entering into a Fund Agreement, successful applicants will be required to:

- Have and maintain commercial general liability insurance coverage meeting the requirements for the funding agreement (this must be secured prior to receiving funds)
- Comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code in hiring practices and in the provision of all services
- Comply with relevant federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations including Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, as amended
- The organization must not be or have not been indebted to the City or be in default of the terms and conditions of any agreement (including any previous grant/funding agreement) with any division, agency, board or commission of the City of Toronto
- Review and sign the Declaration of Compliance with Anti-Harassment/Discrimination Legislation & City Policy form. The City of Toronto will not fund applicants that discriminate or whose actions limit the legal rights of people, in any way.

5.2 Receiving Funding

Successful applicants will implement their project(s) over a one-year time frame after signing the Fund Agreement with the City.

50% of the award funds will be provided to grant recipients after the Fund Agreement is signed by all parties. The remaining 50% of the funds will be disbursed at the conclusion of the project(s) when a final report (including receipts for expenditures) is submitted and accepted as complete by the City.

The City will only provide funding for eligible expenses. Any ineligible expenses incurred during the implementation of the project(s) will not be reimbursed by the City.

5.3 Reporting

Funded organizations are required to submit interim and final reports for CFIF Projects (and Green Workforce Projects, if applicable) to receive the balance of funds.

Standardized reporting templates are provided on the [City of Toronto's webpage](#) to ensure applicants are aware of what will be required of them if successful. Reports will be used to document interim progress and final progress that the grant recipient has made on their project(s) with the funds provided, including any lessons learned. Where possible, lessons learned will be shared with relevant stakeholders, including other grant recipients. If required, the City may interview funded organizations to support information/data collection.

As part of the reports, grant recipients will also be required to track and report on certain

metrics to demonstrate the impact of the funded project(s).

The required metrics for CFIF Projects include:

- Return rate (%)
- Amount of single-use and takeaway items avoided (# and/or kg)
- Total waste reduction (%)

In addition to the three required metrics, the City also encourages grant recipients to track and report on additional metrics that are relevant to, and are able to showcase the success of, their CFIF Project. Possible examples include:

- Greenhouse gas emissions avoided (kg CO₂e)
- Cost savings from not buying single-use and takeaway items (\$)
- Client growth (# or %)

Applicants that are successful in obtaining additional funding for a Green Workforce Project will also be required to track and report on metrics to evaluate project success. Recognizing the broad range of workforce development activities that may be funded, specific metrics will be developed in consultation with City staff at the start of project implementation. Example metrics for a Green Workforce Project include:

- Hours of training delivered (e.g. workshops, training, classes) (hrs)
- Number of training resources developed (and examples of post-development use/application) (#)
- Hours of work-based learning opportunities facilitated (e.g. internships) (hrs)
- Number of participants engaged in workforce development activities (#)
- Feedback forms completed by people participating in the workforce development activities
- Number (and type) of partnerships formed as a result of workforce development activities (#)

Grant recipients will be required to provide receipts and/or other financial information to verify money spent. To maintain transparency and accountability, the City will publicly disclose the names of organizations that received funds, recipient Ward and funding amounts.

5.4 Group Kick-off Meeting

Upon entering into Fund Agreements with all grant recipients, the City will convene a virtual meeting to reiterate the obligations of recipients and to provide an opportunity for recipients to connect with one another so that, if desired, they may communicate independently throughout project implementation to share lessons learned, best practices, etc.

5.5 Site Visit

A site visit will be scheduled with each of the grant recipients approximately midway through project implementation. These visits are an opportunity for grant recipients to showcase their project(s) and any progress made with funding thus far, and for City staff to ask any clarifying questions and ensure the project(s) are being implemented as outlined under the Fund Agreements.

The City's preference is for the site visit to occur in-person at the site of the project(s). However, if the grant recipient does not have a physical location, if that location is challenging to get to, or if the project(s) are not physical in nature (i.e., back-end logistics), a virtual meeting will be scheduled between the grant recipient and City staff.

5.6 Recipient Roundtable Reporting (if requested)

Where possible, the City may request that the grant recipients share lessons learned during the course of their work on their projects with relevant stakeholders, including other grant recipients.

5.7 Project Case Studies (if requested)

To celebrate and showcase the projects funded through CFIF, the City may work with grant recipients to publish case studies on the success of their project(s) on the City of Toronto's website, Circular Economy newsletter, conference presentations, publications and/or City of Toronto social media. The decision to develop case studies on funded projects will be at the sole discretion of the City.

5.8 Photographs/Videos

City staff and/or the City's photographer or external vendor may take photos/videos of the funded projects throughout the funding term, in particular during the site visits. City staff will ensure disclosure/consent is obtained and documented by anyone captured prior to photos/videos being taken.

Grant recipients will also be asked to provide photos or video documentation of their project activities and grant the City a license to use them.

For the City to be able to use any photograph(s)/video(s), careful attention is paid to concerns of copyright and consent. To address both concerns, grant recipients are required to complete the City's Multimedia Consent Form for all submitted photographs/videos, which will be provided to grant recipients.

5.9 Acknowledgement of Funding

Grant recipients must acknowledge the financial assistance provided by the City of Toronto in any and all public communications about the program. The Fund Agreement provides more details on how to appropriately acknowledge the City of Toronto and provides information on the use of the City's logo.

5.10 Repayment of Funds

The City of Toronto may request the return of any funding for a variety of reasons outlined in the Fund Agreement, including if:

- the project is not complete within the allowable timeframe
- funds were not used for the stated purpose of the approved project
- funds were not used for eligible expenses
- an organization fails to submit their interim or final reports

6 Contact

For questions, comments or concerns regarding the Circular Food Innovators Fund, contact circulareconomy@toronto.ca