



To: Regional Council
Meeting Date: December 5, 2024
From: Lisa Gonsalves
Acting Commissioner of Community and Health Services
Re: **Community Investment Fund Activity Update for 2023**

This memorandum provides Council with an annual report on the activity of York Region's Community Investment Fund program for 2023, in accordance with the [October 2021](#) Council-approved Community Investment Fund Program Framework.

The Community Investment Fund provides targeted and time-limited funding to support local projects and initiatives delivered by community agencies

Through the Community Investment Fund, the Region can direct investments into the local community agency sector to deliver programs and services that respond to the health and social needs of residents, benefiting from agencies' familiarity with local community needs, expertise supporting specific populations, and existing services infrastructure.

Investments are focused on preventative and early-intervention services which helps to reduce reliance and strain on more costly core services. Funding is allotted to community agencies through call for application and direct selection processes. All Community Investment Fund projects and funding allocations are approved by the Commissioner, Community and Health Services, as authorized by Council.

The program is funded by the net tax-levy and contributions from the Pandemic Management and Recovery Reserve Fund. In 2023, about \$8.5 million in funding was allocated across 194 projects and initiatives delivered by 98 community agencies. The program can also administer funding provided to the Community and Health Services Department by external sources. Outcomes of externally funded activities are provided when Council receives updates from related Community and Health Services Department programs.

2023 program activity was focused on supporting Regional pandemic response and recovery efforts and implementation of new Council-approved program priorities

The Community Investment Fund had a critical role in the Region's social services response to the COVID-19 pandemic by helping funded agencies adapt projects so that they could continue

delivering services safely. In 2023, funding was allocated to extend projects that were initially funded prior to the pandemic to complete programs and services. In addition, a call for applications was completed for projects that addressed resident mental health concerns made worse during the pandemic experience.

In [February 2023](#), Council approved an enhancement of about \$3.2 million, drawn from the Pandemic Management and Recovery Reserve Fund, to the Community Investment Fund in 2023, as part of supporting critical social infrastructure through the Community and Health Services Budget. This investment enhanced the Community Investment Fund’s ability to address gaps in community services across program priority areas.

In [May 2023](#), Council approved new priorities for the Community Investment Fund to guide program activity for this term of Council. Table 1 summarizes activities taken in 2023 to support Regional pandemic response and recovery efforts and to implement the new priorities. Additional details about the community agencies, projects and initiatives funded in 2023 can be found on the [Community Investment Fund program webpage](#).

Table 1
Summary of 2023 Community Investment Fund Activity by Program Priority

Priority	Activities	Funding Allocation (\$)
Pandemic Response and Recovery	\$3,125,048 approved to conclude 36 projects that were continued throughout the pandemic in support of sector stability and \$1,202,477 approved to 18 projects that helped residents with mental health concerns made worse by the pandemic experience.	4,327,525
Housing Stability	Eleven projects approved for funding to help residents find or keep stable housing.	526,895
Mental Well-being	Twenty-four projects approved for funding to help residents to have positive mental health.	764,360
Food Security System Development	Seven projects and initiatives approved for funding to improve food system access and strengthen the local food security system.	418,776

Priority	Activities	Funding Allocation (\$)
Organizational Development and Capacity Building for Community Agencies	Sixty-six initiatives approved for funding that support local not-for-profit organizations and registered charities with operational, small capital, and residents' needs pressures. 170 staff from 85 agencies participated in eight professional development workshops on topics including grant writing, collective impact, volunteer recruitment and retention, and inclusive leadership.	1,129,871
Other Critical Service and Emergency Needs and Needs Identified in Regional Human Services Plans	\$727,000 approved to eight projects to support implementation of the Community and Safety Well-Being Plan for York Region, \$49,815 approved to 20 initiatives to help residents access York Region Transit, and \$550,120 approved to four projects that respond to the needs of residents victimized by crime, tragic circumstance and human trafficking. York Region staff continue to collaborate with agencies to build awareness of human trafficking and support their advocacy for funding to meet growing pressures, including the need to build a Safe House and Service Hub for sex trafficking survivors as deputed to Council in January 2023 .	1,326,935
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	Over \$660,000 of the above investments included projects that were delivered by and targeted to priority groups. Dedicated funding activity under this priority occurred in 2024 with further plans for 2025.	N/A (no dedicated funding processes administered in 2023)
Critical Social Infrastructure	About \$3.2 million of the above investments included projects and initiatives that were enabled via Critical Social Infrastructure enhancements to the Community Investment Fund to support residents with increasingly critical social needs, including mental health, human trafficking, and homelessness supports.	N/A (funding allocated across program Priorities)
Total:		8,494,362

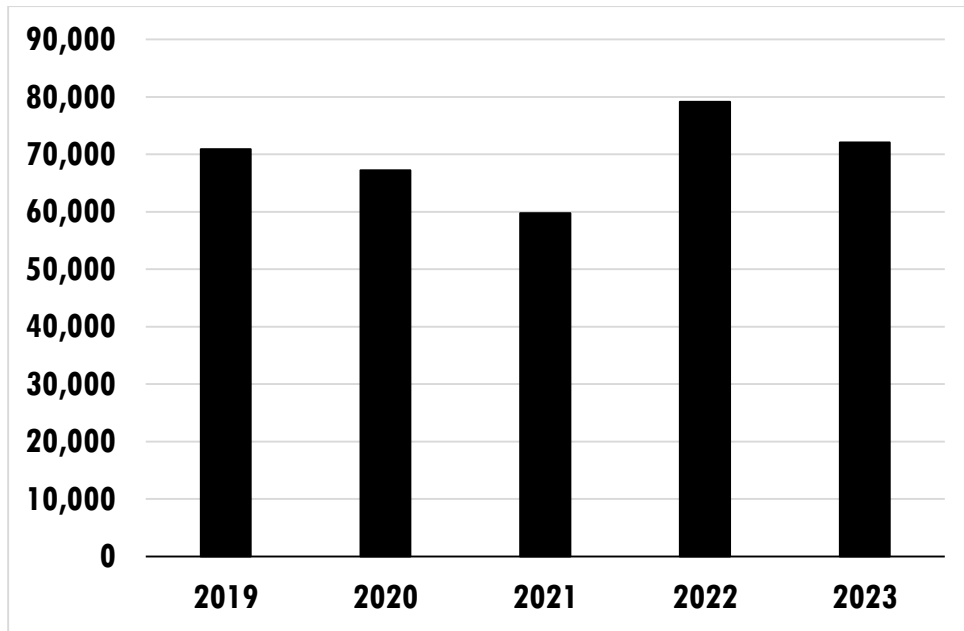
Over 70,000 residents benefitted from Community Investment Funded programs and services

In 2023, funding was allocated to projects and initiatives that responded to economic, social, and health needs of residents, including:

- Services to over 700 residents to improve economic security, including employment attainment and retention
- Support for nearly 1,900 youth and families to enhance mental well-being, including leadership programs for girls, social inclusion programs for HIV+ and 2SLGBTQ+ youth, and mentoring
- Housing stability supports for over 4,300 residents, including housing search assistance, basic needs provisions and community referrals for people experiencing homelessness
- Access to food for over 31,500 residents receiving through school-based student nutrition programs, food distribution to local food banks and emergency food services
- Community-based mental health programs for over 2,800 residents including targeted counselling services and supports for front-line workers
- Assistance to over 7,600 residents to reduce the impact of crime, trauma and tragic circumstance
- Engagement of over 18,000 residents engaged through a local Community Action Table
- Programs for nearly 700 newcomers to support social connectedness and cohesion into the community
- Increased transit access for over 2,800 residents

The above figures reflect the number of acts of help or assistance provided to residents through Community Investment Funded projects and initiatives. Service activity in 2023 was consistent with historical trends, with an average of about 70,000 residents accessing services annually since 2019, as indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Number of Residents Accessing Services Funded by the Community Investment Fund



Project performance is regularly assessed, with 85% of funded projects meeting or exceeding their targets, compared to a five-year average of 76%, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2
Percentage of Community Investment Funded Projects and Initiatives that Achieved Service Targets

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-Year Average
62%	75%	67%	92%	85%	76%

The Community Investment Fund improves the quality of life of residents by enhancing access to community services

The Community Investment Fund is an important part of York Region’s human services system, addressing gaps in community needs. It supports Council’s [Vision](#) for York Region as a place that fosters healthy living and is safe, accessible, inclusive and supportive for all residents, and the [Strategic Plan](#) priority to support community well-being.

For more information on this memo, please contact Mary Boushel, Director, Strategies and Partnerships Branch at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 78389. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Lisa Gonsalves
Acting Commissioner of Community and Health Services



Erin Mahoney
Chief Administrative Officer

November 19, 2024
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