

# COVID-19 Emergency Community Support Fund Internal Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



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## Introduction:

The following FAQs are complementary and in addition to the Briefing Note and Expression of Interest documents sent by United Way Centraide Canada (UWCC) on May 6, 2020. Following the Townhall held on May 7, 2020, these FAQs aim to capture questions asked by United Way Centraides (UWCs) and provide further information about the Federal Government's \$350M Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF). UWCC looks forward to collaborating with you on this important initiative.

If you have additional questions after reviewing the FAQs, please submit them to [ECSF@unitedway.ca](mailto:ECSF@unitedway.ca)

## Background:

### What is the purpose of the Emergency Community Support Fund?

The ECSF is intended to strengthen the capacity of community service organizations to meet the urgent needs of vulnerable individuals and families disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. These resources will support community services in all regions of Canada. UWCC, the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) and Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) were named as three intermediaries with which the federal government would partner to deliver this funding.

ECSF will be administered by open and transparent call for proposals to support activities that:

- address a pressing social inclusion or well-being need caused by COVID-19
- serve one or more vulnerable populations during COVID-19
- can be carried out in a short timeframe (from date of signature to March 31, 2021) with a reasonable budget; and
- has not secured funds to cover the costs of the activities for which they have applied from another intermediary, another federal COVID-19 response program or a different source.

## How is the funding being allocated between the intermediaries?

The funding was negotiated by the Government of Canada, through Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), with each intermediary on a separate basis through a direct contribution agreement with each party. The exact financial allotments of the other intermediaries are not yet public. We do know, however, that the intermediaries have negotiated with ESDC to design their granting streams in the following manner:

- CRC will administer two streams of funding through a national application portal. One stream will be to support small non-profit organizations and the other stream will support a "Preventing Disease Transmission Training and Equipment Program".
- CFC will administer a stream of funding to support [qualified donees](#) serving vulnerable populations through a national application portal that links to their local Community Foundation members.
- UWCC will distribute its funding allotment to local UWC members to administer applications at the local level. UWCs will administer their local allotments to support qualified donees and may contract with

non-profits serving vulnerable populations to deliver a service that aligns with their UWC charitable purpose. Where a UWC member supports a non-profit, they are asking the non-profit to act as its agent to deliver services and specific parameters and oversight are required. Refer to the Townhall slide deck for additional information and feel free to reach out to the Network Engagement Team at UWCC for guidance.

## How may this funding be used?

**Funding may be used to support:** Activities to provide or support food security, financial wellness, health and hygiene, home care or personal support services, information and navigation, legal supports, mental health and wellness, shelter, safety, social inclusion and learning, transportation, and other similar interventions.

**Reaching vulnerable populations, including:** caregivers, children and youth, indigenous peoples, low income or living in poverty, people who identify as LGBTQ2S+ or non-binary, newcomers (all), official language minority communities, people experiencing domestic or gender-based violence, people experiencing homelessness, people living in group homes or supportive living (under the age of 55), people living with mental illness, people struggling with addiction, persons with disabilities, prison populations (detained and incarcerated people), racialized (all), seniors and Elders (not in care), seniors and Elders (living in care), students (post-secondary), workers who are vulnerable (essential workers, temporary foreign workers, workers in the informal labour market, etc.), veterans, and women and girls, and others.

**Through the following activities:** Community outreach and engagement, delivering new models, tools, programming, services or resources, disseminating information and knowledge, volunteer engagement and recruitment, and other similar activities.

**Supporting the following eligible program expenses:** Wages and employment-related costs for staff, fees for professional service, disability supports for staff of the recipient, materials and supplies, printing and communication, equipment rental/lease/maintenance, travel costs, utilities, insurance, rental of premises, lease, purchase and maintenance of equipment, costs of project audits, evaluations and assessments, performance monitoring and reporting costs, data collection, knowledge development activities, and administrative costs associated with the project. Note – purchase of real property is ineligible.

## What are the mechanisms for distributing funds?

UWCC's agreement with the Federal Government allows UWCs to make funding decision using the following two processes:

- Through an open and transparent call for proposals, using either the standard application form provided by UWCC or a local version
- Through a recommendation made by the local COVID-19 community response table, where they exist.

In all cases, the majority of the funding should be allocated through an open and transparent funding process.

## FAQs

### Questions about Program Administration and Supports

#### 1) What tools/resources can UWCC provide to support the administration of ECSF locally?

UWCC is preparing a number of tools and resources for UWCs to use and adapt as appropriate. Where possible, UWCC will be aligning this with Community Foundations of Canada (CFC) to ensure that we are

meeting the reporting requirements of ESDC and supporting the coordination of support to local community agencies.

This will include:

- Application materials, including an application template with a standard set of basic minimum application requirements, application guide, reporting requirements, evaluation rubric, and sample funding agreement. We encourage you to use the application template available in French and English. Please note, the sample application provided meets basic accessibility standards.
- Guidance and tools for those UWCs contracting with non-profit organizations including draft agent or service agreements.
- Access to a national project team for advisory support, to guide implementation and answer questions.
- Use of a simple online data submission tool to UWCC to meet the ongoing reporting requirements of ESDC
- A range of communication materials including:
  - Frequently Asked Questions (external)
  - Key Messages
  - Sample website announcement content, social media content, press release
  - Sample “who we funded” text
  - MP engagement toolkit
  - Government of Canada recognition guidelines
  - Other materials identified throughout the process
- Development of a national evaluation framework to guide data collection, communication and story telling
- Support and resources for UWCs on how to integrate an equity lens into grant making
- Support for communicating with MPs and local stakeholders
- Overall national coordination with Community Foundations of Canada and the Canadian Red Cross, as well as federal government relations

## **2) Does our UWC have to launch the application process on May 19?**

Yes. As part of our agreement with ESDC, both Community Foundations and UWCs are required to launch a public application process on May 19th. UWCC will be publicizing the application launch and will have a map on our website that connects to your local website application page.

## **3) We have limited capacity. Can we hire temporary staff to help us manage this process?**

Yes. UWCs can use up to 8% of the ECSF funds they receive to support administration of the process, including contract staff, if required.

## **4) Is it possible to align the ECSF with previous commitments/funding decisions that meet the criteria for these funds?**

No, previously approved funds are not eligible for this funding. Decisions not yet made may be eligible, provided they meet the Terms and Conditions and you have the basic required information. In all cases, the majority of funding should be allocated through an open call for proposals.

**5) Can we go back to the date of the signing of the contribution agreement with the federal government?**

No, these funds will be eligible for use by UWCs from the date that a signed funding agreement is in place between UWCC and the UWC.

**6) Can we choose to only fund charitable status organizations to keep work within our capacity?**

UWCs may determine how best to allocate these funds, however, it will be important to show that you have an open application process. UWCs need to promote and share this opportunity as broadly as possible.

**7) My UWC uses the member agency model. Do we have to open the call for applications beyond member-agencies?**

Yes. This funding is not intended for only UWC-funded community agencies, but the community services sector at large. UWCs must promote this opportunity broadly to all eligible organizations in their region. Access cannot be influenced or limited to existing funded partners only.

**8) My UWC sits at a community planning table that is directing investments for COVID-19 response. Do we have to do an open call for applications?**

Yes. UWCs are able to fund initiatives recommended by COVID-19 Community Response tables where they exist in communities. However, in all cases, UWCs must also launch an open call for applications with the majority of the funds.

**9) Can UWCs share the size of the local funds being distributed in their community?**

Yes. UWCs are welcome to publicize the amount of resources but are not required to do so.

**10) Are UWCs own COVID-19 response programs eligible for this funding, such as food distribution efforts?**

In the case where a UWC would like to apply ECSF dollars to support its own programming, the UWC needs to seek approval from UWCC. In all cases, however, the majority of the ECSF funds must be distributed through an open call for applications.

If your UWC proposes to utilize ESDC funding for direct services, please email [ECSF@unitedway.ca](mailto:ECSF@unitedway.ca) requesting approval. In your email, please outline:

- the service to be funded, and how much
- what the service does, for whom, and how many recipients/participants

## **Questions about eligibility**

**11) What groups are eligible for these resources?**

ESDC anticipates UWCs supporting registered charities, other qualified donees, and allows for contracting with nonprofits. Registered charities and other qualified donees are eligible to apply for funding, and nonprofits are eligible for support through agent or service agreements, serving part of the UWCs mission. In the case of the latter, to maintain your charitable objects, additional agreement and reporting requirements need to be in place (see slide 26 from Town Hall, May 7, 2020 deck for details).

**12) Is capacity building and/or capital expenses eligible for this funding?**

If the funds are enabling individuals and families in vulnerable situations to better access needed services and resources within the community, expenditures are permissible. This includes capacity building and/or capital. The expenditure should be focused on enabling direct service (for example: training on how to safely use personal protective equipment or purchases of plexiglass dividers). In these instances, reporting should focus on people served, as a result of the enhanced capacity.

**13) Are municipalities eligible to receive these funds?**

Yes, municipalities are considered qualified donees. You can refer to the [CRA website for a full list of registered charities](#) and the [CRA's list of Other Qualified Donees](#) as a resource for reviewing applications.

**14) Are there minimums and maximums for size of grants?**

UWCC will not be mandating a minimum or maximum for the size of grants, however UWCs may choose to do so.

**15) Can the applications be received and processed on a rolling basis?**

Yes, UWCs are welcome to use a rolling application process, including reviewing and making decisions as applications are received, rather than utilizing a fixed date. We encourage all UWCs to ensure their process is clearly outlined in the call for applications.

**16) The guidelines say an organization cannot secure funds to cover the same costs of activities for which they have applied for support from another intermediary, another federal COVID-19 response program or a different source. Does this mean those agencies who are receiving the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy are ineligible to apply?**

No, the clause cited does not mean that agencies receiving the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy are ineligible to apply under the Emergency Community Support Fund. Agencies receiving the Wage Subsidy are eligible to apply. However, an agency cannot apply for money to cover wages already covered by the Wage Subsidy.

**17) Are we able to use the existing New Horizons for Seniors Program applications and use the ECSF to top up those dollars?**

Yes. If you are currently funding a program under the NHSP, you can flow additional resources to expand capacity of this program (by increasing volume or extending the time period). However, in all cases, UWCs must also launch an open call for applications with the majority of the funds.

**18) Do restrictions on funding organizations who received other federal funds mean UWCs cannot grant to a seniors' program that received New Horizons for Seniors Program funding? That funding expires at the end of June.**

No, in this instance, the ECSF dollars can fund added capacity past the June period or enhance current service offerings.

**19) Can organizations that provide support services that are currently funded by a UWC, and that will experience a funding reduction due to pledge loss, apply for funding to support critical services for vulnerable population to ensure supports are maintained?**

If these funds meet the programming criteria in delivering services to vulnerable communities, and these funds are used in the period between grant approval (by July 31 2020 to March 31 2021), then they are eligible. However, these funds must be above and beyond previously committed funding.

## Questions about Government and other Stakeholders

### **20) Did federal partners provide any guidance related to possible duplication, such as previously announced funds under Homeless Partnering Strategy or earlier emergency food security investments? Will we be using the ECSF in our regions to support those earlier investments?**

With the significant number of federal and provincial funding announcements during the pandemic period, not all of these funds have been coordinated.

UWCC will rely on UWCs to ensure community agencies are not duplicating use of funds. The same dollar expenditure cannot be funded more than 100%. To support this, UWCC is requiring each UWC to ask organizations applying for the ECSF to disclose if they are receiving government funding from other sources. We encourage UWCs to continue to collaborate and partner, where possible, with local Community Foundations and the Canadian Red Cross to ensure funds are not duplicated.

### **21) Are there any distinctions between UWCC and CFC's funding?**

Both UWCC and CFC are providing local community agencies access the resources needed to respond to the urgent needs facing individuals and their families in vulnerable situations. There is no clear distinction between the intent or purpose of the funding delivered by UWCC and CFC.

At the national level, UWCC and CFC are collaborating closely. We encourage local partners to work in partnership as much as possible.

### **22) How will UWCs national partners be supported through the ECSF?**

UWCC will not directly fund national partners such as the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, or YMCA Canada. UWCC is encouraging our pan-Canadian partners to work with their local UWCs to apply for the ECSF. We encourage UWCs to consider these partners within your local funds.

### **23) Are there expectations on the part of provincial or territorial governments for how these funds will be invested?**

UWCC has not received any information or direction to collaborate or coordinate with provincial and territorial governments on this funding. If further information is provided, we will share with you.

### **24) How is this funding impacted by M-30 legislation for Quebec?**

Positive discussions are underway between the federal and Quebec government. We will continue to share updates as these negotiations continue. If needed, UWCC will make accommodations for timelines for Quebec-based Centraides.