
For Information

REPORT TITLE: **Community Investment Program 2024 Fund Update**

FROM: Steve Jacques, MScPI, MCIP, RPP, Commissioner of Human Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide Regional Council with an update on the 2024 Community Investment Program fund allocations.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Rising Demand:** In 2024, 84 per cent of Peel's not-for-profits faced surging costs and demand, especially from marginalized groups, underscoring the need for increased support.
 - **Funding Allocation:** The Community Investment Program distributed \$13.0 million through 148 grants to 140 unique not-for-profits that provide programs and services to Peel residents.
 - **Equity Initiatives:** Region of Peel launches its first Black Funding Framework that shapes Community Investments interactions with B3 not-for-profits in Peel, aiming to improve outcomes for Black marginalized communities.
 - **Food Security Achievements:** The Food Security Fund dramatically improved access to emergency food, contributed to the procurement of approximately 35 per cent more pounds of food in 2024 compared to 2023, serving 117,574 Peel residents.
 - **Stabilization Strategies for Not-for-Profits:** Peel not-for-profits will need to boost sustainability by deepening cross sector partnerships, embrace digital tools and use data to drive impact and community resilience.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The **Community Investment Program (CIP)** is dedicated to strengthening Peel's social safety net by empowering not-for-profit and community agencies to build safe, inclusive, and livable communities for the region's most vulnerable residents. With a budget of \$13.0 million in 2024, the Community Investment Funds support local organizations in delivering vital community and social services. This investment focuses on enhancing core operating capacity, building sector resilience, and co-designing equitable funding models in collaboration with community agencies. By prioritizing direct, accessible, and community-informed funding approaches, CIP ensures that its programs remain responsive to the evolving needs of Peel's diverse populations.

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2. Current Peel Not-For-Profit Pressures

Peel's not-for-profits are navigating a complex and evolving landscape in 2025, shaped by economic, political, and social factors. Below is a summary of the **key trends, challenges, and opportunities** that not-for-profits are navigating.

- a) **Economic Uncertainty** - Inflation has stabilized at 3 per cent¹, but 84 per cent of not-for-profits report rising expenses, and 54 per cent face stagnant or declining revenues. Nearly one-third have tapped into reserve funds, and 39 per cent rate their survival risk as high within three years².
- b) **Funding & Donor Shifts**: A potential global trade war and recession fears are impacting donor behavior. While individual giving is rebounding, donor fatigue persists, especially among younger, values-driven donors.
- c) **Rising Demand**: The annual 2024 ONN Survey identified that Peel region has one of the fast-growing populations, and the highest number of not-for-profits experiencing an increase in demand for services, year-over-year. 83 per cent of organizations report increased demand for services, driven by economic downturns, unemployment, and cost-of-living pressures³.
- d) **Workforce Challenges**: Burnout and staffing shortages are widespread. Two-thirds of organizations struggle with recruitment and retention, and 20 per cent lack volunteer management capacity⁴.
- e) **Digital Transformation**: More nonprofits are adopting digital tools to improve efficiency and demonstrate impact to be prepared for the future.
- f) **Cross Sector Collaboration**: Cross-sector collaboration, involving partnerships between nonprofits, government, private sector, and community organizations, offers a strategic path forward in addressing complex challenges, share resources, efficiencies, expand reach, and provide sustainable innovation and upstream systems change.

Food Insecurity in Peel

In 2024 Regional Council declared Food Insecurity a Crisis. As of April 2024, 8.6 percent (123,660) of Peel's population lives in poverty, including 9.5 per cent (27,900) of children ages 0 to 17 years⁵. Poverty and insufficient financial resources have been directly linked to food insecurity, however, in 2024, 28 per cent of households in Peel experienced food insecurity, which was significantly higher compared to 2023 (22 per cent)⁶. The difference in the rates of poverty and food insecurity reveal an alarming trend that food insecurity in Peel is experienced by residents both above and below the official poverty rate with more than 1 in 5 households experiencing food insecurity. The situation with food providers in Ontario, particularly in Peel, has worsened for the eighth year in a row. In 2024, food providers reported increased service demand of 40-60 per cent compared to the previous year. Food Banks Mississauga reports serving 1 of 13 residents in Mississauga⁷, Knights Table reports serving 1 of 16 residents in Brampton⁸ and Caledon – The Exchange food bank is reporting a 43% increase with 27% being first time users⁹.

¹Statistics Canada. (2025, October). *Consumer Price Index, August 2025*. The Daily. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-2025-08>

²Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN). (2024). *2024 ONN Annual Survey – Policy Report*. <https://theonncan.ca/2024-survey-policy-report>

³Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN). (2024). *2024 ONN Annual Survey – Policy Report*. <https://theonncan.ca/2024-survey-policy-report>

⁴Statistics Canada. (2024, April). *Canada's Official Poverty Dashboard of Indicators: Trends*. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca>

⁵Public Health Ontario. (2024). *Household Food Insecurity Snapshot (PHU 2019 to 2023)*. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca>

⁶Public Health Ontario, Household Food Insecurity Snapshot (PHU 2019 to 2023)

⁷Food Banks Mississauga, Annual Report 2024

⁸Knights Table, Annual Impact Report 2024

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Settlement in Peel

In 2024, Peel Region faced mounting immigration pressures that significantly strained local services. The region received an estimated 33,185 new permanent residents, continuing its role as one of Canada’s top settlement destinations. A surge in asylum seekers and newcomers overwhelmed the capacity of emergency shelters. Social assistance programs like Ontario Works saw rising caseloads with increasingly complex needs, while chronic underfunding compared to other Ontario municipalities led to service gaps and longer wait times. Peel not for profits struggled to meet demand, especially for culturally appropriate care, and schools and settlement agencies experienced increased pressure to support language learning and integration while facing funding cuts from the Federal and Provincial governments. The Peel Newcomers Group advocated for a regional accountability model to improve coordination and funding, emphasizing that without adequate infrastructure and investment, the sustainability of local services—and Peel’s ability to support its growing population—remains at risk¹⁰.

3. 2024 Community Investment Program Results

In 2024, the Community Investment Program continued to receive overwhelming demand, receiving 369 applications seeking a total of \$21.44 million in funding. By the end of the year, the program allocated \$13.19 million from its base budget across 148 grants to 140 unique community agencies who provide programs and services through 1.5 million resident interactions. The demand far exceeded available funds; a situation exacerbated by the sector’s growing needs. Notably, regional grants constituted no more than 25 per cent of each recipient organization’s total revenue for the year. Allocations from each fund can be found in Table 1 below.

Funding Distribution Overview

Table 1: 2024 Community Investment Program Funding Streams

Fund Name	Number of Grants 2024	Total Request for Funding	Total Funding Allocations 2024
Core Fund	115	\$9,959,283	\$ 8,663,118
Food Insecurity Fund	16	\$7,811,531	\$ 3,344,929
B3 Fund	15	\$3,127,708	\$ 635,566
Emergency Sustainability Fund – William G. Safe Center	1	\$250,000	\$ 250,000
Supplemental Fund - Metamorphosis Network	1	\$300,000	\$ 300,000
Total 2024 demand/funding	148	\$21,448,522	\$13,193,614

* Motion RCB-2023-110 Regional Council declared Food Insecurity a crisis and amended 2024 Operating Budget for Community Investment to provide an additional \$2 million to the food security funding stream for food banks

The Community Investment Program demonstrates clear alignment between funding and strategic community priorities—such as, systemic equity, food security, capacity building, poverty reduction and operational stability—while also ensuring transparency and fairness in decision-making through a weighted scoring system. The involvement of a diverse fund review committee, including provincial, municipal, regional, and sector funding partners, promotes credibility and cross-sector collaboration, ensuring that Regional investments

¹⁰ Peel Newcomers Group. (2023). *Collective Impact Report: 2022–2023* [PDF]. Peel Newcomers Group.

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reflect shared goals, decreased service duplication and addresses the most pressing needs in the community.

Feedback and Impact

Community Investment is aligned with the Region of Peel's Community Investment Service Outcome "*Community groups in need have support to deliver services to Peel residents*". Community Investments client satisfaction and performance results are used to inform decision making and strengthen accountability. The 2024 Community Investment results are as follows:

- An annual survey from over 250 not-for-profits rated the program highly for its online platform, process, and customer service.
- 78 per cent satisfaction rate among not-for-profits with the program's support and resources.
- 83 per cent of not-for-profits identified that Community Investment funds supported their identified needs.
- 68 per cent of not-for-profits identified that GovGrants online portal is user friendly.

The three-year (2024-2026) Core Fund invests in the core operations of Peel not-for-profits to support the delivery programs and services to Peel's residents who experience vulnerabilities.

Notable outcomes of year one are:

- Funding exceeded the target of 10 per cent funding new agencies at 19 per cent.
- Funding supported over 300 paid staff positions and 1450 volunteers. Top positions funded; IT Support; human resources; finance and fundraising, marketing and communications.
- Funding supported Peel not-for-profits to advance infrastructure outcomes through streamlined operations, partnerships, increased capacity to serve residents experiencing vulnerabilities, stabilize core operations and engage in capacity building.

4. Advancing Equity and Targeting Investment in Peel Not-For-Profits

The Region of Peel's first B3 (Black led, Black focused, Black serving) Fund 2024

The Community Investment Program (CIP) is dedicated to advancing a Black-led, Black-focused, Black-serving (B3) Funding Framework. This framework shapes CIP's interactions with B3 not-for-profits in Peel, aiming to improve outcomes for Black marginalized communities and to meet the goals of Regional Resolution 2020-448, which states "ensure Black led/Black serving social service agencies in Peel are funded equitably through regional funding mechanisms."

Notable 2024 outcomes that align to Regional strategic priorities:

- 1) The fund exceeded the target (10 per cent) of funding new B3 agencies at 37 per cent.
- 2) Sixty percent of the funding supported small to medium sized (revenue up to 1 million) Peel not-for-profits.
- 3) The funded agencies support over 300,000 Black residents in Peel.
- 4) Top five sectors supported 1) 45 per cent Child, Youth and Family Services, 2) 25 per cent Low Income, Employment 3) 23 per cent Settlement & Newcomers 4) 5 per cent Mental Health & Addictions 5) 2 per cent Crime Prevention/Community Safety and Wellbeing.
- 5) Innovative programming and service pathways developed to support Black youth in Peel through employment training.

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- 6) Cross funder partnership with UW-GTA contributing one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to support the Region of Peel B3 funding framework.

In 2025, Peel Region's Community Investment Program committed to developing a robust capacity-building program to strengthen B3 (Black Led, Black Serving, Black Focus) not-for-profits in Peel region by enhancing leadership, improving organizational capacity, and strengthening partnerships.

Outcomes of the Food Security Capital and Innovation Fund

The Food Insecurity Fund, a 3.3 million investment funded 16 agencies in 2024. Due to the impending dissolution of the Region in 2024, a targeted low-barrier, population-based formula was used to allocate funds, aligning with prevalence of individuals living under the poverty line and high shelter costs across Peel. The fund was instrumental in addressing immediate and systemic food insecurity challenges, supporting expansion, operations, transportation and distribution solutions. Some notable outcomes:

- 1) Funding contributed to the procurement of approximately 35 per cent more pounds (2 million) of food in 2024 compared to 2023.
- 2) Funding supported serving an additional 117,574 Peel residents.
- 3) Food warehouse capacity doubled by 44,000 square feet and chilled storage increased by 300 per cent.
- 4) Critical service gaps to support access to fresh and culturally appropriate food were addressed throughout Peel. An example was the implementation of the Mobile Food Truck in the Town of Caledon supporting over 200 residents with food baskets in rural communities.

In 2025, Community Investment Program released its 2-year Food Insecurity Fund (2025-2026) receiving its largest volume of applications totaling 52 applications for 9.2 million in funding. We anticipate funding up to 60% of all eligible applications for \$3 million in funding. The 2025 Fund was co-designed through an equitable, outcome-based fund framework that addresses Peel's food insecurity needs. A Community Advisory Board of 10-14 diverse community food providers comprised of leadership from community-based food programming agencies, anchor academic experts, and internal Regional partners was implemented to ensure that the outcomes and the funding allocation formula meet the needs of Peel's diverse community.

Stabilizing Peel's Not-for-Profit Sector Amidst Challenges

In 2025, Canadian nonprofits will need to focus on long-term sustainability by deepening cross-sector partnership (government, private sector) and embracing digital transformation (i.e. AI). Streamlined collaborative approaches to service delivery, diversification of funding sources, investment in workforce development, and leveraging data to demonstrate impact are identified solutions that will help ensure that Peel not-for-profits continue to play a central role in advancing social equity and community resilience¹¹.

Community Investment staff in 2025 will continue to build capacity in Peel's not-for-profits and along side the Metamorphosis Network supporting innovative cross sector partnership

¹¹ Imagine Canada URL: <https://imaginecanada.ca/sites/default/files/bridging-perspectives.pdf>

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and intentional funding collaborations to drive sustainable impact in tackling complex social issues.

RISK CONSIDERATION

The not-for-profit sector in Peel plays a crucial role within our broader human services system, acting as a vital support network. It has proven to be an essential safety net, especially as it has absorbed increasing demands for services and coordinated efforts to assist the most vulnerable members of our community. Investing in Peel's not-for-profit sector will help to build back resilient and safe communities. Community Investment staff will also continue to support Metamorphosis Network to advocate to the various levels of government and funders for increased investment for the Peel not-for-profit sector to meet growing demand for services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As outlined in the report, the Community Investment Program has forecasted that the increased demand for supports in the community will continue into 2026. Through the 2025 budget process, Regional Council approved temporary additional funding of \$4.0 million to be funded by the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve for 2025 and 2026 and will be removed in the 2027 budget. The additional \$4.0 million is to support the Core fund, the B3 and Indigenous not-for-profits and to address food security. As the need is not expected to decrease beyond 2026, a permanent solution to the food insecurity in Peel is required.

Ongoing advocacy efforts are required to obtain funding from other levels of government to decrease the required regional investment relating to food insecurity and other community supports provided by not-for-profit sector.

CONCLUSION

Peel not for profits continue to face ongoing challenges in securing sustainable funding to support vital work and necessitating a shift towards diversified revenue streams and strategic financial planning. Peel not-for-profits are encouraged to explore social finance tools, asset ownership, and investment readiness to move beyond traditional grant dependency. The Region will continue to facilitate a growing emphasis on collaboration, cross-sectoral partnerships, and leveraging tools (i.e. digital technologies) to enhance efficiency and impact and build a more robust, inclusive, and equitable Peel not-for-profit ecosystem. Staff will continue to engage key stakeholders to address critical needs through the 2025 Community Investment funding streams.

APPENDICES

Appendix I - 2024 Community Investment Program Allocations



Steve Jacques, MScPI, MCIP, RPP, Commissioner of Human Services

Authored By: Arlene Coventry-Bauer, Manager Community Capacity and Investment