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YOUTH INNOVATIONS STREAM

The Youth Innovations Stream invests in the work of grassroots groups that are youth-led or youth-adult partnerships by funding projects that test an idea or grow a successful project. Through this stream, the Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) provides young people facing systemic barriers with the resources they need to design and deliver inspiring solutions to issues that matter to them.

Priority Outcomes and Populations

What are the changes YOF is investing in?

The Youth Innovations Stream invests in the work of young leaders who are generating solutions to the most pressing issues facing young people today. Check out the six Priority Outcomes that drive YOF Youth Innovations projects across Ontario.

- Creating safe spaces for Indigenous and/or Black youth to build strong community and cultural connections

- Addressing racism and its impacts on youth in urban, rural and/or Northern communities
- Supporting Indigenous, Black, and/or newcomer youth to enter the labour market and transition to sustainable career pathways
- Supporting youth who are not connected to education programs, employment programs, and training programs (i.e. NEET) to exit poverty and social assistance
- Empowering girls and young women to lead, including women's economic empowerment initiatives
- Providing mentorship opportunities for youth in and leaving care and/or youth involved in the justice system

NOTE: All projects funded through the Youth Innovations Stream must advance one of the six Priority Outcomes.

Who's leading the change?

YOF believes in the value of grassroots youth leadership in developing solutions and delivering projects that positively impact communities across Ontario. YOF believes that shared identities and experiences are essential to effective grassroots work that responds to and recognizes the assets, needs, strengths, skills and experiences of youth facing systemic barriers.

Who benefits?

Youth Innovations projects benefit young people aged 12 to 25. While each Priority Outcome specifies a primary beneficiary population, YOF recognizes the broad diversity that exists within each of these communities. YOF understands that a person's identity has many dimensions. As different parts of one's identity come together in everyday life, oppressions can intersect, and barriers can grow.

YOF is committed to investing in projects led by and for young people who face systemic barriers to their economic and social wellbeing, including:

- Indigenous youth (i.e., First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit)

- Black youth
- Racialized youth
- Newcomer youth
- Francophone youth
- Two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (2SLGBTQ+) youth
- Youth living with disabilities or special needs between the ages of 12 to 29
- Youth living in rural, remote and/or Northern communities
- Youth in conflict or at risk of being in conflict with the law
- Youth in care or leaving care
- Youth in low-income situations or from low-income families
- Youth who are homeless or at risk of being homeless
- Youth at-risk of dropping out or have dropped out

Here are some examples of projects that are aligned to a Priority Outcome and serve young people listed in YOF's priority populations:

- A group has selected the outcome that focuses on providing mentorship opportunities for youth in care for their project. In addition to the beneficiaries sharing an experience of living in care, the majority of the project's participants are Indigenous and/or racialized. Most members in the core group are themselves Indigenous and have also lived in care.
- A group has selected the outcome that focuses on empowering girls and young women to lead, including women's economic empowerment initiatives. The core group members are five young Black women who are all enrolled in post-secondary science programs. Together they have created a project that celebrates the leadership and innovation of Black women and aims to support participants to explore career pathways in science and technology.
- A group has selected the outcome that focuses on supporting youth who are not connected to education programs, employment programs or training programs. While the youth being served have this experience in common, they

are also living with disabilities and in low-income situations. The core group members, who are also living with different disabilities, have secured steady employment and are now excited to support others on a similar journey.

Types of Youth Innovations Stream Grants

There are two types of grants within the Youth Innovations Stream. Each grant has a specific purpose and invests in different kinds of work. Read more so you can choose the right grant for your project.

	Youth Innovations TEST Grant	Youth Innovations SCALE Grant
Granting Focus	Allows grassroots groups to research, strategize or test new ideas that will advance a Youth Innovations Priority Outcome	Enables grassroots groups to grow an existing project that has demonstrated success in achieving a Youth Innovations Priority Outcome
Profile of Applicants	<p>Newly formed and more established grassroots groups.</p> <p>With newer groups, we will be interested in learning about individual members and the experiences they are bringing to the group and the proposed project.</p>	<p>Groups that have already delivered core project activities over a two-year period. This means the group is experienced at working together and has tested all core activities ensuring a solid foundation to scale the project.</p> <p>You should also be able to demonstrate the success of the model you are looking to scale.</p>

	Youth Innovations TEST Grant	Youth Innovations SCALE Grant
Types of Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research a new concept or issue • Strategize around issues affecting youth • Test a new project idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add elements to an existing project for deeper impact • Expand a project to reach more youth
Amount	up to \$85,000 per year	up to \$125,000 per year
Term	1 to 3 years	3 to 4 years

NOTE: The YOF Youth Innovations Stream does not fund any capital projects (including renovations, repairs and/or new buildings). For these types of initiatives, see the Ontario Trillium Foundation [**Investment Strategy \(/what-we-fund\)**](#).

Check out some [**YOF grantees \(/youth-opportunities-grant/199/466\)**](#) leading change in their communities.

Who can apply to the Youth Innovations Stream?

The Youth Innovations Stream invests in projects led by grassroots groups that respond to issues in new and inspiring ways.

Grassroots work is about **community-led** and **community-inspired** work. Shared identities and lived experiences between core group members who are leading the project and the young people who will benefit is critical to the Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) understanding of 'grassroots'.

Groups eligible to apply to the Youth Innovations Stream:

- Are led by youth, age 12-29 years who share identities and experiences with those they will engage in project activities.

- Operate as a youth-led group or a youth-adult partnership, where members share identities and experiences with those, they will engage in project activities.
- Exist independent of a larger organization.
- Are based in Ontario.
- Have three or more core members.
- Are either an **un**incorporated group or an incorporated non-profit organization with independently managed revenues no higher than \$50,000 in either of the last two years. Registered charities are not eligible to apply to the YOF Youth Innovations Stream.

Not sure if you're eligible? Reach out to us at yof@otf.ca (mailto: yof@otf.ca)

NOTE: If approved for funding, Youth Innovations groups must partner with an **organizational mentor (OM) (/yof/organizational-mentors)**. An OM is an incorporated non-profit organization, charity, or First Nation that meets Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) **eligibility criteria (pdf)** and will provide the group with financial accountability as well as administrative, project, and mentoring support. This means that if your EOI is shortlisted, your group must submit a signed OM-Grassroots Group Collaborative Agreement as part of your completed Grant Application. Your project cannot receive funding until OTF determines that your OM is eligible. If your Grant Application is funded, your OM will sign and uphold the grant contract with OTF. At any point in the process, ask your OM to reach out to us and we can guide them on next steps!

NOTE: OMs are able to partner with only one group applying to the Youth or the Family Innovations Stream per year. Please keep that in mind as you explore finding the right organizational mentor for your project and group.

How to apply to the Youth Innovations Stream

1. **Sign up for pre-application supports via the OTF Calendar**

- Sign up for **Information Sessions** (<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/OTFYouthOpportunit>)
- Access **resources (/yof/resources)**

2. **Log in or create a user profile in our application system**

- Start by **logging in** (<https://services1.otf.ca/s/Login.jsp>) or creating a **(https://services1.otf.ca/files/450884/f105537/YOF_Begin_Organizat** system if you are new to the YOF
- If you are creating a **new user profile**, you'll need to enter the name of email address. Immediately afterwards you'll be emailed your user ID, a to access the online EOI which will open in **mid-September 2020**.

3. **Complete the online EOI by 5 p.m. ET on October 14, 202**

- In mid-September 2020, the online EOI will be open to applicants. Until or the **YI EOI Scale Tool (pdf)** to prepare your responses.
- Once the system is open, log in to the YOF online application system to and submitted online by grassroots groups.
- Begin to research potential organizational mentors (OM). **Learn more a** their role in the YOF Youth Innovations Stream.

NOTE: All groups will receive news on the status of their EOI in mid-No
Those groups will be invited to submit an OM – Grassroots Group Collabor
Application in January.

4. **Shortlisted groups: Confirm your OM and submit the OM Agreement by December 16, 2020 to yof@otf.ca ([mailto](mailto:yof@otf.ca)**

- Select your OM
- Share your EOI with your OM
- Complete, review and sign the **[agreement \(pdf\)](#)** with your OM
- Ensure your OM reviews the Grant Application prior to submission

NOTE: From here, the YOF Team will verify your OM's eligibility. In the situation where your group is not eligible for OTF eligibility, your group will be asked to select a new OM. In case your group is a grassroots group, you may be asked to select a new OM. In both cases, the process.

5. **OMs of shortlisted groups: Apply to be an OM by December 16, 2020**

- In mid-September 2020, the online OM Application will be open to organizations. Please refer to the **[OM Application \(pdf\)](#)** as a reference and navigation tool.
- Is your organization new to OTF? Start by **[registering your organization](https://services1.otf.ca/files/450884/f105537/Begin_Organization_Application_Form.pdf)** (**https://services1.otf.ca/files/450884/f105537/Begin_Organization_Application_Form.pdf**) to complete the OM Application Form.
- Is your organization already registered with the OTF? Log in to your **[org](https://services1.otf.ca/s/Login.jsp)** (**<https://services1.otf.ca/s/Login.jsp>**) to access a short OM Application Form in the top right corner. Click to access OM Application. You may also be asked to update your information if it is out of date.
- The YOF team will verify your organization's eligibility. In the situation where your organization is not eligible for OTF eligibility, you will be notified. We ask that you notify those groups and

6. Shortlisted groups: Complete the online Grant Application

- Log in to the YOF online application system to access the Grant Application.

NOTE: If your Grant Application is funded, your OM will sign and uphold. Applicants will receive news on the status of their Grant Application i

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Learn more about the Youth Opportunities Fund's **other funding streams (/yof)**, or visit the **YOF Resources (/node/69)** page for more information.