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## 1. Facilitation Program Overview

Community hubs provide a central access point for a range of services to enrich community life. Each hub is unique, bringing together a variety of services, programs and/or social and cultural activities that reflect local community needs, such as housing, children's services, Indigenous community services, senior's housing, healthcare, employment and training, education, and poverty reduction. The integrated and multifaceted community hub model plays a critical role in building economic and social cohesion in communities.

While community hubs are locally driven, the province's role and commitment is to make it easier for community partners to offer services that are integrated and coordinated, strengthen community partnerships and make the best use of public space to better serve people in their communities.

Launched in May 2017, the interactive, online component of the Community Hubs Resource Network - [CommunityHubsOntario.ca](https://CommunityHubsOntario.ca) - provides tools and resources in French and English to support communities with open access to information, best practices and data for those who are interested in planning for, building or operating a community hub.

An integral component of the Resource Network is the development of a Facilitation Program that provides support to local communities who are working toward developing, operating or maintaining a community hub by providing communities with access to impartial and customized facilitation services.

The Community Hubs Facilitation Program provides funding to successful applicants to engage service providers who will provide assistance in advancing their community hub development projects. The facilitator will stimulate productive and collaborative discussion and working sessions for parties. They may also act as mediator to support conflict resolution that will advance community hub development. The program is designed to fund a facilitator that would be a neutral party and support the self-determination and capacity building of the proponents.

## 2. Facilitation Program Priorities

In order to augment the support available to organizations in their efforts to plan, develop, and operate a community hub, the Facilitation Program will fill a service gap by providing an opportunity for communities to:

- Increase client-focused service delivery at the local level by supporting relationship building, collective planning, and the development of business plans;
- Increase capacity to accelerate plans for community hub development;
- Support partnership development and maintenance by providing mediation services for community groups; and
- Provide local communities with the tools and resources required to understand community needs, build relationships and plan collectively.

## 3. Background

In August 2015, **Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan**, a report to government on how to guide government policy on community hubs, was released. In that report, 27 unique recommendations were made.

A key finding in the report was that community hub developers often face barriers that require additional, external supports while progressing through the stages of community hub development.

In order to address this barrier, one of the recommendations included the establishment of a Resource Network to strengthen capacity for community hub development by providing both online and offline resources and supports.

The online element of the Community Hubs Resource Network - [CommunityHubsOntario.ca](https://CommunityHubsOntario.ca) - was launched in May of 2017. It includes resources, tools and best practice templates as well as professional development opportunities to support community capacity to develop, maintain and sustain a community hub.

Another critical element included in the recommendations was the role of a neutral facilitator or mediator to help support communities as they moved through the stages of community hub development.

It is anticipated that the facilitation program will offer communities an opportunity to develop and increase their local capacity. The Facilitator's role is to help organizations to accelerate their plans for community development, strengthen and maintain partnerships and fully engage in local integrated planning processes, all essential elements to co-create client-focused service delivery through community hubs.

## 4. Eligibility Criteria

### What Types of Organizations are Eligible?

The following types of organizations, with operations currently located in the province of Ontario, are eligible to submit an application for the Facilitation Program as a lead applicant, or to participate as a partner organization with other eligible organizations that are in the process of advancing a community hub-related project:

- Community Organization
- Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM)
- District Social Services Administration Board
- Healthcare Organization (Local Health Integration Network, hospital, community health centre, etc.)
- Indigenous Community or Organization
- Municipality
- Not-for-Profit Corporation (not registered as a charity)
- Registered Charity
- School Board

If you have any questions about your organization's eligibility, please contact the Community Hubs Division at [community.hubs@ontario.ca](mailto:community.hubs@ontario.ca) or 416-358-7854.

For-profit organizations are **ineligible** to participate in the initiative as a lead applicant but **may** be identified as a partner organization in an application. In such cases, some additional information will be requested in order for the application to be reviewed for eligibility and potential selection, including existing financial commitments or relationships.

Identifying multiple partner organizations is strongly encouraged, especially when the application reflects current and established efforts to co-ordinate or integrate local planning and the proposal outcomes include co-location of services and an integrated service delivery model.

In order to streamline review and assessment of proposals, a lead applicant would act as a point of contact for follow up communications and to act as signatory if the application is successful.

## 5. What Types of Activities are Eligible?

In order to support multi-party collaboration, applications will need to demonstrate that there are multiple parties working together through one of the following stages of community hub development:

- Developing Your Vision
- Assessing Your Community
- Making A Plan
- Building Your Hub
- Sustaining and Operating Your Community Hub

## 6. Examples of Eligible Activities

The Ministry of Infrastructure (The Ministry) will provide funding to successful applicants to acquire facilitation services to accelerate community hub development and/or to support local community capacity building. For example, these facilitators can help organizations:

- Initiate a community visioning exercise
- Craft a community partner plan
- Develop a communications & marketing plan
- Create a strategic plan with mission, vision and values
- Generate a business plan
- Design a community engagement plan

The Ministry expects most requests for facilitation services will range in value from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

The Facilitation Program aims to enhance collaboration and support applicants in performing the work themselves. The Facilitator attached to a project will not be expected to provide consulting services or perform the duties of a project manager. Although the objectives of applicants' community hub-related projects will differ, the Facilitation Program funds facilitators that are neutral parties and support the self-determination and capacity development of the applicants.

## 7. Ineligible Activities/Costs

Funding under this the program is **NOT** available for:

- A facilitator to independently write business plans, develop feasibility studies, governance frameworks, and other project documents. A facilitator may coordinate and convene applicants for the development of these documents; they are not funded to develop the project documents themselves.
- Costs associated with hiring professional or technical expertise required to directly support the project (e.g. services of a project manager).
- Central administration and staffing costs including severance and employee training wage subsidies, placement programs, employee assistance programs or workplace accommodations.
- Infrastructure or large-scale capital improvement projects, building renovations or capital expenditures such as renovation, construction, operational expenses, rental space, utilities and supplies.
- Incorporation fees.
- Preparation of project drawings/specifications or professional fees associated with their development.
- Legal and insurance fees.
- Costs associated with special events such as tournaments, conferences, receptions, festivities, fundraising activities, committee and political meetings, or religious activities.
- Professional membership fees.
- Costs associated with activities or operations performed outside of Ontario.
- Costs not specifically related to the project described in application.

The final determination of an ineligible expenditure rests with the Ministry. In the event of a dispute, the Ministry's decision as to an expenditure's eligibility shall be final and determinative.

## 8. Application Period

Applications will be accepted beginning May 2, 2018 and applicants are encouraged to submit applications as early as possible. Applicants will be notified in writing once the evaluation is complete and decisions have been made.

Applicants are not permitted to submit more than one application or more than one request for a facilitation service. Applications will continue to be considered until the Ministry states otherwise. Please be aware that while the Ministry will review all applications, selection of projects will depend on current Ministry priorities and available funds. The Ministry reserves the right to cease the review of any or all applications at its discretion.

The Ministry will review each application received using the evaluation process described in these Program Guidelines.

## 9. Maximum Project Length

Due to the large degree of variability in community hub-related projects, the maximum length of the facilitation services will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## 10. Application Requirements

This section will provide guidance on what is required for each component of the application form and required attachments.

### Section 1

For section 1 of the application form, if a question does not apply to your organization or proposed project, please enter 'n/a' for the text fields and '0' for the numeric fields.

### Section 2

#### 2.1 Project Description

- Please provide a brief outline of the main objectives and scope of the overall community hub-related project and the anticipated outcomes upon completion of the project. Project descriptions should include approximate quantitative values where possible and appropriate.

#### 2.2 Description of Facilitation Services Required to Advance the Project

- Please indicate what facilitation services your organization is seeking in order to accelerate your community hub-related project (e.g. facilitated visioning exercise, mediation for partnership development, or coordinating the development of a governance framework).

#### 2.3 Project Objectives

- Describe the objectives of the requested facilitation services that support the overall community hub-related project. A clear objective provides an understanding of the intent and potential impact of the facilitation services as well as what you are trying to achieve.
- Explain how and to what extent will the proposed facilitation services strengthen community partnerships and make the best use of public space to serve Ontarians.

#### 2.4 Rationale and Local Community Needs to be Addressed

- Please indicate how local and community needs will be addressed if support is provided to your organization to receive facilitation services. What needs are currently not being addressed?

## **2.5 Project Partners**

- Applications must be submitted by a lead applicant that will be responsible for the development, implementation, reporting and evaluation of the facilitation project. The applicant will also be the signatory when entering into a funding agreement with the Ministry.
- Provide information about the partnerships and stakeholders that are supporting this project. Please indicate the nature and strength of the relationships and how they will impact project success.
- Project applications that demonstrate multiple partnerships will be given additional consideration.

## **2.6 Other Government Funding Received**

- Please indicate if your overall community hub-related project is receiving or has received contributions from other sources or grants (e.g. government or agencies such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation) in the last 1-2 years. Please clarify if this contribution considers facilitation services as an eligible expense. As part of the assessment of your proposal, the Ministry needs to understand if you are leveraging the Facilitation Program to fill a gap in your overall project's funding envelope.

## **2.7 Project Beneficiaries**

- Please include a description of what target populations will benefit from your project and include geographic and/or demographic information (e.g. geographic location and population characteristics). Describe how your project will reach out to the target population(s).

## **2.8 Alignment with Provincial Priorities (select all that apply)**

- Please indicate how your project aligns with any of the following Provincial Priorities:
  - Children's Services
  - Education
  - Employment and Training
  - Healthcare
  - Housing
  - Indigenous Community Services
  - Poverty Reduction
  - Senior's Housing
  - Other (please specify)
- Note that this list does not include all provincial priorities. Additional provincial priorities may be added as appropriate

## **2.9 Please Explain How this Project is Innovative**

- Demonstrate how the overall community hub project enhances the local community's strengths, assets, and vitality and provides services in a new or unique way.
- Project applications that demonstrate innovation will be given additional consideration.

## **2.10 Please Explain How a Facilitator will accelerate the Overall Community Hub-Related Project**

- Indicate why the project requires the support of a facilitator in order to accelerate the community hub-related project.

## **2.11 Anticipated Risks and Challenges Associated with Receiving Facilitation Support**

- Please identify potential risks in receiving facilitation support and include mitigation strategies for each identified risk.

## 2.12 Anticipated Outcomes from Facilitation Support

- Describe the desired change(s) or results the facilitation services are expected to accomplish. The anticipated outcomes should be observable and measureable.

## 2.13 Evaluation Plan (measurement of anticipated outcomes from facilitation support)

- Applicants should provide an outline of their evaluation plan for the facilitation services. This will be scored based on the alignment of the proposed evaluation approach to the proposed project. See the evaluation process section of this guide for more information.

## 3.1 Facilitation Services Work Plan

- The work plan should demonstrate a systematic approach as to how you will accomplish all phases of the proposed facilitation services project.

## 3.2 Facilitation Services Financial Information

- The budget should be detailed and consider all anticipated project expenses. It should demonstrate value for the funding requested from the Ontario Government. Most requests for facilitation services range in value from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

## 3.3 Facilitation Services Timelines

- Please indicate the expected duration of time required for facilitation services to accelerate your community hub-related project.

# 11. Evaluation Process

The Ministry seeks to support high impact and innovative community hub-related projects. Proposals will be screened to determine whether the application is complete and the lead applicant is an eligible organization. Proposals that do not meet these two submission criteria will not be evaluated.

Your application form and any required supporting materials will be evaluated to ensure that they are complete and meet the basic eligibility requirements. Once applications are received they will be reviewed in accordance to the evaluation criteria.

## Considerations:

A review panel will weigh the evaluation of each proposal as follows:

Criteria	Weight
Organizational Capacity	15%
Project Description	20%
Rationale and Demonstrated Need for the Proposed Project	15%
Innovation	10%
Evaluation Plan	10%
Work Plan, Financial Information (Budget), and Timelines	30%

## Organizational Capacity: 15 per cent

- Applicant demonstrates experience in developing and implementing project initiatives similar those listed in application.
- Applicant demonstrates organizational capacity through evidence of: clear governance structure, financial management and accountability procedures, service delivery capacity and effective monitoring and evaluation capabilities.

### **Project description: 20 per cent**

- The overall community hub-related project is achievable and aligns with the Facilitation Program's objectives.
- Overall clarity and comprehension of the community hub-related project.
- The facilitation services requested are realistic and designed to effectively result in the advancement of the overall community hub-related project.
- Project activities do not duplicate existing services.
- The proposal includes appropriate partners to maximize project success. Roles and responsibilities of partner organizations are clearly defined.
- The proposed project has an effective performance measurement plan, including concrete and measurable outputs and outcomes.

### **Rationale and Demonstrated Need for the Proposed Project: 15 per cent**

- The need for the proposed community hub-related project is clearly identified and supported by evidence such as research, statistical data, consultations with partners, potential beneficiaries and stakeholders, and other relevant evidence.
- The proposed project is responsive to local/regional needs with geographic coverage clearly identified (where applicable).
- Consideration will be given to regional representation to reflect Ontario's diverse demographics and geography.
- Consideration will also be provided to applicants whose community hub-related project is time sensitive and has been successful in obtaining additional source(s) of funding (government or agencies such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation). This includes the provincial Surplus Property Transition Initiative (SPTI).

### **Innovation: 10 per cent**

- The proposed community hub-related project aims to provide local residents with desired, sustainable and equitable services.
- The proposed project enhances the local community's strengths, assets, and vitality and provides services in a new or unique way.
- There is the potential for the project to have a lasting impact through the sharing of best practices, dissemination of knowledge and mentoring.

### **Evaluation Plan: 10 per cent**

- The proposed facilitation support has specific and measureable outcomes as well as clearly defined evaluation questions.
- The evaluation methods of the proposed facilitation services are reasonable and clearly outlined.

### **Work Plan, Financial Information (Budget), and Timelines: 30 per cent**

- The work plan outlines steps required to implement the requested facilitation services.
- The evaluation Plan includes a comprehensive assessment of the facilitation services provided.
- The timeline outlines a realistic timeframe for deliverables and relevant performance indicators. The timeline should speak to the facilitation services requested not the overall community hub-related project.
- The applicant demonstrates projected costs of the facilitation services required.
- The proposed facilitation services budget is balanced and sufficiently detailed.

- All costs related to the proposed facilitation services have been itemized and explained.
- The proposed budget is reasonable and sets out costs for key facilitator-led activities.
- The request for facilitation services is cost-effective and demonstrates value-for-money.

### **Maximum Score: 100 per cent**

Projects will be selected for funding through a competitive process. Ministry staff will evaluate the application to determine the degree to which it has met the requirements identified in these guidelines. Applications will be assessed and scored out of a maximum of 100 per cent. Successful applicants will work with the Ministry on the details of their projects and enter into a funding agreement that will set out allowable expenses, payment schedule and required information and reporting requirements.

Even if a proposal meets all of the evaluation criteria, there is no guarantee that funding will be awarded. The Ministry cannot guarantee funding to all applicants, nor can the Ministry ensure the total amount requested by the successful applicants will be granted. The recommendation to fund all or part of an applicant's request will depend on the application's evaluation score and the overall demand for funds in the Facilitation Program.

Preference may be given to initiatives that strongly align with current provincial initiatives or serve high needs communities that may be underserved, which may include: northern communities, Indigenous communities, areas with growing neighbourhood poverty and areas with inadequate community infrastructure.

## **12. Next Steps for Applicants**

After submitting an application with all relevant documents, the Ministry will review and evaluate submissions. The Ministry will contact all applicants once the evaluation process has been completed. If applicants have questions about the program or their application, they can contact the Community Hubs Division at [community.hubs@ontario.ca](mailto:community.hubs@ontario.ca) or 416-358-7854.