

## Overview

**The Environmental Stewardship Fund provides eligible applicants with grants to deliver environmental stewardship projects located within Halton Hills that:**

- Contribute to improving environmental health in Halton Hills, by aligning with environmentally focused Town plans, strategies and/or initiatives including Council's Strategic Plan.
- Support plantings of native trees and shrubs, pollinator gardens, restoring habitats, and reduce the spread of invasive species.
- Support actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase energy efficiency, and mitigate and/or adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Encourage partnerships of residents, schools, and organizations taking on projects that educate and raise environmental awareness.

## Eligibility Standards

**To qualify, the project must take place within Halton Hills, the applicants must be a minimum of 18 years of age, and meets one of the following criteria:**

- Be a Canadian non-profit organization operating for the benefit of the community.
- Be a registered charity with a valid charitable registration number issued by the Canada Revenue Agency.
- Be a service club, social service agency, or faith-based organization (if the initiative benefits the broader community).
- Be a collective group of residents are eligible to apply, provided they are organized around a shared goal or purpose related to the proposed environmental project.
- Partnerships of organizations/groups are encouraged.

**Applications will not be considered for:**

- Any project as determined by the Town that falls under the scope or jurisdiction of another municipality, Halton Region, provincial government, federal government, school boards, school councils, or received primary funding from another source.
- Applicants that have received Town funding within the same calendar year.
- Applications that were submitted after the intake deadline.
- Projects that have already occurred.
- Projects held outside of the Town of Halton Hills.

- Groups or organizations serving only their members.
- Personal appeals, individual pursuits, or registration fees.
- Group expeditions, contests, or pageants.
- Political events or fundraisers.
- Bursaries or scholarships.
- Commercial ventures.
- Fundraising-based projects where the primary intent is to raise funds for the organization.
- Fundraising-based projects are in support of a provincial, national, or international organization.
- Fundraising-based project where the primary intent is to redistribute funds to a third-party (for example bursaries, scholarships, and/or direct financial donations).
- For-profit organizations or other corporations' community initiatives.
- Projects that could be deemed discriminatory as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code or for which purpose is related to religious, political and/or advocacy activity.
- Community groups and organizations that are not in good standing with the Town.
- Submissions that do not comply with the application requirements, terms, and conditions and/or align with the Town's strategic priorities or CGP criteria as contained in these guidelines.
- Projects designed to raise money for core operating expenses, paying for accumulated deficits or debt, staffing costs and/or other.

## Funding Amount & Expenses

### Funding available through the Environmental Stewardship Fund is as follows:

- Up to a maximum of \$2,500 per project per applicant, per intake period will be funded.
- A total of \$15,000 may be funded through the Environmental Stewardship Fund per year.
- A maximum of two applications may be made by the same applicant for distinct and separate projects.
- Funds will be distributed based on funding availability, number and quality of applications received, as well as the amount of funding requested.
- Projects funded through the 2026 program must be delivered between April 1, 2026, and June 1, 2027.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for additional funding from other sources, and where appropriate, additional funding may be available from other Town funding programs. The Town will not support funding from multiple funding streams for the exact same item(s).

### Funding will not be granted for the following:

- Purchasing and/or renting vehicles.
- Purchasing buildings, equipment, and/or renovations that are considered capital assets.
- Ongoing operating expenses such as wages, salaries, rent, and insurance.
- Initiatives held before the application deadline.

- Political affiliations.
- Disbursement of funding to third-party recipients(s) other than identified in the application.
- Fundraising activities/events.

## Application Requirements

- Application guidelines and forms will be published annually before the Community Grant Program - Environmental Stewardship Fund opens for intake of applications.
- The application intake period is once per year, opening in January, closing in February, and decisions communicated in March.
- Applicants are encouraged to consult with Town staff to review eligibility and funding options.
- Applicants must disclose alternate funding sources (e.g., federal/provincial grants) and detail their budget, including in-kind contributions and expense estimates.
- Applications must be submitted on time in accordance with the posted deadlines.

## Evaluation Criteria

Applications are reviewed to assess eligibility, completeness, and clarity. Applications deemed eligible will then be reviewed by a staff review committee, and funding recommendations will be made to Halton Hills Town Council.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following key factors:

- **Environmental Impact and Alignment:** contributing to improving environmental health in Halton Hills, by aligning with environmentally focused Town plans, strategies and/or initiatives including the Town's strategic plan.
- **Community Benefit and Engagement:** has potential to deliver broad benefits, foster inclusivity and accessibility, and actively involves residents through collaboration, volunteerism, and leadership opportunities.
- **Innovation and Complementarity:** offers innovative approaches or complements existing services without unnecessary duplication, with potential to scale and address climate change in innovative ways.
- **Feasibility and Readiness:** demonstrates a realistic plan with achievable goals, clear timelines, and organizational capacity for successful implementation.
- **Efficient and Responsible Use of Resources:** evidence of sound budgeting, leveraging additional funds or in-kind contributions, minimizing reliance on Town resources, and maintaining good standing with the Town.
- **Sustainability and Measurable Outcomes:** ability to create lasting impact, promote long-term self-sufficiency, and report measurable results to the Town.

In some cases, additional information may be requested to supplement the above. Applicants have 30 days to submit any outstanding or requested information to Town staff, or the approved funding will be cancelled.

## Terms & Conditions

To ensure accountability and the effective use of municipal funds, recipients of the Environmental Stewardship Fund must adhere to the following terms and conditions:

1. Funding must be approved prior to the project start date. Expenses incurred before approval will not be eligible for reimbursement.
2. Approval of funding is subject to the Town's annual budget and available resources. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.
3. The Town reserves the right to decline applications from organizations that have received funding from another Town grant program in the same year.
4. The Town may modify the approved funding amount based on available resources and project needs demonstrated.
5. The Town reserves the right to request liability insurance, as required by the Town, before funds can be distributed. Failure to comply may result in forfeiture of funding.
6. All recipients must submit a final report within 14 months receiving the funding from the Town of Halton Hills. The report must include:
  - A financial summary detailing the use of funds.
  - Measurable outcomes and community impact.
  - Proof of recognition of Town support (where applicable).
7. Any unused or misallocated funds must be returned to the Town of Halton Hills. Additionally, recipients may be required to return funding if they:
  - Cease operations or dissolve before project completion.
  - Provide false or misleading information in their application.
  - Are unable to complete the project as described in the application.
8. Funded projects must adhere to all applicable municipal by-laws, policies, and procedures.
9. The Town reserves the right to request a presentation from funding recipients detailing project outcomes.
10. The Town reserves the right to request copies of receipts.
11. The Town reserves the right to modify or discontinue the Community Grant Program - Environmental Stewardship Fund and eligibility criteria, at its discretion.