

# Hamilton Community Foundation - Open Grants Program Reviewer Rubric

Questions Reviewers will use to guide funding decisions	Questions you'll answer on the application
<b>MISSION AND LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT: <i>WHO ARE YOU AS AN ORGANIZATION?</i></b>	
To what extent does the mission of the organization align with the request?	<p>Q1. Describe your organizations' mission and how it aligns with the project you are proposing</p> <p>Q4. What other community organizations or partners will be involved in this program and how will they be involved? Please identify if the community partners you have named are confirmed or prospective.</p>
<b>COMMUNITY NEEDS: <i>HOW ARE YOU SUPPORTING YOUR COMMUNITY?</i></b>	
<p>To what extent does this application meet local community needs?</p> <p>To what extent does the cost/benefit ratio align with the grant?</p>	<p>Q3. Who is the intended participant group for the project, and how do you plan engage them in the planning and implementation program? Include information on outreach and recruitment of participants</p> <p>Q5. What evidence exists to determine this project is needed (specific, local needs information) and does not duplicate any existing service?</p> <p>Q7. Why did you choose this approach to addressing the identified need? Please describe how your project activities will lead to the outcomes you are anticipating, identifying any best practice information, if available, or innovation.</p> <p>Q8. How many unique individuals will your project serve directly?</p>
<b>EQUITY, DIVERSITY &amp; INCLUSION: <i>HOW WILL THIS FUNDING SUPPORT EDI?</i></b>	
To what extent will the funding support one or more equity-deserving groups?	<p>Q9. Providing specific examples, describe how your organization has operationalized your commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Truth and Reconciliation.</p> <p>Q10. How is the principle of "nothing about us without us" reflected in your proposed project? Include a description of how you have engaged equity-deserving groups in planning and implementation?</p>
<b>FEASIBILITY AND VIABILITY: <i>IS YOUR FUNDING REQUEST REALISTIC?</i></b>	

<p>To what extent is the timeline of activities appropriate?</p> <p>To what extent does the budget support the planned activities?</p> <p>To what extent will we know the outcomes of the initiative?</p>	<p>Q2. Describe your project in detail, including what you want to achieve, the activities you will undertake, and timelines</p> <p>Q6. What are the anticipated outcomes for your initiative? Describe the process you will use to evaluate the program.</p> <p>Q11. Briefly describe why HCF funding is needed to support this project (e.g. loss of funding, inflationary increase in costs, program enhancement, new program...etc.).</p> <p>Project Budget</p>
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## Open Grants Program Scoring Sheet

<p>Questions reviewers will use to guide funding decisions</p> <p>Scoring Scale (1-4): To no extent – 1 To little extent – 2 To some extent – 3 To a large extent – 4</p>	
<p><b>MISSION AND LEADERSHIP ALIGNMENT</b></p>	
<p>To what extent does the mission of the organization align with the request (Q1)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> To no extent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To little extent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To some extent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent</p>
<p>To what extent are other appropriate organizations engaged and involved (Q4)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> To no extent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To little extent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To some extent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent</p>
<p><b>COMMUNITY NEEDS</b></p>	
<p>To what extent has the project engaged and/or has a reasonable plan engage the target community? (Q3)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> To no extent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To little extent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To some extent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent</p>

<p>To what extent do the project activities meet community needs? (Q5)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> To no extent <input type="checkbox"/> To little extent <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent
<p>To what extent is the approach proposed in alignment with anticipated outcomes, and informed by community need and/or best practices? (Q6 &amp; Q7)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> To no extent <input type="checkbox"/> To little extent <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent
<p>To what extent does the cost/benefit ratio align with the grant? (Q8, Q11 and Budget)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> To no extent <input type="checkbox"/> To little extent <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent
<p><b>EQUITY, DIVERSITY &amp; INCLUSION</b></p>	
<p>To what extent does the applicant reflect a commitment to EDI and Truth and Reconciliation? (Q9 &amp; Q10)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> To no extent <input type="checkbox"/> To little extent <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent
<p>To what extent has the organizations engaged equity-deserving community members in the planning and implementation of this initiative? (Q9 &amp; Q10)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> To no extent <input type="checkbox"/> To little extent <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent
<p><b>FEASIBILITY AND VIABILITY</b></p>	
<p>To what extent are the activities and timeline appropriate and feasible? (Q2)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> To no extent <input type="checkbox"/> To little extent <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent
<p>To what extent will we know the outcome(s) of the initiative? (Q6)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> To no extent <input type="checkbox"/> To little extent <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent

To what extent in HCF Open Grants Program an appropriate funding source for this project? (Q11)	<input type="checkbox"/> To no extent <input type="checkbox"/> To little extent <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent
To what extent in the budget reasonable and supports the planned activities? (Project Budget)	<input type="checkbox"/> To no extent <input type="checkbox"/> To little extent <input type="checkbox"/> To some extent <input type="checkbox"/> To a large extent
TOTAL SCORE	/48

Comments:

## Open Grants Review Scoring Guide

	To no extent	To little extent	To some extent	To a large extent
<p><b>To what extent does the mission of the organization align with the request (Q1)</b></p>	<p>The proposed project neither fits with the organization’s typical activities, nor is aligned with the organization’s mission and mandate; and/or</p> <p>The proposed project duplicates services of another organization without any rationale for the duplication; and/or</p> <p>There are concerns about the applicant’s capacity to deliver the project.</p>	<p>The project is related to the applicant’s mission and mandate, and activities are similar or related to the applicant’s typical programming; but</p> <p>The proposed project duplicates services without clear rationale; and/or</p> <p>It is unclear whether the applicant has sufficient experience and capacity to deliver the project.</p>	<p>There is some alignment of project purpose and activities with the applicant’s mission and mandate; and</p> <p>There is no obvious duplication of service; and</p> <p>There are no or limited concerns about the applicant’s capacity to deliver the project.</p>	<p>There is clear alignment of the project purpose and activities with the organization’s mission and mandate; and</p> <p>The organization has the experience necessary to run this program, and/or has appropriate partners in place to fill gaps; and</p> <p>There is no duplication of services.</p>
<p><b>To what extent are other appropriate organizations engaged and involved (Q1, Q4)</b></p>	<p>There are no partners identified or in place, with no strong rationale for this, i.e. the applicant does not have sufficient expertise, experience or capacity to deliver the program on its own; or</p> <p>There are partners identified, but they have not been confirmed and/or their relevance to the project is unclear.</p>	<p>Partners have been identified, but not confirmed; or</p> <p>There are partners confirmed but alignment of partners with the project is weak or unclear; or</p> <p>There are no partners in place with a weak rationale for lack of partnership provided, i.e. the applicant has some experience and capacity to deliver the program on its own, but there are clear gaps.</p>	<p>Some or all partners have been confirmed, there is moderate alignment and rationale for selected partners; and/or</p> <p>There are some gaps in expertise, experience that are not filled by partners; and/or</p> <p>There are organizations doing relevant work/delivering relevant services that have not been engaged, with potential duplication of services.</p>	<p>Partnerships are confirmed; and local Partners fill gaps and contribute to the project in complementary ways. They have clear roles and are integrally involved in the program. Their involvement and in-kind contributions add clear value to the project; and</p> <p>All or most local organizations doing relevant work/delivering relevant services have been identified and engaged.</p>
<p><b>To what extent has the project engaged and/or has a reasonable plan engage the target community?</b></p>	<p>There is no evidence that the target community has been meaningfully engaged in shaping or informing the project; and/or</p> <p>There is no indication that feedback, consultation, or lived</p>	<p>There is limited or unclear evidence of community engagement in project planning, and examples provided do not show meaningful influence on design; and/or</p>	<p>There is some evidence that community members or representatives were engaged and that their perspectives informed elements of the project design; and</p>	<p>There is clear evidence that community members, including those with lived experience, were engaged in a meaningful and iterative way that directly influenced project design; and</p>

<b>(Q3)</b>	<p>experience of the target population has contributed to planning; and/or</p> <p>There is no clear or reasonable plan to engage or recruit prospective participants.</p>	<p>Engagement activities appear incomplete, or not representative of the community; and/or</p> <p>Plans for outreach or recruitment are vague, unrealistic, or not suited to the target community</p>	<p>The applicant provides a reasonable plan for outreach, recruitment, or ongoing engagement that is likely to reach the intended population; and</p> <p>There are no major concerns about the feasibility of the engagement strategy, though some areas may lack detail</p>	<p>The plan for outreach and engagement is realistic, well-defined, and tailored to the target population; and</p> <p>Community engagement is clearly integrated into project planning, implementation, and (where relevant) feedback loops.</p>
<p><b>To what extent do the project activities meet community needs?</b> <b>(Q5)</b></p>	<p>The applicant does not demonstrate an understanding of the community's needs or the problem the project aims to address; and/or</p> <p>The proposed activities do not respond to any identified need, or appear misaligned with the target population; and/or</p> <p>There is a lack of evidence supporting the relevance or appropriateness of the activities.</p>	<p>The applicant references community needs, but the link between those needs and the proposed activities is weak, unclear, or not well supported; and/or</p> <p>Activities may address part of the need but fail to respond meaningfully to key gaps; and/or</p> <p>There are concerns that the activities are not well designed to achieve desired outcomes.</p>	<p>The applicant identifies local community needs with reasonable clarity, and the proposed activities are generally aligned with those needs; and</p> <p>There is evidence that the activities are appropriate and likely to have benefit, though some pieces may be unclear; and</p> <p>There are no major gaps, though there may be missed opportunities for stronger alignment.</p>	<p>The applicant clearly articulates the local community need using relevant data, consultation, and/or evidence; and</p> <p>The proposed activities directly respond to those needs in a logical and well-supported way; and</p> <p>There is strong evidence that the activities are appropriate, relevant, and likely to produce meaningful outcomes for the target population.</p>
<p><b>To what extent is the approach proposed in alignment with and informed by community need and/or best practices?</b> <b>(Q7)</b></p>	<p>The project approach appears arbitrary, unsupported, or inconsistent with known best practices; and/or</p> <p>There is no evidence that community input, research, or sector knowledge informed the chosen approach; and/or</p> <p>The rationale for the approach is missing or contradictory.</p>	<p>The applicant references community need or best practices, but the connection to the proposed approach is superficial or unclear; and/or</p> <p>The approach reflects limited understanding of effective or appropriate methods; and/or</p> <p>There are concerns that the methodology is outdated,</p>	<p>The approach shows reasonable alignment with community needs and reflects some awareness of best practices; and</p> <p>There is a plausible rationale for the proposed methods, though some areas could benefit from stronger evidence or justification; and</p> <p>The approach is generally appropriate but may not</p>	<p>The proposed approach is clearly grounded in a strong understanding of community needs and informed by relevant research, best practices, or evidence-based models OR is piloting an innovative approach; and</p> <p>There is a clear rationale explaining why the selected</p>

		ineffective, or unsuitable for the target population.	represent the most effective or evidence-informed option.	approach is the most appropriate; and The methods appear effective, suitable for the target population, and aligned with current practice standards.
<b>To what extent does the cost/benefit ratio align with the grant? (Q8, Q11, and Budget)</b>	<p>The relationship between cost and expected benefit is weak or unjustifiable; and/or</p> <p>The budget contains significant overestimates, unclear expenses, or unreasonable allocations; and/or</p> <p>The project's expected impact is too limited to warrant the requested investment.</p>	<p>Some aspects of the budget appear reasonable, but there are notable concerns about value for money; and/or</p> <p>The scale of impact does not clearly correspond to the level of funding requested; and/or</p> <p>There are gaps or inconsistencies in the financial rationale.</p>	<p>The costs are generally reasonable and aligns with most planned activities; and</p> <p>Most costs are justified and appropriate, though a few items may lack detail or clear rationale; and</p> <p>The project is likely to deliver value relative to the investment.</p>	<p>Costs are clearly justified, well aligned with project activities, and demonstrate responsible budgeting; and</p> <p>The expected community benefit strongly supports the level of funding requested; and</p> <p>The proposal represents good value and an efficient use of grant funding.</p>
<b>To what extent does the applicant reflect a commitment to EDI and T&amp;R? (Q9 &amp; Q10)</b>	<p>There is no evidence provided of applicant's commitment to EDI and T&amp;R in organizational policies, staffing, governance, or programming; and/or</p> <p>EDI principles are absent from the project design or organizational culture.</p>	<p>The organization expresses support for EDI &amp; T&amp;R but provides limited evidence of implementation; and/or</p> <p>Policies or practices appear minimal, inconsistent, or not meaningfully connected to project delivery; and/or</p> <p>There are concerns about representation, accessibility, or inclusion.</p>	<p>The organization demonstrates a commitment to EDI and T&amp;R, with relevant policies in place, and examples of practices are provided; and</p> <p>EDI principles are reflected in aspects of the project design, though some areas may lack depth or consistency.</p>	<p>The organization is EDC-led and/or demonstrates a strong and integrated commitment to EDI and T&amp;R across policies, leadership, staffing, and program design; and</p> <p>Examples provided show that EDI considerations clearly shape the project, with evidence of intentional implementation and accountability.</p>
<b>To what extent has the organization applied the "nothing about us without us" principle, and engaged equity-deserving community members in the planning and</b>	<p>There is no evidence that communities served, including equity-deserving groups or individuals with lived experience, were engaged in shaping or informing the project; and/or</p>	<p>Communities served, including equity-deserving groups or individuals with lived experience, may have been consulted informally or superficially, but their involvement is minimal or</p>	<p>There is some evidence that communities served, including equity-deserving groups or individuals with lived experience, were engaged in planning or implementation; and</p>	<p>Communities served, including equity-deserving groups or individuals with lived experience, are clearly and meaningfully engaged throughout planning, design, and implementation; and</p>

<p><b>implementation of this initiative?</b> <b>(Q9 &amp; Q10)</b></p>	<p>The project appears to have been developed without any community consultation or consideration of equity perspectives.</p>	<p>not clearly tied to decisions; and/or Engagement activities lack depth, representation, or meaningful influence.</p>	<p>Their feedback has informed aspects of the project, though integration may be limited or uneven</p>	<p>Their perspectives have demonstrably shaped key components of the project; and Their involvement appears valued, intentional, and well-integrated.</p>
<p><b>To what extent will we know the outcome(s) of the initiative?</b> <b>(Q6)</b></p>	<p>Outputs are provided, but there are no clearly defined outcomes, indicators, or evaluation methods; and/or The applicant does not demonstrate the ability to measure or report on impact.</p>	<p>Outcomes are vaguely defined or lack measurable indicators; and/or The plan for collecting evaluative information is incomplete, unrealistic, or not well aligned with project activities.</p>	<p>Outcomes are reasonably clear, connected to activities, and measurable; and There is a plan for collecting evaluative information, though not fully developed; and There is reasonable capacity to monitor and assess results.</p>	<p>Outcomes are clearly defined, measurable, and directly linked to activities; and There is a plan to collect evaluative information, it is realistic, and well supported by appropriate indicators or tools; and There is strong evidence that the applicant will be able to track, assess, and communicate outcomes.</p>
<p><b>To what extent is HCF Open Grants Program an appropriate funding source for this project?</b> <b>(Q11)</b></p>	<p>The project does not fall within HCF's mandate or funding criteria; and/or There is an obvious alternative funder for this project; and/or The organization does not operate in Hamilton and does not have a confirmed partner organization that operates in Hamilton.</p>	<p>Some aspects of the project align with HCF's priorities, but significant portions fall outside expected scope; and/or The organization does not operate in Hamilton and has a confirmed partner that operates in Hamilton, but that partner is not established or is not aligned with the proposed project; and or The applicant has significant accumulated funds and potential to fundraise.</p>	<p>The project aligns reasonably well with HCF's focus areas and priorities; and The rationale for HCF funding is acceptable; but The applicant has significant accumulated funds and potential to fundraise.</p>	<p>The project clearly aligns with HCF's priorities, goals, and funding guidelines; and HCF is a logical and appropriate funder for the initiative; and HCF is an essential funder for this project/organization (i.e. access to other funds to support the program would be limited).</p>

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**To what extent is the budget reasonable and supports the planned activities?**

**(Project Budget)**

The budget is unclear, incomplete, or includes unreasonable or unsupported cost items; and

There is no clear alignment between budgeted expenses and planned activities.

Portions of the budget are reasonable, but several items lack justification or appear misaligned; and/or

There are concerns about feasibility, accuracy, or appropriateness of costs.

Most costs are reasonable and aligned with activities, with minor gaps or unclear items; and

The budget generally supports planned activities, though some details may be lacking.

The budget is clear, justified, and well aligned with project activities; and

Expenses are appropriate, reasonable, and demonstrate strong financial planning; and

The budget supports successful project implementation.

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