



100 John West Way
Aurora, Ontario
L4G 6J1
(905) 727-3123
aurora.ca

Application to Recieve Funds

The Aurora Mayor's Charity Golf Classic has raised over \$1 million to date and has financially assisted several community organizations to provide much needed services to residents living in the Town of Aurora. Recipient selection is conducted annually by the application review and disbursement committee of the Town of Aurora Mayor's Charity Golf Classic and is based on the information provided in this application.

Funding Criteria and guidelines;

- Individual applicants and community groups must demonstrate financial hardship or a limited means to retain funds in another manner. Individual applications demonstrating financial hardship will be kept confidential.
- Individuals and organizations may not receive funding for more than two consecutive years.
- Funding requests for more than \$5,000 in a calendar year will not be accepted.
- Funding requests for more than 50% of an initiative will not be considered and applicants must demonstrate how the remaining funds will be or have been obtained
- Applications should demonstrate a benefit to the residents of the Town of Aurora that receiving the funding will provide
- Successful applicants will be required to report back in any way they deem appropriate regarding the utilization of funds within six (6) months of receiving funds

Name of Individual or Community Group *

York Region Food Network

Address

Street Number and Name *

350 Industrial Parkway South

City/ Town *

Aurora

Province *

Ontario

Postal Code *

L4G 3V7

Contact Information

Email Address *

joannew@yrfn.ca

Phone Number *

(905) 841-3101

On a separate document, please outline your initiative and any supporting documentation you have. The information being provided should align with the funding criteria guidelines found above. Please attach your documentation with this this form.

April 15th, 2024

Town of Aurora Mayor's Golf Committee
100 John West Way, Box 1000
Aurora, ON L4G 6J1

Dear Golf Committee;

Food is joy. It brings people together. It puts a smile on one's face. It is a vital element of celebrations and get togethers. It's integral to our culture and social connections, and in York Region, 1 in 6 households, including 25,000 children, are experiencing food insecurity. Tens of thousands of York Region residents are experiencing the mental health impacts of living with food insecurity, including chronic worry, anxiety, stress, and depression. Many are experiencing social isolation as they cannot go out for lunch with colleagues or contribute to potlucks or go out for dinner with family or friends. And the same impacts affect children, not being able to invite friends over, as the cupboards are bare.

York Region Food Network is a community organization that offers vital programs and to support food security. We also educate and advocate for actions to reduce food insecurity. Our Vision: Food for health, Food for All.

Whether it's at a drop-in meal in our community gardens or in community kitchens across the Region, York Region Food Network connects residents to good food in spaces that are welcoming, inclusive, and respectful.

The programs/services we provide are:

Weekly Community Breakfast: We provide a complimentary, healthy breakfast every Tuesday, and provide a welcoming place where anyone can enjoy a freshly made delicious meal, connect with others and access information on community resources.

Affordable Fresh Food Market: Offering fresh fruits and vegetables at a fraction of the retail cost. York Region Food Network works with local farmers and suppliers to provide Affordable Fresh Food Markets twice a month.

Kitchen Programs: Cooking classes and workshops including Community Cooks and Kids in the Kitchen

Urban Agriculture/Community Gardens: York Region Food Network operates 7 collective gardens. These gardens are designed to bring the community together by sharing the work and sharing the harvest. Participants have an opportunity to share their skills and learn from others. These gardens are open to all York Region residents.

York Region Youth Food Committee: The Youth Food Committee (YFC) offers a platform for youth to connect with one another and insert their voices into food system issues. Through the YFC, youth pursue topics, projects and events that catch their interest, with support from York Region Food Network.

Seed Library: York Region Food Network's Seed Library aims to make seeds accessible to everybody in our community. Community members are encouraged to use seeds to create their own healthy produce, exchange and share with other community members.

Our funding request is for \$5,000 for our Community Breakfast program. Food insecurity negatively impacts one's physical, mental and social health and wellbeing. These impacts manifest themselves through greater vulnerability of:

- infectious diseases
- heart disease
- hypertension
- chronic conditions like depression and anxiety disorders
- low confidence
- loneliness
- social isolation

This project addresses the mental and social health impacts associated with food insecurity by offering a weekly community meal where participants have the opportunity to:

- Build friendships and social networks
- Connect with community resources
- Access a healthy meal
- Build confidence and resiliency
- Learn about volunteer, training and other opportunities in the community

This project will target people who are living with food insecurity. This includes people living on low-income, seniors, newcomers and refugees, people living with disabilities, Black and Indigenous community members. Through this project, we will educate participants on services that are available in the community (e.g. mental health supports) and connect participants to these supports through means that are non-stigmatizing. We will also educate about food and nutrition, positive body image and food justice. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about other programs offered by York Region Food Network, including our community gardens and community kitchens. Funds from the Aurora Mayor's Charity Golf Tournament would be used for part-time staff hours and food. The part-time staff hours will be used to coordinate volunteers to execute 52 weekly community meals and to organize bi-monthly presentations from community partners. Resources will also be used to support the ingredient cost of preparing these meals. In this project, we will serve more than 7,500 meals and support over 1,000 community members.

As a result of this initiative, we expect participants' mental and social health will benefit. Outcomes we expect to see are:

- Participants feel less socially isolated
- Participants have stronger social networks
- Participants have increased awareness about community services available to them
- Participants have a sense of belonging
- Participants have regular access to a healthy meal

To determine our success in achieving the above-desired outcomes, we will measure:

- % of participants who report increased social connections
- % of participants who feel less socially isolated
- % of participants who are more aware of resources available in the community
- # of people accessing meals
- # of meals served

These outcomes will be measured through pre and post initiative surveys, feedback forms and testimonials, staff observation, data collection during the weekly meal and interviews/conversations with the participants.

This program will target people living with food insecurity. Based on peer-reviewed research that is available, people who are the most vulnerable to food insecurity are people living on low-income, people living with a disability, seniors, newcomers and refugees, and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. York Region Food Network will work actively with community partners to ensure that we are promoting this program to our target audience and to ensure that the appropriate wrap-around supports (e.g. transportation, translation) are available to participants.

York Region Food Network offers a three-pillar approach to food insecurity:

1. We offer services (such as meal programs, Community Breakfast, Affordable Fresh Food Market, Good Food Box and gleaning) that provide access to fresh foods to ensure people have access to food right now.
2. We offer programs (such as community gardens and cooking classes) to build skills, confidence and reduce social isolation.
3. We work with hundreds of stakeholders in the community to educate and advocate on food insecurity, and to build a more coordinated food system.

York Region Food Network works in all nine municipalities of York Region. Our program design is evidence-based, and our work has proven results of:

- Improving mental health
- Increasing fresh food access
- Reducing social isolation
- Building community connections and friendships
- Building environmental education and awareness

Thank you for considering our request for support. If you have any questions, please contact:

Joanne Witt

Joanne Witt, Director of Fund Development
York Region Food Network
joanne@yrfn.ca
905-841-3101 x202