



United Way
Greater Toronto

South Markham Community Action Grants 2026 Guidelines Agency/Collaborative Stream

Overview

The South Markham neighbourhood stands at the brink of transformation and opportunity. In recent years, residents, community partners, and other stakeholders have collaboratively developed local frameworks and plans to guide this change and capitalize on emerging opportunities, all aimed at fostering stronger and more equitable communities.

The South Markham Community Action Grants (CAG) are designed to support neighbourhood-focused initiatives that advance key community-informed priorities and actions. These priorities and actions are outlined in local plans such as the [York Region Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#) (CSWB Plan) and [South Markham Community Action Plan](#).

Successful CAG initiatives will:

- Support residents, grassroots groups, agencies, and local partners to take action and drive progress against community identified priorities.
- Increase social cohesion, ensuring that key priority populations (Black, Indigenous residents, youth, etc.) are able to contribute to creating equitable communities.
- Foster and strengthen relationships between residents, partners, and other stakeholders (i.e., government, funders, anchor institutions like hospitals, universities, etc.)
- Mobilize resources and collaborative action to effectively action local priorities.

This grant represents the second of three rounds of CAG Agency/Collaborative stream in South Markham. The next call for proposals will be announced in 2027.

To submit your applications, agencies must first contact United Way Greater Toronto at CAG@uwgt.org to confirm eligibility. Only eligible agencies will be granted access to the online application portal (SurveyMonkey Apply). **Requests for access must be submitted by 5 pm on September 4, 2026.**

Grant Focus Areas:

Round 2 of the CAG: Agency/Collaborative stream will support initiatives in South Markham with outcomes focused on improving one (or more) of the following:

1. Employment & Economic Stability
2. Housing Stability
3. Community Safety & Violence Prevention
4. Vibrant Spaces
5. Mental Health & Well-Being

Refer to [Appendix A](#) for eligible projects and project objectives under each Grant Focus Area. For examples of previously funded projects in South Markham and other neighbourhoods, please visit United Way's [Community Action Grants page](#).

Grant Amount & Cycle:

The CAG Agency/Collaborative stream will fund projects or initiatives led by a local agency, collaborative or group of partners in South Markham. The requested amount may range from:

- a) \$25,000 to \$75,000 per project for individual agency applications
- b) \$50,000 to \$100,000 per project for collaborative application between two or more agencies

The projects are expected to be completed by May 31st, 2028. The budget and timeline may vary depending on a range of factors i.e., project scope, scale and intended impact. Project budget may contain up to 10% administrative cost.

The total funds available in this phase is up to \$400,000 between both the resident/grassroots group and agency/collaborative streams. Applicants are welcome to re-apply in future rounds if their projects are not funded in Fall 2026.

Eligibility Criteria:

This application is open to service providers and organizations engaged in broader collaboration in the South Markham community and meet the following criteria.

- Project lead agency:
 - Is a registered charitable organization, or an incorporated non-profit organization* for a minimum of 2 years. Note: Lead Agency for a collaborative application must be a charitable organization.
 - Must operate in South Markham within the geographic boundaries of Woodbine Avenue (west), Highway 7 (north), Steeles Avenue (south) and McCowan Rd (north-east) and Markham Road (south-east). Refer to a map of South Markham CAG area in [Appendix C](#) and [online](#). Agencies must demonstrate this by meeting at least one of the below two criteria:
 - Agency must have a physical presence (e.g. service delivery location) within the neighbourhood boundaries identified above, or
 - Agency must demonstrate a history of active participation at the South Markham Community Action Table (or other local table/platform that has a commitment to the neighbourhood and supports coordination among local stakeholders)
 - Have financial statements for at least one year that have been audited by a licensed public accountant, or be trusted by a registered charity that has financial statements for at least one year that have been audited by a licensed public accountant.
 - For charities with annual revenue of less than \$100,000, have a financial review engagement for at least one fiscal year, conducted by a licensed public accountant.
- Groups and organizations not meeting the above organizational criteria may be part of a collaborative application of an eligible project lead agency (see more information on collaborative applications below)
- Project duration must be within the allowable timeframe between January 1st, 2027 and May 31st, 2028. Projects that are likely to require annual program funding in the future will not be prioritized.

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- Project may be part of a broader initiative but funds from this grant must be for activities in South Markham.
- Project must seek to deliver on one (1) of the Grant Focus Areas. (Note: Projects focusing on solely meeting immediate essential needs of individuals or families in the neighbourhood are not eligible).
- Only one (1) application per project lead agency is eligible to be approved in Round 2. However, an organization can be reflected on multiple applications as partners, as appropriate.

* Project lead agencies that are incorporated non-profit organizations in Canada or the Province of Ontario, but are not registered charities must also meet the following additional criteria and demonstrate it in the application:

- Provide services to people living in, or at risk of, poverty
- Provide social or community services as a primary mandate
- Have a bank account in the name of the organization
- Have documented segregation of duties protocol
- Have a conflict-of-interest policy.

Collaborative Applications:

Multiple agencies or groups may apply together for a common project as a collaborative (refer to definition of a collaborative in [Appendix B](#)):

- The total budget for a collaborative application may not exceed \$100,000.
- Collaborative applications must be led by one lead agency that is a charitable organization. If the application is approved, the lead agency will be responsible for receiving and managing the funds, as well as completing all grant reporting on behalf of the partner organizations of the collaborative.
- Only one application per lead agency is permitted under the 2026 South Markham Community Action Grants. Agencies submitting an individual application may not also serve as the lead agency for a collaborative project.
- If applying as a collaborative, the lead agency must have a collaborative agreement with signatures from all collaborating organizations. (Note: If no existing agreement is in place, you may use the [template](#) provided by United Way Greater Toronto).
- Agencies applying as a collaborative must connect with United Way Greater Toronto staff before submitting their application to confirm if they meet all eligibility criteria.
- In the 2026 funding round, UWGT anticipates only funding one collaborative project in South Markham. (Note: The funding will be provided to the lead agency identified in the successful collaborative application. It will be the lead agency's responsibility to distribute the funding resources to other collaborators, as per the approved budget and application.)

Eligible Expenses:

Types of eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Direct project expenses/supplies *
- Honoraria for volunteers (e.g., facilitators, speakers, performers) cannot not exceed 30% of the total requested amount
- Outreach costs including promotion, advertising, and communications (e.g., flyers)
- Food for participants at event/activity
- Event space rental costs, municipal permits or approval fees, online platform fees (e.g. Zoom)
- Training or capacity building, including any workshop related costs (excluding honoraria)
- Staffing costs
- Minor capital costs (equipment or materials to support direct project delivery)
- Other participant and/or volunteer barrier reduction costs (e.g. food, childcare and transit fare)
- Administration costs (up to 10%)

* The cost of purchasing any project supplies to be distributed in community cannot be more than 50% of requested grant budget.

Ineligible Expenses:

Types of ineligible expenses include:

- Funds for partisan political activities that includes the direct or indirect promotion of a political candidate or party;
- Funds for religious activities, except for Indigenous cultural and/or spiritual activities
- Gift cards or honoraria for project leaders or participants in total of more than 50% of the requested budget
- Cost of procured services (e.g., – food, supplies, etc.) from one particular business should not exceed 50% of the program budget
- Major capital costs (building construction, retrofitting, or expansion, large scale appliance or vehicle purchases). These types of costs may be eligible under the United Way Greater Toronto Expanding Community Service Space Capital Grants. Learn more about the Capital Grants application process [here](#).
- Fines and penalties
- Alcoholic beverages
- Membership fees in clubs and organizations
- Maintaining existing services
- Existing salary or office rental costs covered by other sources of funding or revenue
- Support to ongoing already funded programs or activities where this funding would duplicate other funding currently/previously received
- Fundraising Activities
- Costs related to activities or purchases that occurs before the CAG contract start date

Assessment Criteria:

Project proposals will be reviewed and assessed based on the following:

- A clear and compelling case grounded in a demonstrated community need or opportunity
- Capacity to carry out project and community development activities
- Meaningful opportunities for resident leadership and participation
- Alignment with the relevant Grant Focus Areas
- Clear benefits for structurally disadvantaged individuals or groups in South Markham
- A project design informed by strong knowledge of the community
- Well-defined impact indicators supported by a solid evaluation plan
- A workplan that aligns with project objectives
- A justified, itemized budget with clear eligible costs or estimates

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Align with actions in local plans (e.g., the South Markham Community Action Plan or York Region CSWB plan) and emerging opportunities connected to one of the five Grant Focus Areas (see [Appendix A](#) for details and examples)
- Demonstrate engagement or connection with local residents, partners, and networks, including those involved in Community Action Plan implementation and/or South Markham Community Action Table
- Show support from diverse residents, grassroots groups, and agencies, with potential for partnership and shared resources
- Connect to emerging or ongoing neighbourhood development and community building opportunities
- Centre priority populations such as Indigenous, Black, or structurally disadvantaged groups, and embed principles of Indigenous reconciliation, anti-Black racism, and equity

Selection Process:

The Review Committee for Round 2 CAG will be led by United Way Greater Toronto and comprised of up to ten (10) members with a minimum of five South Markham residents as well as other key stakeholders. The Review Committee members will provide the slate of recommended projects to UWGT for final approval. Successful grantees will be confirmed by November 2026, taking into consideration the applicant's organizational health, eligibility, and project use of funds. Successful projects can expect to commence funded activities from January 2027.

Expectations of Grantees:

Grantees are expected to submit an interim and a final report highlighting project or initiative results. They may also need to provide additional information on their project based on media or donor interest and participate in evaluation processes developed by funders or tables such as the South Markham Community Action Table.

Information Sessions & Office Hours:

We strongly recommend consulting with United Way Greater Toronto staff prior to, and during the completion of the application. Grant Information Sessions and Office Hours will be offered on the dates and times indicated under the 'Important Dates' section.

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Registration is required for the Grant Information sessions during which staff will provide an overview of the grants and application process. Please click [here](#) to register for an information session. For those unable to attend the information session, a recording of the session will be uploaded onto the website in June 2026.

To discuss your project, or for support completing your application, you can drop-in at any of the virtual or in-person Office Hours sessions or request a one-on-one meeting with United Way Greater Toronto staff by emailing CAG@uwgt.org.

Application Process:

CAG applications for agencies and collaboratives will be available through SurveyMonkey Apply (SMA) starting May 25, 2026.

Agencies must first contact United Way Greater Toronto staff to confirm eligibility. Only eligible agencies will be granted access to SMA. Requests for SMA access must be received by 5:00 pm on September 4, 2026; requests submitted after this deadline will not be considered. To request access, email CAG@uwgt.org with the subject line "South Markham CAG – SMA Set Up."

Interested agencies are encouraged to connect with United Way Greater Toronto staff to discuss project ideas and to attend information sessions or office hours offered between June and August 2026. All applications must be completed and submitted through SurveyMonkey Apply (SMA) by 5:00 pm on September 11, 2026.

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Important Dates:

Activity	Date
Launch of Online Application Portal in SurveyMonkey Apply	Monday, May 25
Information Session (online) Click here to register	Wednesday, June 17, 1 – 2:30 PM
Drop-in Office Hours (in-person)	Thursday, July 9, 3 – 5 PM Aaniin Community Centre 5665 14th Ave, Markham, ON L3S 3K5 Tuesday, August 4, 5 – 7 PM Markham Public Library - Milliken Mills Branch 7600 Kennedy Rd #1, Markham, ON L3R 9S5
Office Hours (drop-in online) - <i>Use this Zoom link to join</i>	Wednesday July 22, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM Wednesday August 19, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Survey Monkey Apply (SMA) access request deadline	Friday September 4 th at 5 pm
Application Due	Friday September 11 th at 5pm
Application Reviews	Fall 2026
Applicants notified	End of November 2026
Contracts Begin	January 2027
Interim Report due	September 2027
Final Report due	A month after project completion or June 30, 2028 - whichever is earlier

If you have any questions, please contact Community Action Grants at Email: CAG@uwqt.org

***Please indicate ‘South Markham Community Action Grants’ in the subject line.**

APPENDIX A: South Markham Community Action Grant Focus Areas & Eligible Project Objectives

Focus Area	Project Eligibility
1. Employment and Economic Stability	<p>Eligible projects under this priority should focus on one or more of the following project objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing local hiring, education and training opportunities (including workforce development, new employer partnerships, targeted job placements, bridging programs and skills development initiatives) • Advancing employment focused collective impact initiatives/research • Strengthening of local workforce development models • Strengthening opportunities for social procurement and social entrepreneurship • Leveraging partnerships with business associations and stakeholders to grow diverse economic development opportunities • Enabling community benefits that include access to training programs and hiring pathways • Evaluation efforts related to employment and economic development
2. Housing Stability	<p>Eligible projects under this priority should focus on one or more of the following project objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing collaboration between community and landowners to ensure community engagement and input at all stages of development • Leveraging opportunities to prioritize access to existing and new non-profit affordable housing • Conducting research, feasibility studies and/or building capacity to establish community-based models that support community and public ownership or management of lands (e.g. community land trusts) • Increasing education related to tenant rights, and support for tenant led groups, eviction prevention, and creation of tenant unions. • Strengthening innovative models to expand affordable, accessible and/or supportive housing options • Increasing opportunities for community agencies and residents to participate in government decision-making around affordable housing
3. Community Safety and Violence Prevention	<p>Eligible projects under this priority should focus on one or more of the following project objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing education on topics such as conflict resolution, violence prevention, and violence intervention, for those involved in, or impacted by violent incidents • Increasing mentorship opportunities locally for young people impacted

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	<p>by or involved in violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing culturally competent, trauma-informed trainings related to indicators of community violence, and pathways to non-violence • Developing employment and training supports directly targeting populations most impacted by violence • Increasing safety-focused collective impact initiatives and research • Increasing programs and services related to reintegration for young people who have been impacted by the justice system
<p>4. Vibrant spaces</p>	<p>Eligible projects under this priority should focus on one or more of the following project objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening opportunities to support accessibility of resources and service navigation for residents. • Leveraging local developments and existing underutilized spaces to expand accessible (low-barrier) service delivery spaces for residents, grassroots groups, and other stakeholders. • Activating local community spaces through community initiatives that advance local collaboration and encourage resident leadership • Increasing opportunities for service coordination and collaboration in local spaces
<p>5. Mental Health & Well-Being</p>	<p>Eligible projects under this priority should focus on one or more of the following project objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating or strengthening collaborations that address mental health concerns related to safety • Enhancing mental health service coordination amongst local partners • Increasing culturally competent local resources (including trainings/capacity building) focused on mental health and/or well-being

APPENDIX B: Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
Anti-Black Racism	Engagement with Afro-Caribbean and Black communities is a crucial step toward promoting racial justice and driving systemic change to address the impacts of structural anti-Black racism. There is significant potential to support transformative approaches to safety and well-being, combat gentrification and displacement, uplift Black arts and culture, and promote food sovereignty within Black communities.
Collaborative	A Collaborative, in the context of Community Action Grants, refers to a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship of two or more organizations coming together with a shared goal to achieve something beyond a single project or task. Collaboratives have an informal or formal agreement that demonstrates clear roles and responsibilities, shared decision-making and accountability and strategies to achieve shared outcomes benefitting all partners.
Equity	The principle of recognizing and honouring people’s distinct lived experiences and circumstances, ensuring they have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to achieve equitable outcomes. Equity strives to dismantle the disparities and imbalances rooted in historical and ongoing injustices and oppression. It fosters a society where individuals’ unique identities, experiences, and voices are valued, celebrated, and protected, and where everyone has the resources and social capital to thrive and prosper.
Grassroots Group	Organizations that contribute to charitable activities but do not have registered charity status with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Considered also as ‘Non-qualified Donees’. Grassroots group, in the context of this grant call, will be based in the South Markham community with 50% of participating local residents in leadership roles.
Indigenous Reconciliation	Engagement with Indigenous communities is an essential step towards reconciliation and honouring Indigenous sovereignty. There is great potential for the South Markham area to support Indigenous communities; restore Indigenous identity within the landscape and in public spaces; connect people to arts and culture and build community resources and programs in the future.
Resident Leadership	Ensuring residents hold key project delivery, coordination, and ownership roles to implement an initiative in South Markham is critical. Resident leadership opportunities are intended to go beyond including residents as project participants or beneficiaries (e.g. – attendees, recipients) and should ensure that residents are reflected at the core of how the project gets delivered locally.
Shared Resourcing	The Community Action Grants call invites diverse funding and resource partners to align resources to advance the work of submitted projects. This could include shared space, human capital, monetary resources &/or in-kind (donated) resources.

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APPENDIX C: Map of South Markham Community Action Grant Area

Eligible agencies must operate, or have a demonstrated history of community engagement, within the geographic boundaries of Woodbine Avenue (west), Highway 7 (north), Steeles Avenue (south) and McCowan Rd (north-east) and Markham Road (south-east).

For an interactive map of the area visit this [page](#).

