

## South Markham Community Action Grants 2026 Guidelines Resident/Grassroots Groups Stream

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### 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 Resident/Grassroots stream in South Markham. The next call for proposals will be announced in 2027.

### Grant Focus Areas:

Round 2 of the CAG: Resident/Grassroots 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 Resident/Grassroots groups stream will fund projects or initiatives led by local residents or small groups active in the South Markham community. **The requested amount may be between \$5,000 - \$20,000 per project** and is expected to be delivered over a period of 6 months or less and completed by August 31, 2027. The budget and timeline may vary depending on a range of factors i.e., project scope, scale and intended impact. Project budgets will be required to include a 10% trustee cost as all resident/grassroots group projects will be trustee'd by ACSA Community Services.

The total funds available in this round 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 targeted application is available to resident/grassroots groups that meet the following criteria:

- Group 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](#).
- Grassroots groups that do not have registered charitable status with the Canada Revenue Agency are eligible to apply in this grant stream (Refer to [Appendix B](#) for description of 'grassroots group')
- Project duration must be within the allowable timeframe of up to 6 months.
- Project activities must focus on South Markham.
- Project must have at least 5 resident leaders submitting as a group, with two of those identified as primary leads. All resident applicants are expected to live at different addresses and not be related.
- Project leads must meet the following eligibility criteria:
  - Live in the South Markham neighbourhood
  - Employees of local agencies who live in the community can apply for a project in the resident/grassroots groups stream. However, it must be unrelated to their paid role as an employee of a local agency. Any roles held at local organizations must be disclosed at the time of application.
  - Be willing to work with ACSA Community Services as the UWGT identified trustee organization for the project and abide by relevant policies set out by the trustee in relation to fund disbursement, training opportunities, and reporting.
- Project must seek to deliver on one (1) of the Grant Focus Areas. (Note: Projects focusing solely on meeting immediate essential needs of individuals or families in the neighbourhood are not eligible).
- A resident can only be listed as the 'primary lead' on one application.

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**Eligible Expenses:**

Types of eligible activities and actions include, but are not limited to:

- Direct project expenses/supplies\*
- Honoraria for volunteers and resident leaders (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 project event/activity
- Event space rental costs, permits or approval fees, online platform fees (e.g. Zoom)
- Training or capacity building costs
- Staffing costs
- Evaluation & report creation costs (e.g. consulting support, writing supports)
- 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)
- Trustee administrative costs (10% - mandatory)

\* 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 activities and actions include, but are not limited to:

- 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. (Note: Groups funded under this stream may be required to meet with the trustee agency to consider procurement options).
- Major capital costs (building construction, retrofitting, or expansion, large scale appliance or vehicle purchases)
- 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

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**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 building 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:**

The primary resident leads must have a consistent, leadership role in the project's design and implementation, and be available to meet with the trustee for check-ins as required during the course of the project. Grantees are expected to submit a report highlighting project results upon project completion. They may also need to provide additional information on their project based on donor interest or participate in evaluation processes developed by funders or tables connected to the South Markham Community Action Plan.

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**Information Sessions & Office Hours:**

We strongly recommend consulting with UWGT staff prior to, and during, the completion of your application. This year, UWGT will offer a Grant Information Session, a Resident Grant Writing Training session, and Office Hours to support resident and grassroots applicants to the South Markham Community Action Grants. Specific dates, times, and session registration links are listed under the “Important Dates” section and below.

On June 17, UWGT staff will host a Grant Information Session to provide an overview of the grants and the application process. Please click [here](#) to register for the information session. For those unable to attend, a recording will be posted on the UWGT website by the end of June 2026.

On July 9, UWGT will host a Resident Grant Writing Training session and Office Hours in South Markham. Please click [here](#) to register for the training session.

To discuss your project or to receive support with completing your application, applicants can drop in to any of the virtual or in-person Office Hours sessions or connect with UWGT staff by emailing [CAG@uwgt.org](mailto:CAG@uwgt.org).

**Application Process:**

CAG applications will be available in a downloadable Microsoft Word format on United Way website (<https://uwgt.org/south-markham>) and can be completed by computer, or by hand and submitted electronically to [CAG@uwgt.org](mailto:CAG@uwgt.org) with subject line ‘South Markham CAG Application’ by 5pm on September 11, 2026.

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**Important Dates:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Launch of Application on United Way website	Monday, May 25
Information Session (online)  Click <a href="#">here</a> to register	Wednesday, June 17, 1 – 2:30 PM
Resident Grant Writing Training Session (in-person)  Click <a href="#">here</a> to register	Thursday, July 9, 5 – 7 PM Aaniin Community Centre 5665 14th Ave, Markham, ON L3S 3K5
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 <a href="#">Zoom link</a> to join</i>	Wednesday July 22, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM Wednesday August 19, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Application Due	Friday September 11 <sup>th</sup> at 5pm
Application Reviews	Fall 2026
Applicants notified	End of November 2026
Contracts Begin	January 2027
Interim Project Check-In due	Before June 2027
Final Report due	A month after project completion or September 30, 2027 - whichever is earlier

If you have any questions, please contact Community Action Grants at Email: [CAG@uwqt.org](mailto: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"> <li>• Increasing local hiring, education and training opportunities (including workforce development, new employer partnerships, targeted job placements, bridging programs and skills development initiatives)</li> <li>• Advancing employment focused collective impact initiatives/research</li> <li>• Strengthening of local workforce development models</li> <li>• Strengthening opportunities for social procurement and social entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Leveraging partnerships with business associations and stakeholders to grow diverse economic development opportunities</li> <li>• Enabling community benefits that include access to training programs and hiring pathways</li> <li>• Evaluation efforts related to employment and economic development</li> </ul>
2. Housing Stability	<p>Eligible projects under this priority should focus on one or more of the following project objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing collaboration between community and landowners to ensure community engagement and input at all stages of development</li> <li>2. Leveraging opportunities to prioritize access to existing and new non-profit affordable housing</li> <li>3. 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)</li> <li>4. Increasing education related to tenant rights, and support for tenant led groups, eviction prevention, and creation of tenant unions.</li> <li>5. Strengthening innovative models to expand affordable, accessible and/or supportive housing options</li> <li>6. Increasing opportunities for community agencies and residents to participate in government decision-making around affordable housing</li> </ol>
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"> <li>• Increasing education on topics such as conflict resolution, violence prevention, and violence intervention, for those involved in, or impacted by violent incidents</li> <li>• Increasing mentorship opportunities locally for young people impacted by or involved in violence</li> </ul>

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

### 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.
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 a number 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](#).

