

## Immigrant Economic Wellbeing Fund Overview

The Region's Equity Fund in budget 2022 includes a \$1 million investment in a community led funding program to support community-based initiatives that will positively impact the employment, entrepreneurship and economic wellbeing of immigrants in Waterloo Region.

Led by the Immigration Partnership, the Fund for Immigrant Economic Wellbeing launched in August 2022 in tandem with the call for applications for the Upstream Fund. Significant promotion and community outreach was undertaken to share information and encourage individuals and emerging and established groups across the region to seek support through this Fund, as well as the Upstream Fund and the Waterloo Region Community Foundation's Racial Equity Fund which was open for application at the same time.

Thirty-two applications to this Fund were received through an open call process in August and September, with a total request of \$2,425,264. Since then, Immigration Partnership staff have supported a fund review committee consisting of five Immigration Partnership community partners in reviewing applications and making allocation decisions. The committee approved 18 applications for funding totalling \$1 million. Specific attention was given to applications led by immigrant-led groups and targeting immigrant women, youth and those who are racialized. A robust range of initiatives were approved that will:

- support immigrant employment, entrepreneurship and economic wellbeing across Waterloo Region's urban and rural communities
- target refugees, refugee claimants, people fleeing war, and other immigrants
- focus programming for immigrants who are Ukrainian, Muslim, Black or otherwise racialized

Significant collaboration across regional departments took place in the realization of the various funds to centre community needs, strip down and streamline internal processes, and elevate community leadership of these initiatives. Staff across Regional departments are working together on the administration of agreements and transfer of funding allocations in November and December.

Groups receiving funding from the Fund for Immigrant Economic Wellbeing:

- Adventure4Change International
- Bring on the Sunshine
- Business and Education Partnership of Waterloo Region
- Canadian Arab Women's Association
- Canadian Aweil Youth Association
- Centre for Family Medicine Family Health Team
- Kinbridge Community Association
- Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre Inc.
- KW Working Centre for the Unemployed
- Muslim Social Services Kitchener Waterloo
- Nigerians in the Region of Waterloo
- Ontario Learning Development Foundation Inc.
- Project UP (Unleash Potential)
- Reception House - Waterloo Region Inc.
- The AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area
- Waterloo Region Grassroots Response to the Ukrainian Crisis
- Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin
- YWCA of Kitchener-Waterloo