



CLIMATE **ACTION FUND**

APPLICANTS GUIDE



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ABOUT

ABOUT THE CLIMATE ACTION FUND

The Town of Caledon's (the 'Town') annual Climate Action Fund, provides grant funding to eligible entities to implement projects that address climate change in Caledon and are in line with the targets and objectives of the ***Resilient Caledon Climate Change Action Plan***.

Climate Action Fund Rules

Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria as described below:

- Only one application per organization will be accepted each year;
- Projects must be based in Caledon and directly benefit Caledon residents;
- Applicants cannot apply for the same project in the same location two years in a row;
- Funding must be used within the same calendar year they are issued, unless otherwise stipulated;
- Any unspent funds must be returned to the Town upon completion of the project;
- Applicants who apply to the Climate Action Fund cannot apply to the Towns Municipal, Agricultural and Community grants, and/or Golf Tournament funding.

Please note if you are a school applicant, and the School Board is applying for a project that will be implemented in your school, the Town will still accept your application and consider it for funding. If the Town receives an application from a school and school group, club and/or parent council for the same school, only one application will be awarded, determined by the application score.



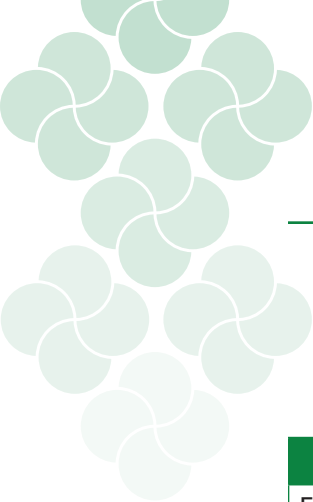
ELIGIBILITY

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Non-profit organizations and/or registered charitable organizations;
- Neighbourhood associations and other unincorporated community-based groups with a documented terms of reference;
- Faith/church groups, for a non-religious purpose;
- Indigenous groups;
- Schools with a Caledon address in a publicly funded school board;
- School groups, clubs, and parent councils, applying on behalf of a school in a publicly funded school board with a Caledon address;
- Publicly funded school boards for a project in schools with a Caledon address; and,
- Individuals/students with a documented collaborative agreement with an eligible applicant.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

- Contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (climate mitigation); and/or,
- Enhances resiliency to climate change impacts (climate adaptation); and/or,
- Educates the community about climate change action.



ELIGIBILITY

Table 1: Eligible Project Examples

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION
Encourage walking, cycling, and use of transit or other sustainable transportation modes through improved programs, infrastructure, and education
Education to encourage the adoption of electric and zero emissions vehicles
Waste reduction and/or enhancement of waste diversion
Education about energy conservation, renewable energy, and low carbon energy sources (e.g. electrification and heat pumps)
Energy monitoring and education
Water conservation*
Renewable energy installation that benefits a community group(s)/or education (e.g. rooftop solar, community-owned solar, etc.)*

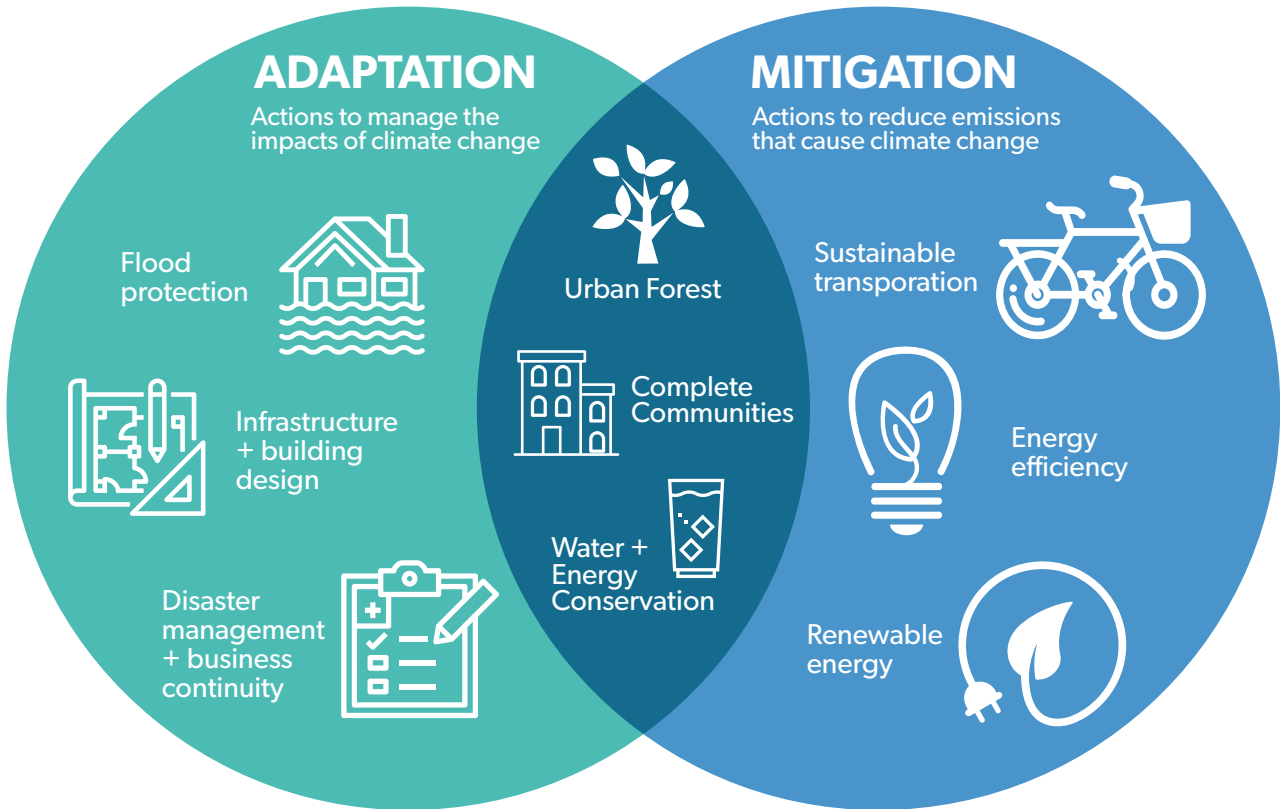
CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION
Support a resilient food and agriculture sector across Caledon
Restoration of wetlands, streams, and meadows
Community gardens, indigenous education gardens, pollinator pathway/habitat corridors
Low impact development and green natural infrastructure projects (e.g. raingardens and bioswales) and decrease of impervious surfaces
School ground revitalization (e.g. teaching/pollinator gardens, urban farms, food gardens, outdoor classroom)
Prepare Caledon residents (including vulnerable populations) for extreme weather and heat events
Tree planting*

* Benefit both areas of climate change mitigation and adaptation

EDUCATION PROJECTS (as it relates to climate change including any of the topics as described above)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops, demonstrations, and group activities • Education campaigns (e.g. waste reduction, energy conservation, active transportation) • Repair events (e.g. bikes, clothing, electronics) • Educational videos • Guest speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field trips • Virtual learning • Community climate change events • Sustainable transportation events • Activities that enhance the existing school curriculum

ELIGIBILITY

Figure 1: Adaptation Versus Mitigation Actions for Communities





EXPENSES

FUNDING & ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Applicants can apply for up to \$8,000 through the Town’s Climate Action Fund. All project funds must be spent within the calendar year they are issued, unless otherwise stipulated. (See Table 6).

Holdback Funds

The Town will hold back a percentage of the successful applicant’s grant funds until the Final Report and project invoices are provided and approved, as follows:

Table 2: Holdback Funds

GRANT THRESHOLD	HOLDBACK PERCENTAGE
\$2,000 or less	10%
\$2,001+	15%

Returning Funds to the Town

The Town will request that unused grant funds be returned by successful applicants according to the following conditions:

- A grant recipient has not spent their full awarded amount as stated in their Grant Agreement;
- A grant recipient claims ineligible expenses; and/or
- A grant recipient claims expenses that are unrelated or are out of scope to their Council-approved project.

To avoid meeting a condition where funds are to be returned to the Town, staff strongly encourage grant recipients to notify environment@caledon.ca about any changes from your application’s project scope or budget for approval.



EXPENSES

ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Table 3: Expense Eligibility

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES
Project supplies and materials directly related to the project
Workshop materials
Space rental or permit fees for event/activity space
Project communications (e.g. flyers, posters, printing)
Human Resources e.g. staff salaries (cannot exceed 25% of your total grant request)
Project evaluation activities
Rentals or small equipment purchases
Consultant fees and skilled labour
Other expenses on a case-by-case basis and approved by the Town

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES
Expenses not directly related to the project
Beautification or landscaping repairs (e.g., ornamental gardens, pathways, etc.)
Fees and expenses for memberships, conferences, travel, personal vehicle use, and parking
Activities related to political or religious purposes
Costs associated with the regular operation of your organization such as current staff salaries (unrelated to project), office rental, utilities, lunch for employees and not related to your project or a community workshop, computer equipment, phones, fax, internet, accounting services, insurance, etc.
Activities that extend beyond Caledon's borders
HST if registered
Other expenses on a case-by-case basis



APPLICATION

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

How do I apply for the Climate Action Fund?

Applicants can apply for the Climate Action Fund by submitting an online application form that can be accessed from the following link:

<https://www.caledon.ca/grants>

What do I need to include in addition to my completed application?

REQUIRED

- Copy of an existing work plan, strategic document, annual report, or recent funding proposal. If this material is not readily available, other information may be deemed suitable by Energy and Environment Staff (submitted as a separate attachment). This is not required for schools, school groups, school board applicants, and/or indigenous groups.
- For projects involving permanent installations, a letter of support from the owner of the property is required (if not owned by the applicant).
- Catholic School Requirement: A signed support letter and/or email from the Catholic School Board's Grant Committee.
- Public School Requirement: Proof of approval from your school's designated Facility Manager (e.g. email or signed letter).
- Planting projects will require a sketch of the project site including project dimensions, photos of the existing site, and a letter of support from the owner of the property (if the installation is permanent and not owned by the applicant).

OPTIONAL (STRONGLY ENCOURAGED)

- At least one quotation (can be informal) to justify budget items over \$2,000.
- Project-specific support letters from community stakeholders or partners that explain and demonstrate the need for this project.



APPLICATION

APPLICATION EVALUATION

An internal cross-departmental evaluation committee evaluates applications using a points-based scoring matrix. The application questions will receive a score out of five (see Table 5) and are weighted as described in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Application Evaluation Matrix

EVALUATION CRITERIA	QUESTION	DESCRIPTION	WEIGHT
Project Description	Project Synopsis: Briefly describe your project and its objectives (Max. 150 words).	The project description is clear and comprehensive. The evaluator has a clear understanding of what the applicant is seeking to achieve through their project and its objectives.	5%
Time Task Table	Provide a timeline for the proposed project tasks. Please base the project start date on the program schedule outlined in Table 7 of this guide.	The actions described in the time task table include key project stages, stakeholders involved, and demonstrate the ability to keep within the grant funding deadlines. Task timelines seem reasonable for the work taking place.	10%
Resilient Caledon Plan and Project Eligibility Alignment	Please describe how your project aligns with the goals, objectives, and/or actions in the Town's Resilient Caledon Plan and meets the Fund's project eligibility stated in the project description. (max. 250 words)	The applicant clearly describes how their project aligns with the Resilient Caledon Plan, by referencing specific actions and/or goals, objectives, and targets. The applicant clearly describes how their project meets the eligible project criteria selected in their application.	20%

APPLICATION

Table 4: Application Evaluation Matrix *continued*

EVALUATION CRITERIA	QUESTION	DESCRIPTION	WEIGHT
Engagement Plan	Describe your engagement plan (e.g. how you will engage the community or the broader school population) throughout your project. If you are partnering with any other groups or organizations describe their role in the project. (max. 200 words)	The applicant clearly describes how the community and/or broader school population (if school applicant) will be engaged. The applicant describes the method of engagement, which key groups will be engaged, and what their role is in the project.	20%
Project Outputs	State the main outcome of your project. The outcome is what the project wants or needs to achieve. (The outputs are the actions or items that contribute to achieving an outcome). Examples include number of people engaged, volunteers participated, number of trees planted, etc.	The applicant has provided a clear picture of the anticipated outputs of their project and relate to the main project outcome. The outputs are meaningful and align with the grant project eligibility.	15%
Monitoring/ Evaluation Plan	Describe your plan to monitor and evaluate the success/progress of the project and the outputs as stated in the project outputs above. What is the lifespan of your project? If you have a planting project, please describe the maintenance plan. (Max. 250 words)	The monitoring and evaluation plan is clear and aligns with the project outputs. The applicant clearly describes if the project will continue to persist beyond the grant funding timeline. For planting projects: the applicant provides a clear maintenance plan.	15%



APPLICATION

Table 4: Application Evaluation Matrix *continued*

EVALUATION CRITERIA	QUESTION	DESCRIPTION	WEIGHT
Project Budget	Provide an itemized breakdown of the project costs associated with the Grant request. Please ensure that the total cost covered by the Climate Action Fund amount is equal to or less than the available funds offered (\$8,000). If the project is greater than \$8,000, applicants may optionally disclose additional sources of funding. Applicants are encouraged to review eligible expenses in the Climate Action Fund Guide.	The applicant has provided a complete project budget and the evaluator has a clear understanding of how the grant funds will be used. The total funding request meets the eligibility criteria, demonstrates a good use of public funds, proposed costs align with the actual costs of the item and/or service, and project costs are in line with project outputs.	15%



APPLICATION

Application questions will be scored as follows:

Table 5: Application Scoring & Definitions

SCORE	RATING	DESCRIPTION
5	Excellent	Exceeds some or all evaluated criteria
4	Satisfactory	Meets all evaluated criteria
3	Below Average	Meets most of the evaluated criteria
2	Poor	Meets some of the evaluated criteria
1	Very Poor	Minimally addresses some, but not all evaluated criteria
0	Incomplete	Non-responsive or did not meet any evaluated criteria

The Evaluation Committee will reach a consensus score for each evaluation criteria. The score will then be calculated using a weighted average. The sum of the scores will determine the funding allotment recommended to Council, as stated in Table 6.

Table 6: Evaluation Score and Funding Threshold

POINT SCORE	FUNDING ALLOTMENT
30 – 35 points	Full Funding
25 – 29 points	Partial Funding (75% of requested grant)
24 and below	No funding

If the requested funding amount from all eligible projects exceeds budget availability, grant funds will be awarded to projects based on the highest score until available funds have been depleted.

The Town will reserve a maximum of \$10,000 for school applicants in situations where funding requests exceed the available budget to ensure an equitable distribution of funds.

PROCESS

CLIMATE ACTION FUND PROCESS

Table 7: Climate Action Fund Process

STEP	APPROXIMATE TIMELINE
1. Application Deadline: Applicants submit their application and required documents by the deadline as set by the Town.	October
2. Application Screening: The Town will pre-screen applications to ensure eligibility requirements are met and that a complete application has been submitted. Eligible applications will be sent to the Town’s Evaluation Committee for review.	One - two weeks prior to the scheduled evaluation meeting
3. Application Evaluation: The Evaluation Committee will discuss and assess applications and assign a score that will determine full, partial, or no funding (see the Application Evaluation section).	Before end of year
4. Council approval: Based on the evaluation results, staff will recommend project funding approval to Council.	December - January
5. Notification: All applicants will be notified of the result of the Council-approved funding recommendation.	One week after Council approval
6. Agreement: Successful applicants will be required to sign a funding contribution agreement with the Town.	January - February
7. Transfer of Funds: The Town will transfer funds to successful applicants. Please note that funds will be transferred to the School Board if the applicant is a school or school group. Funds will not be transferred by the Town until execution of the Agreement.	Upon Agreement Execution (January - March)
8. Project Implementation: Grant recipients will complete projects within the calendar year of their Agreement Execution date.	Within the calendar year
9. Reporting and Holdback: mid-year, grant recipients will complete an interim progress update to notify the Town of any significant budget or scope changes. Applicants will then submit a final report, copies of receipts, and photos of their project. Once approved by the Town, holdback funds will be provided to grant recipients.	One month prior to Agreement expiry (final report)



REPORTING

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Successful applicants will be required to complete the following reports:

- 1. Interim Progress Update:** Update the Town on the status of the project and budget. Grant recipients will be required to provide the Town with the following information via the Interim Progress Update:
 1. Summary of the activities completed to date and the current status of your project.
 2. Notification and description of major changes to your timelines, activities, or budget.
 3. An up-to-date project budget.
- 2. Final Report:** Update the Town on the grant recipient's project outcomes and budget. Once reviewed and approved by the Town, holdback funds will be released to recipients. Grant recipients will be required to provide the Town with the following information via the Final Report:
 1. Summary of project results and achievements.
 2. Updated project outputs table.
 3. Description if the recipient was unable to achieve all expected results.
 4. Feedback on the Climate Action Fund process and any recommended improvements.
 5. Completion of the Final Budget Template and copies of invoices for eligible expenses.
 6. Photo(s) of completed project.

Please note that we strongly encourage grant recipients to notify the Town of any major budget or project scope changes when they occur, regardless of the required reporting deadlines.



TIPS & TRICKS

TIPS & TRICKS FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

- ✓ **Review the Program Guide.** The “Climate Action Fund Applicants Guide” is a helpful document where you can find important information regarding project and expense eligibility, grant rules, application submission requirements, and how your application will be evaluated.
- ✓ **Focus on outcomes.** Consider what your project is trying to achieve. Your outcome should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound (e.g. (X) amount of greenhouse gasses offset by planting (Y) number of trees). Outputs are the actions that help achieve the outcome (e.g. energy monitoring, community education seminars, info sheets, training, etc.)
- ✓ **On the ground action.** Think about how your project can help advance climate action in Caledon in addition to raising awareness.
- ✓ **Unsure of project ideas?** Review our “Project Ideas & Educational Resources” included at the end of this guide, and don’t hesitate to reach out to the Energy and Environment team if you would like to contact a past applicant or would like feedback on a project idea.
- ✓ **Partnerships are important.** Before you apply, consider what organizations or individuals you need to work with to make your project a success. Working collaboratively can be more effective than working alone!
- ✓ **Not the building/property owner?** Receive approval! If you don’t own the property in which your project is taking place, it is required to receive approval from the building/property owner. For example, if you are a school, make sure to receive approval from your School Board.
- ✓ **Inquire about costs.** Unsure how much your project will cost? Try calling and/or reviewing websites of local businesses, contractors, past applicants, etc. to build a project budget. Remember that your application is approved by Council, so it will be important not to deviate from the budget in your application!
- ✓ **Start with an evaluation plan.** How will you know whether your project achieved its objectives? Creating an evaluation plan early in the process will help you understand what tools you’ll need to measure success (e.g. a survey before and after education sessions to see if knowledge improved; or comparing before and after utility data to validate if energy efficient technologies and/or behaviors reduced energy consumption as planned).
- ✓ **If you’re not sure, reach out!** The Town’s Energy and Environment team is available to answer any questions you may have on the application process. You can reach us via email at environment@caledon.ca or call 905-584-2272 and ask to speak with us!



RESOURCES

WE'RE INTERESTED! SO NOW WHAT... PROJECT IDEAS & EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES



Waste Management: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Waste management includes proper recycling and composting, and minimizing waste wherever possible. This can be achieved by reusing materials and throwing away less. Ideas could include:

- Eliminating single use plastics (water bottles, straws, wrapping, etc.)
- Installing water bottle refill stations
- Education campaigns on proper recycling and composting practices
- Waste audits
- Promoting reuse/second use of products (e.g. converting t-shirts into bags)
- Eliminating/minimizing food waste
- Garbage pickup campaigns
- Promoting reusable bags or containers for shopping, takeout, etc.



Active Transportation: Let's get Rolling

Active transportation is focused on encouraging residents and commuters to choose alternative modes of transportation to get around. Active transportation increases physical activity and improves health while simultaneously benefiting the environment. Project ideas could include:

- Bike rack installation
- Stationary bike repair stations
- Incentives for bike/walk events at schools or workplaces
- Awareness and education campaigns



Anti-Idling & Air Quality Campaigns: Clean Air Zone

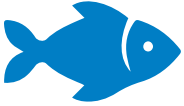
Idling your vehicle contributes to poor air quality and results in negative environmental effects. Individuals can raise awareness by implementing anti-idling policies and signage that reminds us to turn off our vehicles when not in use. Other project ideas could include:

- A campaign distributing fake tickets for idling or rewards (such as coffee or coupons) for those who turn off their engines once they park
- Education and awareness campaigns for zero emission vehicles and infrastructure
- Parking spots dedicated to car pooling and zero emission vehicles



RESOURCES

Habitat Restoration: Sharing Nature's Precious Resources



Environmental awareness can be integrated into our day to day lives and help preserve the local environment. Residents are encouraged to partner with local organizations, including the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Ontario Streams, and the Ontario Federation of Hunters and Anglers, to become habitat heroes. Project ideas could include:

- Nesting (for bees, birds, bats, etc.)
- Designing a butterfly habitat
- Raising and releasing fish and/or water invertebrates
- Invasive species management and education and awareness
- Natural area restoration and/or revitalization
- Rain gardens and low impact development projects to improve stormwater management



Energy Tracking and Monitoring: Keeping Tabs on Consumption

There is no better way to learn about energy (electricity and heating fuels) than by understanding how their used, quantified, and how they can be reduced. Project ideas could include:

- School and community energy monitoring campaigns to understand and improve knowledge of energy usage
- Turning off nonessential light campaigns, or 'power down' events throughout the year
- Mini community based solar or wind turbine energy projects



Greening and Eco-Gardens: Outdoor Education and Preservation!

Planting native trees, shrubs, and plants allows the community to enjoy nature while learning about its benefits to air quality, water, energy conservation, and habitat preservation. Other project ideas could include:

- Outdoor classrooms
- Native and drought-resistant plant gardens
- Tree planting
- Flower gardens that attract pollinator insects

RESOURCES

Local Food Awareness: Get Growing

Planting and growing food is a great opportunity for residents to learn about plant biology, food security, and sustainability. Project ideas could include:



- Indoor food growing projects
- Community food gardens
- Local food picnics
- Compost boxes to create your own fertilizer
- Building a community greenhouse



Environmental Education: A Key Aspect to all Projects and a Goal on Its Own!

Ontario EcoSchools offers great curriculum guides for both elementary and secondary schools under a variety of course topics. Education projects include:

- Online learning opportunities
- Seeds, tools, and soil to allow students to understand plant growth
- Events and guest speakers
- Topic specific awareness and education campaigns/events



Planet Protector Academy Program: Make Learning about Important Environmental Issues FUN!

The Planet Protector Academy (PPA) program is aligned with Ontario Curriculum for Grades 2-6. It is a six-week fun, interactive, arts-based online curriculum resource. It offers multi-learning-style classroom activities such as drawing, acting, and writing that educates and raises awareness about climate change, energy conservation/efficiency, and sustainable transportation habits.



waterdocs AT SCHOOL

Water Docs @ School is a free, curriculum-connected community action program that actively engages Ontario grade 7-8 students in addressing water issues through authentic inquiry, project-based learning, and documentary filmmaking.