

THE ATKINSON DECENT WORK FUND

Guidelines for Applicants

JUNE 2016

The Atkinson Decent Work Fund is a tool for promoting social and economic justice in Ontario. It's a grants program aimed at creating work, wealth and wellbeing for people and communities cut off from the well-traveled routes to prosperity. It's about removing roadblocks, building bridges and taking detours until we get to an economy that works for the 100% and the planet too.

WHY THIS FUND IS NEEDED

The terrain is getting rougher and harder to navigate for Ontario's workers.

Ontario is more unequal than 30 years ago. Disparities in income and wealth are growing unchecked. Our base of good jobs is shrinking rapidly. 1 in 13 Ontarians are unemployed. Only 1 in 2 young people have paid employment. 1 in 2 Ontario workers at all income levels have work described as precarious or insecure. 3 in 10 Canadians report they lost or changed jobs in the past five years. Most of them say their new jobs have lower pay and benefits. 7 in 10 Canadians believe the income gap has made our country "less fair." 85 people scattered around the globe have as much wealth as the bottom 3.5 billion of the world's poorest at last count.

Our quality of life is not improving at the same rate as Canada's GDP. Increases in national wealth are not translating into greater wellbeing for all. Commutes are getting longer, cutting into time and money for leisure, recreation, continuing education, and community involvement. *The Canadian Index of Wellbeing* tells us that Ontarians have experienced a 23% decline in their living standards over three years, the result of "acute economic anxiety." They're becoming more ambivalent about democracy, losing confidence in their elected representatives, and showing up at the polls in fewer and fewer numbers.

There are signals, however, that our combined efforts are changing this reality.

Minimum wage has risen from \$10.25 to \$11.25 thanks to relentless organizing and campaigning by workers. Community Benefits Agreements are gaining traction as a good way to get more for communities and their residents from public investments in infrastructure. Working conditions for early childhood educators are improving in the move to full-day kindergarten in public schools. More diverse voices are starting to be heard because technology is being used by more organizations to engage the public. Fairer legislation and policy are coming from advocacy to improve employment standards, make financial services more accessible, defend unions, and fight discrimination against migrant workers. We're making real progress but there is much more to do.

“Work is complex. It exists at the intersection of people’s economic wellbeing, their sense of purpose, their contributions to family and society, and even their health. This complexity can sometimes be daunting for those of us who are committed to shaping and realizing a shared vision of decent work.

But that same complexity can also be encouraging. It means that there are many points of entry and many ways to construct decent and sustaining work for more people. Decent work is not just something for businesses, unions and governments to work on. It’s for all of us—as civic economic actors—to create together.”

— COLETTE MURPHY

Executive Director, Atkinson Foundation

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT US

The Atkinson Foundation is in the business of changing the headlines. We’re working with the people who are telling new stories with headlines like these: “Inequality is a political choice, not inevitable.” “It’s not about new money. It’s about working differently with what’s already on the table.”

We’re working collaboratively. With partners in every sector, we’re strategizing, organizing, and seizing opportunities to turn bystanders into civic leaders. We’re ready to walk alongside those who know from first-hand experience why change is urgently needed, and to get out front or follow behind when necessary.

We’re working at the intersection of progressive movements. This is the place where we see the first signs that the world is changing for the better. We find inspiring and effective people there, at the edges of the economy where they’re casting off worn-out attitudes and ideas. They’re rallying under the banners of decent work, community wealth, responsible investing, democratic renewal and many other good causes.

From this vantage point, we’re on the look out for ways to make a contribution. We’re inspired by the story of Joseph Atkinson, a newspaperman whose fiery editorials fueled social reform movements in the first half of the last century.

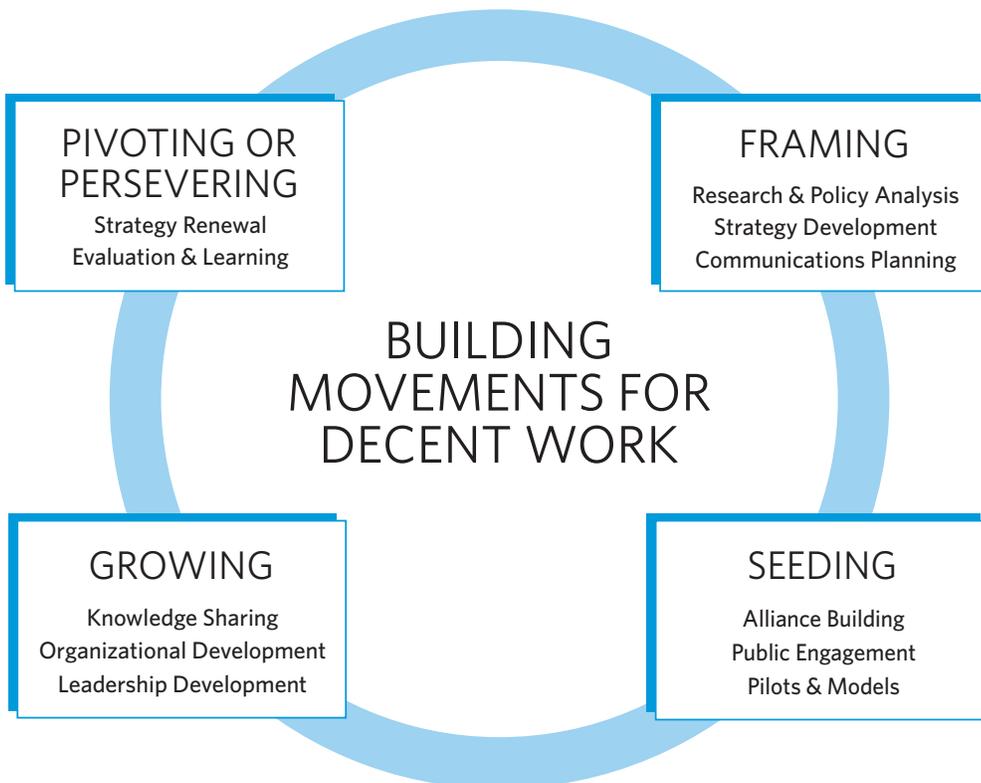
HOW THE FUND WORKS

The Atkinson Decent Work Fund is open to Ontario-based organizations or networks that share our mission, values and vision. Atkinson is a charitable foundation registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). We can, therefore, only provide grants to organizations with charitable status. There are other ways to work collaboratively if you don't qualify. Please contact us if you think your aims are compatible with ours but your organization or network is not a registered charity.

We're interested in your story and approach. Tell us your big idea and your next steps in bringing it to life. Describe how a grant will increase your capacity to be strategic, inspire, experiment, spread solutions, learn from experience, share knowledge, and move forward.

We value the services provided by organizations to help people cope with systemic and structural problems. This fund, however, is not a source of financial support for social service delivery - neither new or proven services. Please contact us if you are not sure if your proposed project falls into this category.

You're invited to propose a project spanning 12 to 18-months that focuses on a stage in building movements. The types of projects listed below are provided as examples, not to limit possibilities.



You should be able to demonstrate that your approach is:

- **People-centred.** You are directly connected to and engaged with residents and their realities.
- **Asset-based.** You focus on community strengths, not deficits.
- **Multi-disciplinary.** You bring together unlikely partners.
- **Inclusive.** You draw a wide circle to include those who are most affected and/or who have been historically excluded.
- **Networked.** You seek collective impact as part of a broadly based social movement.
- **Engaging.** You facilitate participation, learning and innovation.
- **Effective.** You have chosen metrics and can demonstrate your progress.

HOW YOU APPLY FOR A GRANT

Step 1: Write a Letter of Inquiry

Your letter of inquiry is due on Thursday, September 1, 2016. In no more than three pages, please provide the following information:

- A brief description of your organization or network
- What decent work and shared prosperity means to you
- A brief description of your project
- The impact you expect it to have and who you are working with
- Your project timeline
- An approximate budget and the amount of your request to Atkinson Foundation

Step 2: Submit your Letter of Inquiry

We accept all submissions through our online application portal. Please register to access the portal before the end of day, Wednesday, August 24, 2016. You can do so from our website: www.atkinsonfoundation.ca

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

We will shortlist projects based on the information provided in the letters of inquiry. Short-listed projects will be asked to submit a full proposal in November 2016 for a final decision in December 2016.

Atkinson's Board of Directors will make final decisions about grants with recommendations from staff and a network of advisors. We will look for evidence of a sound contextual analysis, smart strategy and effective approach in your letters of inquiry and full proposals. More specifically, we will assess:

- the project's fit with the aims of the Fund;
- the strength of your rationale and the viability of your plan; and
- the likelihood of success and the potential for learning.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

We welcome your questions and comments about the Atkinson Decent Work Fund. Please contact:

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We will be scheduling at least one webinar this summer and more if there is sufficient demand. Watch our website and social media channels for further information.

Please add your e-mail address to our mailing list for occasional updates at www.atkinsonfoundation.ca/contact-us