

THE ATKINSON DECENT WORK FUND

Guidelines for Applicants

FEBRUARY 2018

The Atkinson Decent Work Fund is a grants program that takes aim at growing income and wealth inequality. It's an investment in changing this reality. It's also a sign of confidence in the people who are already demonstrating that a just society and an inclusive economy are possible.

WHY THIS FUND IS NEEDED

Ontario is becoming more unequal as it becomes more prosperous.

Record-breaking economic growth has not translated into greater prosperity for all. The base of good jobs is shrinking. Expectations for training and retraining are rapidly rising. Our quality of life is not improving at the same rate as the country's GDP. Divisions are getting wider and deeper along social, political and economic lines. For many, inequality and climate change seem inevitable and irreversible. They're less confident that we – as a country – can achieve more together than any one of us can on our own.

There are signs that our combined efforts are changing this reality.

A growing number of people want an “all-in” society, not one in which few win. Employment standards and labour relations, including significant increases in minimum wage, have been modernized thanks to a diverse base of relentless campaigners. Community benefits are gaining traction as a strategy to leverage public infrastructure investments to fight inequality. Nonprofit workers and early childhood educators are making progress on wages and working conditions in their sectors. Investors are making decent work a factor in their investment decisions.

We're making 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 has been promoting social and economic justice since 1942

We’re grant makers, advocates and investors committed to the principle of equity in society and in the economy. These days, we’re fighting for decent work.

The International Labour Organization coined this phrase in 1999 when it described the goal of decent work as “not just the creation of jobs but also the creation of jobs of acceptable quality.”

Since the start of the fund in 2014, we’ve been asking prospective partners and collaborators to tell us what decent work means to them.

Together, we've been turning words into action through projects, campaigns and initiatives to advance our six-point decent work agenda:

Employment Insurance. We want to keep Canada's more than 75-year old decent work program relevant and responsive to changing labour market realities.

Employment Standards and Labour Relations. We want modern employment standards and labour relations for all workers supported by strong legislation and enforcement practices.

Public Infrastructure and Community Benefits. We want to make sure that economic development and growth works for everyone — especially those who are persistently excluded.

Social Procurement and Anchor Institutions. We want to leverage the spending power of major public institutions to create economic opportunities for residents who have low-incomes.

Early Childhood Education, Pharmacare and Pensions. We want Canada's social architecture to be renewed to include "social wages" and portable benefits that increase our collective capacity to pool risk and take care of each other.

Workforce Disclosure. We want to improve transparency and the quality of jobs in the operations and supply chains of multinational companies.

“Projects make us see the possible, policy helps make the possible standard practice, and power is what ultimately drives policy reform.”

— DR. MANUEL PASTOR, University of Southern California

HOW THE FUND WORKS

The Atkinson Decent Work Fund is open to Ontario-based organizations and networks that share our mission, values and vision.

We provide grants to organizations with charitable status. Please contact us if you think your aims are compatible with ours but your organization or network is not a charity. There may be other ways we can collaborate.

The Atkinson Decent Work Fund is a source of support for organizations and networks with a membership base.

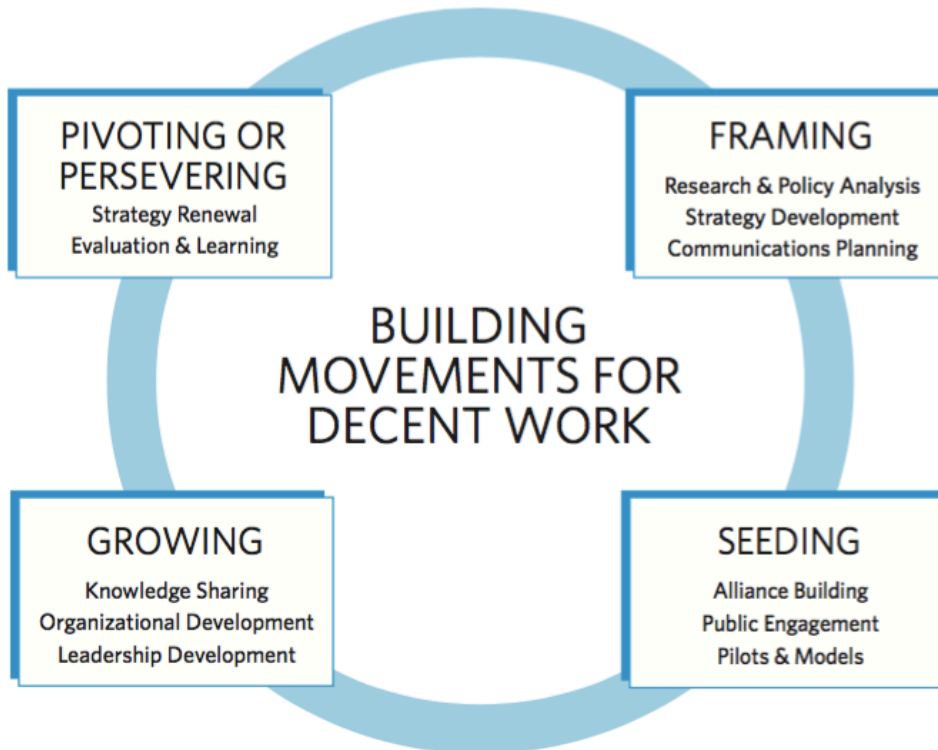
We call these organizations and networks “movement builders” because they develop communities and engage people directly affected by any issue in the process of solving it. They come in different sizes from quite small to very large, but what they have in common is the drive to change unfair systems and structures. That means they expect their projects to eventually lead to policy improvements.

The Atkinson Decent Work Fund supports projects for a six to eighteen month period.

Short-term projects help you take a few steps in the direction of your goals, and help us learn more about you and your work.

The Atkinson Decent Work Fund enables community organizing.

We support a wide range of efforts to strengthen the movement for decent work. There are lots of ways to inspire, inform and mobilize a broad base of people. Take a look at project descriptions on our website for good examples. We do not provide financial support for direct services or program delivery – neither new nor proven services.



Atkinson Decent Work Fund backs people who are natural collaborators, learners and innovators.

With our grant partners, we're learning more about how to make the connection between private troubles to public issues – framing problems and solutions, engaging the people, and changing attitudes and behavior to advance public policy or maintain past policy gains. We're looking for innovation in strategies for worker engagement, economic inclusion and democratic renewal.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A GRANT

STEP 1 Register on our online portal. Click on this link for access.
<https://atkinson.fluxx.io/>

STEP 2 Write a Letter of Inquiry. Letters are due on Monday, March 5th, 2018 at 5:00 PM. In no more than three pages, please provide:

- A brief description of your organization or network
- What decent work means to you
- A brief description of your project
- Who you are working with
- The impact you expect to have
- Your project timeline
- An approximate budget and your request

STEP 3 If short-listed, write a full proposal. Successful proponents will be notified by the end of March 2018. Proposals are due by end of April 2018. We make final decisions in June 2018.

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

Atkinson's Board of Directors makes final decisions about grants with recommendations from staff and a network of advisors.

We look for evidence of a sound contextual analysis, smart strategy and effective approach in letters of inquiry and full proposals. More specifically, we will assess the:

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

“Decent work means better, more inclusive growth, more equity and rights, less poverty and more stable development in economies, enterprises, workplaces, and ultimately in society.”

— INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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Please add your e-mail address to our mailing list for occasional updates at <http://atkinsonfoundation.ca/engage/>.