

RISE Fund Grant Application (2026)

The Racialized & Indigenous Supports for Equity (RISE) Fund is a City of Kitchener community grant for Black, Indigenous, and racialized groups and organizations.

This grant supports events and projects that address identified community needs, reduce barriers to participation, and enhance opportunities for the well-being of Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities.

For the purposes of this fund, racialized refers to people who identify as non-white in race.

Applications for the RISE Fund are being accepted from **August 17 to September 14, 2026.**

Applications submitted after September 14, 2026 will not be accepted.

Important Funding Timeline Information: This intake is intended to support projects and events taking place in 2027. Applications will be reviewed after the September 14 deadline, with funding decisions communicated in December 2026. Successful applicants will be required to sign a grant agreement before funding is released. Grant payments are expected to be distributed in winter 2027. Please consider this timeline when planning your project or event.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome in December 2026.

For general questions about the RISE Fund, please contact the Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Division at REDI@kitchener.ca.

If you require assistance completing this form, including accessibility or translation, please contact Amanda Drumond, Executive Assistant, Corporate Services at Amanda.Drumond@kitchener.ca.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

This grant is open to formal and informal community groups and not-for-profit organizations in Kitchener. Groups may be newly formed for a specific project or already established.

Applicants must meet and demonstrate the following application criteria:

- The project, event, or initiative will contribute to one or more of the following:
 - decrease barriers to participation
 - increase opportunities
 - increase well-being for Black, Indigenous, and/or racialized community members in Kitchener
- Your group or organization is led by individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or racialized.
- Your group or organization supports Black, Indigenous, and/or racialized communities in Kitchener.
- You agree to report back upon completion of the project, event, or initiative, including accountability of all revenues, expenses, and proof of purchases.
- Your group or organization agrees to complete an evaluation form following the conclusion of the project, event, or initiative.

1. Please note: The City of Kitchener will not provide grant funding, financial support, or any other financial or in-kind contribution to any person, group, or organization that promotes **conversion practices**. Groups applying for funds that participate in conversion practices are ineligible.

- I confirm that my group or organization does not participate in conversion practices.

FUNDING AMOUNTS AND CATEGORIES

The RISE Fund has a total available budget of **\$150,000**. Applicants may request between **\$1,000 and \$10,000** per year. Funding is available for:

Events: One-time events or a series of smaller events organized by the group or organization.

Projects: Projects or initiatives organized by the group or organization.

Examples of eligible and ineligible expenses are available at kitchener.ca/RISE.

PRIVACY AND COLLECTION NOTICE

Personal information is being collected in accordance with s. 28(2) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). The information you provide will be used to correspond with you regarding your RISE Fund grant application and will be accessible only to select staff who require it to respond to and fulfill your application. The information you provide on this form will be retained on a server owned by a Third Party Service Provider located in Canada. Inquiries about the collection, use or disclosure of your personal information should be directed to Amanda Drumond, Executive Assistant, Corporate Services, at amanda.drumond@kitchener.ca.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Please complete the questions below. You can save your progress on this form by selecting the "Save Progress" button and bookmarking the page or copying the link to return to it later. You can also share this link with others if you are collaborating on an application.

Your Group or Organization

2. Group or Organization Name:

RISE Above

3. Organization Address (or primary location of operations):

Street Address: 200 King St W

City: Kitchener

Province/State/ Country: Ontario

Postal Code/ Zip Code: N2G 4V6

4. Tell us about your group or organization. You're welcome to include information about your mission, the audience you support, partnerships and collaborations, notable projects (past or present), previous grant successes, and the number of volunteers and/or employees involved.

Our organization RISE Above is a community-led group dedicated to advancing equity, inclusion, and community capacity among Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities in Kitchener. We support individuals, grassroots groups, and emerging organizations by creating opportunities for learning, leadership development, community connection, and access to resources that help communities thrive.

Our work is grounded in lived experience and community engagement. We regularly collaborate with community leaders, residents, service

providers and local organizations to identify barriers and co-create solutions that respond to community priorities. Our initiatives focus on increasing participation, reducing inequities, strengthening community leadership, and improving access to opportunities and resources.

Over the past several years, our team has supported community-based programs, workshops, educational initiatives, and partnership projects that have connected residents with information, skills development, and community supports. Through these activities, we have developed strong relationships with community members and partners who share a commitment to advancing equity and belonging within Kitchener. Our team at RISE Above has experience planning, implementing, evaluating, and reporting on community-funded initiatives and is committed to maintaining transparent financial accountability and effective project management.

Our organization is supported by a dedicated team of community leaders and volunteers who bring diverse professional expertise and lived experience. Together, we are committed to helping strengthen the capacity of Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities so that community members can lead initiatives, access funding opportunities, and create lasting positive impacts for current and future generations.

5. Which of the following best describes your group or organization?

- Community group

6. How long has your group or organization been active?

- 1-5 years

7. Is your group or organization Indigenous-led?

- No

8. Does your group or organization support Black, Indigenous, or racialized communities?

- Yes

9. Which communities does your group or organization support? (Select all that apply.)

- Black communities
- Indigenous communities
- Racialized communities

10. Is your group or organization located in Kitchener and/or meant to support members of the Kitchener community?

- Yes

11. Is your group or organization led by individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or racialized community members?

- Yes

12. Who are the key leaders in your organization or community group, and in what ways do they represent or reflect the communities you support?

Our leadership team is comprised of Black, Indigenous and racialized community members with extensive lived experience and strong connections to the communities we support. Leaders include community advocates, educators, facilitators and equity practitioners who have experience supporting community engagement, program delivery, and capacity-building initiatives. Their professional expertise and lived experiences provide valuable insight into the systemic barriers faced by these communities and help ensure our programs remain community-centered, culturally responsive and reflective of the

needs, strengths, and aspirations of Black, Indigenous, and racialized residents throughout Kitchener.

Primary Contact Information

13. Applicant name:

First name: Neisa

Last name: Long

14. Pronouns (Optional): She/Her

15. Phone Number: (905) 123-4567

16. Email Address: RISEAbove@kitchener.ca

17. What is the best way to contact you?

- Email

Your Event or Project

Reminder: Projects and events proposed through this intake should be planned with the understanding that funding decisions and grant payments will occur after the application review and approval process.

18. Which funding type best describes your event or project? (Please select one):

- Education & Programming

19. Tell us about your event or project. Please include details such as its purpose, who it is intended for, and what activities will take place.

Project Title: RISE Together Grant Application Video Walkthrough and Capacity Building Workshop Series

RISE Together is a community-led grant education project designed to help Black, Indigenous and racialized community groups successfully navigate the City of Kitchener's RISE Fund application process. The

project will include the creation of a professionally produced video walkthrough explaining the application step-by-step, along with two interactive workshops that provide practical grant-writing support. Participants will learn how to identify community needs, develop measurable outcomes, build realistic budgets, and prepare competitive applications. Workshops will include examples of strong responses, opportunities for questions, and peer learning.

The project is intended for emerging grassroots groups, informal community collectives, and volunteers who may have limited experience applying for municipal grants. By increasing knowledge, confidence, and access to funding opportunities, the project aims to strengthen community-led initiatives that advance equity and well-being across Kitchener's Black, Indigenous and racialized communities.

20. What community needs or priorities does your event or project aim to address? How have you identified these needs or priorities? For example, through community assessment, environmental scan, lived experience, or community engagement?

Many Black, Indigenous and racialized community groups possess innovative ideas and deep community connections but face barriers when accessing municipal funding opportunities. Common challenges include limited grant-writing experience, uncertainty about eligibility requirements, difficulty developing budgets, and a lack of knowledge about how funding decisions are evaluated. These barriers disproportionately affect emerging grassroots organizations and volunteer-led groups that often operate without dedicated administrative support. This need has been identified through ongoing conversations with community members, organizations, RISE Fund applicants, and community leaders who consistently express a desire for more accessible application guidance and capacity-building

resources. The City's emphasis on strengthening applicant capacity further highlights this need.

By providing accessible education and practical tools, this project will reduce barriers to participation, increase equitable access to funding opportunities, and support community groups in transforming their ideas into impactful projects that benefit residents throughout Kitchener.

21. Have you run this event or project before? If yes, please briefly describe how it went. What worked well, and what will you change to meet the needs or priorities of the community?

Elements of grant-writing support and funding navigation have been provided informally through community engagement and one-on-one coaching. Feedback from participants consistently highlighted the need for a more structured and accessible resource that community members could access independently.

This project builds on those experiences by combining a permanent video resource with interactive workshops. Lessons learned indicate that participants benefit most from practical examples, simplified language, opportunities to ask questions, and visual demonstrations of the application process. These components have been intentionally integrated into the project design.

22. Where, when, and how will your event or project take place?

Please indicate whether it will be in-person, virtual, or hybrid. Include the name of the venue, neighbourhood, general area, or virtual platform, and the expected date(s) or timeline. If the location or date is not yet confirmed, please provide your preferred or intended location and timing. Briefly explain how this location will serve and directly benefit Kitchener residents.

The project will be delivered between January and June 2027. The grant walkthrough video will be produced and hosted online, allowing ongoing access for community members across Kitchener.

Two in-person workshops will be held at an accessible community location such as Kitchener City Hall, a community centre, or a local partner venue. Hybrid participation options will be explored to increase accessibility.

The project directly benefits Kitchener residents by increasing access to funding knowledge and strengthening the capacity of local Black, Indigenous and racialized groups to create and deliver initiatives that address community needs, reduce inequities, and enhance overall well-being.

23. What is the impact this event or project will have on the community it serves, and how will it be measured?

The project will increase community capacity, confidence, and readiness to access funding opportunities. Participants will gain practical skills in grant writing, budgeting, project planning, and outcome measurement.

Expected outcomes include:

- 50 community members participating in workshops
- 300+ views of the online walkthrough video
- Increased understanding of the RISE Fund application process
- Increased confidence in preparing grant applications
- Increased number and quality of applications submitted by emerging community groups

Impact will be measured through attendance records, participant surveys, post-workshop evaluations, video engagement analytics, and participant feedback. Evaluation questions will assess knowledge gained, confidence levels before and after the workshops, and participants' intentions to apply for future funding opportunities in the region.

By strengthening the capacity of grassroots organizations, the project creates a multiplier effect that enables more community-driven initiatives to support Black, Indigenous and racialized residents in Kitchener.

24. Will your event or project be free for participants? If no, please explain the cost and any reduced-cost or free options that will be available.

Yes. Participation for the workshops and the video resource will be completely free.

Removing financial barriers is a key component of the project's equity-focused approach. Workshops will be offered at no cost, and accessibility supports such as captioning, interpretation, and accessible materials will be provided where possible. Free participation will help ensure that emerging organizations, volunteers, and community leaders can benefit regardless of their financial circumstances.

25. What will happen after the event or project ends? Please describe how you plan to sustain or build on the project's outcomes, and any future activities or goals you hope to pursue.

The project has been intentionally designed to create lasting impact beyond the initial funding period. The completed video walkthrough will remain publicly available as a free resource that future applicants can access year-round.

Workshop materials, templates, budget examples, and grant-writing tips will be compiled into a digital resource package that can be shared with community groups and partner organizations. Relationships developed during the workshops will support peer learning and potential collaboration among participants.

Future opportunities include annual updates to the resource materials, additional workshops delivered by community partners, and integration of the materials into broader community capacity-building efforts. By creating reusable educational resources and strengthening community knowledge, this project contributes to a sustainable increase in equitable access to municipal funding and community development opportunities.

Your Funding Request

26. Please indicate which funding category your grant application falls within:

- Project Funding

27. Please indicate how your request for funding fits within the criteria for the RISE Fund (Select all that apply).

- Decreases barriers to participation
- Increases opportunities
- Increases well-being for Black, Indigenous and/or racialized community members in Kitchener

28. Based on your response above, explain how your funding request will decrease barriers to participation, increase opportunities and/or the well-being of Black, Indigenous, and/or other racialized community members.

This project decreases barriers to participation by helping Black, Indigenous and racialized community groups understand and navigate

the RISE Fund application process. Many emerging organizations face challenges related to grant-writing knowledge, budgeting, and funding accessibility. Through free workshops and an accessible video walkthrough, participants will gain practical skills and increased confidence to pursue broader funding opportunities. The project increases opportunities by strengthening organizational capacity and supporting community-led initiatives that address local needs. Over time, increased access to funding can contribute to stronger programming, greater community participation, and improved well-being for Black, Indigenous and racialized residents across Kitchener.

29. Have you previously applied to the RISE Fund?

- No

30. How much funding are you requesting from the RISE Fund?

The maximum yearly grant amount for successful applicants is \$10,000.

- \$9850

31. Do you have other funding or in-kind support for this event or project?

If yes, please briefly describe it.

No.

32. If you receive less funding than requested, how would this affect your event or project?

If we receive less funding, we will prioritize the core components of the project, including the grant application walkthrough video and at least one community workshop. We will seek in-kind support, community partnerships, volunteer contributions, and lower-cost delivery options where possible. While reduced funding may limit the number of workshops, accessibility supports, outreach efforts, or promotional

activities, the project's primary goal of increasing grant-writing knowledge and access to funding opportunities will still be achieved.

33. Please provide your total budget with a complete breakdown showing how the funds will be used. Please refer to the attached document for a [Sample Budget Template](#).

*****Please note:** This table is an example of expenses. Please refer to the **Sample Budget Template** for proper formatting.

Expense	Amount
Project Coordinator Honorarium	\$2,500
Workshop Facilitator Honoraria (2 workshops)	\$1,000
Video Production and Editing	\$2,000
Captioning and Accessibility Supports	\$800
Venue Rental	\$600
Workshop Materials and Printing	\$300
Marketing and Outreach	\$750
Refreshments	\$550
Evaluation and Reporting	\$300
Translation Support	\$500
Total Request	\$9,850

34. Optional: You may include documents that support your funding request, such as quotes, cost estimates, invoices, or confirmation of other funding or in-kind support.

APPLICATION CONFIRMATION

35. Please confirm the following:

- I understand that, if approved for funding, my group or organization will be required to report back after the event or project is complete.
- I understand that my group or organization may be required to provide receipts, proof of purchases, and records of revenues and expenses.
- I understand that my group or organization will be required to complete an evaluation form after the event or project is complete.
- I understand that, if funded, my group or organization will be required to recognize the City of Kitchener's contribution in promotional materials, where applicable.
- I confirm that the information provided in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

36. Email Subscription Consent

- Yes, please send me updates.

WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK

This section is optional, but your feedback is highly valued. It will help us enhance our processes and improve the experience for all applicants. Responses are confidential and will not affect the outcome of your application.

37. How did you hear about the RISE Fund? Choose one option.

- Word of mouth

38. How was your overall experience with this application process?

- Neutral

39. What did you find challenging with the application process?

N/A

40. Do you have any other suggestions for how we could improve the application?

N/A

Thank you for your submission!

Please allow 8 to 12 weeks for staff to process your grant application.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome in December 2026.