

On Co-op's Technical Assistance Program

Description and Eligibility Criteria, 2011-12

Grants are usually provided in increments of \$2,500, \$3,000 or \$5,000, with a maximum grant amount of \$5,000 available. It takes between 4-6 weeks to process applications.

What can the funding be used for?

Technical assistance funding is meant to provide co-operatives with the support that they need to grow and develop their organization, and can be used on a number of different types of expenses, including but not limited to:

- feasibility studies
- business plans
- member development
- marketing plans
- incorporation assistance and by-law development
- board training
- organizational structure development/ coaching
- capitalization and financing assistance
- offering statement guidance and development
- member services and outreach assistance

The following activities and expenses are **not eligible** for funding under the Technical Assistance Program:

- capital expenses (equipment, computer software, physical installations)
- advocacy or lobbying work
- payment of existing and ongoing operational expenses (including employees of the organization)
- activities or groups outside of Ontario

How does the approval and funding process work?

1. Completeness of Application Form

All grant requests must be submitted in the form of a completed application in order to be considered for funding. Requests made for funding that do not come in the form of the accepted application will be returned to the applicant with a request for the application form to be completed in full before processing can begin.

2. First come, first serve basis

Complete applications will be processed on a first come, first serve basis.

3. Approval Process

All complete applications will be reviewed in the order that they arrive at the office, and are evaluated against a set of standard criteria by three reviewers. Funding will not be provided to organizations that do not meet the threshold rating based on the combined score of three reviewers. Applications that do not meet the threshold rating will be returned with comments on how to improve the application quality in order to improve the rating.

4. Focus of project

On Co-op may choose to suggest a change or refocusing of the proposed activities of the group, based on advice received from the reviewers. The reviewers may feel that the group or project is very worthwhile, but the work that is being suggested may not be as appropriate as another project. For example, the application may request support for the development of articles of incorporation and bylaw development, but the group has not yet done a feasibility study to determine if the co-op is potentially feasible and viable. In a case like this, On Co-op can suggest to the group that there is a shift in the focus of the activities being funded, and if the group agrees, the application can be approved for the new activities.

5. Funding is provided to the consultant, not the group (i.e. On Co-op hires the consultant on behalf of the group)

Funding is provided to the consultant to do the work on behalf of the co-op. – a contract is signed between On Co-op, the consultant and a representative of the group. Funding is not provided directly to the co-operative.

6. Funding is provided in two installments

50% of the funding is provided upon signing of the contract, and the last 50% upon provision of the final report and deliverables. In the case of a consultant that cannot complete the work or fails to meet the required eligibility requirements, final payment may be withheld.

Other notes about eligibility

1. The applicant must be incorporated as a co-operative, or can be a non-co-op working on a co-operative- project, or the start-up of a new co-operative.

Non-co-operative based projects (i.e. projects from shareholder corporations, not-for-profit organizations, sole-proprietorships and other business structures that will not result in the creation of a new co-operative or support an existing co-operative) are not eligible for funding under this program.

2. The group is asked to identify a consultant that will be working with their group to complete the grant work as part of the application process.

A list of co-operative developers is available through the CoopZone Co-op Developers Network website (www.coopzone.coop) and On Co-op can sometimes provide a list of consultants working in particular areas. Sometimes, a consultant that can meet a very specific need or one that has expertise in a particular sector can be difficult to locate, but On Co-op will work with a group to identify a consultant in the case that a project is considered fundable but a consultant has not yet been located. On Co-op may ask a group to submit additional

information about the consultant that they wish to use if they are not known to On Co-op staff or the review team. **On Co-op reserves the right to disallow the use of a particular consultant.**

For more information about the technical assistance program, please contact Peter Cameron, Co-operative Development Manager at pcameron@ontario.coop or 519.763.8271 x23.