



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (RDA)

Resource: Transformational Initiatives Application Guidelines

Transformational Initiative awards address significant community challenges and opportunities that relate to RDA’s *Strategic Field* (below). Proposals can be awarded up to \$600,000 paid out over 3 years. Proposals should address significant *systems-level change*¹ through some combination of collaboration, regional planning, grassroots volunteerism, and root cause/data-driven. Proposals are to focus on affordable housing, child care, mental health, economic development, safety net, violence prevention, and life skills (all terms defined in this guideline). The Transformative Initiatives application is offered once per year as funds become available. A first step in this application process is to discuss your proposal vision with RDA staff to explore if it is a good fit with this grant program’s goals. An online application code will be given to proposal ideas that fit the Transformational Grant purpose.

RDA Strategic Field

	Collaboration	Regional Plan	Volunteer Engagement	Root Cause Approach
Affordable Housing				
Child Care				
Mental Health				
Economic Development				
Safety Net				
Violence Prevention				
Life Skills				

We aspire to address both immediate needs and long-term challenges. The existing *Community Grants* program will continue to support a broad range of community projects. In the Transformational Grants, RDA strives to become more specific in our community impact. Applications that create more leverage for our community and help to align efforts more effectively will be the most competitive.

General Timeline

July 1	Letter of Interest (LoI) Due
August 1	Applicants Notified of Invitation to Apply
September 1	Full Applications Due
September 15-20	TI Committee /Board Presentations
November	Board Approves Transformation Initiatives

¹ *Systems level change* refers to a transformation of the structures, policies, power dynamics, and mindsets that hold a problem in place, rather than just treating its symptoms.



Strategic Field Terms Definitions: Definitions are meant to provide basic guidelines for proposal development, but do not limit what can be presented.

Focus Areas

- Access to affordable/stable **housing**: Preference to use QC Housing Council's six strategic pillars.
- Access to evidence-based **mental health** care services, use of best practices, and alignment of resources.
- Access to **child care**, child care workforce capacity, and emphasis on quality.
- **Economic development**: Process of improving economic and social wellbeing of a community through programs, policies, and activities.
- Access to **safety net** resources: A backstop to safeguard against hardships or adversity. Assuming we all run into challenges along the way (e.g., food bank, rent relief, utility relief).
- **Violence prevention**: Practice of reducing the occurrence or perpetration of violence by addressing the underlying causes, including changing behaviors, environments, organizations, and norms
- **Life skills** development: Community systems that help individuals navigate basic life tasks, overcome normal challenges, develop financial literacy, seek employment, learn about nutrition, etc.

Collaboration: Formal/informal coalitions to convene stakeholders, align resources and efforts.

Collaboration between different organizations can lead to increased productivity, improved problem-solving abilities, boosted creativity, better access to resources, enhanced innovation, stronger relationships, a more diverse perspective, and a positive impact on the overall industry by sharing knowledge and expertise across different entities; essentially allowing organizations to tackle complex challenges more effectively than working alone.

Regional Plans: Unified master plan to address regional challenges, align stakeholders, and clarify goals/metrics.

Regional planning offers several benefits including: improved coordination between local governments, more efficient use of resources, better management of regional issues like transportation and land use, economic development opportunities, environmental protection, and the ability to address social disparities across a wider area, all by facilitating collaboration between different stakeholders within a region.

Grassroots Volunteerism: Efforts to engage volunteer time/resources to address community challenges.

Grassroots Volunteerism provides several levels of benefits. At the individual level, volunteering can provide new skills and work experience and help develop a support system and build community connections. At the community level, volunteering can help people feel connected to their community and to other volunteers, solve community problems, and help reduce social isolation, which is a risk factor for depression. Finally, at the organizational level, volunteering can reduce operating expenses by not needing to pay employee salaries and benefits and help attract and retain talent.

Root Causes Approach: Identify basic causes of challenges and use data to direct resources to achieve desired outcomes.

Root cause thinking offers several key benefits, including: preventing recurring problems by addressing the underlying causes rather than just symptoms, improving decision-making by providing a deeper understanding of issues, fostering continuous improvement through systemic analysis, enhancing team collaboration, and developing critical thinking skills within individuals and teams by encouraging them to explore complex situations and identify contributing factors.

For questions, email ceo@rdauthority.org or pc@rdauthority.org, or call (563) 323-5177