Centraide of Greater Montreal

Q&A for Agencies – February 17, 2022

1. Why is Centraide of Greater Montreal (CGM) reviewing its investment strategy?

    - Our strategy review can be summarized in five questions:
        - ✓ How can we be more agile so that our investments keep pace with changing needs in Greater Montreal and so that Centraide's efforts are distributed more equitably throughout its territory?
        - ✓ Can we review our investments within a single agency to adapt to changing issues and needs in a local community? If so, how can we do that?
        - ✓ How can we make room in Centraide's investments for agencies with ties to diverse community sectors, that meet growing needs, or that we were not as aware of before? What must we do to give them access to Centraide support?
        - ✓ How can we be attentive to the needs and solutions emerging from the community and how can we support the innovation implemented and asked for by community groups? Are we ready to create a space in our budget to do so?
        - ✓ Based on what we have learned from the Collective Impact Project, the Initiative montréalaise de soutien en développement social local, and the Politique régionale de développement social à Laval, what should our next steps be to strengthen synergy, cohesion, social inclusion and mutual aid within our communities?

Developing collaborations with new agencies:

2. How will Centraide select the agencies that it supports?

    - Centraide will determine the agencies it supports and the amount it invests by asking the following questions:
        i. What contributions has Centraide agreed to make to local community efforts?
        ii. Is this agency, through its mission and actions, relevant to the contribution that Centraide wants to make to the community's efforts?
        iii. Does the agency satisfy the performance criteria established by Centraide?
        iv. Given that we are aiming to equitably distribute our investments throughout our territory, how much can we invest in this community?

3. Can you clarify the fact that Centraide does not want to invest in as many agencies as possible while at the same time wanting to open the doors to more agencies?

    - The needs of populations are changing in and shifting across our territory, and some very relevant agencies currently do not have access to Centraide's financial support (as mentioned in the answer to Q1).
    - Developing new collaborations will mean that other agreements will not be renewed when they expire.
    - However, our intention is not to create annual tidal waves of funding withdrawals; we simply want to build a degree of agility to foster greater equity and impact.
    - We won't necessarily be supporting more agencies, but the network supported annually by Centraide will be more accessible.

How to apply for funding:

4. Can you clarify the criteria and process for accessing CGM's regular funding?

    - **We've done away with the idea of "acceptance."** We also want to get away from the image of a "network of agencies supported by Centraide," which can seem closed off and hard to access. Any community agency that meets the eligibility criteria (see our website) can access Centraide's financial support.
    - **In terms of eligibility, we want to facilitate access to community agencies without a charity registration number as soon as we have the details in place** (see next question).
        - The goal is to facilitate access to funding for agencies from different community sectors that are part of independent community action and that develop various forms of civic engagement and collaboration to achieve greater equity and better diversity.
        - We are therefore simplifying our strategy by eliminating some administrative constraints (finding a trustee, etc.).

5. When will agencies without a charity registration number qualify?

    We are working with our legal and tax advisors to fully understand the processes to put in place to meet this goal while complying with Canada Revenue Agency guidelines. To be fully transparent, this could take a few months. We will keep you informed of these developments.

6. What are the application deadlines? Can we submit year-round?

    - There are no annual submission dates, as Centraide does not issue calls for projects, except for specific funds. Centraide establishes its analyses and possible investment areas through relationships with the community and different partners. However, supported agencies must submit the Profile and various documents by the indicated dates.
    - Agencies interested in receiving financial support from Centraide are invited to visit our website for information that fully explains how CGM determines the agencies it supports and the allocated amounts. They can also read CGM's expectations in terms of the collaborative

relationship we have with supported agencies. After getting this information, agencies can click a link on our site to express their desire to work with Centraide and receive financial support.
- The vast majority of CGM's investments are allocated between mid-March and mid-May so that we can confirm the allocated amount to agencies early in the fiscal year. (The majority of agencies start their fiscal year on April 1.)

7. Where can I find the application forms on the site?

   - It is important for agencies to visit our website to become familiar with the eligibility criteria and Centraide's procedure to determine the agencies it will support.
   - After learning about the different ways that it can collaborate with Centraide, the agency can express its interest in being supported by Centraide of Greater Montreal via a form submitted via the Centraide website.

8. Do I have to apply for funding every time?

   - No, you do not need to reapply every time.
   - At the end of each contract term (1 year, 3 years, and eventually 5 years), your Centraide advisor will meet with you to go over your contribution to the desired impacts in the territory.
   - Based on the questions we ask the agency at the end of each contract term (see Q2 above), two scenarios are possible:
     i. Your agency will enter into a new contract with CGM.
     ii. Your agency's contract will not be renewed.

9. Will there be a call for projects for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022?

   - This is not our plan.

10. Are agencies that are developing a social economy initiative eligible?

    - This is not an exclusion criteria as such.

Amount of funding (indexation, funding increases, funding reductions, historical funding):

11. Is there a mechanism to index contracts every year to account for inflation?

    - No. Although we are very sensitive to the impacts of inflation on agency operating costs, an automatic indexing mechanism would force us to withdraw funding for a number of agencies every year. For example, an inflation rate of 2.5% would require an overall funding increase of $1.1 million, which could end financial support to nearly a dozen agencies.
    - We are exploring other ways to help agencies absorb inflation, such as periodic increases in funding, etc.

12. Will Centraide account for the new needs of already funded agencies when deciding whether to increase their funding?

    - Centraide selects agencies and determines the amount allocated by answering the four questions mentioned in response to Q2 (and as outlined during the December 7 webinar).
    - In certain circumstances, it is possible that the allocated amounts may increase, or even decrease, when a contract is renewed.

13. Has Centraide decided to abolish historical funding?

    - We want to distribute our investments relatively evenly across our territory.
    - As mentioned at the webinar, agencies in two Montreal neighbourhoods—Montréal-Nord and Saint-Laurent—informed us of studies they had conducted showing that the historical funding of agencies in central neighbourhoods are significantly higher than the funding available in the former cities (which are now amalgamated), yet these boroughs face similar if not bigger poverty issues. A number of stakeholders have made similar observations. Other issues have been raised for areas outside of Montreal regarding equity for specific cities or neighbourhoods.
    - To meet needs more equitably, Centraide may have to prioritize some agencies and end some long-standing collaborations. However, depending on the priorities, orientations and issues of each territory, some collaborations may continue over time.

14. Will Centraide give an agency time before reducing or stopping its funding? Will Centraide also take into account the agency's history and its ability to find other funding before you withdraw your investment?

    - This is already Centraide’s practice when it announces that a contract will not be renewed.

15. How and when will the agencies that were given money from Centraide of Greater Montreal for the COVID emergency fund be notified if they will be included in the annual campaign?

    - We've done away with the idea of "acceptance" (see Q4). The answer to Q2 clarifies how CGM decides which agencies it will support.

Funding period:

16. By only funding agencies in the short term, won't this add an extra burden on them to start developing new projects?

    - CGM will continue to contribute to the funding of an agency's operating costs. This process does not involve project-based funding.
    - Current contracts are for three years, and the vast majority of future contracts should also be for three years. We will also explore five-year contracts.
    - What CGM is making explicit is the possibility that an agency's funding will not be renewed or that its funding level will be reviewed given the changing needs of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Regional agencies:

17. Can you clarify what you mean by a "requested contribution" to systemic issues by regional groups that do not have multiple points of service?

    - Centraide must gradually clarify the contributions it wants to make to impact systemic issues such as housing, homelessness, food security and many others.
    - Our collaborative ties with regional agencies and Centraide will be made clearer and more explicit (and gradually communicated on our website) as these contributions are identified.

Agency groups:

18. How will Centraide work with groups formed by agencies to advocate for collective positions?

    - Centraide has always worked with groups without specifically providing them with financial support. However, this option has not been ruled out, although most investments in agency groups are made at the local level.

Collective initiatives:

19. Will multi-agency partnership projects be more likely to get funded?

    - The largest portion of Centraide's investments will go to help with agency operating costs.
    - Centraide invests in relevant projects that originate in neighbourhoods and are carried out by agencies with roots in these communities.
    - Centraide also invests in collective action through its regular investments and through the CIP. This option is still possible.
    - For the deployment of our investment strategy in the coming year, Centraide also wants to support pooled initiatives through different mechanisms (coaching, toolbox, financial support). More details will be sent to agencies and posted on our website in the coming weeks.

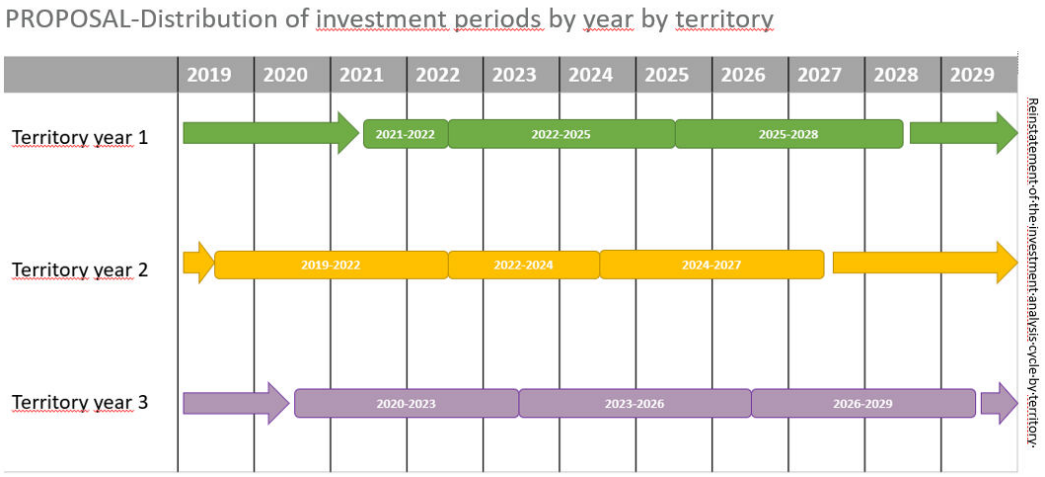
Contracts:

20. The only timelines available are for the modified years, which I haven't had time to properly view yet.

21. Regarding the information about the distribution of the investment periods by year and by territory, could you provide an information document on this, given that it was explained very quickly and I did not understand all the elements?

    - For a long time, Centraide spread out contract renewals for all agencies over three years so that only one third of all contracts would expire and need to be reviewed in any given year.
    - In anticipation of the contract review process in spring 2021, Centraide announced that, on an exceptional and temporary basis, all contracts signed in 2021 would be for one year only to ease the transition to new contracts based on our investment strategy review.
    - **Therefore, in spring 2022, the contracts of approximately 2/3 of the agencies that Centraide supports will expire.**
    - To return to an annual load equivalent to one third of supported agencies and to avoid re-impacting agencies whose contracts were renewed for just one year, here is how we will proceed:

FOR CONTRACTS THAT EXPIRE ON MARCH 31, 2022



- **If your agency's contract ended on March 31, 2021**, we renewed it for a one-year term on an exceptional basis. This situation is illustrated on the graph with the green line. As of April 1, 2022, subject to an assessment of your agency's specific situation, Centraide may offer these agencies a three-year agreement until 2025.
- **If your agency's contract ended on March 31, 2022** and was not extended last year by one year (shown by the orange line on the graph), Centraide will offer you a two-year contract until 2024 (subject to Centraide's assessment of your agency's specific situation).
- **If your agency's contract ends on March 31, 2023** (shown by the purple line in the graph), your situation will not change.

Support:

22. What type of support and coaching (e.g., for our strategic planning, communications, financial management, etc.) do you plan to provide to complement your new funding strategy?

    We are thinking about the support that we can provide for each of our priorities, and we will stay open to the community's emerging needs in complementarity with the support already offered through our skills and leadership development program. We will inform you of the available services on April 1, 2022.

Impact:

23. At the last webinar, you mentioned that the change that our agency would have to commit to working on would be indicated in the contract. Is this still the case? (Asked 2 times)

    - The year 2022-2023 will be a transition year. Although we wanted to incorporate the expected impacts in some contracts this year, we have instead chosen to spend the next year fully communicating our intentions for change to our agencies and communities before proceeding with this aspect.

24. Is there a normative framework that clearly defines the concept of impact and especially how to measure it?

    - Yes, this framework is being developed. This is an internal document called the Impact Measurement Framework. It is a long document that includes a theory of change and a detailed logic model.
    - A summary and simplified version will be produced to communicate Centraide's vision of impact measurement. This framework will also be conveyed through the strategic territorial plans (STP), to which communities will be invited to contribute.

25. Can you elaborate on the year's contract, expectations, and renewal criteria when it comes to collective impact?

    - Part of this question was already answered in Q8 (renewal), Q23 (expectations), and collective impact and will be addressed via the STP as described in Q24.

26. When will you determine the priorities that you want to act on for each community? And the desired impacts in each one? (Asked 2 times)

    - These priorities are already in place and are included in our STP.
    - In 2022, we will communicate these priorities to communities and clarify the expected impacts from CGM-supported organizations.
    - We will also have to work with agencies to define methods for capturing how their community action contributes to achieving the expected positive impacts.
    - Our evaluation team is currently gathering, improving and designing collection tools and preparing the strategy to support agencies in the measurement of these impacts.
    - We are not claiming that everything will be done perfectly this year; however, we are trying to at least lay a solid foundation that we can improve on in the years to come in collaboration with the agencies we support.

27. Do you provide access to your analyses of the territories and cross-cutting issues?

    - The territorial analyses are available from our website; new versions will be produced in 2022 to include data from Statistics Canada's 2021 Census as well as data from many other research projects and surveys.
    - We will also try to include the EDI angle in these analyses. This is an essential aspect, especially since our territorial analyses are widely read and used.

28. Will community development plans now go through the CIP?

    - These plans belong to the communities and are developed through inter-sectoral and inter-network bodies locally (e.g., the neighbourhood tables in Montreal), sub-regionally (e.g., the current process in the east end of Montreal), or regionally (e.g. Laval's regional social development plan).
    - When they have a strong consensus, these strategic neighbourhood visions and priorities contribute to the most strategic and consistent use of available financial resources, whether this goes through the CIP or something else!
    - As mentioned above in the response to Q2, the first question Centraide asks is: What contributions can and should we make to local community efforts? This can be through the CIP or another initiative.

Digital transformation:

29. More concretely, what form will Centraide's help and support take for agencies' digital transformation (materials, training, special funding, bundled service formats, etc.)? How can we get support for our digital transformation (e.g., specific additional amount for this type of need)?

    - In March, Centraide will announce the first concrete mechanisms that are in line with our priority to *Help put community agencies in a good position to make the digital shift.*

Joint initiatives:

30. What are you doing to help agencies put forward joint initiatives? (Asked 2 times)

    - We are currently developing a service that will support each of our priorities, including joint initiatives. We will inform you of the available services on April 1, 2022. We will continue to pay attention to the emerging needs of the community.

Labour shortage:

31. How is Centraide analyzing this issue, and how does it see this issue for agencies?
    Comment: It is becoming difficult to recruit high-quality, qualified staff at our current salary scales – finding new staff is becoming an issue.

- Centraide is very sensitive to this issue. This is one of the main arguments made in the brief that the Centraides of Quebec submitted to the Quebec Minister of Finance during the pre-budget consultations to support the request of community agencies for increases to their core funding.
- As mentioned in response to Q11 (about the indexing of amounts invested in agencies), we are exploring ways to help agencies face this challenge.

Real estate:

32. Where are we with the strategy to allow NPOs to become owners of their buildings?

    - In collaboration with the Coalition montréalaise des tables de quartier, CGM initiated and piloted the Initiative immobilière du Grand Montréal. This initiative recently allowed the 13 community agencies located at the Centre social et communautaire in La Petite-Patrie to (finally) acquire their building.

Ties with other funding partners:

33. Does CGM have a vision for its synergy with other funders? Can you share this vision with us?

    - Centraide is actively collaborating with many financial partners and, when appropriate, will suggest options to achieve greater consistency and greater impact to support community and agency projects.
    - The experiences of the Collective Impact Project, the Initiative montréalaise de soutien en développement social local, the Politique régionale de développement social à Laval, and the Initiative Immobilière du Grand Montréal are good examples of this.
    - We will continue to be proactive in this area.

34. Is Centraide following the example of Avenir d'enfants?

    - Centraide draws inspiration from best practices in Canada, in Quebec and around the world, including the experience of Avenir d'enfants, which, like Centraide, is based on community development.
    - Developing systemic planning that lets all community stakeholders identify their respective contributions to a desired change, reinforcing practices by peers, valuing the work of agencies, and providing a toolkit to support communities' evaluation efforts are just a few of the practices that Avenir d'enfants experimented with.
    - *Centraide is therefore not changing its practices but rather improving or structuring them to better measure its impact and the exceptional work done in the community.*