



Member Profile | The Renewable Energy Co-operative (TREC)

TREC is a non-profit co-operative that supports other non-profits, co-ops and social enterprises in raising and managing community investment. We have coordinated community bond raises for organizations like the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), SolarShare, and Innovation Works, totaling more than \$55 million in community investment.

Social enterprises often struggle to secure financing from traditional sources, like banks and credit unions, but have strong roots in their communities. They can tap into these connections in order to raise financing that can allow them to grow their operations and ultimately, their community impact.

What are Community Bonds and who can use them? Community Bonds are a proven social finance mechanism, which have only recently received due recognition as a practical alternative when financing a significant social purpose project. On the surface, a Community Bond is a simple instrument – it is an interest-bearing loan that has a face value, a fixed term and a set interest rate. The true power of Community Bonds lays in their ability to engage community members in supporting prominent local projects that they can take pride in owning.

Community Bonds can be used by non-profit and co-operative organizations that meet the following criteria:

- Planning to raise more than \$500,000 over the next 18-24 months
- Have a network of supporters who could become investor
- Have a business model that will allow financing to be paid back over time

Community Bonds offer a double win – they create an opportunity for everyday investors to align their money with their values, and make a fair return in doing so, and they allow social enterprises the opportunity to become more financially sustainable.

While TREC's roots are in community-owned renewable energy, we are currently launching a new brand for its social finance services in order to connect with a more diverse array of social enterprises across Ontario. We know that Community Bonds are a viable option for raising financing, and with education and outreach, will change the landscape of sectors like social and supportive housing, local food production and distribution, childcare, and arts and culture.

TREC facilitates the raise and management of community financing, so that social enterprises can focus their attention on addressing societies most pressing challenges, and create a more prosperous, sustainable and inclusive Ontario.

If you have a signature community project that is in need of financing, please contact TREC at CommunityBonds@trec.on.ca. Learn more about TREC [online](#).