

Call for Proposals

Available Funding

Vancouver Foundation is pleased to announce the fourth year of granting with the Youth Homelessness Initiative. This program provides grants to organizations that are targeting the complex issue of youth homelessness in Metro Vancouver. We are specifically looking for initiatives that increase access to, and maintenance of, housing for youth at risk of homelessness who are transitioning to independence. For the purposes of this call transitions include: transitioning out of foster care; transitioning related to sexual identity; transitioning from reserve to an urban context; transitioning from the justice system, among others. Projects which aim to address homelessness among Aboriginal youth are particularly encouraged to apply. Vancouver Foundation values strong evaluation of the work it funds and will provide evaluation funding over and above project/program related costs. In this Call for Proposals, Vancouver Foundation will focus on approaches that increase young people's access to existing housing stock and will not consider requests for capital funding.

The deadline for full proposals is September 16, 2011.

Background

In the spring of 2007, Vancouver Foundation identified poverty and homelessness as one of four strategic priority areas. While Vancouver Foundation has always provided a significant number of grants in areas related to poverty and homelessness, and will continue to do so, the Foundation was seeking to develop a focused body of work in a defined area that would include significant granting, convening and partnering activities. In December 2007, following a series of internal and external conversations and an analysis of the existing work of the Foundation, youth homelessness in Metro Vancouver was approved as a focus for our work in the area of poverty and homelessness.

In early 2008, a Youth Homelessness Initiative Advisory Committee was developed (see list of committee members below), providing advice and guidance on our work in this area. In 2008, Vancouver Foundation provided three multi-year grants and one single-year grant; in 2009 we provided four multi-year grants and in 2010 we provided two multi-year grants through the Youth Homelessness Initiative. In addition to our granting work through this Call for Proposals, the Advisory Committee has identified a convening role, as well as a longer term policy role, for Vancouver Foundation's work in the area of youth homelessness.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Call for Proposals, the following definitions will be used:

Youth:

Youth is generally defined as those between the ages of 16 and 24. However, Vancouver Foundation recognizes that these limits (both upper and lower) are not absolute and will, in particular, consider proposals that include younger youth.

Homelessness:

Homelessness means not having a home. Even if you have a roof over your head you can still be homeless. This is because you may not have any rights to stay where you live or your home might be unsuitable for you. You don't have to be sleeping on the streets to be classed as homeless. You might also be homeless if you are:

- temporarily staying with friends or family
- staying in a hostel or bed and breakfast
- living in very overcrowded conditions
- at risk of violence or abuse in your home
- living in poor conditions that affect your health
- living somewhere that you have no legal right to stay in (eg. a squat)
- living somewhere that you can't afford to pay for without depriving yourself of basic essentials
- forced to live apart from your family, or someone you would normally live with, because your accommodation isn't suitable.

Youth who have recently moved from any of these situations into a more stable environment will also be considered homeless until they have achieved a period of stable tenancy. Adapted from the Shelter UK website, www.England.shelter.org.uk

Program Goal

The goal of the Youth Homelessness Initiative is to make a significant contribution to addressing and preventing youth homelessness in Metro Vancouver through granting, convening and partnering activities. We recognize that to achieve this goal, we will need to make a commitment to working in this area over a significant period of time (3-5 years).

Criteria

The following are criteria by which proposals will be assessed. Proposals must demonstrate:

- approaches that will increase access to, and maintenance of, housing (permanent or longer-term transitional housing) for youth at risk of homelessness who are transitioning to independence in Metro Vancouver;
- involvement of young people in the implementation and evaluation of the initiative and, where feasible, in the development of the proposal;
- a history of successfully developing and maintaining strong collaborations;
- evidence of strong partnerships in the proposed initiative;
- evidence-based approaches by building on what works and/or innovation where there is demonstrated commitment, the likelihood of effectiveness and strong potential to serve as a model to others;
- significant support from the local community, including other funding sources;
- an external evaluation framework; and

- mechanisms for identifying and addressing mental health and/or substance use issues among young people being served.

More generally, the applicant organization:

- must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and effective management;
- must demonstrate that it employs culturally responsive and appropriate strategies; and
- should demonstrate a commitment to the initiative through a meaningful contribution of human and/or financial resources.

Please see Vancouver Foundation's funding guidelines at <http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/grants/fundingguidelines.htm> for a complete list of things we do not fund.

Eligible Organizations

Eligible applicants include registered charities and qualified donees under the Income Tax Act as well as some First Nations bands that may be considered a public body performing a function of a government body. All these organizations must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and effective management. Grants are not made to individuals or to businesses.

Application Process

Early in the development of your proposal, interested applicants must contact Melissa Stephens to arrange a time to discuss your initiative with Catharine Hume, Director. **Please contact Melissa by June 30, 2011.** Once a fit has been established with Vancouver Foundation staff, organizations will be invited to submit a full proposal due September 16, 2011.

Selection Process

Applications will be selected for funding after being reviewed by the Youth Homelessness Initiative Advisory Committee who have knowledge, skills and experience in responding to issues of youth homelessness. The Vancouver Foundation has a conflict of interest policy for advisory committee review, which is available upon request, and will be followed in the event that one or more of the organizations with which Advisory Committee members are affiliated submits a proposal.

In this granting cycle, the Advisory Committee will allocate a total of approximately \$625,000. The Committee expects to select approximately 2-3 larger, multi-year grants totaling \$625,000. Proposals should not exceed a three-year time frame.

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions in December 2011.

Advisory Committee Members

Mr. John R. McLernon, Chair
Ms. Krista Thompson
Ms. Alice Sundberg
Ms. Lynda Gray
Ms. Puneet Grewal

Ms. Annie Smith
Mr. Mark Townsend
Ms. Justine Goulet
Ms. Jocelyn Helland
Ms. Michelle Fortin
Ms. Kate Hodgson
Mr. Robert Wilmot

Contact Information

Further inquiries about Vancouver Foundation's Youth Homelessness Initiative may be directed to:

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