

## Disability Supports for Employment Fund: Building Community Action

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### Purpose

The purpose of the Disability Supports for Employment Fund (DSEF) is to support new approaches to employment for people with disabilities that may complement or augment existing programs in the community. The Fund provides support for organizations throughout BC who are working to increase employment opportunities and ultimately the rate of employment for persons with disabilities in their communities. However projects must demonstrate that they do not duplicate or replicate existing government-funded programs, supports and services for persons with disabilities.

The Fund recognizes the diversity of the population of persons with disabilities in British Columbia and supports initiatives by non-profit, charitable organizations that will promote the social and economic independence of individuals with disabilities

### Definition

For the purposes here, "employment" shall include activities that nurture the full participation of people with disabilities as well as those which are building blocks to employment, such as:

- Full or part-time employment
- Social enterprise
- Entrepreneurial ventures
- Internships
- Volunteer development opportunities
- Self-employment
- Alternate work arrangements (such as the provision of job coaching support)
- Innovative models for work-related assistive devices
- Other initiatives that fit this definition

### Goals

- To support initiatives developing community linked solutions that will provide meaningful employment opportunities and assist people to maintain and enhance their career or entrepreneurship path.
- To support initiatives that will increase the sustainability and organizational capacity of organizations that provide employment programming and related supports to persons with disabilities.
- To support the development of approaches that have the potential to create systemic change in the provision of disability supports that enhance employability of persons with disabilities.
- To support initiatives that encourage organizational and community learning on employment for persons with disabilities.

## **Objective**

Grants are available to assist eligible organizations throughout BC who are working to increase employment opportunities and ultimately the rate of employment for persons with disabilities in their communities. Projects must demonstrate that they do not duplicate or replicate existing government-funded programs, supports and services for persons with disabilities.

## **Program Description**

The intent of the program is to support initiatives by non-profit, charitable organizations that will promote the social and economic independence of individuals with disabilities. Specifically the program will support:

- Initiatives developing community linked solutions that will provide meaningful employment opportunities and assist people to maintain and enhance their career or entrepreneurship path
- Initiatives that will increase the sustainability and organizational capacity of organizations that provide employment programming and related supports to persons with disabilities
- Initiatives that will support the development of approaches that have the potential to create systemic change in the provision of disability supports that enhance employability of persons with disabilities
- Initiatives that encourage organizational and community learning on employment for persons with disabilities.

## **Definition of Employment**

For the purposes here, "employment" shall include activities that nurture the full participation of people with disabilities as well as those which are building blocks to employment, such as:

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- Innovative models for work-related assistive devices
- Other initiatives that fit this definition.

## **Application Process**

There are two steps in applying for a DSEF grant from Vancouver Foundation:

1. Submit a Letter of Inquiry
2. Submit a Grant Application

N.B. Applicants should allow at least 4 months for the entire process

After you have reviewed the above information, send us your Letter of Inquiry for your project of no more than two to three pages (8 1/2 x 11") containing the following information:

- introduction to your organization, including your registered business number;
- statement of the issues or community priorities that the project will address;
- concise description of the activities to be undertaken;
- start-up and completion dates;
- project budget identifying sources for itemizing all potential expenditures and at least 50-70% confirmed or potential revenue; and
- the amount to be requested from Vancouver Foundation.

If information is missing, or the agenda is full, your proposal could be postponed to the following funding cycle or rejected if it is time sensitive. Early submission is recommended (please see below for deadlines).

<p><b>2008 Cycle One Deadlines</b> Letter of Intent: February 14th, 4:30pm Application: March 27<sup>th</sup>, 4:30pm</p> <p><b>2008 Cycle Two Deadlines</b> Letter of Intent: September 4th, 4:30pm Application: October 2nd, 4:30pm</p>
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A Program Director will review your proposal for basic eligibility and relationship to the fund goals. You may be contacted for additional information. If your project is not considered appropriate for further consideration, you will receive an explanation. However, if the Program Director feels that the project would be suitable to take to the next stage of review, you will be invited to submit a formal application.

### **Grant Application**

The Program Director will send you a grant application form with specific instructions for completion. This application must be returned by the deadline.

Once your application has been received, you will be sent written confirmation. Over the next nine weeks, the Program Director will thoroughly assess all projects prior to review by an Advisory Committee made up of equal representation from the Minister's Council on Employment of Person's with Disabilities and the Vancouver Foundation. Part of the assessment involves consulting with other funders and informed people in the field. A Program Director may phone or meet with you at this stage to go over further details of your project.

The Advisory Committee will then consider your application, taking the Program Director's assessment and recommendation into account, and make a final selection. A decision will be available approximately twelve weeks after the deadline date. You will receive written notification of the Board's decision, along with the terms and conditions

of any grant that has been awarded.

*N.B. Submitted materials become the property of Vancouver Foundation. Final decisions on all grants rest with the Minister's Council and the Foundation and access to its decisions is restricted.*

The timeline below provides a summary of the entire process to guide your project planning. Please remember to allow a minimum of 16 weeks (four months). DSEF does not provide retroactive funding. All funded activities must begin after the decision date.

#### **Action Time Line (relative to application deadline)**

1. Applicant submits letter of inquiry by deadline
2. Applicant submits completed grant application form by application deadline
3. Program Director assesses application 2 to 11 weeks after application deadline and discusses project with applicant
4. Applicant receives final decision approximately 12 weeks after deadline

Vancouver Foundation appreciates the opportunity to make site visits, if time and location permits.

#### **DSEF Application Evaluation Criteria**

DSEF will evaluate applications based on their ability to fulfill one or more of the Fund's goals. The individual merits of each proposal are considered. Priority will be given to applications that provide direct disability supports to individuals or that directly improve the employability of specific individuals with disabilities. These supports should not be available to these individuals from other sources.

General evaluation criteria include:

- Meets the goals and purpose of the fund
- Delivers a demonstrated community need
- Is a viable project
- Has the organizational skills and capacity to deliver
- Does not duplicate existing capacity
- Is sustainable through other funding sources (where appropriate)
- Has community support
- Can share or disseminate learning

#### **After a Grant Has Been Awarded**

DSEF expects the following from grant recipients:  
approval from the Program Director prior to any alterations in plan;

- proper fiscal management;
- thorough and well-planned project evaluation;
- project dissemination plan and activities, where appropriate;

- interim and/or final reports (financial and descriptive); and
- public recognition of the support received from DSEF.

### **Vancouver Foundation Contact**

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