

Guidelines for Field of Interest Grants

These guidelines explain Vancouver Foundation's Field of Interest Grants program. You will find answers to some common questions from applicants, and understand the thinking behind our approach. This will help you make informed decisions about your application.

These guidelines have been revised for 2015 – previous versions no longer apply.

What is Vancouver Foundation?

Vancouver Foundation is Canada's largest community foundation and we've been investing in our communities since 1943. Our vision is to build healthy, vibrant, and livable communities across British Columbia. We do this by harnessing the gifts of energy, ideas, time and money of caring residents to make meaningful and lasting impacts.

What are Field of Interest Grants?

Vancouver Foundation provides Field of Interest Grants to organizations with innovative projects that work towards meaningful outcomes through four specific fields.

Every year we invite [registered charities](#)ⁱ and [other qualified donees](#)ⁱⁱ to apply through an open call for applications. We review these applications in partnership with our Volunteer Advisors – experts in each field of interest – because we are committed to the principle of community guided granting.

Four fields of interest

Field of Interest Grants can be used to fund projects that work towards meaningful outcomes in the following fields:

- Arts and Culture
- Education and Training
- Environment
- Health and Social Development

You can find [specific guidelines for each field of interest](#) on our website.

Three types of grants

Vancouver Foundation offers three types of Field of Interest Grants:

- Develop (up to \$10,000 for up to one year)
- Test (up to \$75,000/year for up to three years)
- Grow (up to \$50,000/year for up to three years)

More information about these grant types is included below under the heading 'What types of Field of Interest Grants are there?'

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Matching donors, community priorities, and meaningful outcomes

Field of Interest Grants are guided by the intentions of our donors, the priorities identified by the community, and our goal of achieving meaningful outcomes. We know that communities are complex and that it can be challenging to make meaningful change. That's why we focus our Field of Interest Grants on new ideas – social innovations – that look at problems or issues in a new way.

What is social innovation?

A social innovation is a novel solution to a complex social issue. The value of the solution benefits society as a whole, rather than private individuals. It is an idea that works for the public good.

We define **social innovation** as a project, process or program that changes a social system by changing one or more of the following:

- the basic routines (how we act and what we do)
- the flow of resources (money, knowledge, people)
- the authority flows (laws, policies, rules)
- the beliefs (what we believe is true, right/wrong)

Adapted from Westley, Frances & Antadze, Nino. (2010)ⁱⁱⁱ

An important part of the social and ecological resilience of a society is its ability to come up with social innovations. Poverty, homelessness, isolation, climate change and loss of biodiversity are some examples of complex social issues. Social innovation addresses these challenges by applying new learning and unique ideas to solve these problems. We believe it is especially important that social innovations actively involve vulnerable populations.

What are the key elements of successful projects?

Vancouver Foundation gives priority to projects that have the following characteristics.

Community informed and directed projects

- respond to researched and documented needs and priorities
- recognize the rights and abilities of individuals to be directly involved in the plans and decisions that impact their lives, especially for vulnerable individuals who have been labelled, marginalized or isolated
- show evidence of significant, appropriate and local support
- include resource commitments from applicants and their partners
- increase conversations between neighbours who are working together to solve local problems, provide opportunities for individuals to make new friends, and connect people across generational and cultural boundaries

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Projects that strengthen the skills and abilities of organizations and individuals to respond innovatively

- use, enhance or expand the skills, ideas and abilities of local people and communities
- generate new ideas that work to address the root causes of difficult social issues and apply new learning and strategies to positively affect these issues
- engage vulnerable individuals and populations to increase diversity, strengthen inclusion and foster overall community resilience
- show evidence of collaboration with others in the same field or build linkages with other sectors of the community

Projects that lead to measurable and sustainable solutions

- are likely to have a measurable impact in the broader social, political or economic context that originally created or is sustaining the issue
- are likely to be effective and to serve as a model for others
- are long lasting, transformative and achievable
- contribute to the public body of knowledge related to the issue and/or outcomes
- provide realistic plans for longer-term funding (if applicable)

Vancouver Foundation understands that non-partisan political activities, as part of a larger project, can be a useful way to address complex social issues. Learn more about [allowable political activities](#),^{iv} and consider whether or not these activities will add value to your project.

What types of Field of Interest Grants are there?

Vancouver Foundation offers three types of Field of Interest Grants, created for the different stages of developing a social innovation.

1) Develop grants

Short-term grants to help organizations turn innovative ideas into viable project plans.

Maximum grant: \$10,000 for up to one year.

One stage application: You submit a Project Overview including a project summary and budget.

- develop grants are available to project teams that have already worked on an idea and need support to move the idea forward to become a viable project plan

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2) Test grants

Longer-term grants to help organizations test the effectiveness of a new project.

Maximum grant: \$75,000/year for up to three years.

Two stage application: You submit a Project Overview including a project summary and budget and then - if you're invited to proceed - you submit a Full Proposal supported by various documents.

- test grants are meant to help launch new social innovations and evaluate their effectiveness
- test grants may also help to cover the cost of evaluating the effectiveness of a social innovation currently in progress
- test grants can be used to connect your project to other projects working towards the same outcomes, and can help you to generate the evidence needed to approach sources of long-term funding

3) Grow grants

Longer-term grants to help organizations grow proven projects and/or influence policy and practice.

Maximum grant: \$50,000/year for up to three years.

Two stage application: You submit a Project Overview including a project summary and budget and then - if you're invited to proceed - you submit a Full Proposal supported by various documents.

- grow grants are meant to help proven social innovations achieve even more by scaling up, out or across to new populations and/or geographic areas within British Columbia
- grow grants can be used to connect your project to other projects working towards the same outcomes, and can help you to generate the evidence needed to approach sources of long-term funding

How is grant size determined?

Vancouver Foundation usually funds up to 50% of the budget for a project. Both cash contributions and in-kind donations of services or goods for incurred expenses are considered valid matching funds. Generally, grant sizes are based on:

- grant amounts for past proposals of a similar nature
- the size of the total project budget
- the availability of funds
- the match between the project and our funding guidelines

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Who is eligible for a Field of Interest Grant?

- Vancouver Foundation can only grant to [registered charities](#) and [other qualified donees](#) listed by the Canada Revenue Agency
- if your organization is not a qualified donee, then you must enter into an [intermediary arrangement](#)^v with a registered charity or other listed qualified donee in order to bring an application forward for consideration
- Vancouver Foundation does not give Field of Interest grants to individuals or businesses
- Vancouver Foundation gives priority to organizations that demonstrate inclusiveness and respect for cultural diversity, and that share our [Vision and Values](#)^{vi}

What kinds of projects or expenses are not funded?

- an organization's ongoing operational or core expenses, including its cost to fundraise
- project expenses that have been incurred prior to the application date or that have been, will be, or that we feel should be covered by other funding sources
- bridge funding, debt retirement, reserves or mortgage pay-downs
- endowment matching grants
- [direct religious purposes](#)^{vii}
- capital and public infrastructure projects (libraries, schools, health care facilities)
- travel to and/or attendance at conferences, competitions, symposia or annual events (unless part of a broader project proposal)
- bursaries, scholarships and awards (unless part of a broader project proposal)

Vancouver Foundation's grants are intended to support work that has yet to begin. We may consider applications for projects that have already begun and for which additional funding is needed, provided that the request does not include any of the items listed above.

We already have a Field of Interest Grant from Vancouver Foundation. Can we apply again?

In general, Vancouver Foundation does not consider new requests from organizations that have grants for projects that are still running. We also typically don't consider new requests from organizations that have not yet met all of their reporting requirements.

Exceptions are sometimes made for:

- Large community service organizations which have broad mandates and serve diverse populations, or
- Organizations which represent a coalition, partnership, or collaborative initiative.

If you're unsure whether you're eligible to apply again, please contact us.

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What about Copyright and Intellectual Property?

All submitted materials become the property of Vancouver Foundation, and may be shared with community advisors and/or other Funders at our sole discretion. A [list of approved grants](#)^{viii} is also made public on our website.

How do I find out more about Field of Interest Grants?

You can find out more about Vancouver Foundation's Field of Interest Grants by visiting our website at <http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/grants/field-interest-grants>.

References

- i <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/lstngs/menu-eng.html>
- ii <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/qlfd-dns/qd-lstngs/menu-eng.html>
- iii Westley, Frances & Antadze, Nino. (2010). Making a difference. Strategies for scaling social innovation for greater impact. *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, 15(2), article 2. Accessed on March 20, 2015 at http://www.innovation.cc/scholarly-style/westley2antadze2make_difference_final.pdf
- iv <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/cmmnctn/pltcl-ctvts/menu-eng.html>
- v <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/plcy/cgd/ntrmdry-eng.html>
- vi <http://vancouverfoundation.ca/about-us/vision-values>
- vii <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/plcy/csp/csp-r06-eng.html>
- viii <https://s.vancouverfoundation.ca/grants/grantsearch.asp>