

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 were revised 23 Feb 2017 – 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?

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 social innovations that influence and change social systems in a new way.

Field of Interest Grants can be used to fund projects that work towards meaningful outcomes in Arts and Culture, Education and Training, Environment and Animal Welfare or Health and Social Development. You can find [specific guidelines for each field of interest](#) on our website.

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)ⁱ

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.

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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

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](#),ⁱⁱ and consider whether or not these activities will add value to your project.

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What kinds of projects or expenses are not funded?

- projects that take place outside of BC
- 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
- event sponsorships (unless part of a broader project proposal)
- bridge funding, debt retirement, reserves or mortgage pay-downs
- endowment matching grants
- [direct religious purposes](#)ⁱⁱⁱ
- 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)

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

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

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

Develop grants are short-term grants to help project teams explore complex social issues and to develop viable projects that might address these issues through social innovation. Project teams will have already begun working on this idea and need further support to move the idea forward to become a viable project plan.

Develop grants

- Support teams when there is a high degree of uncertainty or lack of agreement on what the issue is, how to address the issue, and who to work with to address the issue.
- Allow teams to gather information, meet with key stakeholders to learn more about the system and systemic issue, and begin to form a model or prototype of a social innovation.
- Support the capacity of an existing or expanding project team. If the project team has not yet formed, then the grant application must include the steps that will be taken to form a complete and appropriate team.
- Enable applicants to apply for a Test Grant in the future. Please note any future applications must represent a social innovation that works towards one of the ten broad outcomes that Vancouver Foundation has identified under our four fields of interest.

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2) Test grants

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

Two stage application process:

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

Test grants are longer-term grants to help project teams run and test the effectiveness of a new or existing social innovation on a systemic issue. Project teams will have a clear sense of the systemic issue they intend to address, what the social innovation is that they are implementing, who they are partnering with throughout the work, and how they will evaluate their project and monitor the outcomes.

Test grants:

- Support teams with well developed timelines of activities and budgets that reflect the project team's demonstrated knowledge of what is needed to have an impact on one of the broad outcomes associated with Vancouver Foundation's fields of interest.
- Allow teams to connect their project with other projects working towards the same outcomes, and could help you to generate the evidence needed to approach sources of longer-term funding.

3) Grow grants

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

Two stage application process:

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

Grow grants are longer-term grants to help project teams scale an existing and successful social innovation to new geographic areas (scale out), new levels of systems (scale up), or to embed the social innovation further within existing levels of systems or institutions (scale deep).

Project teams will have a clear sense of what the systemic issues are, what type of scaling they would like to implement, and how scaling the social innovation will support the potential for greater systemic change. Project teams will have established partners and will know how they evaluate their project and monitor the social system that is being influenced.

Grow grants:

- Support social innovations that have already been demonstrated as effective through a written evaluation.
- Support teams with well developed timelines of activities and budgets that reflect the project team's demonstrated knowledge of what is needed to have an impact on one of the broad outcomes associated with Vancouver Foundation's fields of interest.
- Allow teams to connect with other projects working towards the same outcomes, and could help you to generate the evidence needed to approach sources of longer-term funding.

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How is grant size determined?

Vancouver Foundation funds no more than 50% of the budget for a project, due to funding limitations. Both cash contributions and in-kind donations of services or goods for incurred expenses are considered valid matching funds. In most cases, Vancouver Foundation does not expect to be the sole external funder connected to the project, nor the largest source of funding.

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 during the current granting cycle

Who is eligible for a Field of Interest Grant?

Every year, we invite proposals forward through an open call process. 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.

- 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](#)^{iv} 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](#)^v

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](#)^{vi} 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>.

Contact a Field of Interest Grants administrator

Arts and Culture

[Jill Shouldice, Grant Administrator](#)

Education and Training

[Jill Shouldice, Grant Administrator](#)

Environment and Animal Welfare

[Mike Conroy, Grant Administrator](#)

Health and Social Development

[Mike Conroy, Grant Administrator](#)

References

- ⁱ 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
- ⁱⁱ <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/cmmnctn/pltbl-ctvts/menu-eng.html>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/plcy/csp/csp-r06-eng.html>
- ^{iv} <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/plcy/cgd/ntrmdry-eng.html>
- ^v <http://vancouverfoundation.ca/about-us/vision-values>
- ^{vi} <https://s.vancouverfoundation.ca/grants/grantsearch.asp>