Participatory Action Research
2022 Addendum

Hello applicants!

We're testing a handful of revisions to our Convene and Investigate application forms, and we wanted to share what's changed and why.

Early in 2020, we began a project to deepen systems change grant making, first by recognizing entrenched power imbalances, and then by reimagining our relationships and practices. The ongoing pandemic, the devastation caused by extreme weather events and the continued groundswell of the reconciliation and anti-racism movements has only amplified the urgency of dismantling oppressive structure and building just, equitable systems.

We started by reaching out to community groups and organizations to listen to their experiences applying for systems change grants; especially those from equity-denied communities. Conversations with over 50 organization – about half of whom had either never applied to Vancouver Foundation or had not been successful being awarded a grant – surfaced important insights. The application process is one small piece of the equity puzzle. Still, much of the feedback suggested that incremental tweaks to the application form could be a signal of more substantive work to come. Systems change is complex and emergent work, and yet, we heard that the application forms seemed to require a high level of certainty over the project plan, partnerships, and outcomes – and felt too focused upon Western ideas of research and evidence.

So, we've made some revisions to the application forms to embrace systems change as learning, and to open up ways of knowing beyond formal research. We've also removed the budget template for Convene grants. We were unable to make changes to the word counts and the written format in this round but are exploring changes for future cycles. As we move forward, we will seek out more feedback and publicly share how we're approaching the many other pieces of equity at Vancouver Foundation.

Please note:
- The changes described below are based upon revisions originally made to the Develop and Test application forms during the 2020-2 granting cycle. These revisions were generally well-received by applicants and advisors and so we have introduced them to the Convene and Investigate forms this year.
- The changes below affect the Convene application in its entirety and to Stage 1 of the Investigate application. No changes have been made to Stage 2 of the Investigate application at this time.
- The revised questions will appear automatically in our online application system as long as you begin a new application. If you wish to continue to work on an application that you began during previous funding calls, then please contact us first so that we can apply the changes to that work.

1. Changes to the **Convene Grant** application form

Additional Question	Why did we make this change?
Where you're at Tell us about where your project team is at in its research journey. Vancouver Foundation embraces all levels of experiences and wants to support teams where they are at. If your team has varying degrees of research experience, then select the statement that reflects the most experienced team members. • We're pretty new to the language and concepts of participatory action research • We're pretty new to Vancouver Foundation's language of participatory action research, but not to community-based research • We've been using similar participatory action research language and concepts for a while • None of these statements quite fit where we're at	Knowing where you are on the participatory action research journey informs an understanding of your work and how we might be able to support you. Vancouver Foundation sees value in supporting the development of newer research teams, as well as more experienced teams.

Other changes to Project Details section

Previous Version	New Version	Why did we make this change?
Project Summary • State the title/name of your project • Indicate the anticipated start and end dates for your project	No change	
Systemic Issues and Root Causes Have you articulated a research question? If so, then what is it? If not, then what pressing issue(s) impacting the health of a population does your research team want to better understand, and that a research question could develop from?	**Systemic Issues and Root Causes** Do you have any health-related research questions in mind already? If so, then what are they? If not, then what are your early questions about what parts of the system(s) are negatively impacting the health of your community (e.g., beliefs & mindsets, relationships & power dynamics; structures, policies & resource flows)?	We want to know the systems you are seeking to question, while making the language we use more accessible. We also want to emphasize that a full understanding of the system is not required at this stage and that gaining an understanding of how best to question the system is one of the goals of Convene grants.

Systemic Change Why will researching this issue be meaningful? How do you foresee it enabling the community to act on the issue being researched?	**Systemic Change** Why is questioning this issue important? How do you foresee the findings of a future research project enabling the community to influence change?	We want to understand how your research questions came forward from community. We recognize that 'community' is not a homogenous entity and want to hear from you which voices in the community you perceive as having influence.
Research and Evidence To what extent has this research question or the emerging issue been explored already? How might your research differ from or build upon other related work in this area?	**Ways of Knowing** To what extent have your questions been explored already? How might your approach to these questions differ from or build upon other related work in this area?	We want to shift the framing of this question in terms of learning and inquiry to acknowledge that there are ways of knowing beyond the formal research that you'll reference in the next question.
Literature Review Please attach and upload a literature review (2-page maximum) of the critical, directly pertinent research related to your project.	No change	
Process Where are you currently in the design and development process? What have you done to move your ideas forward, and what activities do you still need to do?	**Process** Where are you currently in the design and development of the convening process? What have you done to move your questions forward? Tell us about your current and planned activities, and how they will help you to create a viable research project plan.	We recognize that organizations considering a Convene grant are doing so to further their understanding of how to explore a systemic issue. We want to give you the space to share your questions, rather than your answers. This question is also intended to help you to link your project activities to the things you've identified you want to learn.
Participation Share with us your approach to working with others. Who are you engaging in your development process, who do you hope to engage, and in what ways? How are the people most affected by the issue participating and what power(s) do they have in your project?	**Participation** Share with us your approach to working with others. Who are you engaging in this convening process, who do you hope to engage, and in what ways? How are the people most affected by the issue participating and what power(s) do they have to shape the convening process and the eventual research plan?	Based upon feedback, we understand that applicants want to share their approach to building partnerships and engaging community in ways that are meaningful. We recognize that community engagement takes time and will evolve over time. Asking about power in the process is one way to reflect upon the kinds of relationships that you hope to establish.

Project Description	Project Description	The re-wording of the question puts the focus on learning and inquiry at the Convene stage, rather than certainty and solutions.
What is the pressing health issue that your team is trying to understand? Why is this understanding meaningful? How will your Convene process lead to a fully formed and viable research project?	What is the pressing health issue that your team is trying to understand? Why is this understanding meaningful? What process will you use to question how systemic behaviours are keeping the issue in place?	

Changes to the Project Budget section

We have removed the requirement to fill out a predefined budget template and have replaced it with the following questions in order to simplify the process.

1) What is the estimated budget for the entire development process?
2) How much are you requesting from Vancouver Foundation?
3) Who else is supporting this project financially, and by how much?
4) What in-kind and cash contributions have you confirmed?
5) What in-kind and cash contributions are you in the process of securing?

2. Changes to the **Investigate Grant** application form (Stage 1 only)

Additional Question	Why did we make this change?
Where you're at Tell us about where your project team is at in its research journey. Vancouver Foundation embraces all levels of experiences and wants to support teams where they are at. If your team has varying degrees of research experience, then select the statement that reflects the most experienced team members. • We're pretty new to the language and concepts of participatory action research • We're pretty new to Vancouver Foundation's language of participatory action research, but not to community-based research • We've been using similar participatory action research language & concepts for a while • None of these statements quite fit where we're at	Knowing where you are on the participatory action research journey informs an understanding of your work and how we might be able to support you. Vancouver Foundation sees value in supporting the development of newer research teams, as well as more experienced teams.

Other changes to Project Details section

Previous Version	New Version	Why did we make this change?
Project Summary • State the title/name of your project • Indicate the anticipated start and end dates for your project	No change	
Systemic Issues and Root Causes What is your health-related research question, and how did you identify it?	**Systemic Issues and Root Causes** What are your health-related questions, and how did they come forward from the community as a priority to investigate and research?	We want to know the systemic issues you are seeking to investigate, while making the language we use more accessible. We also want to emphasize that a full understanding of the system is not required at this stage and that gaining such an understanding is one of the goals of the grant.

Systemic Change Why will researching this issue be meaningful? How will the findings enable the community to act upon the issue being researched?	**Systemic Change** Why is investigating this issue important? How do you foresee the community using the findings of this research project to influence change?	We want to understand how your research questions came forward from community. We recognize that 'community' is not a homogenous entity and want to hear from you which voices in the community you perceive as having influence.
Research and Evidence To what extent has this research question been explored already? How might your investigation differ from or build upon other related work in this area?	**Ways of Knowing** What is shaping your knowledge and understanding of the questions you're seeking to investigate? What and whose stories, experiences, research, evidence and ways of knowing is your curiosity grounded in?	The language of research and evidence comes from a Western, colonial lens. "Evidence-based" interventions and policy making has had the effect of elevating certain evidence about others, often rooted in an empirical world view. We also want you to be able to share the stories, insights and lived experiences that are driving your work. It's also important to recognize that *what* information is cited is also a question of *whose* information.
Literature Review Please attach and upload a literature review (2-page maximum) of the critical, directly pertinent research related to your project. The accepted formats are PDF and Word documents, and the maximum file size is 5MB.	No change	
Anticipated Outcomes What are your anticipated outcomes for the project (short, medium, and long term)?	**Anticipated Outcomes** What is your guiding star* for the change you'd like to see? What are the near star(s)* you're hoping to reach with this project, over the next one to three years? *These could be signals along the way that show your learning journey and where you hope to end up.	The guiding star metaphor is intended to shift the language away from the traditional use of short, medium and long-term outcomes. A guiding star may be interpreted more flexibly as a sign you are headed in the right direction. Our intent is to recognize the long-term and non-linear nature of systems change.

Process	Process	We recognize that the old question was quite broad and that applicants may have struggles to link their investigation of the systemic issue with their proposed activities. By asking you to share the thinking behind what you want to do, we hope to understand better how you see your project shifting the status quo.
Describe your research methodology, including the community involvement and participatory nature of the research.	What will be your core methodology and key activities to investigate these questions? Why have you chosen this approach?	
Participation	**Participation**	Based upon feedback, we understand that applicants want to share their approach to building partnerships and engaging community in ways that are meaningful. We recognize that community engagement takes time and will evolve over time. Asking about power in the process is one way to reflect upon the kinds of relationships that you hope to establish. Project partners and the people most affected by the issue may be distinct groups, or they may overlap.
Share with us your approach to working with others. Who are you engaging in your development process, who do you hope to engage, and in what ways? How are the people most affected by the issue participating and what power(s) do they have in your project?	Tell us about your participatory approach. Who are you engaging, and who do you hope to engage, in what ways? How are the people most affected by the issue participating and what power(s) do they have in the project? Where does decision-making lie?	
Project Description	**Project Description**	
What is the pressing health question that your team is investigating? Why is this investigation meaningful? How will your research project position the community to influence systems change?	What are the pressing health questions that your team is investigating? Why is this investigation meaningful? How will your research findings position the community to influence systems change?	Minor changes made to increase clarity.

Changes to the **Your Team** and **Project Budget** sections

No changes have been made to these sections. The Your Team section contains a pop-up table where you list the two co-leads and any other research team members that have been confirmed at this point, and the Project Budget sections contains a pop-up table where you list the revenues and expenses that are associated with the project.