



# Participatory Action Research Grants

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## Application Guide

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## Overview

Participatory Action Research (PAR) grants support research that is co-led by community members and researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of pressing community health issues. The **research must be a collaboration between a community service organization and an institution with access to an ethics board**, such as a university, health authority, or other research-based organization.

## Focusing on the social determinants of health

**The PAR grants specifically fund participatory action research projects related to the social determinants of health.** Participatory action research is an innovative approach that engages communities and leads to meaningful action by utilizing the expertise of participants, informed by their lived experiences, and the specialized training of researchers to build and implement a research project. Most PAR projects involve a process of reflection, which can lead to meaningful action in communities.

Vancouver Foundation focuses on the social determinants of health because we believe it has the greatest potential to impact the lives of communities and populations.

## Available Grants

We offer two different grant types to reflect the various stages of a participatory action research process. Each of these grant types is described in more detail in the following pages.

### Convene grants

Convene grants are short-term grants to help teams develop a participatory action research project plan that can be submitted for future funding.

Convene grants support:

- Activities that help potential teams of researchers, knowledge-users and/or community stakeholders to establish relationships and work together to identify research questions or emerging issues that could then form the basis of a future Investigate grant.
- Initial planning and discussion of a research project among potential team members, including researchers, knowledge-users and/or partners, to assess the viability of the research project and the partnership.
- Stakeholder consultations and community engagement activities help to solidify a research question or the direction of a research project.



## Investigate grants

Investigate grants are multi-year grants that help teams answer a research question, analyze their findings, and share knowledge in a way that supports the community to take action in the future.

Investigate grants support:

- Support research teams with a clear and viable participatory research plan that is grounded in the exploration of a complex issue affecting the health of a population.
- Encourage collaboration and knowledge exchange between and among communities, organizations and institutions affected by or interested in the pressing issue.
- They are led by communities and are intended to inform and lead to evidence-based action in the future.

## PAR grants at a glance

	CONVENE	INVESTIGATE
<b>Purpose of grant</b>	To develop a participatory action research project plan	To investigate a research question about the root cause(s) of a pressing issue impacting the health of communities
<b>Available grant amount</b>	Up to \$25,000	Up to \$100,000 per year
<b>Length of grant</b>	Up to 1 year	Up to 3 years
<b>Requires matching funds</b>	No	No
<b>Application process</b>	One-stage	Two-stage



## Key Dates

**July 2, 2025:** At 12 pm, applications open for Convene and Stage 1 Investigate grants via the online grant management system (GMS).

**July 8 & 10:** Online information sessions are hosted by PAR grant managers via Eventbrite

**August 5, 2025:** At 5 pm, applications close for Convene and Stage 1 Investigate grants via GMS.

**August to end of September 2025:** Vancouver Foundation staff and community advisors review all Convene and Stage 1 Investigate grant applications.

**Early October:** Decisions are sent via email for both Convene and Stage 1 Investigate grants:

- Final decisions for Convene grants
- Invitations for Stage 2 Investigate grants
- Decline notifications sent to Convene and Stage 1 Investigate grant applicants

**October to November 2025:** At 8 am, applications open for Stage 2 Investigate grants.

**November 3, 2025:** At 5 pm, applications close for Stage 2 Investigate grants.

**November to December 2025:** Vancouver Foundation staff and community advisors review all Stage 2 Investigate grant applications.

**Late December:** Final funding decisions are sent via email to Stage 2 Investigate grant applicants.

## Eligibility

Before you continue through this guide, please confirm that the organization acting as the primary applicant is a [qualified donee listed by the Canada Revenue Agency](#).

Other eligibility includes:

- The research must be a collaboration between a community service organization and an institution with access to an ethics board, such as a university, health authority or other research-based organization
- The project takes place primarily in BC



- Use a participatory action research methodology to develop and/or explore a health research question coming from community

### Eligible expenses

PAR grants support research projects that empower communities to create lasting change. We are accepting applications for a diversity of projects, which can include, but are not limited to:

- Salaries and benefits for each of the research team members to be hired to work on the project (e.g. research assistants, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows)
- Services and professional fees outside of the contributions provided by the research team (e.g. statistical consultation, video editing, training, or translation services)
- Supplies and materials (e.g. audiotapes, survey forms, postage, refreshments for meetings or interviews, and office supplies)
- Phone bills
- Travel expenses necessary to participate in research or knowledge exchange activities at multiple or community sites. This may include travel for the project leads, research team members and/or participants (if not covered in honorarium).
- Participant honorariums for their time contributed to the project which can include child care
- Knowledge exchange activities to share and discuss the results locally and beyond
- Costs associated with accessing data from any source (e.g. Pharmanet, government ministries).
- University overhead and indirect research costs. Vancouver Foundation is a charitable foundation, and as such, we request that our grants be exempt from universities' standard practice of deducting a percentage of grant dollars for overhead and indirect research costs.

### Ineligible expenses

PAR grants do not fund the following:

- Program development and evaluation
- Direct service, unless part of a broader research project proposal that is investigating the social determinants of health
- Salary costs of individuals who are salaried researchers at their institution (i.e., individuals with a portion of their salary protected for research time).
- Graduate students listed as co-lead researchers are not eligible for salary from the Vancouver Foundation funding
- Projects that take place primarily outside of BC
- An organization's ongoing operational or core expenses, including its cost to fundraise



- Project expenses that have been incurred before the application date 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
- 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)

## How to apply

**Step 1:** Download and read the PAR application guide and complete an eligibility quiz to determine your research project's eligibility.

**Step 2:** Decide which PAR grant type suits your research project.

**Step 3:** Attend an info session on July 8 or 10 to connect with the PAR grant managers. [Register today to attend.](#)

**Step 4:** Sign in to or create a new user profile via our online grant management system (GMS) to access Convene and Stage 1 Investigate applications.

- For new users: If you've never applied for a grant using this system, please create a profile by selecting "Register Here" at the top left of your screen. You can also watch our [video on how to create an account on GMS](#) to walk you through this process.
- Returning users: If you've applied for a Vancouver Foundation grant before, you can log in with your username and password.
- If you can't remember your login credentials, please select "Forgot Password" and follow the instructions when prompted. Please check your spam/junk email folder in case the email containing the reset information was sent there.

**Step 5:** Complete and submit your online application by **August 5, 2025, at 5 pm**. After applying, the individual listed as the Project Contact will receive an email confirmation.

**Step 6:** In October, decisions will be sent via email for both Convene and Stage 1 Investigate grants:

- Final decisions for Convene grants



- Invitations for Stage 2 Investigate grants
- Decline notifications sent to Convene and Stage 1 Investigate grant applicants

***For Investigate grant applicants, continue to Step 7.***

**Step 7:** Submit Stage 2 Investigate grant application.

**Step 8:** Wait for final decisions for Stage 2 Investigate grant applications.

## Reporting requirements

For both Convene and Investigate grants, annual reporting will be required. More information will be provided to successful grant recipients on the Grant Information Sheet after final decisions are communicated.

## Contact Us

If you have any questions about PAR grants, including how to navigate and troubleshoot the online grant management system, please email us at [grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca](mailto:grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca)

## PAR application checklist

### **1. Determine if you are eligible.**

Assess whether your organization and project is eligible for Vancouver Foundation funding. Take the [eligibility quiz](#).

### **2. Be sure you're applying to the right program and grant type.**

Review the [PAR grants at a glance table](#) (pg. 2) for an overview of the different grant types. If you're not sure which grant type is right for you, then please contact one of our grant managers.

### **3. Read the application process according to the grant type you are applying for.**

This will give you a better picture of the application process and provide you with the application questions so you can prepare your answers and collaborate with others.

- [Review Convene grant application process](#)
- [Review Investigate grant application process](#)

**Helpful tip:** Preparing questions outside of GMS may also give you a sense of the amount of time the application is likely to take and the type of information you'll need to have ready.





#### **4. Paint a clear picture of your project.**

Our reviewers need a clear picture of what you're hoping to accomplish so that they can decide whether your project should be recommended for funding. The more specific you can be about all aspects of the project (how you plan to conduct the research, and the resources you'll need), the easier it will be for the reviewers to decide.

That means:

- You've clearly described the who, what, when, where, and how of your proposal
- Your budget aligns with your project activities (for Investigate only)
- Your project timeline is realistic and aligns with your budget (for Investigate only)
- The proposal's narrative, budget and timeline all describe the same project, in a different way (for Investigate only)

#### **5. Be sure you're ready to take on a participatory action research project.**

Participatory action research requires an intentional investment of time and resources. Partnerships and research activities might only proceed after months of development work and discussions. It's not something anyone can do well "off the side of their desk."

You may want to consult with your Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, donors or community members to ensure that if your proposal is funded, you and your team will be able to take on the new work and keep your other work going.