



Participatory Action Research Grants | FAQ

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Eligibility

1. Who are these grants for?

Participatory Action Research (PAR) Grants support research co-led by community members (community service organizations) and researchers to explore the root causes of pressing issues that negatively impact **community health**.

The research projects we consider for funding:

- Must investigate the root causes of a complex health issue
- Must be a collaboration between a community service organization and a research institution with access to an ethics board, such as universities, health authorities or other research-based organizations
- Must be led by a primary applicant that is a [registered charity or other qualified donee](#) listed by the Canada Revenue Agency.

2. What is a qualified donee?

Under the Income Tax Act, a [qualified donee](#) is an organization that can issue official donation receipts for gifts it receives from individuals and corporations, such as a registered charity. Registered charities can also make gifts to them.

3. What do you mean by ‘participatory action research (PAR) methodology’?

At the core of the PAR methodology is the belief that research should be conducted with people, rather than for or on them.¹ The ‘action’ part of PAR refers to how evidence is gathered and how issues are researched. The action becomes part of the subject matter being researched.

Throughout the project, the team takes action to develop the research and inform its future direction. Action also means that research moves beyond just observing or studying an issue and focuses on using the research findings to transform it.

4. What do you mean by ‘community service organization’?

A community service organization is typically a charity or non-profit with a strong connection to the community experiencing the health issue that is being researched. This organization likely represents and is comprised of individuals with lived experience of the issue being studied.

¹ Chevalier, JM and Buckles, DJ. Participatory Action Research: Theory and Methods for Engaged Inquiry. UK: Routledge; 2013.



5. My organization is national, but we conduct some work in British Columbia (BC). Are we eligible?

Yes, we will fund organizations based elsewhere in Canada whose projects and work take place primarily in BC. Vancouver Foundation will only fund expenses related to the BC-based activities.

6. I've previously received a Vancouver Foundation grant. Can I still apply for this grant?

Yes, you can still apply for a PAR grant if you've received another grant from Vancouver Foundation. Our practice is to award only one Participatory Action Research grant to the same project team at a time.

7. Can I submit multiple applications for my organization?

Our practice is to consider only one application per project team. Different project teams working on different research may apply from the same institution. However, submitting more than one research project application at the same time will not increase the likelihood that your project team will receive funding.

8. My organization is not a qualified donee. Can Vancouver Foundation help me find a registered charity or other qualified donee to partner with for my application?

Vancouver Foundation is unable to broker these types of relationships as they need to be formalized by both organizations ahead of the grant application submission.

9. Can I apply for funding for a project that has already started?

We will consider applications for research projects that have already begun, provided that the request does not include expenses that have been, will be, or that we feel should be covered by other funding sources. Vancouver Foundation does not provide retroactive funding, nor bridge funding to sustain research projects between grants. Applying for a project that is already underway will not increase the likelihood of it being funded.



10. Do I need to use the funds within a certain time frame?

We trust that you intend to use the funding within six months of being awarded a grant and will use each year's payment within 12 months of receiving it. However, we know things can change, and we just ask that you stay connected with us if that happens.

11. What can the funds be used for?

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.

12. What activities are not eligible for PAR funding?

Participatory Action Research 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 prior to 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)
- Bursaries, scholarships, and awards (unless part of a broader project proposal)

Grant Program Details

13. What types of grants are available for research projects?

Depending on the stage of your research, we have two grants available for your project:

Convene grants are short-term grants to help teams articulate a research question and develop a participatory action research project plan that can then be submitted to funding organizations in the future. Convene grants help teams unpack a complex health issue and question the systemic behaviours that have created that issue or that are holding the issue in place. The funding requested should be distributed equitably between the convening process and the community's participation in that process.

Investigate grants are multi-year grants to 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.

14. What is the maximum/minimum amount I can request?

It depends on the stage of your research, grant type, and the scope of your initiative.

For Convene grants, you can request up to \$25,000 (for up to one year) for your research, based on the scope of your project.

For Investigate grants, you can request up to \$100,000 per year (for up to three years) for your research based on the scope of your project.



15. Do you require matching funds from other sources?

For both Convene grants and Investigate grants, we **do not** require organizations to match funds from other sources.

16. What are in-kind contributions?

In-kind contributions relate directly to real, anticipated, and essential expenses in the project budget—that is, they should also be project expenses. In-kind contributions can be in the form of cash-equivalent goods or services, which, if not donated, would have to be purchased with project funds. In-kind contributions can also include the time of paid staff within partnering organizations (e.g. experts in a specific area) spent giving direction or participating in the project, if their involvement is not considered volunteer time. In some cases, partners may provide specialized skills and advice, as well as access to specialized equipment, space, and data sets.

Application Process

17. What is the application process?

All applications must be submitted through Vancouver Foundation's [online grant management system](#). Both grant types will open on July 2 and close on August 5, 2025. You can prepare your application using the application questions below:

- [Convene grant application questions](#)
- [Investigate grant application questions](#)

18. When can we expect to hear decisions by?

Typically, the Convene grant application process takes approximately three months, following the close of applications on August 5, 2025. We intend to communicate final decisions for Convene grants by October 2025.

The Investigate grant application process takes approximately six months following the close of applications on August 5, 2025. We intend to communicate final decisions for Investigate grants by December 2025.

All important dates are listed on our [PAR webpage](#) under the Key Dates section.



19. Who is making the funding decisions?

Vancouver Foundation staff will make final grant decisions. Our granting team works with community advisors, including those with research experience that make funding recommendations to Vancouver Foundation.

20. Can I appeal a grant decision?

You cannot appeal a granting decision. If your application is not successful, we will let you know why it did not meet our criteria.

We recognize that sometimes you may disagree with the granting decision or process. In these cases, we encourage you to speak with the staff member listed on the final decision email.

Support

21. I need tech support with my application. Who do I contact?

You can watch our playlist of grant application support videos on YouTube. Alternatively, you can email us at grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca.