



# LEVEL BIPOC Grants Application Guide (2026)

LEVEL BIPOC Grants are designed to invest in BIPOC leaders across B.C. BIPOC-led organizations face disproportionate barriers to accessing reliable and operational funding, which impacts their capacity to run programs and initiatives, manage resources, and respond to emerging needs. Addressing racial inequities and injustices is important to systems change work, and marginalized communities are at the forefront of solutions by and for their communities.

These grants aim to close the funding gap by increasing access to funding for organizations serving marginalized communities. By providing multi-year operational grants, these grants aim to support BIPOC-led, BIPOC youth-led, and/or youth-engaged organizations to strengthen and sustain their organizational capacity, allowing them to focus on their programs, services, and impact.

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## Key Dates

**January 12, 2026:** Applications open.

**February 9, 2026:** Applications close at 5pm PT.

**February to April 2026:** Applications reviewed by Vancouver Foundation staff and Community Advisors.

**End of April 2026:** Invitations sent via email to select organizations to submit a Stage 2 application (oral or written submission). Declined applicants from Stage 1 will also be notified via email.

**May 2026 to June 2026:** Stage 2 applications close on June 12, 2026, at 5pm PT.

**June to July 2026:** Stage 2 applications reviewed by Vancouver Foundation staff and Community Advisors.

**End of July 2026:** Final decisions communicated via email to all Stage 2 applicants.

## Available Grants

These grants are \$50,000 each year, for up to three years of funding,

# LEVEL BIPOC Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for a LEVEL BIPOC Grant, organizations must identify as “BIPOC-led” and must ensure the following criteria are met:

- Your organization is either a [registered charity](#) OR [registered non-profit society](#) (including community service co-operatives) operating in B.C. since January 1, 2025, and has (or will have) society incorporation or charitable registration by April 30, 2026,
- Your organization’s primary purpose is to operate for [community benefit](#) in B.C.,
- Your organization is BIPOC-led, meaning at least two-thirds (67%) of your organization’s leadership team\* and/or board/non-conventional governance structures are held by individuals who self-identify as Black, Indigenous or People of Colour;
  - \* Leadership team is defined by those in leadership positions. For volunteer-run organizations, leadership positions include all roles on the Board or other unconventional governance structures (e.g. Flat Hierarchy).

When applying, organizations will be asked to self-identify as youth-led and/or youth-engaged. To be considered eligible, organizations must:

- Meet all BIPOC-led eligibility requirements outlined above, and,
- Your organization is led by individuals aged 19 to 30, or,
- Your organization actively empowers BIPOC youth to significantly influence the organization's policies, practices, strategies, and decision-making processes.

## Quick Links

- [Defining BIPOC-led organizations](#)
- [Defining BIPOC youth-led and/or youth engaging organizations](#)

## Eligible Expenses

- Operating costs
- Capacity building
- Staffing costs
- Employee assistance programs
- Service delivery costs
- Technology investments

## Ineligible Organizations, Activities and Expenses

- Individuals
- Non-BIPOC-led organizations
- Funded activities and/or initiatives that do not benefit the populations of BIPOC communities in B.C.
- Endowment funds or capital campaigns
- Activities and programs that take place primarily outside of B.C.
- Operating deficits or after-the-fact support
- Debt retirement
- Monetary reserves
- Mortgage pay-downs
- Large public infrastructure project
- [Activities deemed not charitable](#) as defined by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

# How to Apply

There is a two-stage application process for LEVEL BIPOC Grants. Stage 1 is a written application through our online grant management system. For Stage 2, applicants will be invited to select either an oral or written application. Applicants can expect to receive updates via email from our online grant management system @smartsimple.ca.

## Stage 1 Application

**Step 1:** Review this guide to see if this opportunity is right for your organization.

**Step 2:** Complete the [eligibility quiz](#) to confirm that your organization meets the eligibility requirements.

**Step 3:** If eligible, go to the Vancouver Foundation's [online grant management system](#) when the online application opens on **January 12, 2026**.

- **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 [How To Create a User Account video](#) 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.
  - **Forgot your password?** Follow the instructions on the login page to reset your password. Check your spam/ junk email folder in case the password rest email was sent there.

**Step 4:** Once inside the online grant management system, navigate to the “Apply” section (top right-hand corner of the screen) and select 2026 LEVEL BIPOC to apply.

**Step 5:** Complete and submit your online application by **February 9 at 5pm PT**. You’ll receive a confirmation email as receipt of your application submission from our online grant management system “@smartsimple.ca”.

**Step 6:** Wait for a decision via email by the end of April 2026.

*If your organization is invited to submit a Stage 2 application, continue to Step 7.*

## Stage 2 Application

**Step 7:** Complete and submit your Stage 2 written application or attend your scheduled oral application, based on your selection made in step 6 by **May 11, 2026**.

**Step 8:** Complete and submit your Stage 2 written application or complete your scheduled oral application, based on your selection made in step 6.

**Step 9:** Wait for final decisions communicated via email by the end of July.

You can [download the application questions](#) to review and prepare your application.

## Selection Process

All applications will be reviewed by Vancouver Foundation staff to confirm eligibility, funding priorities, and alignment to the grant program. Community Advisors will support Vancouver Foundation staff to assess the applications and invite eligible organizations to submit a Stage 2 application.

After Stage 2 closes on June 12, Vancouver Foundation staff and Community Advisors will review and assess written and oral applications to make final funding decisions.

Final funding decisions will be communicated via email by the end of July 2026.

## Reporting Requirements

Progress reports are required annually. Annual reporting helps us understand how funded work is unfolding, learn from grantee experiences, and share examples of grantee impact. It also supports our responsibility to ensure funds are being used as intended and to identify where our processes or supports could be improved. We aim to keep reporting **straightforward, mindful of grantee time**, and focused on **shared** learning.

### Contact

For questions related to the LEVEL BIPOC grant program, please email us at [level@vancouverfoundation.ca](mailto:level@vancouverfoundation.ca).



# Glossary of Terms & Definitions

This glossary defines key terms used throughout the LEVEL BIPOC Grants application process. It is designed to help applicants better understand the language, concepts, and methods we use while applying for funding. We encourage you to reference this tool as you complete your application.

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**Adjudicated process** means grant applications are reviewed by our staff and Community Advisors, who use a decision-making framework to assess and evaluate them based on specific criteria. **BIPOC** stands for Black, Indigenous, People of Colour. You may know variations of this acronym including:

- IBPOC: Indigenous, Black, People of Colour
- BIMPOC: Black, Indigenous, Multiracial, People of Colour
- QTIBIPOC: Queer, Trans, and Intersex, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour.

**Black** is a term used to refer to individuals of African descent. **BIPOC-led** is defined as an organization with at least two-thirds (67%) of its leadership positions (Board of Directors and/or leadership team if staff are employed and/or any other unconventional governance structure that influences operational and strategic decision-making) are held by people who self-identify as Black, Indigenous or People of Colour.

**Community accountability** is an organization's duty to the communities it serves. This means involving the community in decisions and ensuring that the organization's actions, goals, and values match the community's needs.

LEVEL BIPOC Grants acknowledge various community accountability practices, including a complaints process, equity and inclusion policy, and anti-discrimination policy.

Some other examples of community accountability practices are:

- Maintaining openness in decision-making and regularly updating the community on its strategies, successes and challenges.
- Actively soliciting, listening to, and acting on feedback from the community through surveys, town halls, focus groups, etc.
- Involving the community in setting funding priorities or deciding how funds are allocated to different programs, through participatory budgeting.
- Evaluating projects regularly with community input to assess impact and adjust strategies accordingly.
- Consistently sharing progress and setbacks with the community to build trust and seek collaborative solutions.
- Unlocking the capacity of community members to take on grassroots leadership roles within the organization or other community groups.
- Adapting programs and services to meet the community's specific cultural, linguistic, and social needs.
- Establishing clear ethical guidelines to ensure that projects and partnerships align with community values and avoid exploiting or misrepresenting community interests.

**Equity** is the idea that everyone has a right to the opportunities and resources they need to participate fully in society. Equity recognizes that achieving fairness means putting special measures in place for some individuals and groups.

**Governance** is how organizations are managed and regulated, ensuring accountability, transparency, fairness, and responsibility in decision-making. Good governance includes clear roles, ethical standards, and strategic decision-making aligned with organizational goals.

**Indigenous** is Canada's preferred term for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. It replaces the older term "Aboriginal." Some regions or individuals may prefer different terms.

**Intersectionality** is the idea that different parts of a person's identity can overlap and intersect to compound experiences of discrimination or privilege. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw.

**LGTBQIA2S** - Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual & Aromantic, Two-Spirit

**Not-for-profit organization** is an entity that operates for purposes other than making a profit for its owners or shareholders. Instead, it focuses on serving a specific mission and/or providing community benefit.

**Non-conventional governance** structure refers to organizational frameworks that depart from traditional hierarchical governance models, such as those in corporate or bureaucratic settings.

Examples of unconventional governance structures:

- Flat Hierarchy: Where decision-making is distributed evenly among all members rather than being top-down.
- Participatory Governance: Involving community members, stakeholders, and beneficiaries directly in decision-making processes.
- Collective Leadership: Shared leadership responsibilities among a group of individuals rather than relying on a single leader or CEO.
- Rotating Leadership: Leadership positions rotate among members regularly to ensure equal participation and prevent power imbalances.

**Operational funding** refers to financial support for day-to-day expenses like salaries, utilities, and administrative costs, ensuring organizations can sustain their core functions and activities while maintaining stability to continue delivering services or fulfilling their mission over time.

**People(s) of Colour (POC)** generally refers to individuals not of white or European descent who do not identify as Black or Indigenous.

**Privilege** means advantages that are automatically granted to certain social groups, but not others based on aspects like race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, geographical location, ability, and religion.

**Racialized** generally refers to non-white people. This term highlights how race is socially constructed, yet has very real impacts on people. (See also: BIPOC and People of Colour).

**Racial equity** is the idea that everyone, no matter their race, has what they need to succeed and participate fully in society. **Racial justice** is an outcome where people no longer face significant and unfair disadvantages because of their race.

**Settlers** refer to those who are not Indigenous to a place and who either chose to settle there or had ancestors who settled there.

**Sustainability (operational)** refers to an organization's ability to keep running and fulfil its mission, adjusting to changes while staying true to its values. This means managing resources well to handle financial, social, and environmental changes.

**Operational sustainability** also entails the organization's ability to effectively serve the community. This can be achieved through leadership that mirrors the community and practices that encourage long-lasting community involvement and resilience. Sustainability isn't just about lasting a long time; it's about offering quality service that adapts to community needs and changes over time.

**White** generally refers to individuals of European decent.

**Youth** refers to individuals between 19-30 years old (inclusive).

**Youth-engaging** refers to organizations whose governance structures actively enable BIPOC youth to significantly influence decision-making processes.

An example could be a decolonized organization that actively involves young BIPOC individuals to ensure their input is valued and implemented, shaping the organization's policies and direction.

**Youth-led** refers to a group/ organization in which at least two-thirds (67%) of the leadership team and/or board/other governance structures are held by individuals between 19 and 30 years old.