

Calgary Foundation's Collective Group Systems Change Pilot 2023-2026

Calgary Foundation is committed to systemic change. A 3-year pilot program has been launched to support transformational and lasting change by placing trust and shifting decision-making closer to the impacted communities. Significant and flexible funding to Black, Indigenous and racialized communities will provide critical time and space for relationship-building, autonomy and shared solutions.

How we fund is as important as what we fund. Calgary Foundation has a strong community-driven approach that includes a diversity of volunteers who represent the community in our decision-making.

This pilot takes our participatory approach a step further, engaging charities and their partners to decide how funds are allocated as their projects unfold. Along the way, participants in the pilot program will help us understand how they approach systemic change and how we can better support collaboration, foster relationships and mitigate funder-grantee power dynamics.

The pilot program is providing three-year funding to groups who are:

1. Taking a collective approach to tackle issues related to mental health and poverty by involving people who are impacted by the issues in the decision-making process.
2. Designing projects that advance the goals of racial equity, and who have a vision for change, have trusted community partnerships and a deep understanding of the challenges that need to be addressed.

From 2023 - 2026, Calgary Foundation is supporting the following three groups:

- 01 **Is Kitsii Gome (Seven Brother's Circle)**
Grantee lead: Aboriginal Friendship Centre
\$660,000 over 3 years

The collective strategically supported the community through the pandemic, and now provides continuing care supports post COVID. This unique approach to delivering programs and services is geared towards removing barriers and empowering individuals. The collective maintains its Indigenous based framework and strategy to ensure cultural relevancy and safety. Their goal is to address the following key areas: basic needs, food security and provide cultural reconnection opportunities. The Seven Brothers Circle membership operates on a 'pooled' resource and coordinated approach to meeting the needs of the community.

02 **Weaving World Views and Practices: Collaborating to Improve Mental Health of Racialized Communities**

Grantee lead: Action Dignity

\$1,000,000 over 3 years

Project Weave is a collaborative that will be convened and facilitated by ActionDignity with the aim of addressing systemic barriers to mental health and well-being among racialized community members in Calgary. ActionDignity works to address systemic barriers that hinder active civic participation and engagement of ethnocultural and racialized communities in Calgary. For the past 20 years, Action Dignity has surfaced various vectors that contribute to social exclusion among racialized community members; they have built the capacity of grassroots ethnocultural community groups and leaders to design and deploy culturally appropriate interventions; and, they have collaborated with policymakers and systems-actors to incorporate the voices and lived experiences of ethnocultural communities into policymaking to promote social inclusion. In the project, ActionDignity aims to mobilize a collaborative comprising of ethnocultural community groups, service providers and public institutions to work towards making the Alberta Mental Health Services system responsive to the needs and lived experiences of racialized communities.

03 **The African Canadian Collaborative for Systems Change**

Grantee lead: Calgary African Community Collection and Somali Canadian Society of Calgary

\$1,100,000 over 3 years

The Calgary African Community Collective is a Black-led not for profit umbrella organization that is focused on policy advocacy and systems change. Through this initiative, CACC will mobilize resources, interest and partnerships to create the conditions to tackle generational poverty and inequity that have marginalized our communities. Guided by the Nguzo Saba Principles, CACC aspires to shift the dynamics of power and effect change by empowering our grassroots and associations through knowledge mobilization, research, adaptive capacity building and systems thinking. CACC will facilitate its member organizations to tackle the poverty in the Black communities through a framework that will allow them to look beyond income and include programs and services to fully integrate people into the society regardless of their situation.

Calgary Foundation will need time to learn from the systems-changing work that is being led by the collective groups. The pilot is not accepting new applicants. However, we will continue to encourage collaborative work when applying for the various granting streams that are available.