

Community Grants General Guidelines

CONTACTS

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[Click to schedule a conversation with the team](#)

IMPORTANT NOTE: We revise the Program Guidelines every grant cycle. Please refer to the [Community Grants website](#) for the most up-to-date information on the Program Guidelines. New guidelines are posted at the start of each cycle, in January and August.

ABOUT COMMUNITY GRANTS

Community Grants cover a broad scope of projects aimed at strengthening the charitable sector and engaging communities. This is Calgary Foundation's largest granting program and is open for application twice a year. We receive about 200 applications each grant cycle and are able to fund about one-third of the them. Grant amounts vary; the average request is \$75,000 and range from \$5,000 - \$200,000. *(Requests above this range cannot be accepted, including multi-year requests)*

Community Grants support single year or multi-year proposals for:

- **Existing Programming:** *(For organizations with an annual operating budget less than \$4 million)* Costs associated with the delivery, continuation, stabilization or incremental growth of programs, where the core program, target population and service delivery model remain the same. Incremental growth may include serving more participants, extending program duration, or increasing program features. Examples of eligible costs include salaries, program materials and equipment, space, promotion, administration, accessibility considerations, etc.
- **New Initiative:** *(For organizations of all sizes)* Costs associated with activities that introduce a new program, service, or approach. The activities must represent a change in service delivery and/or target population. Examples of eligible costs include salaries, program materials and equipment, space, promotion, accessibility considerations, as well as public policy dialogue and development activities.
- **Organizational Development:** *(For organizations of all sizes)* Costs associated with internally focused work that invests in the effectiveness of an organization to advance its charitable mission (capacity building). Includes: staff wellness strategies, consultancy fees, professional/leader development, organizational assessments, technology, specialized equipment, renovations, capital projects, and costs associated with organizational mergers. Capacity Building may also be to strengthen a sector or collective group and may include costs to collaborate, community engagement and organizing, identifying issues and framing shared actions. (Note: adding more staff to deliver programs is captured in the programming categories above).

WHO CAN APPLY?

Registered charities and other qualified doneesⁱ can apply for projects that take place in Calgary and areaⁱⁱ. If your group is not a registered charity, contact us to discuss grant options. Calgary Foundation funds a wide variety of organizations and we encourage applications from organizations with programs led by and for equity-deserving communities. About 30% of the Fall 2025 Community Grants were awarded to organizations led by and focused on Indigenous, Black, racialized, disabilities, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Read our commitment to [Equity and Inclusion](#).

CAN WE HAVE MORE THAN ONE COMMUNITY GRANT?

Charities and qualified donees can have **one** active application or grant at a time ('active' means from the time of application submission to the completed report submission). While groups can only have one grant at a time, it is not a one-time-only grant. We are happy to hear from past grantees about new projects or about next steps in a project we supported.

We make an exception for charities to apply for a second grant when they are supporting a registered non-profit society that is not otherwise eligible to access funding on its own. Check out the [Better Together Guide](#) for more information about working in partnership and contact us before applying.

CAN WE TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT OUR IDEA?

Yes. **Bessie or Cait** can help you think through your project ideas, connect with peers who have done similar projects and support you to outline your grant application. We also provide feedback on draft applications. We offer alternative application formats (oral or video) to make our application process more accessible. Declined applicants can discuss the reasons for the decision with us.

WHAT IS INELIGIBLE?

- Activities that do not align with [Calgary Foundation's stated values](#)
- Any activities that happen or expenses that are incurred before our grant decisions (decision notifications are sent to applicants around early July and January for the Spring and Fall application cycles respectively)
- Annual events or event series, e.g., symposiums, gatherings and conferences
- Research other than Participatory Action Research
- Fundraising activities or fundraiser's salaries
- Debt retirement and endowment building
- Direct financial support to individuals
- Requests from private schools except Designated Special Education Schools (DSERPS) that serve students who are identified with a mild, moderate or severe disability
- Local neighbourhood or school playgrounds and parks
- Travel outside of Calgary and area or the surrounding First Nations of Treaty 7 Territory
- Exclusively religious activities (defined as religious worship or instruction), those that include proselytizing (defined as converting or recruiting people to a specific set of religious beliefs), or programs/services that require participation in religious activities

HOW DO WE APPLY?

- [Read the Program Guidelines](#) carefully.
- Contact us well in advance of the application deadline to discuss your initiative and eligibility before working on an application.
- Check the next Community Grants deadline on our website. There are two application deadlines per year, typically in mid-February and mid-September. It takes about 4 months between the application deadline and grant decisions. It is important to plan your applications in advance of the work you want to do.
- Complete the application form online on Calgary Foundation's [Grants Portal](#). The application consists of long and short answer questions. The text area is about 2 pages.

WHO EVALUATES COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS AND HOW DO THEY DECIDE?

Staff and volunteer committees made up of local community members, mostly with nonprofit sector experience, who believe in inclusive welcoming communities review eligible applications. Reviewers look for such things as: groundwork and details that support the project purpose, a well-thought-out and resourced plan, a clear understanding of what you hope to achieve and appropriate relationships with other organizations that would help in making the project successful.

Applicants whose applications most closely meet these criteria are invited to meet with a committee to share more about their initiative. We also consider alignment with community priorities and how the proposal addresses findings from the annual Quality of Life Report. Read the [Quality of Life Report 2025](#).

IF AWARDED A COMMUNITY GRANT, THEN WHAT?

- Acknowledge the support of Calgary Foundation in project materials or use our logo on your website where appropriate. See [Media Kit | Calgary Foundation](#). *Note: If your project is awarded a Community Grant, we will list that information on our website and in our other public records.*
- Consult us first if you are considering changing the project or how you spend the grant. We will do our best to support you as you respond to changing circumstances.
- Tell us your project story and lessons learned through a final (and sometimes, interim) report.

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- I. Go to [Canada Revenue Agency's Charities Listings](#) to see if your organization is a qualified donee
 - II. Calgary and area means the work must be based in and serve one or more of the following regions: Banff, Calgary, Canmore, Municipal District of Bighorn, Foothills County, Municipal District of Kananaskis, Rocky View County, Wheatland County (including towns and hamlets), Siksika Nation, Kainai Nation, Piikani Nation, Tsuut'ina Nation, and Iyârhe Nakoda Nations.