

Exploring Transformational Impact

The Major Grants Program is designed to respond to and empower the charitable sector to dream big and think differently by funding projects with ‘transformational impact’.

Transformation is context dependant. Because of the breadth of sectors we serve, the intention of this document is not to define transformation for potential applicants. Instead, it serves as a conversation guide for applicants to reflect on the transformation they want to achieve and assess their own fit for the program. It also supports the Major Grants Committee to understand how our grants might propel change.

Major Grants has supported projects to do one or more of the following:

- Create or strengthen new collaborative models and relationships
- Address complex challenges through innovative infrastructure
- Influence policy or sector-wide practices that may lead to better outcomes beyond a single program
- Model a way of working or serving community that doesn’t currently exist in a sector or community
- Change power dynamics or foster self-determination

Questions to consider:

We encourage applicants (individual charities or groups of charities) to help us understand your ecosystem and how your initiative creates meaningful change in the wider sector or community beyond your organization.

- Will your initiative address a persistent issue from new angle or change the conditions that hold it in place?
- Are there commonly held assumptions about the community you serve or the way your sector works that you aim to shift?
- Will the work center perspectives and/or people that have previously been overlooked or systemically excluded?
- Is there an emerging opportunity that, if leveraged, could result in significant change for your sector or community?
- Who else is part of this ecosystem? How will they be involved and impacted?
- If this initiative succeeds, what will be different at the organizational, sectoral or broader community level?

Examples of Funded Projects

USAY Youth Centre

The Urban Society of Aboriginal Youth (USAY)'s Indigenous Youth Centre in Forest Lawn creates a unique space owned by and for Indigenous people – it is the only centre of its kind in Calgary. With a comprehensive range of programs, the Youth Centre empowers both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth on a journey to reconciliation, ensuring equitable access to resources, mentorship, and culturally relevant activities.

The Community Information Exchange

The Community Information Exchange (CIE) is a designed to connect Calgary's social, health, and government services, allowing organizations to share data and coordinate care effectively. Developed by Distress Centre Calgary and partners, the CIE tackles the challenge of fragmented services by creating an interoperable platform that supports individuals with complex needs, reduces redundant assessments. The CIE empowers providers to see the complete journey of service seekers, reducing gaps and duplication, and offering a more equitable, trauma informed approach to care.

Better Job Pathways

The Better Job Pathways: Systems Change and Innovation to Improve Career Access: Through this initiative, Momentum is seeking change in two ways. First, by pushing for regulatory reforms in the Private Career Colleges sector to protect vulnerable learners from exploitative practices, and second, through an innovative Income Share Agreement model that links training costs to participant employment outcomes. The success of Momentum's efforts through this initiative could reshape the job training landscape, improve economic access for many, and create safer, more accessible pathways to financial stability for everyone.

The Joseph Chung Centre for Creativity

The National Access Arts Centre's development of the Joseph Chung Centre for Creativity together with The Trico Communities Accessible Arts Centre will create the world's first accessible arts learning campus, designed to support the learning, creation, and presentation aspirations of Canadian artists living with disabilities. The new campus will become a cultural landmark, a community gathering space for Calgarians – and Canadians – of all abilities and a platform for Canadian artists with disabilities to advance and showcase their creative talent.

Nature's Network: Maintaining Connected Landscapes

Miistakis Institute and partners are working in two areas experiencing high level of land use change, the Greater Calgary Region and Southwestern Alberta to develop and implement solutions to keep landscapes connected. Together with partners, they are addressing gaps in science, conservation planning and policy and socialization of connected landscapes. A variety of opportunities, including new highway overpasses and time sensitive policy windows, drive the need for this work.

A Note to Readers

A previous version of this document presented similar information with a "Layers of Transformation" graphic. If you studied the previous version, don't worry, the intent remains the same.

The previous version described change at an organization, sector, and city-wide level. Through conversations with applicants and committee members, we found the distinctions between layers were fluid and many of us interpreted them differently.

This updated version removes the layers, but retains the focus on change that extends beyond a single organization.