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Transforming Systems Grants
Application Guide

This guide explains the purpose, timeline, eligibility criteria and how to apply. We encourage you to read it in its entirety to see if the Transforming Systems Grants are right for your organization.

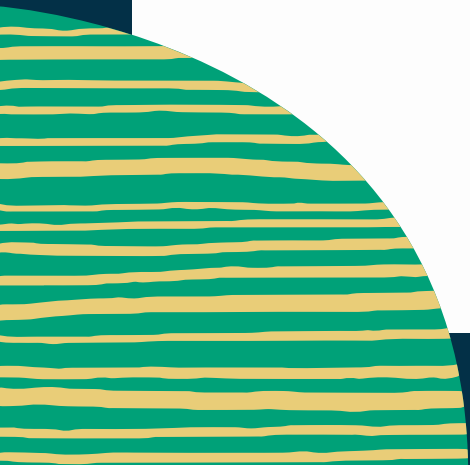Thank you for your ongoing work contributing to your community and creating lasting change in British Columbia.

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About Transforming Systems Grants

The Transforming Systems Grants (TSG) help to fund organizations **advancing systemic change** by addressing the **root causes** of inequality and supporting those most affected to shape their own futures. It is intended to support organizations that prioritize **intersectionality, allyship** and **mutual liberation** in their efforts to challenge oppressive systems.

PURPOSE OF FUNDING

These grants were designed to support **operational costs**, rather than specific projects, for organizations that are advancing systemic change by addressing the root causes of systems of oppression.

Funding is intended to support existing work and can be used for one or more of the following:

- Sustaining, deepening, and/or expanding current operations and initiatives;
- Building or expanding networks or strategic partnerships; and/or,
- Amplifying reach and effectiveness.

EXAMPLES OF THE WORK TO BE FUNDED

Below are some examples of oppressive systems applicants may be addressing in their work with an example of an initiative related to each:

Please note: This list is not exhaustive, and we invite applicants to identify other systems they're addressing when they apply.

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Oppressive System	Definition	Example of an Initiative Addressing the System
Ending Exploitation	Ensuring equitable access to support and opportunities for systemically marginalized groups by fostering economic independence and enabling social mobility.	Supporting and collaborating with migrant farm workers to address exploitation by employers.
Challenging Marginalization	Funding organizations and communities that work to uplift systemically marginalized communities, ensuring equal access to support, opportunities, and decision-making processes.	Addressing the disproportionate effects of poverty experienced by people with disabilities.
Combating Powerlessness	Investing in programs that build leadership, agency, and self-determination among communities that have historically been denied power and influence over their own lives and environments.	Addressing the fundamental and long-standing causes of boil water advisories in an Indigenous community.
Resisting Cultural Imperialism	Supporting efforts to protect and promote cultural diversity by organizations that resist the imposition of dominant cultural norms and values on minority groups.	Challenging norms in the public school system by promoting 2SLGBTQIA+ youth leadership.
Preventing Violence	Funding organizations and communities that address both direct, structural and institutional violence, and other forms of harm directed at systemically marginalized communities.	Engaging with seniors to create policies that address elder abuse.

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Key Dates

NOVEMBER 18 2024

Stage 1 applications open online at 9am PT

JANUARY 14 2025

Stage 1 applications close at 5pm PT

JANUARY TO MARCH 2025

Application review begins to confirm eligibility and alignment with the funding purpose.

MARCH 2025

Randomized selection process completed. Organizations selected will be invited via email to select either an oral or written Stage 2 application.

MARCH 2025 TO APRIL 2025

Stage 2 applications open.

JUNE 2025

Final funding decisions communicated via email to all Stage 2 applicants.

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Available Grants

Transforming Systems Grants has a funding commitment of $9 million.
There are 30 awards available for operational grants of $100,000 per year for three years.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a Transforming Systems Grant, your organization's primary purpose must be for community benefit AND, you must meet one of the following criteria:

- Your organization is a **qualified donee** operating in British Columbia.

- Your organization is a **registered non-profit society** that has been operating in British Columbia since January 1, 2024.

- Your organization is an unregistered non-profit society that has been operating in British Columbia since January 1, 2024, that will have society registration by February 28, 2025.

    o **If becoming a registered non-profit society** is a barrier for your organization, please contact us at **grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca**

- Your organization is a **community service co-operative** operating in British Columbia.

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EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Staffing costs including salaries and benefits, professional development, training and coaching etc.

- Administration and overhead

- Capacity building including strategic planning, board governance and partnership development etc.

- Relationship and network building

- Communications and outreach

- Program delivery costs

- Technology and infrastructure investments

EXAMPLES OF INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES

- Activities and programs that take place, or benefit communities, primarily outside of BC

- Endowment funds or capital campaigns

- Operating deficits or after-the-fact support

- Debt retirement

- Monetary reserves

- Mortgage pay-downs

- Large public infrastructure projects

- **Activities deemed not charitable** as defined by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

Not sure if the Transforming Systems Grants are the right fit for your organization? *Confirm your eligibility today by taking the* online eligibility quiz.

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How to Apply

STEP 1:

After reading the Transforming Systems Grants Application Guide, confirm eligibility by completing the online eligibility quiz.

STEP 2:

When applications open on November 18, use the online grant management system to access the application portal.

- For returning applicants: If you've applied for a grant through this system before, you can log in with the same username and password.

- For new applicants: If this is your first time applying for a Vancouver Foundation grant, you'll need to create a profile by using the "Register Here" button found at the top left of the portal. View one of the **How To Create a User Account video** to see a video demonstration of this first step in the online grant application process.

Forgot your password? Follow the instructions on the login page to reset your password. Check your spam/junk email folder in case the password reset email was sent there.

STEP 3:

Once inside the application portal, navigate to the "Apply" section (top right corner of the screen) and select 2024 Transforming Systems Grants.

STEP 4:

Complete and submit your Stage 1 online application by 5 pm PST on January 14, 2025. You'll receive a confirmation email upon submission from "@smartsimple.ca" (our online grant management system).

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STEP 5:

Wait for Stage 1 decisions, communicated via email in March 2025.

If your application is selected, you will be invited via email to Stage 2 (steps 6 to 8). Your organization can submit a written or oral application (conversation with staff and Community Advisors) as part of Stage 2.

STEP 6:

Follow the emailed instructions to select either a written or oral Stage 2 application submission.

- To submit a written application, you'll be given access to Stage 2 of the application portal of the online grant management system

- To submit an oral application, a member of our granting team will contact you to schedule a 60-minute conversation

STEP 7:

Complete and submit your Stage 2 application or attend your scheduled oral Stage 2 application (based on your selection made in step 6).

STEP 8:

After completing and submitting your Stage 2 application, our granting team will communicate final decisions via email in June 2025.

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Selection Process

1.

After Stage 1 closes on January 14, staff will assess applications, confirming eligibility and alignment to the grant's purpose.

2.

Applications will be sorted and assigned to either a **large urban population centre** or a **smaller population centre**, **rural and/or remote communities** as defined in the glossary.

3.

Applications will be randomly selected to determine which ones advance to Stage 2.

4.

Selected applicants will be invited to Stage 2 to provide more information by submitting a written or oral application. These applications and conversations are reviewed by staff and Community Advisors.

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Reporting Requirements for Grant Recipients

Formal reporting is required for all grants made to registered non-profit societies and community service cooperatives as outlined by the Canada Revenue Agency's reporting requirements for **grants to non-qualified organizations.** More information will be provided to awarded recipients when final decisions are communicated.

Grants to qualified donees do not require formal reporting. Instead, we've created an optional opportunity for organizations to connect with us to share their experience and discuss their organizational priorities and challenges.

Contact

Need help confirming eligibility or navigating the application portal?

Please email us at **grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca** and one of our granting team members will follow-up with you.

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Glossary of Terms

Allyship refers to the active and ongoing commitment of individuals and organizations to support, amplify, and stand in solidarity with marginalized communities. It involves recognizing and addressing power imbalances, leveraging privilege to advocate for those who are underrepresented, and working collaboratively to address unfair laws, policies and societal norms.

Challenging marginalization refers to funding organizations and communities that work to uplift systemically marginalized communities, ensuring equal access to support, opportunities, and decision-making processes.

Combating powerlessness means investing in programs that build leadership, agency, and self-determination among communities that have historically been denied power and influence over their own lives and environments.

Community service cooperatives (co-ops) are owned and operated by the people who use these essential products or services. They develop communities and create jobs by offering a range of supports like housing, food or health care. Community Service Cooperatives must be registered and listed on OrgBook BC. to be eligible.

Ending exploitation means ensuring equitable access to support and opportunities for systemically marginalzed communities by fostering economic independence and enabling social mobility.

Equitable distribution proportionately distributes available funding to organizations based on the population size they serve. Transforming Systems Grants will distribute 60% of available funding to urban-based organizations and 40% to organizations serving smaller, rural, and/or remote areas.

Equity is a principle and process that promotes fair conditions for all people to fully participate in society. It recognizes that although everyone has the right to be treated equally, not all have equal access to resources, opportunities, or benefits.

Existing Work refers to current activities, programs and initiatives that are established and actively being implemented

Future is used to recognize that our work is not annual, it is generational and multi-generational. This term includes the future of all people, the planet and our non-human relations.

Governance structure refers to how organizations are managed and regulated, ensuring accountability, transparency, fairness, and responsibility in decision-making. Some best practices include clear roles, ethical standards, and decision-making that is aligned with organizational goals.

Interconnectedness is a term to recognize that systems of oppression (colonialism, racism, patriarchy, transphobia, ableism and others) affect everyone and everything but disproportionately impacts specific groups more than others.

Intersectionality is a term coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, illustrating the interconnectedness of our identities that cannot be separated from one another. Crenshaw's work highlights how individuals with multiple marginalized identities (such as Black trans women or disabled queer people) experience compounded forms of inequity and oppression.

Justice is used to reference a state where all people, planet and living beings exist in harmony with their rights fully realized.

Large urban population centres in BC are Metro Vancouver, the Capital Regional District (Greater Victoria) and/or the Regional District of Central Okanagan. These metropolitan areas have substantial population sizes and infrastructure development that bring unique urban challenges and opportunities.

Mutual liberation recognizes that everyone's freedom is connected and dependent on one another, requiring a collective action to address unfair laws, policies and practices. This concept emphasizes that true liberation cannot be realized until every group in society is free from injustice and inequality. In this context, interconnectedness and mutual liberation are connected.

Operational funding refers to financial support for day-to-day expenses like administrative costs, capacity building, salaries, and/or technology investments. This type of funding helps organizations sustain their operations and maintain stability to continue fulfilling mission and vision.

Organizational structure is how people and activities are managed within an organization. It defines roles, responsibilities, and relationships among individuals and teams impacting how decisions are made, how information flows, and how responsibilities are allocated within the organization.

Some examples include:

• **Hierarchical:** A traditional structure with clear levels of authority and a top-down chain of command.

• **Flat:** A structure with few or no levels of middle management, promoting more direct communication and collaboration.

• **Non-traditional:** Alternative models such as matrix, networked, collective etc. that emphasize flexibility, collaboration, and shared decision-making.

Preventing violence refers to funding organizations and communities that address both direct, structural and institutional violence, and other forms of harm directed at systemically marginalized communities. the work of organizations that addresses and stops harm directed at members of systemically marginalized communities.

Privilege is a set of unearned benefits given to people who fit into a specific social group. Individuals can be granted privilege based on certain aspects of their identity like race, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, geographical location, ability, religion and others.

Randomized selection refers to a method where applications are selected for review from a pool of eligible applicants. This approach is used to minimize bias and ensure fairness in the selection process. Randomization helps to impartially distribute funding to qualified applicants, enhancing transparency and equity in grant distribution.

Registered non-profit societies in BC are also known as "societies." Societies are independent, democratic organizations that are required to comply with the Societies Act and their own constitution and bylaws. Societies do not earn any profits for their members. All money is donated to the organization's cause or goal. Not-for-profit / non-profit societies must be registered and searchable under OrgBook BC, to be eligible to receive a Transforming Systems Grant.

Resisting cultural imperialism refers to the efforts to protect and promote cultural diversity by organizations that resist the imposition of dominant cultural norms and values on minority groups.

Root causes are the underlying factors behind a problem or issue. For example, poverty and lack of education can lead to crime. To reduce crime, you need to fix the deeper issues, like creating jobs, increasing wages and improving education.

Self-determination means having the freedom to make your own choices and control your own life. It's about deciding what's best for yourself or your community, without being forced or influenced by others. People or groups with self-determination can set their own goals and take action to achieve them.

Small population centres, rural and/or remote communities are areas outside of BC's three large urban population centres: Metro Vancouver, Capital Regional District (Greater Victoria), and the Regional District of Central Okanagan. Smaller population centres have lower population densities and limited access to urban services which can lead to experiences of isolation, economic challenges, and need for specialized resources and development initiatives.

Sustainable is a term to identify a state that provides for the needs of today's generation while balancing the needs of future generations, considering social, economic, environmental, and cultural resources.

Systemically marginalized communities are groups of people who are traditionally excluded from society and often have less access to funding, rights, and opportunities. This can happen because of factors like race, gender, disability, income, or sexual orientation.

Systems (in the context of "systemic change") refers to an interconnected network of elements—including laws, institutions, policies, and cultural norms that influence social behaviors and outcomes.

Systems change work addresses the symptoms and root causes of systemic inequities. The goal is to influence and transform unfair laws, policies, and practices to create more inclusive communities. Some key concepts of systems change include:

•   **Transformative change:** Shifting or altering how a system operates to embed values of inclusion and equity. The change is transformative because it impacts the entire system to disrupt patterns of inequality.

•   **Mental models:** These are the beliefs and assumptions that influence an individual's understanding of the world. Changing mental models involves challenging stereotypes and biases and welcoming new perspectives that promote equity and justice.

•   **Power dynamics:** refers to the distribution of influence and authority within a system, determining who has the capacity to make decisions and who is excluded. Changing these dynamics involves ensuring that historically marginalized voices are not only acknowledged but also have meaningful impact on decision-making processes.

•   **Structural change:** Advocating to change the rules, policies, and practices that disproportionately affect marginalized communities.

Systemic inequalities refers to the unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, benefits, and limitations among different social positions or statuses within a group or society. This often leads to disparities in access to resources and opportunities.

Systems of oppression refers to the intentional mistreatment against an identified group. These systems perpetuate inequities through exploitation, discrimination, colonization, disempowerment, and/or committing violence. For more examples, you can refer to the The Five Faces of Oppression.