

# Transforming Systems Grants Frequently Asked Questions

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# Grant Program Details

## 1. HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

The total funding budget is approximately \$9 million, providing at least 30 awards of \$100,000 per year for three years.

## 2. WHAT CAN THE FUNDS BE USED FOR? DO I NEED A PROJECT IDEA?

**Transforming Systems Grants are not project-based and are meant to support the operating costs of organizations. Some eligible expenses include:**

- Staffing costs including; salaries and benefits, professional development, training, coaching etc.
- Administration and overhead
- Capacity building including; strategic planning, board governance, partnership development etc.
- Relationship and network building
- Communications and outreach
- Program delivery costs
- Technology and infrastructure investments

## 3. WILL THIS GRANT BE OFFERED AGAIN?

At this time, we are only intending to offer Transforming Systems Grants (TSG) this year. In the meantime, we are co-designing a new grant program with Community Advisors that we plan to launch in 2026. You can subscribe to our [\*\*granting newsletter\*\*](#) to remain updated on our latest grant programs.

#### 4. WHEN IS THE APPLICATION DEADLINE?

The online application portal will close on January 14, 2025, at 5pm PT.

#### 5. DO I NEED TO USE THE FUNDS WITHIN A CERTAIN TIME FRAME?

We trust that you intend to use the funding within six months of being awarded a grant and will use each year's payment within 12 months of receiving it. But we know things can change. We just ask that you stay connected with us if your plans change.

#### 6. HOW WILL FUNDING BE DISTRIBUTED?

**When applying, organizations will be asked to identify where the majority of their community involvement and financial resources are focused (primary area of impact). This information will be used by staff as part of their review to assign applications into one of two funding pools:**

- Organizations operating primarily within smaller population centres, rural and/or remote communities.
- Organizations operating primarily within large urban population centres; specifically, one or more of the municipalities within **Metro Vancouver**, the **Capital Regional District** and/or the **Regional District of Central Okanagan**.
- Technology and infrastructure investments

Of the 30 available grants, 18 are allocated for organizations located in or benefiting large urban areas, and 12 are allocated for organizations based in or benefiting smaller, rural, and/or remote areas. You can review the definitions of large and small urban areas in the key terms section of the **application guide**.

## 7. HOW DOES VANCOUVER FOUNDATION DEFINE “EXISTING WORK”?

Transforming Systems Grants are designed to support organizations with current activities, programs and initiatives that are established and actively being implemented. When applying, applicants will be asked to demonstrate their experience and operational foundation in this area.

## 8. WHAT DOES VANCOUVER FOUNDATION MEAN BY “SYSTEMIC CHANGE”?

Vancouver Foundation’s approach to systemic change recognizes the interconnectedness of inequitable structures such as policies, power dynamics and practices, and seeks to address the root causes of inequities to transform systems. It recognizes that challenging oppressive systems requires a holistic approach that addresses multiple layers simultaneously. You can refer to the key terms section of the [application guide](#) for the definition of systems, systems change and systems of oppression.

# Eligibility



## 9. WHO ARE THESE GRANTS FOR?

These grants 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.

**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;
- Build or expand networks or strategic partnerships; and/or,
- Amplify reach and effectiveness.

## 10. DO APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO BE REGISTERED CHARITIES?

No, registered non-profit societies and community service co-operatives are also eligible to apply. You can find our complete eligibility on page 6 of the [application guide](#).

## 11. WHAT IF OUR ORGANIZATION IS NOT A REGISTERED NON-PROFIT SOCIETY?

To be considered “**registered**” and be eligible for funding from Vancouver Foundation, your organization must be registered, and therefore searchable under the public online directory [OrgBook BC](#).

If you’re interested in becoming a registered non-profit society, visit the [Government of BC’s website](#). If becoming a registered non-profit society is a barrier for your organization, please contact us at [grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca](mailto:grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca).

## 12. WE'RE IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A REGISTERED NON-PROFIT SOCIETY OR COMMUNITY SERVICE COOPERATIVE, ARE WE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

If your organization will be registered by February 28, 2025, you are eligible to apply for a Transforming Systems Grant.

## 13. WE ARE A FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY/BAND BASED IN BC. ARE WE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

Yes, you can apply if you are a qualified donee or "other qualified donee". First Nations are often registered as "other qualified donees" under the category "municipal or public bodies performing a function of government in Canada".

If your Nation or band is not a qualified donee, you can [register to become a society in BC.](#)

## 14. WHY DOES VANCOUVER FOUNDATION REQUIRE ORGANIZATIONS TO BE REGISTERED?

In 2023, the [Canada Revenue Agency \(CRA\) updated their guidelines](#) allowing charities like Vancouver Foundation to grant directly to non-qualified donees, including registered non-profits and community service co-operatives operating in BC, whose activities advance the charitable purposes of the foundation.

As we explore and apply the CRA's guidance, including the best ways to expand the eligibility of grant programs, we will continue to explore opportunities that will enable us to fund other non-qualified donees whose activities advance the charitable purposes of the foundation.

## 15. OUR CHARITY IS NATIONAL, BUT WE DO SOME WORK IN BC. ARE WE ELIGIBLE?

If your organization is based outside of BC but has operations in BC that benefit local communities, you are eligible to apply. You can complete the [eligibility quiz](#) or email us if you're still unsure.

## 16. WHAT IF WE ARE A REGISTERED IN ANOTHER PROVINCE OR FEDERALLY?

You can be registered anywhere in Canada or federally but must be operating in and/or benefitting communities in BC. Your organization will also need to be listed on **Orgbook BC** as an 'extraprovincial society' for us to confirm eligibility. If your organization isn't listed on Orgbook BC as an "extraprovincial society", please **complete an extraprovincial registration** and maintain registered status while operating in BC.

If becoming registered as an "extraprovincial society" is a barrier for your organization, please contact us at **grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca** to discuss how we can support your organization.

## 17. CAN MY ORGANIZATION APPLY IF WE'VE RECEIVED A GRANT IN THE PAST OR HAVE AN ACTIVE GRANT WITH VANCOUVER FOUNDATION?

Yes, you can still apply for a Transforming Systems Grant if you've received a grant in the past or have an active grant with Vancouver Foundation.

# Application Process



## 18. WHO DECIDES WHICH ORGANIZATIONS TO FUND?

Funding decisions are made by Vancouver Foundation staff following recommendations from a review panel of Community Advisors. Our Community Advisors are individuals who are deeply connected to their communities. These individuals contribute valuable lived experiences, expertise, and wisdom to our funding decisions.

## 19. HOW DOES VANCOUVER FOUNDATION USE A RANDOMIZED SELECTION PROCESS FOR STAGE 1 APPLICATIONS?

All submitted Stage 1 applications will be reviewed by staff to confirm the organization's eligibility and alignment with the funding purpose. Staff will assign Stage 1 applications to a funding pool based on their primary area of impact for randomized selection.

Vancouver Foundation uses a randomized selection process after confirming eligibility and alignment to promote fairness while reducing bias. This approach ensures that all eligible applicants have an equal chance to be selected for Stage 2 and minimizes the use of subjective indicators in the selection process.



# For Selected Organizations



## 20. WHEN CAN WE EXPECT TO HEAR FINAL DECISIONS BY?

In March 2025, all applicants will be emailed whether they have been invited to apply for Stage 2. Final funding decisions will be communicated via email by the end of June 2025.

## 21. WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

Our reporting requirements depend on whether your organization is a qualified donee. **Formal reporting is required for all grants made to registered non-profit societies and community service cooperatives** but not required for **qualified donees**, as per CRA requirements. More information will be provided to awarded recipients when final decisions are communicated.

## 22. I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT THE GRANTS THAT IS NOT ANSWERED HERE. WHO CAN I CONTACT?

## Contact

For any questions about Transforming Systems Grants, including navigating and troubleshooting Vancouver Foundation's grant management system, please contact [\*\*grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca\*\*](mailto:grants.admin@vancouverfoundation.ca)