

2025/26 Community Enrichment Grants

# Applicant Guide



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# Introduction

Community Enrichment Grants are awarded annually to charitable organizations and other qualified donees to support programs, services, and initiatives of eligible organizations in the Comox Valley. This applicant guide contains all the information that applicants will need to prepare and submit their requests to the Foundation. Support is available if you have questions. Please contact our Manager, Grants and Community Initiatives: Sigourney Brown at [sigourney@cvcfoundation.org](mailto:sigourney@cvcfoundation.org) or 250-208-8309.

## **About the Comox Valley Community Foundation**

Since 1996, Comox Valley Community Foundation has awarded \$5.75 million to over 175 local non-profits and 250 students in the form of grants and scholarships. As a funder, we support all not for profit and charitable organizations in our community so that they may respond to the pressing and ever-evolving needs and priorities of our citizens.



# How do I apply for a grant?

Eligible organizations can submit applications online through the [Grants Portal](#) on the Community Foundation website from Monday, August 18 to Thursday, September 18, 2025.

## Who is eligible to apply?

Eligible organizations meet the following criteria:

1. Your organization and its programs or services directly impact the Comox Valley as defined by the [geographic boundaries of School District 71](#). Organizations located outside the Comox Valley must clearly demonstrate how funds benefit and will primarily be used within the Comox Valley.
2. Your organization is one of the following:
  - Registered charity as defined by Canada Revenue Agency,
  - First Nation, municipality, or public body performing a function of government in Canada,
  - Registered non-profit society as defined by the Societies Act of British Columbia working in partnership with a registered charity as a fiscal sponsor,
3. And, if your organization is a past Community Foundation grant recipient, you have completed final reports from all previous grants (2023 and prior). If your organization is a current grant recipient, final reports for your current (2024) grant are due by December 31, 2025.



# Unsure of your organization type?

Here are some databases that may help you search your organization and confirm your organization type:

- For registered charities:
  - [CRA database of qualified donees](#)
- For First Nations, municipalities, or public bodies performing a function of government
  - [List of municipal or public bodies performing a function of government in Canada registered as qualified donees](#)
- For non-profit societies in BC
  - [OrgBook BC](#)

# What types of expenses are eligible?

Eligible expenses include but are not limited to;

- General operating
- Staffing
- Program adaptation
- Technology adaptation and upgrading
- Projects, programs, or initiatives
- Organizational capacity building (including staff wellness, training and professional development, costs associated with organizational mergers)
- Modest capital costs critical to the organization fulfilling its mission (including purchasing or upgrading physical assets including technology, safety equipment, vehicles, office equipment, etc.)

If you are unsure if your expenses are eligible, please contact us.





# What is a general operating request?

General operating requests include expenses incurred through normal operations such as rent, heating, insurance, honorariums, staffing and equipment costs. If you are unsure if your general operating costs are eligible, please contact us.



# What are the funding priorities?

Community-informed focus areas are set every two years to prioritize grant funding toward areas of considerable need in the Comox Valley. The current funding priorities for grants are: 1) Food security & food systems, 2) Mental health & connection, and 3) Equity, diversity & inclusion. Applications that are directly linked to these priorities will be accepted:

## 1

### FOOD INSECURITY & FOOD SYSTEMS

Activities and organizations that promote reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious food. Examples might include, but are not limited to:

- **Nutrition education programs:** Offering classes and workshops on cooking, nutrition, and healthy eating to help community members make informed food choices.
- **Food recovery programs:** Collecting surplus food from restaurants, grocery stores, and farms to redistribute to those in need, reducing food waste and hunger.
- **Community gardens:** Implementing gardening programs to teach children, youth or other community groups about agriculture, nutrition, and the importance of fresh food.
- **Community kitchens:** Providing low cost or no cost food access programs to community members of all ages.
- **Other ideas might be ....** Food pantries and soup kitchens, local food procurement policies, urban agriculture initiatives.



## 2

### MENTAL HEALTH & CONNECTION

Activities and organizations that foster mental health, connection, and social well-being within our community. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- **Peer support programs:** Creating networks of trained volunteers who offer peer support and mentorship to individuals experiencing mental health challenges.
- **Public awareness campaigns:** Running campaigns to reduce stigma around mental health issues to encourage people to seek help.
- **Mental health first aid training:** Offering courses to teach community members how to recognize and respond to signs of mental health crises.
- **Support groups:** Facilitating support groups for various issues, such as grief, addiction, depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions.
- **Youth and family services:** Providing support services for children, youth and families, including counselling, after-school programs and family therapy.
- **Other ideas might be ....** social connection programs for seniors, community gardens and green spaces to connect with nature to promote mental well-being; Arts and culture programs such as music therapy sessions. Youth programs for mental health education, counselling services, and anti-bullying, and so on.





### 3

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Activities and organizations that aim to create more equitable environments by addressing disparities and/or promoting diversity that improve participation in society, particularly for equity deserving populations and communities. Examples might include, but are not limited to:

- **Multicultural festival and events:** Organizing events that celebrate the cultural diversity of the community, fostering understanding and appreciation among different groups.
- **Youth mentorship programs:** Creating mentorship and after-school programs that support underrepresented youth, providing them with role models, academic assistance, and career guidance.
- **Accessibility improvements:** Making public spaces, transportation, and services more accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- **LGBTQ+ support programs:** Creating safe spaces and support networks for LGBTQ+ individuals, including youth programs, counselling services, and community centres.
- **Other ideas might be ...** Immigrant and refugee support services, language access services for non-English speaking community members, and so on.

Quick note that equity initiatives addressing housing affordability will be supported through the Housing & Homelessness Support Grants.



Priority will be given to applications from equity denied groups. Equity deserving populations and communities include groups who identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination. This could include attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers that are based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, Indigeneity, gender identity and gender expression, nationality, race, sexual orientation, etc.

### **Looking for a different grant program?**

We have other grant streams focused on other priority areas;

- 1) Housing and homelessness supports (*open August 18 to September 18, 2025*)
- 2) Environment and conservation (*by invitation only*)
- 3) Social programs for adults with diverse abilities (*by invitation only*)

These streams follow different application processes. Please contact us to learn more.



# Are you located on Hornby Island?

Additional specific funding and supporting criteria exists for Hornby Island organizations. Please contact us before applying.

# Can I apply for more than one grant?

You can submit ONE application per calendar year on behalf of your organization inclusive of all grant streams. In addition to your one application, your organization may also serve as a fiscal sponsor for one or multiple registered nonprofit societies.

# What activities are NOT eligible?

- Scholarships or bursaries funded elsewhere by the Foundation
- Activities of religious or sectarian organizations that serve only their membership and/or direct religious purposes. Activities of such organizations must demonstrate a benefit to the broader community to be eligible.
- Political activities, specifically directly or indirectly supporting or opposing a political party or candidate for public office
- The establishment of or addition to endowment funds
- The establishment of or addition to operating reserves
- Organizations or initiatives that discriminate based on based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, or disability.





# How much funding can be requested?

There is no maximum amount of funds an organization may request; however, grant approvals have historically ranged from \$30,000 to \$3,000 per application with most requests funded at the \$10,000 level or lower. This year, \$300,000 will be available for distribution in support of the entire community. We encourage applicants to keep their requests relative to the total funding available.

# What questions are on the application?

Before applying, you can view the application questions [here](#) and budget template [here](#).





# How are applications evaluated?

All eligible applications will be reviewed by a Grants Advisory Taskforce, which is a committee comprised of community members. The taskforce will use the common rubric below to support funding decisions. The chart continues on the next page.

Questions reviewers will use to guide funding decisions	Questions you'll answer on the application
How clearly does the proposal define its primary goal, and how well does it align with the stated objectives of the grant?	Proposal Overview What is the primary goal of your proposal?
How detailed, clear and feasible is the proposed plan of action in achieving the stated goals.	Proposal Details Please describe your plan in detail, outlining the specific actions and steps you will take to achieve your proposal's goals.
How effectively does the proposal demonstrate the project's significance and its alignment with the granting focus area(s)?	Focus Area Why is this proposal significant to your organization and how does it address your identified grant focus area(s)
How clearly does the proposal address the potential consequences or missed opportunities if the project is not implemented?	Impact What will be the impact to the community if this proposal is not implemented?
How effectively does the proposal outline clear, measurable outcomes and demonstrate their contributions to the projects' goals and broader impact?	Outcomes What are the anticipated outcomes of your proposal?
Does the application clearly demonstrate that the organization is led by or primarily serves equity-deserving populations, as defined by the program?	<p>Equity-deserving representation Equity-deserving populations and communities include those who experience barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources due to discrimination or disadvantage. This may include attitudinal, historic, social, or environmental barriers based on (but not limited to) age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, Indigeneity, gender identity and expression, nationality, race, or sexual orientation.</p> <p><b>Does your organization identify with any of the following?</b> (Check all that apply)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Led by members of equity-deserving populations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Primarily serves equity-deserving populations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Both</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither / Prefer not to say</p>



# How are applications evaluated?

## Continued

Questions reviewers will use to guide funding decisions	Questions you'll answer on the application
How effectively does the proposal demonstrate that the organization applies an equity lens by centering the voices of those with lived experience, and by meaningfully involving them in the project's planning, leadership, evaluation, and promotion?	<p>Equity Lens Describe ways your organization actively brings an equity lens to its work</p> <p>An equity lens recognizes that individuals with lived experience know what is best for themselves and their community and that their participation is integral to the success of the program. When the principle is used, the organization's work is guided by the needs and aspirations of the people being served. Those people served are provided meaningful opportunities for participation in project planning, leadership, evaluation, and promotion.</p>
How well does the proposed budget and other financial resources demonstrate a clear, reasonable and well justified allocation of resources to support the project's activities and outcomes?	All responses from the following sections: Funding Request, Partial Funding, Budget, Financial Information



# What happens after I apply?

**September 18, 2025, at 5 pm:** All applications are due via the CVCF grants portal.

**September:** Our team reviews all applications to ensure that applications are eligible and complete. As part of this process, we may reach out with questions about your application.

**October:** A community formed Grants Advisory Taskforce reviews applications and provides recommendations.

**December:** All applicants are notified of funding decisions regardless of status. Funded applicants will receive Conditions of Granting forms for completion. Unfunded applicants will be held on file until January 31, 2026, and continue to be eligible should new funding arise.

**January 2026:** Funds for approved grants are distributed.

**December 31, 2026:** Final reports are due via the Grants Portal.

## I still have questions, who do I contact?

Should you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact Sigourney Brown at [sigourney@cvcfoundation.org](mailto:sigourney@cvcfoundation.org) or 250-208-8309.

