

2026/27 Community Enrichment Grants
Stream 1: Housing Stability & Basic Needs, Mental
Health & Social Connection

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 applicants need to prepare and submit applications to the **2026/27 Community Enrichment Grants Stream 1: Housing Stability & Basic Needs, Mental Health & Social Connection**. A separate application and Applicant Guide are available for Stream 2: Non-Profit Capacity Building. Support is available if you have questions. Please contact our Manager, Grants and Community Initiatives: Sigourney Brown at sigourney@cvcfoundation.org or 250-208-8309.

About the Comox Valley Community Foundation

Since 1996, Comox Valley Community Foundation has awarded \$8.63 million to over 200 local non-profits and 310 students in the form of grants and scholarships. As a funder, we support all not-profit and charitable organizations in our community so that they may respond to the pressing and ever-evolving needs and priorities of our citizens.



Grants Overview

Stream 1: Housing Stability & Basic Needs, Mental Health & Social Connection

In 2026/27, Stream 1 of the Community Enrichment Grants has two focus areas;

- Housing Stability & Basic Needs
- Mental Health & Social Connection

These grants help registered charities and non-profit organizations respond to some of the Comox Valley's most pressing and interconnected community challenges. They are designed to support programs, services, and initiatives that improve access to safe housing and essential needs while strengthening emotional well-being, reducing social isolation, and fostering belonging across our community.

These two focus areas recognize that housing, food security, mental health, and social connection are closely linked. Stable housing and access to basic needs create the foundation for well-being, while meaningful relationships, inclusion, and mental wellness help individuals, families, and communities thrive. Funding supports organizations working across one or both focus areas to create lasting, positive change. This integrated approach reflects local community priorities and recognizes that many organizations respond to multiple, interconnected needs.



This grant stream offers flexible support to help organizations:

- Prevent and respond to housing instability and homelessness;
- Help people maintain safe, stable housing;
- Improve access to food and other essential basic needs;
- Strengthen mental health, emotional well-being, and resilience;
- Reduce social isolation and foster belonging through supportive relationships;
- Deliver culturally grounded, Indigenous-led, and equity-centred services; and
- Support people and families facing complex or intersecting barriers to well-being.



Who is eligible to apply?

Eligible organizations meet the following criteria:

1. Your organization and its programs, services, or research activities must directly benefit the Comox Valley, as defined by the [geographic boundaries of School District 71](#). Organizations located outside the Comox Valley must clearly demonstrate how the funds will primarily benefit and be used within the Comox Valley.
2. Applicants must be one of the following:
 - Registered charity as defined by Canada Revenue Agency (CRA),
 - 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,
3. If your organization is a past Community Foundation grant recipient, you have completed final reports from all previous grants (2024 and prior). If your organization is a current grant recipient, final reports for your current (2025) grant are due by December 31, 2026.



Unsure of your organization type?

Here are some databases that may help you search your organization determine your eligibility. To be eligible, your organization must be found in one of the following registries.

- 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 are the funding focus areas?

Community-informed focus areas are set every three years to prioritize grant funding toward areas of considerable need in the Comox Valley. The current funding focus areas for grants are: 1) Housing Stability & Basic Needs, 2) Mental Health & Social Connection and 3) Non-profit Capacity Building. Applications that are directly linked to these priorities will be accepted.

1

HOUSING STABILITY & BASIC NEEDS

Activities and organizations that help people secure and maintain safe housing while meeting essential day-to-day needs that support well-being and stability.

- Homelessness prevention, housing navigation, outreach, emergency shelter, and transitional or supportive housing-related services
- Tenant support, rent or utility assistance, and other services that help people maintain stable housing
- Food security programs, meal access, community kitchens, and other low-barrier essential services
- Poverty reduction supports and practical assistance that help meet immediate basic needs
- Indigenous-led, culturally grounded, and equity-centred organizations serving people who face disproportionate barriers, including seniors, youth, families, people with disabilities, and people experiencing complex or intersecting vulnerabilities



1

HOUSING STABILITY & BASIC NEEDS

Examples might include, but are not limited to:

- Expanding a housing outreach or housing navigation program for people at risk of homelessness
- Delivering rent bank, utility assistance, or eviction prevention supports for low-income households
- Increasing meal programs, food hampers, or community kitchen access in underserved neighbourhoods
- Creating low-barrier access to hygiene supplies, clothing, transportation, or other essential needs
- Providing culturally grounded housing or basic-needs supports for Indigenous people, youth, seniors, or people with disabilities



2

MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CONNECTION

Activities and organizations activities that strengthen emotional well-being, reduce isolation, and foster belonging, resilience, and supportive relationships in the community.

- Counselling, peer support, early intervention, and low-barrier mental health or wellness services
- Programs that reduce social isolation and strengthen belonging for youth, seniors, families, and other community members
- Community-based spaces, groups, and activities that foster connection, inclusion, resilience, and relationship-building
- Substance use-related wellness, harm reduction, recovery support, and wraparound services that contribute to overall well-being
- Indigenous-led, culturally grounded, and equity-centred organizations supporting people who face barriers to mental health support, connection, and belonging



2

MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CONNECTION

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Launching or expanding peer support, counselling access, or community-based mental wellness programming
- Creating social connection programs for seniors, youth, caregivers, or other groups experiencing isolation
- Offering group-based wellness, arts, recreation, or cultural activities that strengthen belonging and connection
- Developing low-barrier substance use support, harm reduction, or recovery-focused programming
- Providing culturally grounded and community-led mental health supports for people facing systemic or intersecting barriers



What types of expenses are eligible?

Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- General operating
- Staffing
- Program adaptation
- Technology upgrades and adaptation
- Projects, programs, or initiatives
- 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 activities are not eligible under any CVCF grant program?

- Scholarships or bursaries
- 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, have a physical presence in community and existing positive reputation 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 race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, or disability.



Can I apply for more than one grant?

Organizations may submit one grant application per calendar year, regardless of grant stream. In addition to their own application, organizations may also serve as the fiscal sponsor for one or more registered non-profit societies.

Organizations awarded a three-year grant are not eligible to submit additional grant applications until their three-year funding term has ended.

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 10 to Friday September 25, 2026.



How much funding can be requested and for how long?

Community Enrichment Grants Stream 1: Housing Stability & Basic Needs and Mental Health & Social Connection offer both **single-year** and **three-year** funding. Applicants should select the option that best reflects the nature of their work.

The three-year funding option is available only during the 2026/27 grant cycle. In 2027/28 and 2028/29, funding for these focus areas will be offered through single-year grants only.

- **Single-Year Grants** provides up to \$20,000 to support projects, programs, services, or activities that can be completed within one year or where funding needs may change over time.
- **Three-Year Grants** provide up to \$30,000 per year for three years to support ongoing work that benefits from greater stability, continuity, and long-term planning.

Organizations receiving a three-year grant will not be eligible to apply for additional grants until their three-year funding term is complete.



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 made up of individuals selected for their experience, community knowledge, and understanding of the non-profit sector in the Comox Valley. The taskforce will use the common rubric below to guide funding recommendations. The chart continues on the next page.

How equity shapes funding decisions

Priority may 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.



How are applications evaluated?

All eligible applications will be reviewed by a Grants Advisory Taskforce, which is a committee comprised of individuals selected for their experience, community knowledge, and understanding of the non-profit sector in the Comox Valley. 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 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 detailed, clear and feasible is the proposed plan of action in achieving the stated goals.	Proposal Details – One Year Grant Please describe your plan in detail, outlining the specific actions and steps you will take to achieve your proposal's goals. OR Proposal Details – Three-Year Grants Please describe your plan in detail for year one/two/three, outlining the specific actions and steps you will take to achieve your proposals' goal.
How clearly does the proposal address the potential consequences or missed opportunities if the proposal 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?



How are applications evaluated? Continued

Questions reviewers will use to guide funding decisions	Questions you'll answer on the application
Does the application clearly demonstrate that the organization is led by or primarily serves equity-deserving populations, as defined by the program?	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. Does your organization identify with any of the following? (Check all that apply) ☐ Led by members of equity-deserving populations ☐ Primarily serves equity-deserving populations ☐ Both ☐ Neither / Prefer not to say
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?	Equity Lens Describe ways your organization actively brings an equity lens to its work 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.
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 25, 2026 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 - November: A Grants Advisory Taskforce reviews eligible applications and provides advisory input. Final funding decisions are made by the Comox Valley Community Foundation.

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, 2027, and continue to be eligible should new funding arise.

December 31, 2026: Final reports are due for the 2025 grants via the Grants Portal.

January 2027: Funds for approved grants are distributed.

December 31, 2027: Final reports are due for the 2026 grants 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 or 250-208-8309.

