

2026/27 Community Enrichment Grants
Stream 2: Non-Profit Capacity Building

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 2: Non-Profit Capacity Building**. A separate Applicant Guide is available for Stream 1: Housing Stability & Basic Needs, Mental Health & Social Connection. 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 2: Non-Profit Capacity Building

Capacity Building Grants help registered charities and non-profit organizations strengthen their **effectiveness, stability, and long-term community impact**. These grants support activities such as strategic planning, governance development, staff and volunteer learning, technology improvements, and other organizational enhancements that help groups adapt, grow, and serve their communities more effectively.

Unlike funding that is directed primarily toward program delivery, capacity building support invests in the internal systems, leadership, infrastructure, technology, and sustainability practices that allow organizations to remain effective and responsive over time. Strong communities depend on strong, well-supported organizations.

This grant stream offers flexible and responsive support to help organizations:

- Develop stronger governance and leadership;
- Improve operational processes and organizational infrastructure;
- Increase fundraising capacity and financial sustainability;
- Expand technology, communications, and digital capacity;
- Invest in staff, board, and volunteer development;
- Strengthen evaluation, learning, and impact measurement;
- Build lasting organizational resilience.



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 using a [charitable partnership agreement](#).
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 and 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 is capacity building?

Capacity building refers to activities that strengthen an organization's ability to fulfill its mission effectively and sustainably over time.

- Strategic planning, sustainability planning, and theory of change development
- Board development, governance review, and policy modernization
- Human resources systems, staff development, and workplace policies
- Financial management systems, budgeting practices, and internal controls
- Technology upgrades, cybersecurity, and software implementation for internal systems
- Fundraising strategy, donor stewardship, and communications development
- Volunteer recruitment, training, retention, and management systems
- Program evaluation, data collection systems, and impact measurement
- Equity, accessibility, inclusion, and cultural competency practices
- Risk management, legal compliance, and privacy practices
- Leadership development, succession planning, and organizational wellness
- Partnership development, shared services, and collaboration initiatives
- Other capacity-building initiatives not listed above.



What types of projects are eligible?

These examples are intended as guidance only. Organizations are encouraged to propose other activities that clearly strengthen their long-term organizational capacity.

- Implementing a client, donor, or contact management system
- Developing and launching a new communications or community engagement plan
- Upgrading accounting software and strengthening financial reporting practices
- Creating, implementing, or adapting a fundraising and donor stewardship strategy
- Conducting a governance review through the lens of organizational resilience and effectiveness
- Developing a staff training plan, onboarding process, or volunteer handbook
- Establishing an evaluation framework with outcome indicators and data collection tools
- Reviewing and updating policies related to privacy, accessibility, risk, or human resources
- Exploring shared services or formal partnerships with one or more non-profit organizations
- Developing a succession plan or leadership transition strategy for key staff and board roles



What types of expenses are eligible?

Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Consultant and facilitator fees;
- Training and professional development;
- Technology and digital tools;
- Staff salaries and employment-related costs related to the grant request;
- Contractors and fees for professional services;
- Evaluation and planning activities;
- Accessibility and inclusion measures;
- One-time Administrative expenses connected to the funded work.

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



What projects are outside the scope of this grant?

Examples of activities that will not be supported by this grant stream:

- Costs associated with direct program delivery
- Client services
- Regular ongoing operating costs
- Ongoing staff salaries unrelated to the capacity building project
- Equipment purchased solely for program delivery
- Events or activities that primarily benefit participants rather than organizational capacity
- Construction or facility maintenance (unless directly tied to organizational infrastructure improvements)



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.

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 2: Non-Profit Capacity Building provides single-year grants of up to **\$20,000** to help organizations strengthen their internal capacity.

Funding in 2027/28 and 2028/29 will continue to be offered through single-year grants only.



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 the capacity-building goal, and how well does it align with strengthening the organization's resilience, sustainability, or effectiveness?	Proposal Overview What capacity-building goal will this proposal help your organization achieve?
How clearly does the application describe the organization's mission, context, staffing, volunteer capacity, and current operating scale so reviewers can understand the capacity-building need?	Organization Information How many volunteers, including board members, does your organization currently have? How many full-time staff does your organization currently have? How many part-time staff does your organization currently have? What is your organization's annual revenue? When did your organization begin operating? Briefly outline your organization's mission/purpose.
How detailed, clear, and feasible is the proposed capacity-building plan, including activities, steps, timeline, and people involved?	Proposal Details How will you carry out this capacity-building work? Describe the activities, steps, timeline, and people involved. Start Date End Date



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 identify meaningful outcomes that show improved organizational effectiveness, resilience, sustainability, or ability to serve the community?	Outcomes What are the anticipated outcomes of your proposal? Where appropriate, include measurable results such as improved systems, policies, training completion, fundraising capacity, technology use, or evaluation practices, as well as descriptions or stories that show impact.
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 Does your organization identify with any of the following? ☐ Led by members of equity-deserving populations ☐ Primarily serves equity-deserving populations ☐ Both ☐ Neither / Prefer not to say
How effectively does the organization apply an equity lens by involving people with lived experience in planning, leadership, evaluation, decision-making, or communications?	Equity Lens How does your organization apply an equity lens? Describe how people with lived experience shape planning, leadership, evaluation, decision-making, or communications.
How well does the application identify the primary and other populations that may benefit from a stronger, more stable, or more effective organization?	Populations Served Which primary population will benefit from a stronger, more stable, or more effective organization? What other populations may benefit from this capacity-building work?
How well do the requested funds, proposal budget, partial funding plan, and other financial resources demonstrate a clear, reasonable, and well-justified allocation of resources to support the capacity-building activities and outcomes?	All responses from the following sections: Funding Request, Budget, Partial Funding, 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.

