

Collaboration Grant Stream 2024 Application Guidelines

When organizations work together towards shared goals, they can have far greater impact than when working alone. In response to community organizations seeking support for greater collaboration, Victoria Foundation has offered the Collaboration Grant Stream since 2017.

Continuing from 2023, Victoria Foundation's Collaboration Grant Stream is supporting two grant sub-streams reflecting the evolving ways community organizations are looking to work together to address collective goals:

1. **Collaborative Practice Innovation**
2. **Collaborating for Systems Change**

The first step in applying for the Collaboration Grant Stream is to read through the application guidelines and contact the granting staff to set up an appointment to discuss your proposed application. If you qualify to apply, then you will receive an eligibility code.

Inquiry period: August 8 to September 30. Appointments to confirm program eligibility are available within this time.

Phone: 250-381-5532

Email: grants@victoriafoundation.bc.ca

The application portal will open at 10:00 am PST on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, and close at 11:59 pm PST on Thursday, October 3, 2024. During this time, organizations will be able to apply using our online grant portal.

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General Information

This document is intended to provide supplementary guidelines for collaborations interested in applying to this grant stream. Please see the following information for a full list of eligibility criteria including geography, eligible/ ineligible expenses, priority demographics, priority issue areas and other FAQs, that all apply to the Collaboration Grant Stream applicants.

Please note that a registered charity that applied to the 2024 Vital Grant Stream (Spring 2024) can also apply to the Collaboration Grant Stream, if they are applying on behalf of a collaboration partnership.

Eligible Applicants and Geography

We fund federally registered charities and other qualified donees* working within the Capital Region (see map [HERE](#)). See infographic [HERE](#) for clarity on how different types of qualified donees can apply to the Victoria Foundation.

*A qualified donee is defined under the Federal Income Tax Act as those organizations that can issue official donation receipts for gifts they receive from individuals and corporations. For a full list of types of organizations that qualify as qualified donees, see the CRA website [HERE](#). If you have questions about your eligibility, see [HERE](#).

Eligible Expenses

- Coordination and support of collaboration (human resources, operational costs in support of collaboration efforts)
- Development of shared goals and strategies
- Support for coordinating activities across multiple partners
- Pilot programs to test new approaches
- Capital projects that address a major barrier to systems change, and that are critical to the collaboration fulfilling its mission
- Evaluation
- Other activities that strengthen collaboration and support systems change

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include:

- Fundraising campaign costs and contributions
- Sponsorships
- Capital campaigns (e.g., for new buildings, land, monuments)
- Political activities that are prohibited by the [Canada Revenue Agency](#)
- Grants primarily benefiting individuals (outside of the activities of eligible organizations)
- Deficit reduction (e.g., debts or loans)



- Retroactive requests (any expenses incurred before September 1, 2024)
- Requests without specific benefit to the residents or environment of the Capital Region
- Religious activities or services including faith-based programming or proselytizing

Priority Issue Areas

The Community Grants Program provides support across the non-profit sector including the arts, environment, food security, housing/ homelessness, health, youth engagement and more. Supporting a broad range of organizations is important to community wellbeing. In addition to this broad-based approach, we will prioritize support to address pressing needs as identified by community, informed by sector reports, and as identified through the most recent [Vital Signs Report](#). The 2023 Vital Signs Key Issue Areas that received the lowest grades are:

1. Economy
2. Getting Started
3. Housing
4. Safety
5. Transportation

Priority Demographics

The Victoria Foundation recognizes long-standing structural and systemic inequities within our community and is committed to upholding the values of equity, diversity and inclusion in our programs. In pursuit of these values within the sector-wide scope of Community Grant funding, and to prioritize and center their work at the forefront of their communities, we encourage applications from equity-deserving groups.

Equity-deserving groups are those that:

- actively seek social justice and reparation in order to disrupt those power dynamics/imbalances
- identify and work to reduce or eliminate barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination

Equity-deserving groups include, among others:

- Indigenous Peoples
- Black and racialized people
- Women
- People with visible and hidden disabilities
- LGBTQIA2S+ communities



- Newcomers (immigrants and refugees who have landed in the past 5 years)
- Children and youth (ages 0-29)
- Seniors (ages 65+)

We recognize the intersectionality of issues and identity and are continuously looking for ways to better understand and prioritize different needs.

Total Funding Amount Available

Victoria Foundation's Community Grants Program awarded \$4.89 Million to 199 organizations, through the Vital and Collaboration grant streams in 2023. Of that amount, 14 local collaborations were supported through the two Collaboration grant sub-streams, totaling \$666,000.

In 2024, the Victoria Foundation plans to allocate approximately \$700,000 in total towards supporting collaborations in our region. We engage donors year-round to support their giving through Community Action Funds, pass-through gifts and Donor Advised Funds. See "How is the Community Grants Program Funded?" below for more information.

Funding Timelines

Please apply for 12 months of funding to support your initiative. Expenses are eligible from September 1, 2024.

How to Apply

The first step is to create a new account on our online grants portal after it opens on September 10, 2024. Even if you have applied in the past, you will have to create a new 2024 account with updated contact information.

The portal can be accessed through this webpage: <https://vfgrants.ca/>

From the main page, select the "2024 Applications" link. This will take you to the current application portal where you can register a new account.

For organizations that do not have a federal charity registration number (i.e., other qualified donees including First Nations), please contact the grants staff and we will generate a number for you. This will allow you to complete your account registration.

Current Grants with the Victoria Foundation

Submission of final reports from previous years is not required for your organization to be eligible to apply for funding in 2024.

If you have received a grant in the past and have spent 100% of the funds, submitting the related final report is required to complete the requirements of that grant agreement. As part of our due diligence process for new requests, staff review all active and closed



grants an organization has with the Foundation, and this may influence the application review process.

If you have any questions about previous grants and final reports, please contact grants@victoriafoundation.bc.ca.

Grant Sub-stream #1: Collaborative Practice Innovation

Overview

Collaborative Practice Innovation grants began in 2023 and were developed in response to the growing number of collaboratives that are focused on **strengthening sector and organizational effectiveness** through strategic collaboration. These collaboratives may be groups of 3 or more partners*, networks or coalitions where organizations have joined forces **to strengthen how they work** in order to have more impact. Organizations in the collaborative may already be working together in close partnership or have the willingness and intent to begin working together.

Eligibility

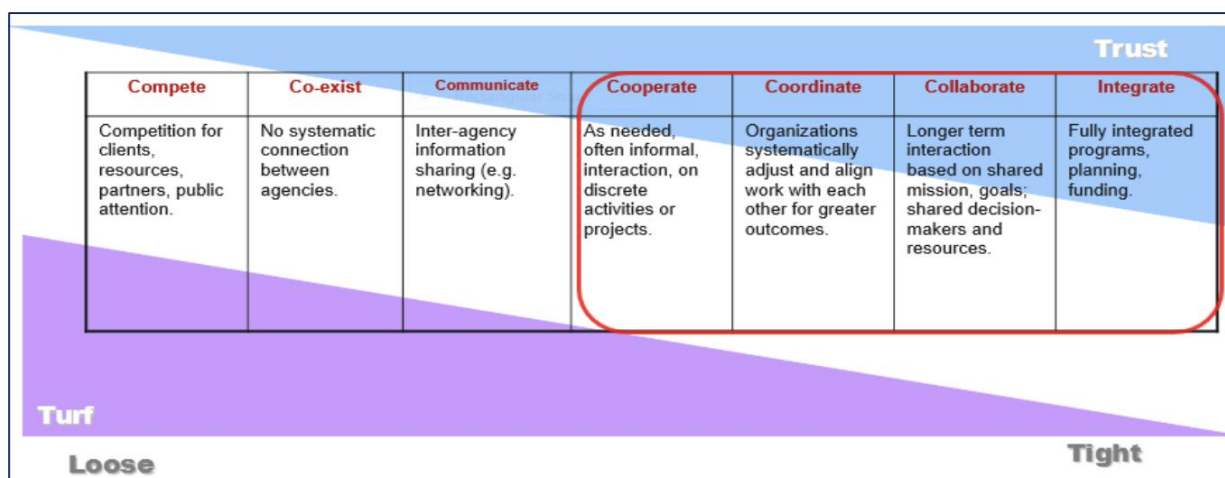
In addition to the core requirement to be proactively strengthening co-ordination and alignment among partners, these initiatives are focused on at least one of the following practice innovations:

- Developing or improving shared services
- Strengthening shared capacity, tools or resources in order to have greater impact
- Aligning and merging governance, management or program delivery functions
- Co-creating new programs, services or approaches for shared delivery
- Changing practice in order to better engage/ meet the needs of equity-deserving groups or people with lived experience

Collaborative Practice Innovation partners should demonstrate how they are making efforts to move along the Collaboration Spectrum towards Collaboration or Integration.

See table below, adapted from Tamarack Institute's [Collaboration Spectrum Tool](#).





* We invite applications from fewer than 3 organizations/partners, if the organizations are from equity-led groups (BIPOC). If this is the case, please reach out to discuss your application with Jenna Falk from the grants team.

Application Questions

See full list of [Collaborative Practice Innovation Questions HERE](#).

Grant Amounts

The Collaborative Practice Innovation grant sub-stream was new for 2023. Based on this first year, grant amounts were between \$30,000 and \$60,000, averaging \$48,000. Generally, collaborations applying under this grant sub-stream will have smaller requests than those working at the systems change level.

Examples of Collaborative Practice Innovation funded projects

- Grant for [OneAbility](#): Greater Victoria Collaborative for Adapted Sport and Physical Activity (\$50,000) to implement an annual action plan for improved network member support, disability services and programming across dozens of organizations in the region.
- Grant for the 10 member agencies of the [Coalition of Neighbourhood Houses of the Capital Region](#) (\$30,000) to secure their part-time Coordinator role for effective functioning of the Coalition.
- Grant to support the [Greater Victoria Alliance for Literacy \(GVAL\)](#) (\$55,000) to hire a part-time coordinator to develop and direct a pilot project for a shared services model, honoraria for volunteer training and professional development opportunities, as well as shared physical space for members of GVAL.



Example of projects which would NOT be a fit for Collaboration Practice Innovation grants

- Two organizations want to share space/ co-locate to cut costs but are not looking to substantially integrate services at the “Coordinate, Collaborate, or Integrate” level or integrate services in any meaningful way.

Grant Sub-stream #2: Collaborating for Systems Change

Overview

Collaborating for Systems Change grants continue to focus on efforts to **disrupt the status quo and shift the conditions that hold a complex community problem in place** by addressing underlying root causes. These types of grants support groups working collaboratively to transform how a system works and create positive impacts for (human or non-human) populations who are most affected by the challenge. For more information on systems change theory, see [HERE](#).

These collaboratives may be groups of 3 or more partners, networks or coalitions where organizations have identified a shared aspirational goal and are intentionally collaborating and aligning activities to affect systems change on a deeply rooted challenge. Organizations applying to the Collaborating for Systems Change sub-stream are typically already working together in close partnership.

Eligibility

In addition to the core requirement of proactively strengthening co-ordination and alignment among multiple partners, Collaborating for Systems Change initiatives demonstrate the following approaches over time:

- Working towards a shared goal or outcome among all partners to address a complex community challenge
- Undertaking efforts to understand the system using data and root cause analysis
- Identifying and jointly acting on strategies for change that address the root causes* of the challenge
- Meaningfully engaging and working with those who are affected by the challenge, and other equity-deserving groups
- Building in learning structures to support ongoing reflection and adaptive action
- Measuring shared impacts over time

*** Root Causes:** *The root cause of a problem is a primary underlying factor contributing to the problem. Root causes are not symptoms, but are usually deeper factors that are causing a problem. Another way of thinking about root causes is described in this 20*



second video about “[upstream thinking](#)”. Big social and environmental problems often have multiple root causes, or “upstream factors” that groups need to consider and depending on the context, the capacity and readiness of stakeholders, and the resources available, groups may identify one or more root causes for attention, where they see the greatest potential to create change.

Grant Activities: Collaborating for Systems Change

Collaborative system change work is long term and often evolves over time across five main stages or phases of development; although the stages are not always linear, and groups may be working in multiple stages at one time. The following table provides **some examples** of the types of activities collaboratives may undertake at different stages, however, it is not meant to be prescriptive. Applicants will be asked to identify the collaborative’s current stage(s) of work and describe planned activities in the four main areas: governance, coordination and leadership; community engagement; strategy development and implementation; and learning/evaluation.

See table on next page, adapted from the [Tamarack Institute](#).



	1. Assess Readiness	2. Formalize Partnerships, Champions & Gather Data	3. Develop Shared Strategies	4. Align & Implement
Governance, Coordination & Leadership	Recruit key leaders & partners	Form leadership team, develop MOUs & orient leaders	Define additional roles & structures including work groups, staff or backbone	Working groups recruited, oriented & internal communication systems in place.
Community Engagement in particular, people with lived experience, and other equity-deserving groups	Convene key stakeholders to assess interest	Develop a broader engagement plan including those who are most affected by the challenge (people with lived experience)	Engage diverse stakeholders in system analysis & co-creating solutions	Recruit for working groups & launch broader information sharing
Strategy Development & Implementation	Identify the issue, urgency, interest & resources	Map the landscape, gather data	Develop a Theory of Change or strategic plan	Support working groups to create action plans
Learning, “real-time” evaluation & Measuring impact	Establish inquiry & learning approach	Gather (baseline) data & engage in collective sense-making	Research and learn from inspiring examples	Establish a learning agenda and key indicators for intermediate outcomes

Application Questions

See full list of [Collaborating for Systems Change Questions HERE](#).

Grant Amounts: Collaborating for Systems Change

From 2017-2023, there were 36 total grants awarded to the Collaborating for Systems Change sub-stream. Grant amounts were between \$20,000 and \$104,000, averaging \$55,000.

Examples of Collaborating for Systems Change funded projects

- \$65,000 to Transition Salt Spring Society for staff and coordination capacity as the backbone organization for Salt Spring Climate Action Network, of over 60 member organizations.



- \$50,000 grant to Victoria Community Food Hub Society to support the [Good Food Network](#), a collection of organizations and individuals in the Capital Region connecting and aligning efforts towards a *healthy and sustainable food system for all*.

Types of projects which would NOT be a fit for Collaborating for Systems Change grants

- One organization has an idea for systems change collaboration, but they have not socialized this, and other partners have not begun to formalize Partnerships, Champions or Gather Data in any of the activity areas.
- Organizations have started to meet and work together, but the “Issue, Urgency, Interest and Resources” have not been identified.

How is the Community Grants Program funded?

The Community Grants Program distributes grants to qualified recipients using funding from the following sources:

- **Discretionary Funds:** Victoria Foundation holds endowed funds established by donors who have given our board and staff discretion to allocate funding across a broad range of community wellbeing issues. We choose to distribute this funding to local organizations through the Community Grants Program. The investment of these endowed funds and the annual distribution rate that is applied to the market value of the funds each year determines how much funding we have available to allocate through the program.
- **[Donor Advised Funds:](#)** Donor Advised Funds are established by donors who want to remain an active participant in annual granting. Sometimes they choose to support organizations which apply to the Community Grants Program. Applications are not proactively shared with donors, but if a donor comes forward with a particular interest in an organization or cause area, and it connects to an organization that has applied to the Community Grants Program, staff will let the donor know. The donor will then have the opportunity to make a donor advised grant recommendation to support that application.
- **[Community Action Funds:](#)** Community Action Funds are non-endowed funds which allow donors to give confidently to areas of greatest need within cause areas that matter to them. From January 1 to May 22, 2024, all gifts made to the Community Action Funds will be allocated to approved Community Grants Program applications.



How are applications assessed?

The Community Grants Program will utilize a [trust-based philanthropy framework](#) to assess all applications. Some key values of this approach include equity, humility and transparency.

Strategic Initiatives grants staff conduct an initial due diligence review on each application, then assess applications based on 4 main criteria. As a broad-based funder, the Foundation will also consider funding based on geography, specific subsectors, issue areas and equity-deserving groups in final recommendations. In addition, we know that certain populations and causes are in greater need at certain times, and we adjust our focus annually to direct funds to areas of greatest need. This is weighted with our overall support of the sector to create a vibrant and caring community for all.

1. **Governance, Leadership & Collaboration (25%)**
2. **Community Need & Impact (35%)**
3. **Engagement & Demographic Impact (20%)**
4. **Financial Need & Resilience (20%)**

The Victoria Foundation's review process is comprehensive, and we seek input from a variety of sources. We intentionally include people with an array of perspectives and diverse experiences as part of setting our grant priorities and during the review process. We will seek input from a wide variety of sources for the 2024 grant cycle, including:

- Community Engagement Committee: The Foundation's Committee of the Board provides oversight, guidance and additional community knowledge.
- Community Grants Advisory: We will seek input from a voluntary Community Advisory, which includes community leaders representing a variety of subsectors.
- Subject Matter Experts: We will seek input from individuals who can provide additional context and regional information to help support the review process.
- Victoria Foundation's [Vital Signs Report](#): An annual community check-up that measures the vitality of our region, identifies concerns and supports action on issues that are critical to our quality of life.
- Other community engagement, regional reports and surveys: Staff continuously engage with community groups to understand emerging needs and opportunities, and to hear additional input and feedback. For example, through the [2023 State of BC's Non-Profit Sector: Safety Net](#) report.



Post-application

October 3 @ 11:59pm: All applications due via the online grant portal found on the Victoria Foundation website.

September - October: Victoria Foundation staff conduct due diligence checks on all applications and undertake a review process. As a normal part of our review process, you may hear from us with questions about your application. We appreciate your time in providing clarity and additional information as required.

October - November: Consultations with Community Advisory members, Community Engagement Committee and subject matter experts to provide additional input on the grant making process.

Late December: Applicants notified, and funding distributed. Every applicant will receive notification regardless of funding decision.

January onwards: Victoria Foundation staff will be available for follow-up calls with applicants.

Reporting and Stewardship

- All successful applications will be required to submit a simple final report through the online grant portal. You will receive an email reminder from the grant portal to complete the final report, based on the end-date you indicated in the application. If the final report is not submitted by the time indicated in the application, staff may follow up via email or phone asking for a status update or offering to extend the final report deadline.
- If your grant deadlines or project deliverables change at any time during the lifetime of your grant, please connect with the grants team to share that information to update your file as well as explore other ways that we can provide support.
- We want to hear from you during the lifecycle of your grant! Please reach out anytime with an impact story, picture or video, or just to say hi.

NEXT STEPS: Initial Phone Call

There must be a willingness and intent among multiple organizations to work collaboratively to increase coordination and synergy among organizations. Before requesting your application access code, please check your eligibility status by reviewing the information throughout the guidelines. Once confirmed, please contact grants staff to review the initial screening questions below.



Inquiry period: August 8 to September 30, 2024. Appointments to confirm program eligibility are available within this time. Email grants@victoriafoundation.bc.ca to schedule your appointment.

Initial screening questions may include:

1. Does the collaboration include multiple organizations with formalized relationships?
2. Is there leadership in place to steward the collaboration?
3. Who is the lead charitable partner who will be applying on behalf of the collaboration?
4. How long have partners been working together?
5. Collaborative Practice Innovation
 - Has the collaboration systematically adjusted and aligned their work for greater efficiency?
6. Collaborating for Systems Change
 - Has the collaboration clearly identified the “Issue, Urgency, Interest and Resources”?

