



COMMUNITY CONNECT GRANT

Grant Guidelines and Application Toolkit

Document prepared by the Community Engaged Learning Office



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I. INTRODUCTION

We're excited that you're taking the first step toward applying for the Community Connect Grant! This document will help guide you as you begin developing your application.

If you have any questions or would like support shaping your ideas, please don't hesitate to contact the Community-Engaged Learning Coordinators at celoffice@uvic.ca.

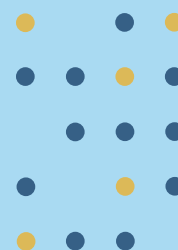
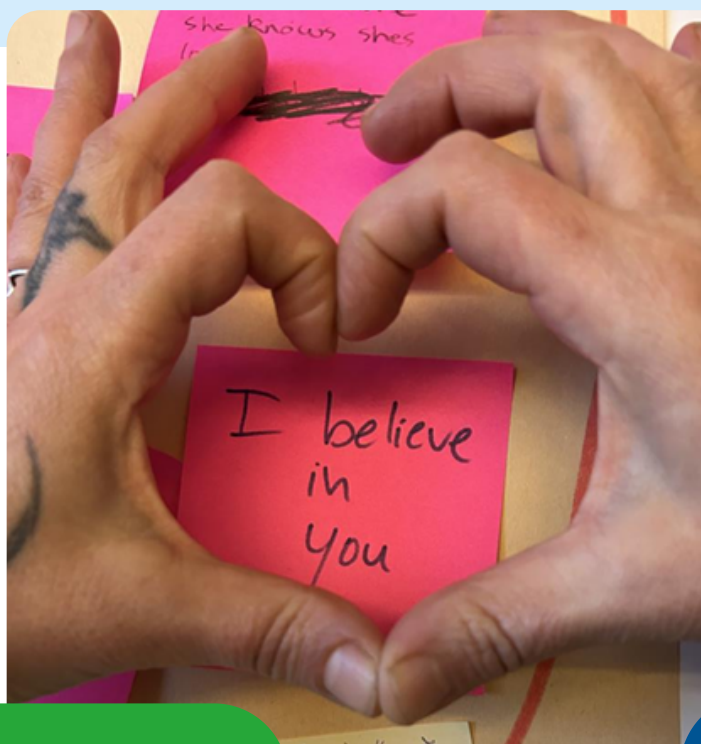
In this document you will find:



1. ***Application Steps & Checklist***- a quick checklist to make sure you completed all requirements for the grant application.
2. ***Grant Guidelines***- in this section we share all the information you need to write a successful application.
3. ***Application Toolkit***- in this section we share tips and examples of how to respond to each question within the grant application.

II. APPLICATION STEPS & CHECKLIST

1. **Review Grant Eligibility Guidelines** located in this document to ensure your idea meets the criteria to be considered for funding.
1. **Read the Application Toolkit** located in this document for helpful suggestions on how to respond to each question in the application.
1. **Provide a Community Partner Letter of Support & Partnership Agreement.** If your proposed idea involves collaboration with a community partner, you will need to complete this letter with your community partner.
1. **Complete the Community Connect Grant Application.** See *Community Connect Grant Application Form* on the webpage.
1. **Complete the Budget Form.** Please review eligible and ineligible expenses in the *Grant Guidelines* in this document.



III. GRANT GUIDELINES

About the Community Connect Grant:

The *Community Connect Grant* is designed to inspire UVic students to actively participate in community life by developing and leading a community engagement activity that makes a difference off campus.

This grant provides UVic students up to \$2000 to co-design and implement a targeted, timebound activity that responds directly to local priorities.

Important: Students can work directly with a community partner or may propose a community engagement activity that does not involve working with a community partner.

CCG 2027 theme: Community Safety and Wellbeing

This year, the CEL Office is partnering with the City of Victoria to support student activities that occur within the city of Victoria and align with the City's Community Safety and Wellbeing plan. The Community Safety and Wellbeing plan strives to enhance the quality of life for community, residents (housed and unhoused), workers, businesses, and visitors. It takes a holistic approach to create wellbeing in the community by prioritizing programs and policies that encourage participation, build trust, and cultivate a spirit of mutual care where everyone feels valued, safe, and welcome.

Community wellbeing and safety can look and feel different to different groups; some may identify with more westernized concepts of wellbeing, while others may come from different religious, cultural, or social backgrounds and have a different view. Some applicants may identify with an Indigenous perspective of wellbeing that focuses on reconciliation and connection to land. Victoria is home to Indigenous People(s) (in particular the Songhees Nation and x^wsepsəm Nation on whose territories the city exists), migrants, visitors and settlers. The City welcomes proposals and practical ideas that advance community safety and wellbeing while reflecting the diversity of the community.

Priorities from this plan that align with Community-Engaged Learning activities include:

- Fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing community wellbeing
- Strengthening social cohesion or reducing social isolation
- Reducing stigma and addressing the culture of compassion fatigue
- Fostering access and literacy of community resources and strengths
- Enhancing community well-being and vibrancy
- Acknowledging existing community initiatives and supporting inclusive and connected neighbours or neighbourhoods

Proposals that want to receive matching funds (Up to \$1000 in matching funds) from the City should clearly demonstrate how the activity contributes to one or more of these focus areas and how the activity works to advance the priorities outlined in the City's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan.



Eligibility Criteria:

Applicants must be current students (full-time or part-time) at the University of Victoria. All levels of study and academic discipline are welcome to apply.

Activities must take place within the municipal boundaries of the City of Victoria. Applicants should refer to the map provided to confirm that the location of the community engagement activity is eligible ([link to map](#))



Important: The CEL Office will accept applications that take place outside of the city of Victoria boundaries, but those applications **WILL NOT** be eligible to receive matching funds from the City of Victoria. Applicants who fall within this category can apply for \$500-\$1000.

Examples of eligible community engagement activities

May include but is not limited to:

- education session or a community workshop
- film night on a social issue
- arts and crafts gatherings or pop-up music events to bring neighbours together
- Construction of a neighbourhood lending library
- potluck for social connection
- neighborhood clothing exchange
- ocean, creek or park clean-up
- place-making activities with community

Ineligible community engagement activities

- Any activity that seeks to collect human subjects' data. The proposed activity CANNOT be research unless you have an existing ethics approval from UVic and applicants are asked to upload their ethics approval with the application.
- If student(s) are working with a community partner, the funds cannot be used to support a regularly delivered community service or activity. This grant is intended to provide modest support for student-led exploration in community-building, not to sustain or offset organizations' costs.

Example of eligible expenses

- Community partner honorarium (up to \$300)
- Principle student applicant honorarium (up 10% of budget for applications with a budget of \$1000-\$2000)
- Program materials, printing, and supplies
- Marketing and promotion expenses
- Venue rental to hold event/workshop
- Hospitality and food (alcohol or cannabis are an ineligible expense)
- Transportation and accommodation for guest speaker (up to \$300)
- Speaker fees (up to \$200)
- Rental equipment for activity
- Service providers doing something for the activity (musicians, artists)
- Group transportation for activity
- Appreciation gifts for volunteers or speakers (can't exceed \$50)



Eligible expenses for applicants & co-applicants

- Transportation & parking for principal applicant and co-applicants planning and activity i.e. (bus pass, street parking, gas mileage, ride hailing) (up to \$150)
- Individual subscriptions or licenses that support the community engagement activity e.g. individual subscription to Canva.

Ineligible expenses

- Expenses not directly related to the approved community engagement activity
- Personal equipment and technology, such as a computer
- Expenses related to organizing fundraisers, campaigns, or marketing
- Expenses that are incurred before the grant period begins

What is a community partner?

For the purpose of this grant, we define a community partner as nonprofits, public sector organizations, registered charities, societies, cooperatives, First Nations communities, neighbourhood associations, and schools.

If you are planning to work with a community partner, you must complete with your community partner the ***Community Letter of Support & Partnership Agreement***. The letter should endorse the proposal, speak to your relationship with them, and describe their involvement in the co-development of the activity. The completion of the letter provides an opportunity to learn about community partners' priorities/needs and ways in which you can build a collaborative partnership for your community engagement activity.

The template for the ***Community Letter of Support & Partnership Agreement*** can be found on the Community Connect Grant webpage. Upload the completed form within the Community Connect Grant application.

Grant Review Process & Evaluation Rubric:

Grant applications are evaluated based on how clearly, realistically, and thoughtfully the activity is planned. Adjudicators are looking for strong ideas that are organized, achievable, and beneficial to the community.

Strong applications show clear connections between the idea, the plan, and the impact. Reviewers will prioritize proposals that demonstrate thoughtful preparation and a strong sense of purpose.

Evaluation rubric

- **Purpose & Impact** - Is the goal of the activity clear? Does it address a real need or issue?
- **Planning & Feasibility** - Is the idea realistic and achievable within the timeline? Are the steps clearly outlined?
- **Theme** - Is the proposed activity advancing the City's community safety and wellbeing objectives?
- **Budget & Financial Planning** - Is the budget detailed, accurate, and well-researched? Are costs justified and clearly explained?
- **Community Engagement & Collaboration** - Does the activity involve community members or partners? Has the community partner been involved in the development of the idea? Has the community partner provided a ***Letter of Support and Partnership Agreement?*** Are roles clearly described?
- **Learning Objectives & Student Growth** - Are personal learning goals clearly identified? Does the proposal show opportunities for skill development and leadership?

Program Requirements, Reporting and Tracking:

Successful principal applicant will be required to:

1. Be the direct contact with CEL Coordinators to coordinate expense reimbursements
2. Attend a midway check-in with the CEL Coordinator to provide an update and share tracking expense report (including receipts)
3. Complete a final report response form that outlines the outcome and impacts of community engagement activity, and share final tracking expense report (including receipts)
4. Be in direct communication with CEL coordinators to discuss any changes to expenses or proposed community engagement activity to ensure changes still meet the scope of the funding.

Successful principal applicant and student co-applicants will be required to:

1. If the proposed activity involves working with youth under the age of 19 and/or vulnerable adults due to age, mental or physical health conditions, or other vulnerable circumstances, you will be required to undergo a Vulnerable Sector Check, either through your community partner or through our office.
2. Read the Brightspace course module called *Foundations of Community Engagement*
3. Attend at least three peer meetings that will occur monthly from January - August
4. Attend final showcase and share learnings.

IV. APPLICATION TOOLKIT

Question 1- Title

(Max 12 words)

Come up with a title that is relevant to the community engagement activity. A strong grant title gives reviewers a quick, clear sense of what you're doing and why it matters.

- Start with clarity over cleverness. If someone can't roughly understand your proposal in a few seconds, the name is probably too vague
- Keep it concise. Aim for a short, punchy title (no more than 12 words). Long titles can feel unfocused and are harder to remember
- If your proposal focuses on a particular community, place, or issue, reflect that in the name. Example: Downtown Victoria, North Park, Fernwood, Oaklands, James Bay, Fairfield, youth, seniors, new immigrants, unhoused, LGBTQ2SIA+
- Use plain, accessible language. Avoid jargon, acronyms, or overly technical terms unless they are widely understood
- Consider a two-part title. A common and effective format is:
 - A. short, engaging phrase (hook)
 - B. followed by a descriptive subtitle

e.g. Growing Together: Expanding on Fernwood Community Gardens for food security

- Your title should reflect the priorities of the grant (e.g., community engagement, safety and wellness, community belonging, social cohesion).

Question 2- Summary

(Max 150 words)

Your response should aim to provide a concise snapshot of your community engagement activity. Strive to write 2-3 sentences that provide a concise overview of the proposed idea. *What are you doing? Who is this for? What impact will it have?*

In this section, you want to show how your proposed community engagement activity supports a community need or an opportunity specific to safety and wellbeing.

It's important to think about the feasibility of what you are proposing. Small scale activities are key to success and overall feasibility. Often a simple idea has the most impact!

Consider writing the summary last, once you have a strong sense of your goals, timeline, budget and partnership roles (if you have a community partner).

"This activity (title) aims to (main goal) by (key activity). It will serve (target group) in (community/location), creating (specific impact)".

Question 3- Community partner information

(Max 100 words)

Note: If your activity does not involve collaboration with a community partner, you do not need to respond to this question.

In this section, you should identify who your community partner is and describe briefly how you are engaging and collaborating with your community partner. Describe how you and your community partner will work together to either co-design, develop, and/or implement this activity. Why are you and your partner well-positioned and suited to deliver the activity?

Please also upload that **Community Partner Letter of Support & Partnership Agreement** in this section of the application.

Question 4-Describe your proposed community engagement activity/objective

(Max 200 words)

This question asks for more details than the summary. Your response should clearly describe the specific activities the grant will support and provide a practical plan for how they will happen. Funders are looking for a well-defined approach, not just a general idea.

It is helpful to use S.M.A.R.T objectives acronym: Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Time-Bound.

e.g. "By August 2027 (Time-Bound), I will provide one 2-hour community gathering focused on artful activities (action/activity) to build community and foster new connections for ten (Measurable) newcomers living in Fernwood (specific community)."

Question 5- State the overall goal(s) of your proposed community engagement activity

(Max 150 words)

In this section, you want to provide information on the overall aims of your project. These are macro, high-level statements about what you hope to accomplish. Goals are not as specific as objectives. They might be loftier in their wording but should remain within the scope of your proposal and the grant funding.

E.g. "My goal for this proposed community engagement activity is to create social cohesion and understanding for community members who are unhoused. This is important because it is too often xxxx. I think the proposed activity will help fill this need because it allows xxxx"

Question 6-Provide a timeline that outlines key milestones and major activities

In this section, you should demonstrate that your idea is well-planned, realistic, and achievable within the proposed timeframe. A good way to create a timeline is to break your activity into phases (e.g. planning, outreach, implementation) and show (with possible dates) how the activity unfolds. This helps adjudicators understand the flow of your proposed community engaged activity, your ability to manage it, and the overall feasibility of community engagement activity.

Things to include in your timeline: Key milestones, major activities, specific dates, and checkpoints of collaboration with community partner, and with the CEL Office.

Important dates to note are:

- First week of January - welcome meeting
- April 2027-mid-point check in with CEL
- Dates of peer meetings
- August 15, 2027- activities must be completed
- August 30, 2027- complete and submit to CEL Office final report form and expense tracking with receipts
- September 2027- Showcase and Celebration

Question 7- Budget

Crafting a strong budget means finding a balance; you want to accurately support the idea without overestimating or underestimating costs. A well-prepared budget supports your plan and shows funders that you are organized, have planned expectations and that the proposed community engagement activity is feasible. Use the ***budget template*** provided and upload it within the application.

When developing your budget keep these tips in mind:

- Look up for real prices. While estimates are okay, they should be as accurate as possible. Include links or sources if you can (e.g. room rental fees listed online)
- Break down your costs so it's clear how the money will be used. For example, instead of writing "\$180 for food," explain: "Lunch for approximately 10 volunteers: pizza (\$30 × 5) and refreshments (\$3 × 10)"
- Use simple formulas (cost × quantity) so your totals are easy to follow and adjust if needed
- Every major part of your activity should appear in the budget, even if it costs \$0. This shows you haven't overlooked anything
- Include donations, volunteer time, or funding from other sources. This helps show the full value and scope of your idea and how it could be repeated in the future
- Consider costs like transportation, printing, or contingency funds (a small buffer for unexpected expenses)

Question 8- What three learning objectives would you like to set for yourself?

(Max 150 words)

In this section, students should reflect on their own personal goals and skills they hope to create through the proposed community engagement activity.

Things to consider:

- What will you learn through the grant application process, as well as project planning and implementation stages?
- What will you learn in managing this engagement activity and timeline?
- What skills will you gain through implementing the specific activity?
- What may you learn through collaborating with your community partner?