



HABITAT  
CONSERVATION TRUST  
FOUNDATION

## HCTF Action Grant Application FAQ

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## Action Grants

1. Is there a clear definition of what would be a "critical habitat?" Does that need to be federally designated Critical Habitat as mapped under SARA or just key/important habitat?

When we reference critical habitat, it does NOT need to be federally designated Critical Habitat as mapped under SARA. You are correct in understanding our reference to critical habitat as meaning key and important habitat and this can be on a local, regional, or provincial level. Action Grant applications that clearly demonstrate how they will meet the goals, objectives, and deliverables towards addressing an important conservation issue could be working on key and important a.k.a. critical habitat on a local, regional, or provincial level. However, projects that occur in federally designated Critical Habitat may make for a more compelling application if they can detail an urgent conservation challenge requiring funding.

2. Do Action Grants include education to change behaviours?

Education and outreach are critical in biodiversity conservation and can be instrumental in reaching your project goals and meeting our grant criteria. However, standalone education and outreach programs are not currently supported by any of our grants. While education and outreach can be important ways to achieve your project goals and meet your grant criteria, they need to be very specific, well described, and show how they will help achieve the project outcomes. Simply using education or outreach to describe how and what you plan to do in your application is not considered to be detailed enough.

Applicants should keep in mind that knowledge alone does not lead to action, so information-sharing activities such as brochures, short-term events, interactions, or websites - while still valuable resources - are not very effective in changing behaviour or practices. These types of methods assume the audience is already interested in the issue which may or may not be the correct assumption. Therefore, it is critical to understand who your audience is and what their barriers are to changing behavior or practice before undertaking these types of activities. There are several behaviour change models or frameworks (i.e. social marketing, human-centered or theory of change, etc.) and finding the right approach for that targeted behavior change will set up a better process to solve your project's specific conservation challenges and help you achieve better outcomes for people and nature.

3. What was the success rate for Action Grant applications in 2024?

2024 was the first year of the Action Grant. HCTF received 55 applications and of those 10 were funded.

4. Under Action Grant: Is there a clear definition of what would be considered a private landowner?

Private landowners would be defined as fee simple landowners e.g. listed on the title of a property and are responsible for required property taxes and maintenance of the property. The activities of Action Grants may take place on private properties, municipal property, parks, protected areas, and possibly crown land. Action Grant applicants should keep in mind that the intent of the grant is to implement changes for the benefit of conservation by changing behaviours of a group, a.k.a. target audience, across a defined area rather than of a singular individual or property.

5. Can a private landowner apply for an Action Grant to enhance a wetland habitat on their property?

Action Grants are not intended for landowners submitting applications for work on their own lands. However, projects being led by organizations (which could include levels of government) or conservation groups with the purpose of protecting important or critical habitat (not necessarily federally listed; may be local, regional, or provincial) or species through landowner agreements could occur on private properties. Applicants should be mindful that reviewers will look to approve projects that clearly benefit the conservation of fish, wildlife, or habitat and that demonstrate a long-term community conservation benefit.

6. I work with a First Nation that is interested in starting a guardianship program; the planning is ongoing, but we are currently looking for funding to pay wages for our pilot of the program (the project would be more related to action/behaviour change of users in the Nation's territories). Would that be eligible for the Action Grant?

Please email us directly and we'll be happy to discuss what your best option is.

7. Can I apply for another Action Grant if I have an approved project in the previous year?

Yes, with the following considerations:

- There is no guarantee an applicant will be funded for multiple occurring projects as each year applications will be evaluated and ranked on merit and approved based on available funding.
- Action Grants are not about funding programs, so any new application must be a clearly defined project with achievable and measurable outcomes within the 2 year term.

# General Stewardship Grants (Action, Capacity, Community)

## 1. What will be the % allowed for admin?

Admin fees are currently only eligible within the Action Grant. HCTF is considering an admin fee for Capacity Grants. (Admin fees are not eligible for Community Grants.) Please check the website for admin fee eligibility before applying.

## 2. Do you have to be a registered society to apply for a grant?

No, you don't.

## 3. Please define what you mean by honorariums etc.

Honorariums are a symbolic gift (or voluntary payment) in recognition for volunteer services such as attending a meeting, typically for a singular event. Honoraria are used as a gesture of appreciation for what has been received, taught, and shared. It is not a payment to compensate an individual for their time or expense.

## 4. Can one applicant apply for more than one grant for different projects?

Yes. An applicant can in theory apply for more than one grant for different projects. Applicants should keep in mind that the stewardship grants are designed to create opportunities for differing applicants, meaning if there are more strong applications than available funding, the Board committee may choose to distribute funding to different applicants rather than funding multiple projects by one applicant.

## 5. Are costs covered for: marketing and publicity to attract volunteers and public awareness, recruiting volunteers, and training or managing volunteers and their work?

No, marketing, publicity, general public awareness, and recruiting are not generally eligible. Some training and management of work and volunteers may be eligible. Please see the eligibility lists for associated grants.

## 6. You mentioned matched funding not helping eligibility for Community Grants, but how do additional grants affect Capacity or Action Grant applications?

Community Grants do require a 1:1 match contribution of which 50% must be volunteer labour. Match funding from other sources is not considered part of the match contribution for Community Grants. Please see the Community Grant

guidelines for specific information on what is eligible as match funding. Action and Capacity Grants do not require any matching funding. However, additional support via other funding or in-kind support may lead to overall stronger applications.

## 7. Do all three grants require a 1:1 match?

No. Only Community Grants require a 1:1 match and 50% must be volunteer labour. The Community Grants guidance document provides detailed information on this; please reach out to [grants@hctf.ca](mailto:grants@hctf.ca) with more questions.

## 8. Is there a resource HCTF could recommend around grant project development? I have a general idea for an initiative, but am unsure of the best way to get it funded, or how to tweak it to make it more fundable.

Would one of your staff members be available to discuss our project and point us towards the most applicable grant?

Do we email [grants@hctf.ca](mailto:grants@hctf.ca) to discuss our project and additional questions regarding the best grant category to apply for as our project hits on all categories or is there a specific person to email?

Please email [grants@hctf.ca](mailto:grants@hctf.ca) to get in contact with the appropriate staff to discuss your project ideas and any additional questions regarding the best grant category to apply for.

## 9. Are you able to fill out the grant application prior to entering it all into Survey Apply? For example, as a draft document.

Yes. A Word worksheet of the application form has been created for Community Grants. While we have not yet created similar worksheets for Capacity and Action Grants the full list of application questions is available on the website. Please continue to check our website [hctf.ca](http://hctf.ca) and email any questions you have to [grants@hctf.ca](mailto:grants@hctf.ca).

## 10. Our project runs from May to August - how does that fit with your process?

If for example you applied for a 2025 grant with a Feb 28 application deadline and were successful, your funding would be approved in June 2025. You would have 2 years to complete your project: June 2025-June 2026 = year 1 and June 2026-June 2027 = year 2. The grant would not cover expenditures for activities done before grant approval e.g. May 2025. This gives you 2 options: Option 1, try to ensure that you have other funding in place to cover costs of activities worked on before grant approval in June 2025. Option 2, plan your project and develop your application with the intention that project work will occur in May-August 2026.

## 11. Does location hold a lot of weight when reviewing applicants?

Not generally. HCTF will sometimes have priority or preference statements to reflect a need for certain project types and/or because additional funding has been received to support these types of projects. For example, the Capacity Grant as noted on the website emphasizes projects related to caribou habitat restoration in current ranges. Community and Action Grants do not have priority areas, or assessment criteria based on location. Any stewardship grant application that demonstrates a priority conservation issue whether local, regional, or provincial, and clearly demonstrates how it will meet the goals, objectives, and deliverables of the grant will be highly ranked. Applicants should be aware that the final review and approval stage considers available funding and best fit with HCTF's Trust Purposes and [strategic plan](#).

## 12. How are you ranking grants? Do grants that relate specifically to species-at-risk get ranked higher?

All applications are reviewed by multiple reviewers to rank applications based on how well they have met the grant criteria with responses to the application questions. The final review stage for all the applications considers available funding and best fit with HCTF's Trust Purposes and [strategic plan](#).

## 13. Is there a list on the website of what criteria proposals are ranked by?

Not currently. However, all applications are reviewed and ranked based on how well they have responded to the application questions (grant criteria).

## 14. Would any of the grants help to fund the development, production, and installation of interpretive signage that is done in partnership between an Indigenous community and a community conservation group where it is part of a larger project that we already have funding for?

Stewardship grants do not fund standalone communications or signage, however, the "development, production, and installation of interpretive signage" as a component of a larger project may be eligible. Please see the eligible and ineligible activities lists for each grant and/or contact [grants@hctf.ca](mailto:grants@hctf.ca) to discuss your application further.

## 15. Do species that are/have been traditionally hunted or trapped take priority over non-hunted species? We have been unsuccessful with a species-at-risk of priority to us, but it's not trapped or hunted.

HCTF stewardship grants do not evaluate applications with the lens of "species that are/have been traditionally hunted or trapped take priority over non-hunted species." Please see HCTF's approved project list for [Fish & Wildlife](#) and

[Stewardship](#) for the variety of species projects that have been funded in the past. The Capacity Grant as noted on the website emphasizes projects related to caribou habitat restoration in current ranges but no other species. Action and Community Grants do not have any priority or emphasis statements based on particular species. Projects are assessed on how well they meet the grant goals, e.g. Action: changing behaviors, Capacity: building abilities, and Community: working with volunteers in local communities. Applications that clearly meet the project goals along with demonstrating a strong conservation need and conservation outcome will be highly ranked and may be funded based on the availability of funds for the grant.

#### **16. What level of reporting is required for the grants? Do we keep and submit all receipts etc.?**

In reporting you will be required to report on activities, outcomes, and categories of expenditures as applicable to your grant. Budget categories such as labour, honorariums, supplies, equipment, travel, meals, and admin fees may apply depending on the grant. For Capacity and Action Grants, you will submit an invoice along with your report that reflects your expenditures. For Community Grants, no invoice will be required with reporting as all funds are paid at the project approval stage. HCTF does not require you to submit receipts, but as per all the grant agreements, record keeping and audit requirements are to be able to provide records for 5 years.

#### **17. Are there any different considerations for invasive species?**

The scope of invasive species support is determined by the grant. HCTF recognizes the need for invasive species funding and the good work that many organizations are doing toward invasive species management. Stewardship grants may fund aspects of Invasive species work, but they are not designed to fund Invasive Species Programs, a.k.a. ongoing maintenance. Community Grants can be directed at invasive species projects that work with volunteers in local communities. Action Grants may consider projects focused on response involving initial species control of emergent species and that target a specific audience, in a specific location and demonstrate how work will continue beyond the scope of 2-year Action Grant funding. Capacity Grants may consider invasive species control as part of an overall grant e.g. training or planning.

#### **18. How much funding is available?**

Funding is confirmed annually during HCTF's March Board meeting. For the upcoming 2025 grant cycle we anticipate similar funds to last year, where \$650,000 was available across the suite of stewardship grants.