



# Community Grant Application Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in HCTF's Community Grants program (formerly known as PCAF).

The Community Grants program provides small grants to organizations and individuals who have a conservation project involving volunteers in mind but need financial help to make it happen. We welcome the opportunity to help carry out conservation work in your community!

**The application deadline for the 2025 Community Grant intake is  
February 28, 2025, at 4:30pm PST.**

Apply before you start your project! Community Grants cannot be used to fund work that has already started on a project (HCTF will not fund proposals or project activities retroactively).

This document intends to provide additional information about:

- [Eligibility](#)
- [Funding Requirements](#)
- [Project Reporting](#)
- [Budget Categories](#)
- [Project Administration](#)

## Eligibility

Community Grant proposals must align with HCTF's trust purposes as described in the *Wildlife Act*. Projects must focus on activities that maintain, conserve, or restore native (indigenous) fish and wildlife species and their habitats. Projects should:

- 1) have long-range benefits to fish, wildlife, and their habitat;
- 2) involve many volunteers; and
- 3) raise community awareness and engage people in hands-on conservation action.

Some examples of Community Grant projects and activities that HCTF has funded include:

- building and installing bird nest boxes
- building waterfowl nesting floats and boxes
- fencing to protect sensitive or restored areas
- improving habitat for freshwater fishes
- planting shrubs

- replanting forage species for ungulates to improve winter range
- restoring grasslands
- restoring riparian areas

Some types of projects or activities are **ineligible** for Community Grant funding include but are not limited to:

- Activities required for ongoing maintenance
- Administrative costs (ex. rent, utilities, etc.)
- Design costs for newsletters and websites (printing costs for newsletters are eligible)
- Hatchery activities
- In-class school programs and development of classroom materials
- Lecture series or conventions
- Payment of wages (except for contracted equipment or special expertise required in the field, e.g. a biologist, restoration specialist, etc.). See the table below for more information on special expertise.
- Photographic or film documentaries
- Promotion of business opportunities
- Research studies that do not include volunteer engagement
- Routine courses such as First Aid, Small Vessel Operation, etc.
- Salmon-only or marine projects that do not demonstrate clear benefits to freshwater species or their habitats
- School food garden projects
- Vehicle mileage (note that fuel costs can be covered)

**Other considerations:**

<p><b>Paying for special expertise and wages</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please include justification for any expert costs and time (i.e. explain what they will be doing and why they are essential to deliver the project). <b>Preference will be given to projects where no more than 25% of the total request is going to a single expert</b> (multiple experts may be acceptable with sufficient rationale). Note that regular wages for project coordinators are not eligible for Community Grant funding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Projects on Private Land</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the exception of non-profit conservation organizations, <b>landowners are not eligible to submit applications for work on their own lands.</b></li> <li>• Proposals for projects on private land must demonstrate long-term community conservation benefits (e.g. how will the restored habitat be protected in the event the property is sold).</li> <li>• If your project involves work on private land, you must submit written permission from the landowner.</li> <li>• You should also discuss the project with local Indigenous communities and/or First Nations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>School ground or school participation in habitat enhancement/restoration projects</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects must be focused on restoring or enhancing school ground wildlife habitat.</li> <li>• School-based projects should be done in partnership with a community conservation group or professional biologist.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Citizen Science projects</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Community Grants are not intended to fund research programs; proposals that include research activities must be primarily focused on volunteer engagement.</b></li> <li>• Proposals with research activities (e.g. inventory, data collection) must explain how the results will be used to inform a specific conservation action (e.g. restoration projects) and/or solve a conservation problem.</li> <li>• The proposal must describe how the project contributes to the conservation of fish, wildlife, and their habitats.</li> <li>• Ensure standard inventory techniques are used. Experimental techniques may be considered.</li> <li>• Describe what training methods will be provided for volunteers to ensure Quality Assurance/Quality Control of data collection (what format of training, how often, who will deliver).</li> <li>• For primarily research-based proposals please see our <a href="#">HCTF Fish &amp; Wildlife Grant</a>, though please note they still prioritize projects that yield tangible outcomes for fish and wildlife.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Restoration projects</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please use only native plant species.</li> <li>• It's important to follow current best practices to ensure positive benefits for the target species.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Allowable recreation projects</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects with the main purpose of providing public use should direct human activity in such a way as to 1) minimize environmental damage, and 2) promote access for responsible use (fishing and wildlife viewing access, etc.).</li> <li>• Such projects must clearly demonstrate either direct conservation benefits or increased public awareness to address a conservation threat.</li> <li>• Proposals must explain how the activity and access will not lead to negative impacts due to disturbance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Allowable communications projects – public awareness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of signs, brochures, and pamphlets is supported provided that the messaging has been reviewed by a biologist or other professional with appropriate expertise.</li> <li>• Costs for the design of newsletters or websites are not eligible for funding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wildlife rehabilitation centers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A one-time-only grant not exceeding \$5,000 may be given to wildlife rehabilitation centers towards startup costs.</li> <li>• Community Grants do not fund feed, veterinarian services and/or the purchase of medicine.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Grant proposals overlapping with HCTF Fish &amp; Wildlife Grant, Action or Capacity Grant projects</b></p>	<p>In some cases, Community Grant proposals may be associated with another HCTF project to the benefit of both projects. Please ensure the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Community Grant project must be a separate volunteer component that adds value to the other HCTF project.</li> <li>• The applicant must fully describe how Community Grant activities relate to the HCTF project.</li> <li>• You cannot apply for Community Grant activities or materials that have been funded by another HCTF project (i.e. no duplicate funding).</li> <li>• Staff time and equipment paid for by an HCTF project cannot be claimed as in-kind donations in the Community Grant budget, nor can HCTF funds.</li> <li>• Community Grant funds must be used only to support work carried out by volunteers.</li> </ul>

## Funding Requirements

Applicants may apply for a maximum of \$10,000 in any one year. Grant funds may only be used on the approved project.

**Duration:** Once approved, you have up to five (5) years to use the grant money that has been awarded to your project. Upon completion of the project, a final report to HCTF is required. Any unspent funds must also be returned to HCTF.

If you intend to apply for more Community Grant funding for the same project in future years, or if you know you have a multiyear project, you must submit a new application each year. The new application must also include a progress report that outlines expenditures and activities completed to date. **The maximum funding for a multi-year project is \$20,000 over the lifespan of the project.**

### Matching Funds

Unlike other HCTF granting streams, Community Grants require a 1:1 match in that your contribution must be equivalent to your funding request (Refer to *Figure 1*). In addition, at least 50% of the match must be in volunteer labour.

### **Figure 1:**

**To be eligible for funding, at least half (50%) of your matching funds MUST come from the volunteer labour.**

The example below shows that half of the matching funds come from volunteer labour. However, volunteer labour may amount to greater than half the matching funds.



Your Community Grant budget should clearly indicate what you will contribute (in-kind, volunteers) and what amount of funding you are seeking funding from HCTF.

**At least half of your matching funds must be made up of volunteer labour.** Volunteer labour is calculated at \$20/hour. Your remaining contribution may be in the form of allowable donations made to your project. For example, this may include:

1. The **value of donated labour** - For example, if a consultant or equipment operator donates a day's worth of services to your project, you may claim that day's wage as a financial contribution.
2. The **value of donated materials or equipment (donated shovels, soil, wheelbarrows).**
3. **Cash donations.**
  - Cash donations may include community fundraising or club donations.
  - Note that grants received for the project from other funding agencies are **NOT** an allowable donation as part of your matching funding contribution.

As Community Grants are based on volunteer involvement, it is important for us to know what actual activities your volunteers will be doing for the hours you have indicated. Please be specific. Where

possible, indicate the activity and the volunteer hours required to complete the work; you may want to use a table showing different activities and estimated volunteer hours for each one.

- For example: Volunteer planting activities:  
10 volunteers for 5 days (6-hr each) at \$20/hr = 10 x 30 x \$20 = \$6,000

## Budget Categories

You may select the required budget category multiple times to provide adequate information. Include as much detail as possible to assist reviewers in determining reasonable costs.

### Dropdown options:

- Materials and Equipment
- Fuel
- Contracted Services
- Honorarium
- Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Local Knowledge Holders
- Meals and Catering
- Facility or Equipment Rentals

**Materials and Equipment** - List equipment and materials that will be purchased. Include quantity and individual item costs.

**Fuel** - Fuel costs are eligible under Community Grants, but milage is not. Include the estimated number of miles that will be driven.

**Honorarium** - This is a symbolic gift (or voluntary payment) in recognition of 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. Stipends which typically are payments of appreciation for ongoing services or activities may be included here.

**Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Local Knowledge Holders** - This provides an exchange of value (reciprocity) to recognize the teachings, knowledge, and time shared. Elders and Knowledge Keepers are Indigenous individuals who hold specific traditional/spiritual/linguistic knowledge and skills. Local Knowledge Holders may be Indigenous or nonindigenous individuals who hold specific and detailed local knowledge.

**Contracted Services** - This is payment for services (contractors, consultants, biologists, experts in the field) including Indigenous individuals who are providing a specific activity or role, e.g. translations. This may include provision of food, or meeting space.

**Meals and Catering** - Include the following details in the description: Identify how many people, how many meals, and how many occurrences are being provided (e.g. 1 lunch for 100 people, OR breakfast, lunch, dinner for 50 people over 2 days, OR coffee and snacks for 10-20 people at 5 workshops).

**Facility or Equipment Rentals** - List all rental items and facilities. includes vehicle rental for transportation in this category, as well as any other rental items.

## Project Reporting

A report on your Community Grant project is required for all approved projects.

## Progress reports

If you intend to apply for additional funds to support a multi-year project, you must submit a progress report with your new Community Grant application by the deadline. Your progress report should include a statement of expenditure and outline what activities have been completed to date.

## Final reports

Community Grant funds must be used within five years of approval, and any unused funds must be returned within sixty (60) days of completion, termination, or expiration of the allowable term. Upon completion of your project, a final report is required.

**For applications that were submitted and approved before 2021:** Download the Community Grant Report Form [from our website](#) and indicate if this is a final report or a progress report. Once complete, please email your report and any attachments to [reporting@hctf.ca](mailto:reporting@hctf.ca).

**For applications submitted through Survey Apply and approved in 2021 and onwards,** the final report should be submitted through the Survey Apply system.

Don't forget to include any high-resolution photos documenting your project, links to media stories, etc. as these are useful for displays, presentations, and other public relations activities. We may share your story as inspiration for others!

# Project Administration

## Other Project Considerations

1. It is the proponent's responsibility to obtain all required statutory and regulatory approvals (authorization documents, licenses, and permits). Project planning should account for the necessary timelines to apply for and receive permits and approvals before commencing work. Refer to [FrontCounter BC](#) application list for more info.
  - For example, if your project involves working near or on the water then work must meet the requirements of the Water Sustainability Regulation and comply with any conditions set out by a habitat officer in response to a notification. You must submit your notification of proposed work to [FrontCounter BC](#) a minimum of 45 days before beginning work (submitting more than 45 days ahead of time is recommended).
  - Click here to access the [BC Government Directory](#).
2. You may also require approval from various government agencies, such as (but not limited to):
  - BC Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
  - BC Ministry of Forests
  - BC Ministry of Environment
  - BC Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
  - Fisheries and Oceans Canada
3. Any employees, volunteers or agents working on the project must be competent, properly trained and instructed, and exercise a standard of care as required to undertake and successfully complete the Project.
4. You must ensure that all health and safety standards are met.

**If you have additional questions, please contact the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation directly.**

[grants@hctf.ca](mailto:grants@hctf.ca)