community spaces

Program
Guide

Community Spaces Program Guide

This program guide is intended to provide an overview of Co-op Community Spaces, as well as additional information related to program eligibility, application best practices and frequently asked questions.

Search tip: If you're viewing this on a computer and looking for information on a specific topic, open the search tool by holding the Ctrl (Command) button and pressing the letter F on your keyboard. Type a key-word related to your topic into the search field and press the Enter button on your keyboard.

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What is Co-op Community Spaces?

At Co-op, we know the importance of community, and we are proud to support spaces that bring people together. That's why we created the Community Spaces program to help protect, beautify and improve spaces across Western Canada.

Co-op will invest in the communities we serve by contributing $1 million per year to support projects that improve the places where Canadians meet, play, learn and share.

Applications are accepted between February 1 and March 1 at 5 p.m. (CST). For application support, please review the following sections.

Who Can Apply?

Co-op Community Spaces is focused on improving community health and well-being by building places for Western Canadians to come together, build social connections and enable community development. In keeping with our ongoing commitment to invest in the communities we serve, projects can apply to receive between $25,000 and $150,000 in capital funding in three categories: recreation, environmental conservation and urban agriculture. Keep reading to see if your project meets the eligibility requirements.

Funding Categories

Recreation
Provide enhanced recreation spaces in the community such as sports or arts centres or playgrounds.

Environmental Conservation
Preservation of natural spaces in the community such as green spaces or interpretive centres.

Urban Agriculture
Small-scale community agriculture initiatives in both rural and urban areas such as community gardens or food education facilities.

Curious about past recipients?

Here's a quick look at some of our past recipients who fall into each category.

Recreation
- Indian Head Skate Park, Indian Head, SK
- Magic Carpet Lift at Optimist Hill, Saskatoon, SK

Environmental Conservation
- Wildlife Haven Murray Education Centre, Ile des Chênes, MB
- Willband Creek Park Viewing Platform, Abbotsford, BC

Urban Agriculture
- Regina Food Bank, Regina, SK
- Winnipeg Harvest, Winnipeg, MB

Project Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for funding the project must:

- Have a funding request between $25,000 - $150,000 (requests above or below will not be considered)
- Align with one of the three funding categories (recreation, environmental conservation or urban agriculture)
- Be available and accessible for the community to use
- Be completed within two years of receiving funding
- Be a capital project (please review page 7 for an outline of what is considered a capital project)
- Be located in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba
- Agree to permanent signage

Applicant Eligibility Requirements

In addition to the project requirements, your group must fall into one of the following applicant categories:

- Registered charities under the Canada Revenue Agency with valid registration numbers
- Registered non-profit organizations under the provincial government with proof of registration
- Non-profit organizations partnered with their municipal government who will accept funding and issue receipts on their behalf
- Community service co-operatives

   *If you have any questions about your eligibility, please see page 5.

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Is your project a perfect fit for Community Spaces funding? Let's get started with your application!

To apply, please visit the Community Spaces page and follow the instructions. The application opens February 1 and runs until March 1 at 5 p.m. (CST). Please note that due to the high volume of applications, we are unable to provide feedback and discuss individual projects. If you have questions, please refer to the following information and FAQ sections.

Application Best Practices

Community Spaces receives a high volume of applications every year. To make your project stand out and to simplify the application process, we've created a list of best practices and things to keep in mind when applying.

Plan ahead

The application period goes by quickly! We recommend planning ahead to make applying easier. Here are some tips:

- In January, we will post a sample application for you to review and generate ideas. Take time to review it, as well as the Program Guide, to ensure that your project meets the eligibility requirements.
- Begin collecting letters of support, securing quotes, creating site plans or drawings and gathering any other relevant data.
- Once you have created an account and started the application, you will be able to save your work and revisit it to make updates or continue filling out the application.

Showcase what makes your project unique

We recommend highlighting why your project is different and how it impacts the community and its members! Remember – we're looking to support projects that benefit as many people as possible, so showcasing what makes your project unique and how it will impact the community in a measurable way will help make your application stand out.

Be concise and thoughtful

Keep in mind there is a limit of 5 attachments, including pictures, documents, etc., for the application. We know how passionate our applicants are about their projects and understand the limited length may feel too short. However, the software will not allow this limit to be exceeded, so a high-level overview of the project is all that is required.

Please note that anything of interest to the evaluation committee is asked for in the application.

We recommend only including the documents that best support the topics outlined in the application.

Needing technical support with your application?

Please refer to page 7 for answers to common technology questions.

Searching for a quick answer? Here you'll find answers to our most common questions about program eligibility, the application process, technology and more!

Community Spaces Eligibility

[Click here to see what types of projects are eligible](#)

*Please provide relevant information to demonstrate that your project meets the outlined eligibility requirements. This includes your non-profit certificate of incorporation, project drawings and schematics, contractor quotes, proof of land acquisition, etc.

Is my (garden, playground, outdoor space, etc.) eligible?

- Part of the funding criteria is that the funding is used for spaces available to the general public or the community at large. We're looking to support projects that benefit as many people as possible and allow communities to enjoy the space together. We recommend reviewing the *Who Can Apply* section on page 1 for more details.

What types of organizations can apply?

- Registered charities under the Canada Revenue Agency with valid registration numbers
- Registered non-profit organizations under the provincial government with proof of registration
- Non-profit organizations partnered with their municipal government who will accept funding and issue receipts on their behalf
- Community service co-operatives

*Please note: if your organization is not a CRA-registered charity and you do not include your proof of non-profit status or letter of support from your local government, your application will not be considered.

What is a community service co-op?

- Community service co-ops are a designation recognized under the Cooperative Association Act. They have a similar status to that of non-profit societies. A community service co-op may also be eligible for charitable status (which must be applied for separately through the Canada Revenue Agency).

Do you require the certificate of non-profit status or just the number?

- If it is a Canada Revenue Agency Registered Charity, we just need the number. If your organization is a non-profit, please attach the certification.

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We are a non-profit but do not have a charity number. Are we still eligible?

- Non-profit organizations without registered charitable status are still eligible to apply for the program, as long as they have letters of support from their local municipal government to accept the funding and issue receipts on the recipient's behalf.

Can municipalities apply for funding?

- Municipalities are not eligible to apply for the Community Spaces program. Charities, non-profits, and community service co-operatives are the only groups eligible for funding.

How does a municipality partner with a non-profit?

- Partnering with a municipality will provide the non-profit the support to receive funds, as the funds will be sent to the municipality, who can issue a receipt. The non-profit is still required to manage the project.
- The project can be owned and operated by the municipality if it's accessible to the community.

Can we still apply if our project contains multiple phases?

- Projects are permitted to have multiple phases, as long as they follow the eligibility requirements. Please note that Community Spaces does not support programming, only capital expenditures.

We are not located in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba. Can we apply?

- No. At this time, the program only extends to the four western provinces.

Does there need to be a Co-op in the community?

- No, there does not need to be a Co-op in your community, but we do consider the distance to the nearest Co-op.

Can schools or classrooms apply for this grant?

- Schools can apply for this grant through their school board as long as the school board is registered as a non-profit or charity.
- If your group is not registered, you will need to submit a letter from the city councillor endorsing the project in your area.
- Classrooms are not eligible.

Can faith-based schools or organizations apply?

- Faith-based organizations and schools that apply will be considered, as long as the project isn't politically affiliated or only accessible to people of a certain religion or faith. Community Spaces wants to bring the community together and inclusion is important!

Can daycares that are operated out of churches apply?

- If the daycare operates independently from the church, then it is eligible to apply.

Can Indigenous communities apply?

- Some Indigenous communities are registered as charities through CRA and can meet the eligibility criteria of the program.

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Applying to Community Spaces

When is the application period?
- The application period opens February 1 and runs until March 1 at 5 p.m. (CST).

What can I do to help prepare my application before the application period?
- A sample application will be posted in early January. Review this and begin generating ideas.
- In preparation for the application period, gather relevant data for your project, get letters of support, secure quotes, create site plans/drawings, etc.
- Evaluate if you fall under one of the three funding categories (recreation, environmental conservation or urban agriculture). Must be available and accessible for the community to use to learn, play, grow and share.

Where do I find the application or sample application?
- The application forms become active on the Community Spaces website on February 1 and remain open until March 1 at 5 p.m. (CST).
- In January, there will be a sample application that you can view to prepare answers and collect documents for when the application is live.

When applying do we need to include GST/PST?
- If you have this information, please feel free to add it to your application. It is not a requirement.

What document should we attach to provide proof of land acquisition?
- You can attach a copy of your lease agreement or a simple letter from the municipality, etc. advising of the lease term.

Can I set up a call to discuss my project?
- Unfortunately, due to the high volume of applications, we are unable to provide criteria, feedback or discuss individual projects over the phone. Refer to eligibility criteria and best practices when applying.

Co-op Signage

What are the rules about signage?
- A requirement of Community Spaces recipients is for permanent Co-op branded signage to be added to the site/space. When a project is nearing completion, we work with recipients to discuss signage.

Do we have to pay for the signage?
- No. Co-op will cover the cost of all Community Spaces signage.

Does the sign need to be a specific size?

- No, there is no specific size range as size is dependent on the space. It can be anywhere from 1 x 1 ft to 4 x 8 ft. We will work with each organization individually to determine an appropriate size for signage.

Who installs the signage?

- Co-op coordinates all logistics to produce and install the sign, in conjunction with the recipient.

Technology Support

I created an account, but I cannot log in.

- After creating an account, you will receive an email with a link to confirm your email address. If you do not see it in your inbox, check your junk/spam folder. If you still do not see it, then you may have incorrectly entered your email address.

Help! I filled out my application but when I came back everything was gone.

- If this happens, you can retrieve the application from your account. Follow these steps:
  - Click "My Account" in the top right-hand corner
  - Select "Draft Proposals" on the left side
  - Click "Continue"

My documents won't upload.

- You may be over the five attachment limit. The system only allows for a total of 10MB to be uploaded.

I submitted my application, but my documents weren't attached. What do I do now?

- Return to the documentation page, click upload and then attach. Ensure that you have not exceeded the file limits.

General Questions

What are capital costs?

- Capital costs are fixed, one-time expenses incurred on the purchase of land, buildings, construction, and equipment used in the production or in the rendering of services.
- Physical things involved in the construction of the project, or physical things that will be added into the space (tables, equipment, etc.) count as capital. Things related to salaries for employees, costs to build a program or service are not considered a capital cost.

Is gym equipment a capital cost?

- Yes.

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What percentage of funding do we need to raise?
- There is no specified amount an organization must have raised to apply for funding.

My organization has received funding in the past, can I apply for additional funding?
- Organizations that previously received Community Spaces funding must wait two years before applying for additional funding.

When will I know if my organization was successful or not?
- Successful organizations will be contacted by the beginning of May.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by the end of May.

Couldn't find the answer you were looking for?

Email CommunitySpaces@fcl.crs for additional inquiries!

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