

## RENTER SERVICES GRANTS INFORMATION GUIDE

This Info Guide provides information about the objectives, criteria and application process for the Renter Services Grants program. Renter Services Grants are one of many grant streams offered by the City of Vancouver. Information about other social grant programs can be found on the City's web page at: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/community-grants.aspx>

### Introduction

#### Council Direction on Supporting Renters in Vancouver

The Renter Services Grants (RSG) program was one of the key actions approved by Vancouver City Council in June 2019 to enhance and grow renter services in response to growing concerns about the challenges many Vancouver renters face in securing their housing. Other key approved actions that staff are implementing include a [Renter Enquiry Line](#) to respond directly and in a timely manner to renter enquiries, developing an internal City cross-departmental team to coordinate and improve City responsiveness to renter issues, and exploring the creation of a community-based centre for renter services.

For more information, please see the Council reports available on the Renter Services Grants website: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/renter-services-grants.aspx>

#### Renter Services Grants: Our Statement of Intent

Renter Services Grants are investments that contribute to improving rental housing outcomes for renters in Vancouver. They support non-profit community-based programs that assist and empower Vancouver renters to **understand their rights, pursue their rights, and/or retain their housing**. Renter Services Grants are intended to augment and enhance, not simply maintain, an organization's capacity to support renters.

Renter Services Grants:

- Respond to dynamic needs of renters in Vancouver;
- Address equity by reducing the impact of systemic barriers that create conditions of vulnerability for renters;
- Facilitate partnerships and networks between the City, other levels of government, business and non-profits;
- Inform and respond to Council priorities on supporting renters, including the provision of direct services that will improve housing outcomes for renters, and non-profit actions that will create positive systemic change for renters; and
- Increase an organization's capacity to support and/or advocate for the needs of Vancouver renters.

### Renter Services Grants Priorities

Renter Services Grants provide funding for projects that address inequity and mitigate conditions that create vulnerability for Vancouver renters. **Priority consideration is given to projects or services that meet the following:**

- Align with the Renter Services Grants Statement of Intent (noted above);
- Reinforce or support the goals of Council-approved actions to support Vancouver renters;
- The primary function is to provide supplemental supports and/or remove barriers to ensure equitable access to services and opportunities for renters in Vancouver;
- The primary focus is renters who are experiencing social, physical, and/or economic disadvantages and/or who face discrimination, particularly those living in private market rental housing.
- Because of limited funding of this grants program, applications with services that support renters living in private market rental housing will be prioritized.
- Use one or more of the following approaches to improve housing outcomes for renters:
  - Service-oriented, and aimed at reducing the barriers to equity; OR
  - Systemic or individual advocacy aimed at securing services and protecting rights; OR
  - Community development which empowers and involves equity denied renters in solving social problems, bringing about positive social change, and extending participatory democracy.
- Use one or more of the following strategies to improve housing outcomes for renters:
  - Organizing/mobilizing volunteer resources; OR
  - Developing mutual support (e.g. coalition building, collaborative projects) among groups, individuals and group support systems; OR
  - Facilitating improved access to renter services; OR
  - Building the capacity of individuals or families who rent to address the causes of rental housing instability; OR
  - Developing or supporting new service delivery models; OR.
  - Delivering community-based workshops, conferences, or other non-formal educational opportunities for renters and/or renter advocates; OR
  - Undertaking focused research to better understand systemic challenges experienced by renters and opportunities for system change.

Applicants must demonstrate that the approaches and strategies proposed will demonstrably increase an organization's capacity to support and/or advocate for improved housing outcomes for renters. Additionally, applicants are encouraged to identify the measurable potential impact their project will have on the broader renter community in Vancouver.

## Principles for Grant Making

- **Accountability:** We embrace ongoing feedback loops with partners to understand City investments and how they influence change.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** We strive to build equity in our communities by making grant processes accessible, especially for groups that experience exclusion.
- **Transparency:** We are open, transparent, and consistent with our grant making processes.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** We inform our grant making using evidence-based research, and consider all data sources, both formal and informal.
- **Balanced Investment Approach:** We balance short, medium and long-term investments so that, while addressing immediate concerns, we never lose sight of our goal of effecting lasting systems change.
- **Diversity and Reconciliation:** Our grants recognize the unique strengths of our many diverse communities by fostering relationships, helping heal the past, and moving forward with shared understanding and respect – working with the context of Vancouver as the unceded homeland of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Our grants demonstrate alignment with Council priorities for renters and related strategies and initiatives.
- **Partnerships:** Our relationships with our community and funding partners are based on trust, respect and transparency.

## Fairness and Equity

Renter Services Grants provide funding for projects that address inequity and mitigate conditions that create barriers to equity for Vancouver renters. Throughout the application applicants are encouraged to link their work directly to achieving this goal.

The City of Vancouver has developed an [Equity Framework](#) to address systemic injustices and inequities experienced by a broad cross-section of our society and to reduce barriers for those who have historically experienced the most exclusion, violence and harm.

This framework will shape how the City, as an employer and policymaker, provides additional supports for equity-seeking groups in order to advance fair conditions for all people.

For more information about the City's approach, we invite you to read about the steps that the City of Vancouver is taking to advance reconciliation, equity, and anti-racism for all people in Vancouver: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/equity-diversity-inclusion.aspx>

## Eligibility

An organization must:

- Be a registered non-profit society, community service co-op or social enterprise wholly owned by a non-profit and in good standing with the Registrar of Companies; OR be a registered charity, in good standing with the Canadian Revenue Agency; OR a First Nations Band;
  - Please note that if you are not registered as one of the above you may partner with a fiscal sponsor that is a registered non-profit society or registered charity in order to meet this requirement.
- Have an independent, active governing body composed of volunteers. The by-laws must have provisions that no staff member can be a voting member of the board or executive;
- Demonstrate accommodation, welcomeness and openness to people of all ages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities (including trans\*, gender-diverse and two-spirit people), ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, religions, languages, under-represented communities and socio-economic conditions (including people experiencing or at risk of homelessness) in its policies, practices and programs, except in instances where the exclusion of some group is required for another group to be effectively targeted;
- Be in compliance with the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) and the [British Columbia Human Rights Code](#);
- Have the demonstrated functional capacity and sufficient resources to deliver the programs to which the City is being asked to contribute;
- Show costs that are reasonable and on par with other similar programs;
- Deliver the funded program in Vancouver to Vancouver residents.
- If you have applied for a grant previously, were not successful and plan to apply again during this intake period we ask that you contact a Social Planner to discuss how your project may or may not align with funding priorities.

Exceptions to the above may be approved at the discretion of the Managing Director of Housing and Homelessness Services.

## Ineligible Projects and Expenses

- Those which fall wholly or primarily within the mandate of other government departments, e.g.(but not limited to):
  - Direct healthcare programs (such as health self-help groups, health information programs, medical treatment, maintenance or rehabilitation programs);

- Employment training;
- Initial settlement programs.
- Direct welfare supports, including food banks, meal programs and provision of clothing;
- The capital costs of housing and or rent payments or rent supplements;
- One-on-one counselling with licensed psychologists, social workers or registered clinical counsellors;
- Projects which are primarily recreational (formal recreation programs such as clubs/groups or teams), or formal educational projects leading to a credential (Note: non-formal educational projects that do not lead to a formal educational credential are eligible);
- Transportation/travel expenses, except those that allow users or potential users to access services;
- Legal fees;
- Payment of: City property taxes; capital expenses, operating or capital deficits;
- Act in the capacity of a funding body for, or make grants to any other group or organization;
- Projects directed to the preservation of any particular ethnic or cultural heritage, except in instances for Reconciliation initiatives;

Organizations receiving a Renter Services Grant may provide one or more of the programs noted above, but the City’s grant cannot be used to support those activities. Exceptions to the above may be approved at the discretion of the Managing Director of Housing and Homelessness Services.

## How to Apply

### Online Grant Portal

All applications are now being accepted online via [VanApply](#). To navigate our online grant system, check out our How to Guides, Instructional Videos and more resources [here](#).

Please note that printed copies or emailed applications will no longer be accepted. If you have questions or need assistance completing your application, please do not hesitate to contact us. Contact details are below.

Application Tasks:	Content:
<b>Pre-Application Questionnaire</b>	Determines your eligibility for the Renter Services Grants
<b>Organization Information</b>	Basic information about your organization
<b>Application Form (Project Information)</b>	Specific questions about the project for which you are seeking funding
<b>Program/Project Budget</b>	Detailed budget of the proposed project
<b>Mid-Year Report Back (for applicants who were awarded grants last year)</b>	Sharing results (to date) of the project funded
<b>Supporting Documents Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● List of Board of Directors</li> <li>● Minutes of the most recent AGM</li> <li>● Minutes of the most recent Board Meeting</li> <li>● Organization budget: audited financial statements for the most recently-completed fiscal year</li> <li>● Organization’s Policy on Diversity (if available)</li> <li>● Annual Report (if available)</li> <li>● Organization’s By-laws/Constitution (New Org Only)</li> <li>● Incorporation Document (New Org Only)</li> <li>● Job descriptions for staff positions to be funded by Renter Services Grants (if applicable)</li> </ul>

**Please ensure you have all required documents at hand to upload, as you will be unable to submit an incomplete application.**

**Note:** It is important that all new applicants (i.e., those not funded in the previous year) contact a grants planner in the Renter Office to discuss their application prior to submission. This is to ensure that your organization and program meet eligibility criteria.

## Review Process, Amount

### Review Process

Applications will be reviewed and assessed using standard criteria by a team of City staff. If a reviewing planner has questions, they may call an applicant for clarification. Staff will present funding recommendations to City Council for approval typically in late February/early March. Applicants will be notified of staff recommendations via email one week prior to the meeting at which Council considers the grant recommendations.

As the review and recommendation approval process leading up to the final decision by Council is extensive, there is no appeal process for grant decisions.

### Term of Renter Services Grants

The term of a Renter Services Grants is one year. Grants typically will be disbursed in late March/early April in one full payment immediately following Council approval. Exceptions will be discussed on an as needs basis with grant recipients.

### Amount of Renter Services Grants

The number of projects funded — and, therefore, the size of any one grant — is not predetermined, but will be considered in context of the number and quality of applications received. We anticipate grants could be in the range of \$5,000 to over \$50,000. Requests for smaller or greater amounts will be considered depending on the scale and impact on housing outcomes for renters.

## Contact Information

Renter Office, Housing and Homelessness Services, ACCS

City of Vancouver

Phone: 604-673-8291

Email address: [renteroffice@vancouver.ca](mailto:renteroffice@vancouver.ca)