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Neighbourhood Grants **Committee Recruitment and Orientation**

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 2 out of 9

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INTRODUCTION TO MODULE 2: NGC RECRUITMENT AND ORIENTATION

Introduction to Module 2: NGC Recruitment and Orientation

The Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) is the group of local volunteers who make decisions about how the grants are distributed in their community. In this module, you will find guides and templates for recruiting and orienting NGC members. You will find more resources connected to the NGC in Module 5: Grant Decision Making.

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2.1

Guide to NGC Recruitment and Orientation



2.1

Guide to NGC Recruitment and Orientation

The Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) is a group of local residents who decide how to allocate Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) funding to the applicants in their area. They may also assist with promotion of the grants, mentor and support Project Leaders and attend their events, and help to organize and facilitate the Orientation and Wrap-Up events. This guide summarizes the steps involved in recruiting and orienting volunteers for the NGC.

Read Guides (6-8 weeks before applications open): This guide, along with the [“Guide to NGC Structure and Responsibilities”](#) (see 2.2) and [“Guide to NSG Decision-Making”](#) (see 2.3) will help you prepare for your work with the Committee. As these may get updated each year, please check back to see if there are any changes and to review the documents.

Contact Past Committee Members (6-8 weeks before applications open): In order to know how many new members you will need to recruit, contact anyone who was on the Committee last year and still has time left in their term or whose term you want to renew, and ask them if they are able to return again. NGC members serve for a two-year term, which may be renewed once for a total of four years.

Outreach to find potential volunteers (6-8 weeks before applications open): Using your networks and those of other local organizations, do some outreach for potential volunteers. The [“NGC Volunteer Posting Template”](#) (see 2.5.1)  is available for you to use. Depending on how many new Committee members you need to recruit, try to plan this so that you have enough time for interviews and selection and to plan the Orientation by the time the grants open (or if this isn't possible shortly after they open). You can also ask your contacts within the community to suggest people who might be interested.

Interview and Select Members (4-6 weeks before applications open): The [“Guide to Interviewing and Selecting NGC Members”](#) (see 2.5.2)  includes qualities and qualifications to look for in NGC members, what to consider in the Committee as a whole, and sample questions you can use in your interviews. There are also documents that can be used as handouts during interviews including the [“Timeline Template for NGC”](#) (see 2.5.4)  that can be used to go over the time commitment and schedule of activities involved in a granting cycle, and the [“Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking”](#) (see 2.4), which can be used to communicate the core values of the NSG program and to assess the interviewees alignment with these values.

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Request and Record NGC Member Information (*4-6 weeks before applications open*): Record each Committee member's information, including their contacts, availability, skills and resources, needs and so on. The "[NGC Member Info Template](#)" (see 2.5.5) ↓ is available for you to edit and use. If there is any information about new members that you need that you did not receive in the interview, contact the member to learn more. You may also want to inquire as to whether any further questions have come up for them since the interview.

Promotions and Outreach (*as early as possible*): Ask NGC members to help with promoting the grants. You may want to provide them with promotional materials and specific tasks (for example a specific area to do postering in). They can also use their social media to get the word out, sharing posts from Vancouver Foundation, your Regional Network or local Partner Organizations.

Plan NGC Orientation (*2-4 weeks before applications open*): Choose an Orientation time, date, and venue as early as possible and plan the food. Ideally the Orientation happens before the grant applications open. Online polls (for example [Doodle](#)) can be helpful in finding times when everyone can attend, and evenings and weekends tend to work best. It is particularly important that new NGC members attend, but it can be good to have some of the older members in attendance as well, so that everyone can meet each other and build rapport, for mentorship purposes, to update them on any changes to the program, and to refresh their memory of the program as some time will have passed since they last made granting decisions.

One example of an online poll is Doodle →

doodle.com/en

Create Your Orientation Agenda and Supporting Materials (*2-4 weeks before applications open*): Take time to plan your agenda and prepare supporting materials. Templates for you to use as a foundation are available in [Section 2.6.1](#) ↓.

Update and Send NGC Manual Template and Supporting Materials (*2-4 weeks before applications open*): Customize the "NGC Manual" and other orientation materials in [Section 2.6.2](#) ↓ for the Committee members. You will need to spend some time updating these and customizing them for your area and current practices. Once confirmed, send out information about the Orientation session as well as relevant documents by email for members to look over beforehand.

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GUIDE TO NGC RECRUITMENT AND ORIENTATION

Facilitate the NGC Orientation *(1-3 weeks before applications open):*

Finalize your Orientation agenda, gather any supplies you need, send out a reminder and finalize any last details. Try to make the Orientation as fun and engaging as possible, as well as providing the information the NGC will need to participate in decision-making.

Plan Grant Approval Decision-Making Meetings *(at the Orientation or shortly after):*

Set the time, date and location of at least your first decision-making meeting. It is usually best to have them no sooner than 4-5 days after applications close so that you can input paper applications into the system and for NGC members to review them once this is done. Meetings can be held at your organization or at the home of one of the members. It is best to have a relatively quiet space where you will not be interrupted and you will need access to wifi. Remember that you need a minimum of 50% of the members to attend in order to make decisions, and plan accordingly.

Provide Access to the Applications *(after the Orientation/at least a week before applications close but ideally sooner):*

Provide access to the applications so that NGC members can start reviewing them as soon as possible. Their account in the online Grants Management System ([see 4.2](#))  can be created after the Orientation, preferably at least a month ahead of applications closing (and no less than a week ahead). Encourage the Committee to read each application and comment online or make notes to bring with them. Remind them that there may be applications that come in right up until the deadline, as well as that it may take you a few days after the applications close to enter applications that were submitted on paper into the online system.



2.2

Guide to NGC Structure and Responsibilities



2.2

Guide to NGC Structure and Responsibilities

The Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) play a critical role in the ongoing success of the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) Program by offering their expertise as local residents. The Committee promotes the NSG program within their communities, makes granting decisions, helps plan the Project Leader orientation and wrap-up events, and sometimes mentors and/or supports Project Leaders. This guide provides an overview of the NGC and how it operates. All of this information is also available in the [NGC Manual \(see 2.6.2\)](#) .

NGC Terms of Reference

- **Appointment:** Members are recruited by NSG partner organizations in each participating community. The Program Coordinator and/or others make appointments to the committee after an interview process.
- **Reporting:** Members will report to, and be supported by, the Program Coordinator.
- **Orientation:** NGC members will be provided with an orientation training session to learn about the process for reviewing NSG grant applications and prepare for the grant review meetings.
- **Committee size:** Each committee will have at least four to six members. The Program Coordinator will decide on the size of the committee for the community based on the size of the area, the population, and the number of NSG applications that likely need to be reviewed.
- **Diversity:** Committees are composed of people with diverse skills, life experiences and backgrounds to ensure that a variety of perspectives are included in grant-making decisions. They should also reflect the diversity of the community itself as much as possible.
- **Term:** NGC members serve for a two-year term, which may be renewed once for a total of four years. The two-year commitment and renewal of the role are up to the Program Coordinator.
- **Overlapping terms:** Members serve on the committee in overlapping terms of service, creating a gradual turn over in membership. New members are selected as needed when vacancies occur. This enhances consistency in decision-making, allowing experienced members to share their knowledge with new committee members.
- **Supporting roles:** For NGC members who would like to continue to support the program after their term on the NGC has expired, there are opportunities to take on roles such as program promotion, event planning and supporting grant recipients or program mentors/champions.

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NGC Roles and Responsibilities

- **Promotion:** Promote the NSG program through word of mouth, e-mail, social media, posters, and other means.
- **Grant reviewing:** Review applications and make recommendations for funding in line with NSG principles, goals and grant approval guidelines.
- **Assisting community gatherings:** Assist in planning and conducting an orientation event for NSG Project Leaders and a Wrap-Up Celebration session.
- **Mentorship:** Support NSG Project Leaders by answering questions during the application submission stage, providing them advice as they plan their projects as needed, and attending their projects to offer encouragement.
- **Storytelling:** Collect and share stories about projects that stood out for reaching a milestone, overcoming a challenge, showing more creativity, and/or having significant participation.
- **Feedback:** Provide feedback and reflection on the NSG program to the Program Coordinator, local Partner Organizations, and Vancouver Foundation for improving the grant-making process and the overall program.
- **Recruitment:** Identify individuals from within the community as potential future committee members and make recommendations for recruitment to the Program Coordinator.



2.2

Grant Review Process

- **Application copies:** Committee members will be given access to copies of NSG applications and related documents for review at least one week prior to the grant review meeting.
- **Preparation for grant review meeting:** NGC members are expected to review applications before the granting meetings and become familiar with NSG principles and grant approval guidelines.
- **Grant review meetings:** Meetings are facilitated by the Program Coordinator or a delegate named by the Coordinator. They take place within 4-6 weeks after applications have been received. A minimum of 50% of the members is required for making decisions. More than one meeting may be necessary depending on the number of applications and the need for additional information from applicants.
- **Working together:** The facilitator may support the committee members to develop community agreements for working together as a group. These are meant to ensure that all committee members participate in discussions, freely express their opinions and communicate with each other respectfully.
- **Decision-making process:** Grant decisions are made using consensus-building discussion within a reasonable amount of time allotted for each application. When consensus is not reached, decisions are made by voting where majority vote determines proposal acceptance and amount of funding. If the vote results in a tie, further discussion will be encouraged until a majority vote is reached.
- **Finalizing grant decisions:** Granting decisions including the amount of money for approved grants and reasons for any declined grants are compiled by the Program Coordinator. These are shared for review to all NGC members before notifications are sent to grant applicants.

Conflict of Interest

There must not be a conflict between the private interests of NGC members and their responsibilities as committee members. For example:

- NGC members can apply for grants within their communities while they are members of the committee. However, NGC members who have applied for grants are required to declare their conflict of interest and should not participate in decisions regarding their application.
- The NGC member is required to declare their conflict of interest and should not participate in decisions regarding an application if any of the following conditions exist:
 - The NGC member is involved with an NSG project.
 - The NGC member is a close friend or family member of the applicant.

Privacy and Confidentiality

NGC members are required to maintain the confidentiality of their NGC activities, including:

- Protecting the personal information of NSG applicants and co-applicants, such as address, telephone number, and e-mail. If applications are downloaded, they should be kept on a secure device. If they are printed, they will need to be shredded once the decisions are made.
- Maintaining confidentiality regarding all business of the committee including, but not limited to, meeting discussions, committee documents, and granting decisions (for example, how much each project received).

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Guide to NSG **Decision-Making**



2.3

Guide to NSG Decision-Making

The following are the principles, concepts, and guidelines used to make granting decisions. They begin with the Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking, which are the core of the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program. Next comes the important concept of “Starting with Yes” which sets the tone for the grant decision-making process. This is followed with some information on setting Priority Focus Granting Areas, in order to encourage projects around priorities identified by the community. And lastly, the Granting Guidelines, with supporting information and considerations for each one. All of this information is also available in the [NGC Manual \(see 2.6.2\)](#) ↓.

Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking

The principles of grassroots grantmaking guide our mission of harnessing local skills and experience in order to foster community self-direction and empowerment and make neighbourhoods better places to live. They are at the center of the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program.

Everyone has gifts: We use an Asset-Based Community Development approach to draw upon existing strengths and build sustainable communities. The passions, skills, and knowledge of neighbours are the building blocks of community development. The resources necessary for change already exist in each community through asset areas such as physical, human, social, personal, and financial. When neighbours are encouraged and inspired to share and connect their assets, communities are strengthened, and meaningful and lasting change can come from the ground up. Connecting local assets also increases relational networks, helps new groups and associations to form, and grows the neighbourhood’s sense of ownership, pride, and ability to work towards common goals.

Small is beautiful: We believe that small scale actions and projects can have a far-reaching impact on people and places. We support individual or informal group-led projects with budgets of \$500 or below. No project is too small, and when counted collectively these projects create lasting impact and become a powerful movement of neighbour-led change.

Local decisions: We believe that neighbours know what is best for their communities, so we make sure that decisions about projects are made locally. We rely on Neighbourhood Grants Committees (NGC) — made up of people living in the community — to review ideas submitted by other

“We have a universal need to connect with one another.”

VIVEK H. MURTHY

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neighbours and decide which ones to fund. We support our volunteer leaders as experts, solicit and listen to their feedback, offer guidance and skill sharing opportunities, and connect them with each other and resources to help build on their success.

Where we live matters: We take a place-based approach to building community. Though our grassroots grantmaking program areas share many commonalities, they are each designed or adapted to meet unique local conditions. In building community, it is the community that is the expert. Projects are done at the neighbourhood level, and these neighbourhoods are defined by the people who live in them. The neighbourhood a person identifies with can provide a rich set of resources and relationships. Projects are led by people who bring these local resources and relationships as contributions to the work, and change happens in a way that is unique to each neighbourhood and the people who live in it.

We learn together: Building a sense of belonging and creating a sustainable community requires certain skills and resources. We seek to empower community members with decision-making abilities and access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities so they can effectively act together to achieve collective goals.

Everyone is invited: We are committed to welcoming and listening to all voices in local solution-building, and making opportunities for participation accessible and inclusive. We must be conscious of the barriers to action and supportive of efforts to overcome them. When all voices are heard and all ideas considered, projects will represent and highlight the diversity of each community and neighbours will form connections with one another regardless of potential boundaries.

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Starting with Yes

Although there are specific guidelines that projects must meet in order to be approved to receive grants, they also center the bigger picture of the NSG program and grassroots grantmaking when looking at applications. For example, we believe that everyone has gifts to offer, and aim to empower local leadership by extending trust and putting funds for projects directly in the hands of groups of neighbours. A good way to keep these values at the heart of the decision-making process is the concept of *starting with yes*.

Starting with yes means considering each project based on its strengths and with a focus on approving it if we can. This doesn't mean we shouldn't sometimes say no! Of course there are applications that need to be declined. However, the idea of *starting with yes* discourages instinctive dismissals of unusual and imperfect ideas, proposals to do things differently than perhaps we would choose to do them, or in ways similar to other initiatives that did not work all that well in the past. It encourages us to consider applications that aren't as detailed or well written as others, which could be because of literacy or language barriers rather than shortcomings in the applicants' ideas and their capacity to be successful in their projects.

The concept of *starting with yes* redirects the discussion from criticism to constructive feedback and solutions. It cultivates a willingness to support applicants to make changes to their application or project so that they can be funded. This can also mean contacting applicants to gain clarification or providing mentorship and support to Project Leaders when needed so that they can succeed.

When approving grants, we can feel responsible for the money we are handing out, wanting to make sure the projects we approve are the "right ones." However, despite the program itself being a large financial investment, each individual grant is small enough that we can afford to be generous in how we distribute them. We want to give people a chance to learn and grow together as this is how community building happens at a grassroots level. *Starting with yes* means using the grants to call forth the gifts of others in our community, letting them know what they have to offer is valuable and helping them to share those gifts with others.

“The gifts of the people in our neighbourhood are boundless. Our movement calls forth those gifts.”

JOHN MCKNIGHT

Priority Granting Focus Areas

Some NSG areas also choose to have focus areas for their grants. Not all grants would need to fall under these focus areas, but special funds could be put aside for projects that do, or those projects could be prioritized within the normal granting funds. These focus areas are a way to engage certain populations within the community or to encourage projects around a certain priority that has been identified by the community. Here are a few examples:

- Projects that **connect Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members** to promote cross-cultural learning, sharing, and understanding. For example, community kitchens where stories of food are shared; collaborative arts and crafts workshops where participants exchange their skills and experiences.
- Projects that are led by **youth aged 18-24** and may encourage and engage more young people to participate in the program. For example, youth-led community dialogues; youth-led neighbourhood-cleanup events that foster intergenerational connections.
- Projects that **build intergenerational connections**. For example, cooking or gardening projects where youth learn about growing and preparing food from seniors, or projects where youth teach seniors computer skills.
- Projects **with a green focus**. For example, projects that help in reducing participants' carbon footprint, creating zero waste, improving access to nature, growing local food, and so on.

Granting Guidelines

The eligibility criteria of the NSG program are designed to ensure that communities are able to support a diverse range of projects that uphold the Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking. A description of each guideline is below:

- 1. Applicants must live in the participating community they apply to and projects must take place within the neighbourhood or community where the application is processed.** One of the principles of grassroots grantmaking is that “where we live matters.” We take a place-based approach to community development. Therefore, the applicants must live within the communities funding the grants and do their project in that community. However, sometimes the boundaries of NSG areas might not perfectly or absolutely reflect the boundaries of the community, and so people who live or implement their project close to but outside of those boundaries can be considered if the Committee feels it is appropriate.
- 2. Two applicants living in the same community but from different households are required on every application, one as the main applicant and the other as co-applicant.** Both are responsible for managing the grant money. The intention of this guideline is to encourage community-building and to ensure that it is indeed a group of residents applying and not an individual or single household. Some Committees choose to make exceptions for roommates, as they often don’t operate as a household in the same way that partners or families might. Different suites in the same house or building can count as separate households.
- 3. Individuals can be main applicants for one Neighbourhood Small Grants project per year and a co-applicant on up to two project applications per year.** Ideally people who want to initiate or help plan multiple projects will team up with their neighbours, which helps spread both leadership and funding further within the community. Sometimes groups of people also apply for multiple grants, using different applicants and co-applicants (for example, a group of seniors who live in the same building or attend the same program or gardeners from a local community garden). If you’re aware that this is happening, the Committee may want to consider a limit on how many projects they will fund per group.

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- 4. Projects must be free, accessible and welcoming to all. They may not charge entrance fees, request donations, or fundraise for other projects and/or organizations.** Cost or a sense of pressure to donate can become a barrier to people participating in a project. Even if providing money is optional, sliding scale or by donation, this can still make it more difficult for some people to feel welcome or comfortable to participate. Project Leaders can also be encouraged to make events inclusive in other ways as well, such by choosing venues that are wheelchair accessible or scent free when possible, translating project materials into multiple languages, putting gender pronouns on name tags and so on. This guideline doesn't mean that projects can't focus on a particular group of people, particularly if that group faces marginalization of some kind. Some NSG projects focus on bridging differences, bringing people of many different backgrounds together to build community. Other times they focus on building safety and capacity for a particular group who face barriers to belonging. Examples might include single mothers, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour), LGBTQ+ communities, seniors, or people with disabilities.
- 5. Except for community gardens, projects involving infrastructure building or upgrading or purchasing of large equipment such as computers are not eligible.** Infrastructure building and upgrading or large equipment purchases can bring up liability issues, as well as issues around who it will belong to, be cared for and how it will be shared. It is also not a fit with the "small is beautiful" principle. Smaller pieces of equipment can be purchased if the Committee believes that it is a good financial decision that will have long-term benefit to the community. If equipment can be rented or borrowed, this would often be preferable, and the Committee may want to make suggestions if they know where the item is available in this way. When smaller items are purchased, things to consider include: Where will it be stored and how will it be maintained? How will the community have access to it after the project is completed?
- 6. Projects involving therapy and counseling support are not eligible.** Due to liability and safety issues, this sort of support is best done in a professional setting.
- 7. Applicants may not profit financially from the project.** They cannot, for example, receive the honoraria themselves nor pay it to their own business.

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8. **Registered organizations and businesses are not eligible to apply. These grants are specifically for individuals and small volunteer-based neighbourhood/community groups.** Although businesses are welcome to support projects, they are not able to apply. Registered organizations, with the exception of those that are volunteer-driven such as Community Gardens or PACs (if the committee feels this is appropriate), are also not eligible to apply. The Committee may want to check any organizations or groups that apply for nonprofit/registered status before considering their application.

Registered organizations can support the grants by promoting it to their program members and helping them apply. If funded, applicants should be encouraged to do their projects outside of regular program activities, open them up to people not already linked to the program, and take leadership in their projects rather than relying on program staff. If program participants are supported by the organization's staff, it is important that the project idea originates from them and that the staff only provides support and mentorship. Applicants should be encouraged to lead, plan and implement their projects so they can build skills and confidence and be able to do a project on their own in the years that follow.

9. **Projects must begin after the grant decisions are made. Projects are not supported retroactively.** If the project is completed by the time the grant decisions are made, it cannot be funded. It can be helpful to estimate when the decision-making will be complete so that the Committee can ensure that projects take place after this time. Generally, it takes 6-8 weeks from application submission to granting decisions.
10. **Preference will be given to new projects, or those that have been funded for fewer than three years in a row.** Although there is much value in ongoing projects that create community traditions that can be built on year to year, these ongoing projects may also have access to resources and support that new projects do not. By ensuring that new projects receive priority in the funding, the Committee can ensure they are continually providing support to new connections within the community. This does not mean that repeat projects should not be funded at all. They could, for example, be given less funds than newer projects. If the project has been funded in previous years, it can also be good to encourage applicants to add new components, involve new organizers/leaders, do additional outreach and otherwise add to what was done in previous years. The Committee may also want to prioritize new Project Leaders in this same way as well, over applicants who have applied many previous years.

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11. **Projects may continue year-round, but the grant must be spent by a specific date, generally 6-7 months after decisions are made. This is typically November 30th for the spring cycle and May 30th for the fall cycle.** Although we encourage projects to continue beyond the time when the grant is spent, it is important to ensure that the grant money has been used by a certain date both for administrative purposes and so that we are able to harvest stories from projects before the next year's granting begins. Some people will ask to return the funds because they do not think that they will be able to complete the project in time. These Project Leaders can be encouraged to do their project in a smaller or easier form if this is appropriate. Otherwise, unused funds will need to be returned by this date.
12. **The budget of each application is expected to be under \$500. However, applications that offer unique and creative ways of meeting the NSG goals may be considered for additional funding.** This is another example of the idea that "small is beautiful". Projects can ask for in-kind donations or financial support from other sources, as long as the scale of their project remains appropriate for the program. Committees who have the funds to do so may choose to offer extra funding to select applicants. These applicants will be asked to submit a new expanded budget for their project to the Committee for consideration. On top of the project offering unique and creative ways of meeting NSG goals, the Granting Committee can determine any additional criteria they would like to use for determining which projects will receive an offer of extra funding if it is available. They may, for example, look at projects that were successful in the past, projects that address specific focus areas (such as reconciliation or the environment) or ones that come from groups the program is making an extra effort to engage (such as youth, Indigenous communities, or newcomers).
13. **A portion of the grant money may be used to pay people for services (also called honoraria) to help with the project. An example may be a carpenter or face painter.** Total honoraria may not be more than \$100 per project. An honorarium is a fee paid for a service, in which it is acknowledged that the fee does not cover what would formally be paid for such a service. Honoraria can also be paid as a gesture of acknowledgement of services that don't have a formal price attached to them or as a gesture of acknowledgement of valuing what someone is offering. There may be circumstances where an applicant needs to pay an honorarium to someone involved in carrying out their project activities. Such honoraria are limited because the program encourages people to freely offer their time and skills and pool together the gifts of their neighbours in order to improve their neighbourhood and build

community. Please note that many Indigenous communities have protocol around honoraria. Please always inquire about this and follow local protocols, even this means providing an honoraria higher than \$100.

14. If a project is going to take place on neighbourhood streets or public spaces/parks, applicants will need to follow municipal by-laws and obtain appropriate permits and liability insurance prior to their project start date.

In order to approve some projects, the Coordinator or Committee may need to research municipal by-laws or necessary permits. Examples might include projects that want to install something on public property, such as traffic calming signs. Permits might also be required for block parties, projects that take place in parks (this can sometimes depend on the anticipated number of participants) or garden projects on public land. Some areas may have clearly laid out rules about specific kinds of projects. For others, an applicant may need to contact the local parks board or municipality to learn whether their project idea is permissible and if permits are required. It can be helpful to find some allies within the municipality that you can direct applicants to for information and support. Sometimes these processes can also be avoided altogether by doing a project on privately owned property or at a local organization.

There may be areas of liability and safety in which the Committee may want to decline funding or discuss with the applicants whether they are willing to remove these elements from their projects. One example that has come up is offering child minding at events (unless the parents are in sightline of the children while they are being watched by someone else or the event is at an organization that can provide professional child minding). Some areas also do not fund bouncy castles because of safety issues and also because they tend to be a large budget item.

Liability insurance will only be necessary in certain situations - for example if an organization requires it for someone to use their space or in some municipalities if the event is held in public spaces such as parks. It can also be good to ask applicants to consider any more general safety and liability issues, including around any structures being erected (tents, sculptures or book exchange boxes for example), physical activities (a bike race or exercise classes), and participant allergies (to bees, foods, or latex balloons for example). For certain projects, the Committee may want to ask participants to sign waivers as well.

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Projects that take place on private property may not be required to have extra insurance coverage because home or rental insurance may cover events and activities. However, applicants should inquire with their insurance providers about what type of coverage they need to have in place for the projects they are planning. Strata corporations are also considered private property. It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact their Strata to inform them of the project if it will take place on Strata property and to determine what insurance coverage requirements will be.

The Coordinator and Committee can consider creating resources about these issues specific to their area for applicants. Even so, there may be projects that fall outside of what is covered by these resources, and in these cases the applicants may need to do further research and get back to the Committee.

15. **When creating a project budget, applicants should determine the actual cost of items to be used and think resourcefully in how to obtain materials through borrowing or donations.** If a budget is very vague, the Committee can ask the applicants to further itemize budget costs. The Committee may also have to adjust budget amounts because there is not enough money to fund everyone at their requested budget. Having itemized budgets can help the Committee determine if the amount they can or want to provide is enough for the project to still be feasible. When the Committee has ideas to help people lower costs they might also consider contacting them to suggest resources.
16. **Applicants are responsible for keeping expense receipts to account for project costs.** Because trust is a core value of the NSG, it is not a requirement for the Coordinator or Committee to ask for projects to turn in receipts. However, in case a situation comes up where receipts are needed, we do ask Project Leaders to hold onto them for one year after they receive the grant.
17. **Festival-style events are expected to focus on a specific neighbourhood or community with a range of 100 to 300 attendees. Projects that are part of festivals must demonstrate an activity within the event that helps neighbours to develop or strengthen relationships.** Because of the focus on small projects and building ongoing relationships, large festivals are not eligible for funding. Once festivals that were started with NSG funding have become too large, the Committee may want to suggest other funding streams, perhaps by having them partner with a local organization. Or, alternatively, a smaller

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scale activity within the larger festival may be appropriate for funding, particularly if it will build connections between local residents.

Other considerations:

Legal Substances: A topic that has come up in the past has been around the discussion or consumption of legal substances such as alcohol and cannabis at events. Vancouver Foundation is comfortable with granting dollars going towards information and education on cannabis and alcohol, as long as it ultimately serves the principles of NSG (e.g. a cannabis information workshop that serves to connect and educate neighbours). They are also comfortable with granting dollars going towards the adult consumption of legal products, as long as it's not the primary purpose of the grant/activity. For example, an event that included a glass of wine with the meal would be acceptable. Partner Organizations in your area may have a different policy however, and so it is good to check and decide on what your practice locally will be.

It is also important to acknowledge that not everyone feels comfortable or safe around substances such as alcohol or cannabis. Because one of the principles of NSG is that everyone is invited, we can encourage Project Leaders to consider whether having substances at an event might become a barrier to some people participating. If this is a concern for the Committee they could ask that the Project Leader do some work around this before their event. For example, before an event, they could contact the people on their block and confidentially invite feedback around whether having alcohol or cannabis at the event would make them feel less welcome, included or comfortable.

2.4

Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking



2.4

Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking

The following principles guide our mission of harnessing local skills and experiences to make neighbourhoods better places to live. They are at the heart of the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program.

Everyone has gifts: We use an *asset-based community development* approach to draw upon existing strengths and build sustainable communities. The passions, skills, and knowledge of neighbours are the building blocks of community development. The resources necessary for change already exist in each community through asset areas such as physical, human, social, personal, and financial. When neighbours are encouraged and inspired to share and connect their assets, communities are strengthened, and meaningful and lasting change can come from the ground up. Connecting local assets also increases relational networks, helps new groups and associations to form, and grows the neighbourhood's sense of ownership, pride, and ability to work towards common goals.

Small is beautiful: We believe that small scale actions and projects can have far-reaching impact on people and places. We support individual or informal group-led projects with budgets of \$500 or below. No project is too small, and when counted collectively these projects create lasting impact and become a powerful movement of neighbour-led change.

Local decisions: We believe that neighbours know what is best for their communities, so we make sure that decisions about projects are made locally. We rely on Neighbourhood Grants Committees – made up of people living in the community – to review ideas submitted by other neighbours and decide which ones to fund. We support our volunteer leaders as experts, solicit and listen to their feedback, offer guidance and skill sharing opportunities, and connect them with each other and resources to help build on their success.

Where we live matters: We take a place-based approach to building community. Though our grassroots grantmaking program areas share many commonalities, they are each designed or adapted to meet unique local conditions. In building community, it is the community that is the expert. Projects are done at the neighbourhood level, and these neighbourhoods are defined by the people who live in them. The neighbourhood a person identifies with can provide a rich set of resources and relationships. Projects are led by people who bring these local resources and relationships as contributions to the work, and change happens in a way that is unique to each neighbourhood and the people who live in it.

We learn together: Building a sense of belonging and creating a sustainable community requires certain skills and resources. We seek to empower community members with decision-making abilities and access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities so they can effectively act together to achieve collective goals.

Everyone is invited: We are committed to welcoming and listening to all voices in local solution-building, and making opportunities for participation accessible and inclusive. We must be conscious of the barriers to action and supportive of efforts to overcome them. When all voices are heard and all ideas considered, projects will represent and highlight the diversity of each community and neighbours will form connections with one another regardless of potential boundaries.

NGC Recruiting: Resources & Templates



2.5.1 NGC Volunteer Posting Template

This template can be used to get the word out and find potential committee members.

2.5.2 Guide to Interviewing and Selecting NGC Members

This guide includes what to keep in mind when selecting members for your Committee and sample interview questions.

2.5.3 NGC Interview Notes Template

This template can be used for taking notes during interviews.

2.5.4 Timeline Template for NGC

This template can be used to create an approximate timeline of the program to help new potential volunteers on the NGC understand the time commitment and schedule of activities they will be involved in if they join the Committee.

2.5.5 NGC Member Info Template

This template can be used to record each NGC member's personal information all in one place for future reference.

NGC Orientation Materials



2.6.1 For NGC Orientation Facilitator

NGC Orientation Outline Template: This sample agenda can be used to design your annual NGC Orientation workshop.

Making an NSG Event Accessible and Inclusive Template: This template includes some ideas for how to make NSG events inclusive and accessible. Some of these suggestions may only be relevant to the larger events that happen in NSG later in the granting cycle, but some may be useful even for a small workshop such as the NGC Orientation.

Ways of Being Together Template: This template can be used to develop intentions for how the NGC members want to work together as a group. While the agreements (see below) are the larger expectations of Committee members, these are more about the process of the group itself.

NSG Definitions Template: This document lists common terms that can be useful in introducing the NSG program and creating common language with the Committee members.

Mapping Your Community: This document helps you get to know your town, city or region better through demographic and asset mapping. This can be useful in introducing Asset Based Community Development during the Orientation. You may even want to take some time to do the activities in this document during the Orientation.

NGC Agreements Template: This template can be used to design agreements that spell out the expectations for NGC members. Members will need to sign these before they officially join the Committee, which can be done at the NGC Orientation workshop.

Sample NSG Applications Template with Teaching Notes: This template includes short sample applications based on real past applications, that can be customized year to year using examples drawn from real applications in your area. During the Orientation, it can be useful to have the committee simulate a grant decision-making meeting by discussing these sample applications. This version includes the teaching notes so that you can ensure that all of the relevant points are discussed.

NGC Orientation Materials



2.6.2 For NGC Orientation Attendees

These resources can be adapted as handouts for the NGC members at the Orientation.

NGC Manual Template: This template can be customized each year and provided to the NGC members before or during the Orientation by email and/or as a physical handout. It includes information on the NSG program and how it works, the role and responsibility of the NGC, the Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking and other key concepts used to guide decision-making, the NSG granting guidelines and a list of resources for NGCs.

Greenest City NSG Template: This template includes information on the Greenest City Neighbourhood Small Grants (GCNSG) program, a partnership between the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Foundation to help Vancouver become the greenest city in the world.

Timeline Template for NGC: This template can be used to create an approximate timeline of the program for NGC members. It can be used at the Orientation to help NGC members understand the time commitment and schedule of activities they will be involved in.

Starting with Yes Infographic:

This infographic was designed for NGC members as a visual reminder of the “starting with yes” framework used to approve applications.

Grant Approval Checklist Template: This template provides a short checklist of the granting decision guidelines and can be used to go through the Sample NSG Applications during the NGC Orientation.

Sample NSG Applications Template: See above for a description of this activity in the Orientation. This version does not include the teaching notes and can be provided to the Committee members as a handout for when they discuss the Sample Applications.

NGC Orientation Feedback Form Template: This template can be used to design a form for NGC members to provide their feedback on the Orientation. They can do this on paper at the end of the Orientation, or this can be sent to them after by email or as a Survey Monkey form.