

3

Grant Promotion and Applicant Support

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 3 out of 9

3

PAGE 72

INTRODUCTION TO MODULE 3: GRANT PROMOTION AND APPLICANT SUPPORT

Introduction to Module 3: Grant Promotion and Applicant Support

Leading up to the opening of the grants through to the application deadline, the focus of the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program is primarily on promoting the grants and supporting people to apply. This module includes information and resources to use in doing outreach to and building relationships with potential applicants in your community.

Table of Contents

3.	<u>Introduction to Module 3: Grant Promotion and Applicant Support</u>	<u>72</u>
3.1.	<u>Promotion and Branding Basics</u>	<u>73</u>
3.1.1.	<u>Guide to NSG Promotion</u>	<u>74</u>
3.1.2.	<u>Guide to NSG Branding Basics</u>	<u>78</u>
3.1.3.	<u>Promotional Templates</u>	<u>79</u>
3.2.	<u>Guide to Supporting Applicants</u>	<u>80</u>
3.3.	<u>Supporting Applicants: Resources & Templates</u>	<u>84</u>
3.3.1.	<u>Email Templates for In-Progress Applications</u>	<u>84</u>
3.3.2.	<u>NSG Frequently Asked Question Handout Template</u>	<u>84</u>
3.3.3.	<u>How to Come Up With Great Project Ideas Handout Template</u>	<u>84</u>
3.3.4.	<u>Effective Grant Writing Infographic for NSG Applicants</u>	<u>84</u>

3.1

Promotion and **Branding Basics**



3.1.1

Guide to NSG Promotion

The following are tips on how to most effectively promote the grants within your community. Promotion is not only about maximizing how many people apply but also about ensuring that those who apply represent all of the different parts of your community, both socially and geographically. In other words, to make sure that all of the neighbourhoods in your larger community know about the grants and feel supported to apply and that the applications you receive reflect the diversity of your community.

Strategic Promotion: When you are beginning your promotion of the program, it's a good time to go back to your demographic mapping from ["Mapping Your Community"](#) (see 1.6). Who in your community are you most trying to reach? Who has been underrepresented in your local program? If you're wanting to outreach to these groups, where would you have to focus your promotions?

Next, think back to your asset mapping. How do people communicate in your community? Where do people meet? Remember to pay attention to both formal and informal groups and communities. For example, we may need to present to boards of local organizations as well as in church basements and put a poster up at the Community Centre as well as in the local bowling alley.

Promotional Materials: Vancouver Foundation or your Regional Network Lead will provide you with templates you can customize with your community's NSG colours, including posters, postcards and bookmarks. These are available in a number of languages, including Chinese, Farsi, Spanish and Arabic. You can also work with local translation services to translate these materials into other languages, based on which are spoken in your area.

Try to distribute these in high traffic areas as well as places where they may reach less connected residents and groups that you wish to target in your promotions (see ideas for accessibility and inclusion below). Each year, remember to ensure that you are using the most up-to-date promotional materials.

Places you may want to target with posters and postcards include local businesses, organizations, community bulletin boards and posts. Be creative. Consider parks, schools, daycares and afterschool programs, restaurants and coffee shops, friendship centers, yoga studios, art galleries, doctor and dentist offices, settlement agencies, banks, grocery stores, community policing offices, libraries, community centers, cultural centers, seniors

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centers, youth drop-in programs, housing co-ops, theatres, the offices of local officials, farmer's markets and so on.

Google Maps →
www.google.ca/maps

Consider mapping out different areas of your community ([Google Maps](#) can be useful with this), listing places where materials can be left, and then splitting these areas up between Partner Organization staff, Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members, other volunteers and the Coordinator. You can look at data from your last year's grants to see if there are areas where very few people applied and then do more strategic and concentrated promotions in those areas.

Dedicate some time to regularly re-poster and replenish materials until the grant deadlines. It can be useful to know the days when posters are removed from street posts and bulletin boards. Some NSG areas even hire poster companies to cover high traffic areas and community spaces.

NSG Website Community Page: Each community involved in the NSG program is provided with a community page on the [NSG website](#).

Community pages on NSG website →
neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/communities/

Partner Organizations Websites: The websites of community partners involved in the program are an excellent way to promote the grants. When the applications are open, it can be helpful to have the program listed on the homepage or have a prominent link that is easy for people to find.

Social Media: [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and so on can also be effective ways to get the word out about the grants. The accounts of the Partner Organizations can be used in this way, or the Coordinators in some areas create their own NSG accounts. Vancouver Foundation also advertises on social media through their accounts and you can feel free to share their posts on your own accounts. The [NSG videos](#) can also be impactful to share on social media.

It can be helpful to do some research to find local social media or Facebook pages that you can post notices to. For example, your local food security network, community centre, or parents group may have a page you can join or post to without being a member. It can also be helpful to tag local organizations, associations, groups or individual community builders to ask them to share a post on their pages.

With social media, less is often more. Try to post regularly enough that word gets out but not so often that you overwhelm people. And it's important to

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remember that not everyone is on social media or on it regularly enough to see posts. It can be one promotion strategy, but be sure to also do offline promotions as well.

Craigslist →
geo.craigslist.org/iso/ca
Kijiji →
www.kijiji.ca

Mail Chimp provides a simple and free platform for email lists and can be used to create customizable email templates. →
mailchimp.com/

Zoom →
zoom.us
Facebook Live →
www.facebook.com
Google Hangouts →
hangouts.google.com

Online Postings: There may be places where you can make online postings, such as to local community event calendars, community forums or classifieds such as [Craigslist](#) or [Kijiji](#).

Email Lists: Many NSG Program Coordinators maintain their own email lists of past applicants, NGC members, Partner Organization staff, and local listservs, government officials, and community organizations. [Mail Chimp](#) provides a simple and free platform for email lists and can be used to create customizable email templates.

Information Sessions: In-person or virtual presentations for groups in the community, for example at programs of local organizations, can be an excellent way to not only promote the program but to assist people in writing their applications. This can also be an effective way to involve staff of local organizations in spreading the word and assisting their program members to apply. You could ask to come to a staff meeting or weekly program for example, and speak for 10-15 minutes about the program. Coordinators may want to do some of these presentations themselves or ask for volunteers among experienced NGC members and past Project Leaders. “Pop-up” information sessions in local cafes, restaurants or community organizations can also be quite effective. Ask permission, set up a station, let people know you’re there, and chat with interested folks as they drop by! Pre-scheduled video sessions on platforms like [Zoom](#), [Facebook Live](#) or [Google Hangouts](#) can also be effective, and may be easier to attend for some.

Local Media: This might include sending press releases or purchasing ads in local newspapers, including those in languages other than English. It might also include asking local agencies that publish their own newsletters or small newspapers to feature the program. Connecting local media with past Project Leaders can help illustrate what the program is about and inspire others to do their own projects.

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Word of Mouth: Connecting with community leaders and service providers and asking them to spread word in their networks is one of the most effective ways to promote the program, as is asking previous Project Leaders, NSG members and Partner Organization staff to do the same. NSG is all about building relationships, and for many people it will be the encouragement of someone they know that will empower them to apply.

Accessibility and Inclusion: One of the goals of the NSG program is to celebrate and respect diversity, and our first opportunity to do that is in how we do our outreach. Look back at any community mapping you've done and continue to develop a sense of what cultural, language and social groups you would need to reach to make the program reflect the diversity of your community as a whole. Consider barriers people might encounter in hearing about the grants, such as literacy, language and social isolation, and try to address them in your promotions and outreach. Here are a few ideas to try:

- Do promotions in the various languages that people in your community speak.
- Keep promotional materials simple and use accessible language.
- Connect with service providers, community developers and staff of local organizations who have relationships with people who have previously been underrepresented and can support them to apply. Consider doing information sessions and dropping off posters at local programs as well as taking time to have one-one-one conversations with people whenever possible.
- Build relationships over time. Sometimes involving people who tend to be marginalized or isolated can require building trust and providing ongoing encouragement and support. They may not apply right away but you may plant the seed of future applications.
- Consider door-to-door canvassing or dropping postcards into people's mailboxes in areas where there aren't a lot of community organizations or businesses to promote the grants.
- Offer help with the application process.

3.1.2

Guide to NSG Branding Basics

The following document provides a few of the basics of Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program branding for promotional materials. Why does consistent branding matter? It is our visual language. It is how we identify each other and how our community members recognize and know us. If you or your organization would like more in-depth information about branding, please contact Vancouver Foundation or your Regional Network Lead and they'd be happy to provide it!

NSG Provincial Logo: The NSG primary logo is recognized by its distinct ladybug icon and red colour. We ask that this logo not be changed in any way. This logo is for use in program-wide materials. Try to leave some space around this logo, and not make it too small (it needs to be at least 1 inch per side) or stretch it out. Vancouver Foundation or your local Regional Network Lead will provide you with these logos.



Neighbourhood Small Grants

Community Colours and Logo: Each community that joins the NSG program is asked by Vancouver Foundation or your local Regional Network Leads to select 3 colours that work well with their existing organizational logo and branding, from a specific palette of colours. These will not include the NSG red, as it is for use in program-wide materials. These community colours will be used to make your own unique community NSG logo and can also be used to customize the templates available for promotional materials, including posters, bookmarks and postcards.

Fonts: The fonts used in NSG promotional materials are Arial and Montserrat. Your body text should be at least 11-12 point size so that it is easy to read. Headlines should be about 9 points bigger at around 20-21. Subheadings should be in all caps and 1-2 points bigger than body text. Here is an example in Arial:

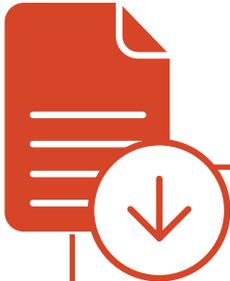
Heading 20 points

SUBHEADING 13 POINTS

Text 12 points

Photos: Photos from local projects can, with permission, be used on promotional materials. We also have an NSG “photo bank” that will be provided by Vancouver Foundation or your Regional Network. Please be sure to use high resolution photos that will print well. If you would like further ideas of what constitutes a good NSG photo, an NSG “mood board” (an arrangement of photos used to convey a style or feeling) is also available in a document called “Neighbourhood Small Grants Brand Identity Guide”, which you can request from Vancouver Foundation or your Regional Network.

3.1.3



Promotional Templates

3.1.3 Promotional Templates

This document includes templates that you can use in your promotions of an NSG granting cycle. They include templates for emails and online postings, Partner Organizations websites, social media posts, and information sessions.

3.2

Guide to Supporting **Applicants**



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Guide to Supporting Applicants

The following are some ways to support applicants to create their ideas, fill out their applications, and have the best chance of success in receiving a grant. During the application period we have the opportunity to invite and encourage people to apply and to make the application process as accessible as possible.

Despite our efforts to make the application process simple and easy to use, many people may still have barriers to applying, including ones related to literacy, language, access to and knowledge of how to use the technology involved, or simply feeling intimidated by the process and/or unsure if what they have to offer matters. This is one of the places where we put our principle “everyone has gifts” into action, assuring people that they have what it takes to be a Project Leader, that their skills and knowledge and passion are important and can make their community a better place, and ensuring that everyone who might wish to apply has the ability to do so.

Direct Encouragement: Speaking directly to people about applying for a grant is often the most effective way of engaging them. Many people need a kind of “permission” - someone to tell them they can and should apply. It can also be helpful to reassure people that the application process is meant to be easy and informal and that their application doesn’t at all need to be perfect. The Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) will contact them if they have any questions or need any further information.

Handouts: A number of handout templates are available that you can send out by email, give to people at information sessions, leave at community organizations and so on. The [“NSG Frequently Asked Question Handout Template” \(see 3.3.2\)](#)  provides some basic information about the program and application process, including the timeline, how to apply, and the guidelines for projects. The [“How to Come Up With Great Project Ideas Handout Template” \(see 3.3.3\)](#)  is meant to give people who are interested in the program but aren’t sure exactly what they want to apply for some ideas to get them started.

Application Writing: Offering direct support for individuals filling out applications can be a great way to address literacy and language barriers, as well as the anxiety some people feel when applying. This support can be offered by Partner Organization staff, the Coordinator, NGC members and/or past applicants. If someone does not have computer skills or access, the Coordinator or Partner Organization staff can also help them fill out the application and even make an account for them to fill out the online

3.2

application if needed (for example, if they don't have an email address). Of course, we want people to fill out the application for themselves as much as possible, but we can help reduce barriers and ease the process.

Information Sessions/Application Workshops: In addition to offering support to specific individuals, consider offering short workshops to local programs or groups or creating drop in times when people can come to receive help with their applications. These can be done online (for example on [Zoom](#) or [Facebook Live](#)) and/or in person. If possible, doing both will help you reach the largest number of people. Ask local organizations to help you promote these sessions to their clients and program participants, advertise them online and directly invite anyone you know may be interested in applying but are needing support with developing their ideas and/or filling out their application.

Zoom →

zoom.us

Facebook Live →

www.facebook.com

Paper Applications: Providing paper copies of the applications can also address barriers around computer skills, comfort and access that might make it more difficult for some people to apply. They can be made available through the Partner Organizations and other local organizations, or even mailed to people if needed. Once filled out, paper applications will need to be entered into the online Grant Management System if you use it in your NSG area. If some are entered after NGC members are given access to the online system to read applications, you will need to notify them of this so that they do not get missed.

Multilingual Applications: This is another good point to return to any demographic mapping you've done and look again at what languages are spoken in your community. This will allow you to be intentional about how you promote the grants in different languages and promote multilingual applications. It can also be helpful to let people know they can apply in their first language. If you receive applications in a language you do not read yourself, you will need to find local translators through the Partner Organizations, NGC, past applicants (provide honoraria for this work) or formal translation services to help with these applications and communication with the applicants. This may be something you want to set up ahead of time for any languages that are spoken by a large number of people in your community and that you expect you may receive applications in. These too will need to be entered into the online Grant Management System when you receive them. Applications in a variety of languages are available on the [NSG website](#).

Applications in a variety of languages are available here →

neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/multilingual-application-forms/

3.2

Alternative Applications: If you feel you have the capacity, you can also choose to sometimes accept applications in other forms, such as video, audio, or combinations of writing and drawings. This can be a useful thing to offer if the applicants may not feel comfortable or able to submit a written online application. It might make more work for you as you would have to find a way to enter the information into the online application and either you or the NGC would need to contact the applicant to get any missing information, but it may also increase accessibility and inclusivity in certain cases. Vancouver Foundation is also exploring ways to allow for the uploading of video, audio and photos as part of online NSG applications, so stay tuned for more on this!

Managing In-Progress Applications: In the online Grant Management System, you will be able to see when an application is started or completed. Customizable templates can be found in [“Email Templates for In-Progress Applications” \(see 3.3.1\) ↓](#). These include templates for:

- when applications are started, to provide some information that may help applicants
- when the deadline is approaching, to remind the applicants to complete their application in time
- applications that have been submitted early and do not adhere to the NSG guidelines
- applications that seem close to completion but weren't submitted by the deadline

Supporting Applicants: Resources & Templates



3.3.1 Email Templates for In-Progress Applications

When you see in-progress applications in GMS, you may want to be in touch with applicants to remind them of the application deadline, to offer support, and to remind them of important parts of the application process and eligibility criteria. These email templates can be adapted to use in this way.

3.3.2 NSG Frequently Asked Question Handout Template

This template can be used in your promotions as a physical handout, an attachment to emails or as part of your online and social media promotions. It goes over the most frequently asked questions of people who are considering applying.

3.3.3 How to Come Up With Great Project Ideas Handout Template

This is another template that can be given to people who are considering applying. It provides tips on how to come up with project ideas that could be funded through an NSG grant.

3.3.4 Effective Grant Writing Infographic for NSG Applicants

This infographic includes four easy to understand tips for writing a successful NSG application. It can be provided to applicants by email, as a handout or even put up on the wall during information sessions, office hours or in the Partner Organization(s) during the time when applications are being received. It can also be used as part of promotions, for example, as a graphic on Partner Organization websites.