

# HOSTING PROJECTS ONLINE

## A Guide for Project Leaders

With the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting physical distancing requirements, and shift to the Responsive Neighbourhood Small Grants program, an increasing number of NSG projects have been taking place online. Despite the widespread use of online engagement tools, many Project Leaders still face difficulty in ensuring these tools work for their project. The tips below can serve as a guide as you plan your next online project.



### Choose Your Platform

With the new R-NSG guidelines, you can now allocate a portion of your project budget to subscribing to a digital platform if you need it to carry out your project. But which platform do you choose? Zoom has been a popular choice that, due to its popularity, one with which many of your participants may already be familiar. Alternatives include Google Meet or Facebook Messenger, which may work well if there's a desire for project participants to stay connected in between project sessions. Whichever option you choose, ensure there is a dial-in option via phone for those without internet connection.

### Test Your Platform

Prior to holding your project, test out the platform for yourself. Do you feel comfortable using it? Does it have all the features you need?

Provide your participants with a chance to check out the platform as well. Advertise what platform you will be using and encourage participants to reach out with any accessibility requests or concerns.



### Create Community Guidelines

Engaging with one another online poses some additional communication challenges compared to in person interactions. To address some of these challenges, start off your meeting by co-creating a set of community guidelines along with the group. The community guidelines should set the expectations for how participants should interact with one another and the various ways that they can remain engaged throughout the meeting.

### Consider Participant Needs

Participants may have various learning, listening, and interacting styles and in an online environment, it is more challenging to check in with all participants one-on-one. To account for these various styles, consider the following:

- Letting participants know it's okay to type their questions or comments into the chat. Consider having a co-instructor or volunteer help you moderate the chat so you can be alerted to any questions.
- If providing instruction, preparing links to visual and textual instructions and sharing those as an alternative to oral instruction.
- If teaching a specific skill or craft, record a video of yourself going through the process. This recording can be shared with participants to review on their own at a later time or with participants unable to attend.



### Follow Up with Participants

After the online meeting, follow up with your participants to learn what worked well and what didn't. Their feedback provides you with different perspectives that can help you prepare for your next meeting or project or spark new ideas. Following up with participants also keeps the door open for ongoing conversation and connection.

