

Coordinating NSG Toolkit



**Neighbourhood
Small Grants**





Coordinating NSG Toolkit Welcome Letter

My name is Danielle. The Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) Program is all about stories, so I wanted to start by offering some pieces of mine. I am an uninvited settler on the lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Watuth), and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nations, in the Hastings-Sunrise neighbourhood of East Vancouver. I am deeply grateful to live on these beautiful lands, but also aware of the impact that my being here has on the Indigenous communities who have stewarded them for so long. I believe that the governing of these lands should be returned to the Indigenous people who have lived here since time immemorial, and I aim to support the decolonization and unsettling processes that are occurring where I live and all over Turtle Island.

I grew up on the shore of Lake of the Woods in Anishinaabe Territory, and still have strong ties to the land and my hometown there, giving me experience in both urban and rural contexts. I am a disabled white cis-woman of mainly Scottish descent, living with chronic pain and illness. In addition to my community development work, I also work in sexual and reproductive health and am an artist, photographer, writer, herbalist, and enthusiastic life-long learner.

For almost 8 years, I was the Coordinator of an NSG program in East Vancouver, working as a contractor for Cedar Cottage, Kiwassa and Frog Hollow Neighbourhood Houses. This is where the NSG program had its roots in 1999 and it was a great honour to tend them, fostering webs of connection in such a vibrant, diverse community. I loved that the program aimed to be truly accessible, and enjoyed the creativity this required, whether this was contacting the 10 year old who wrote their application mainly in pictures, finding translation for applications in languages I and the Neighbourhood Grants Committee members didn't read ourselves, creating events that were welcoming to as many people as possible, or watching a spark kindle in people's faces when their ideas were listened to and valued.

I transitioned out of my position as Coordinator in 2018 and about a year later returned to the program as the author/compiler of this Toolkit, working closely with Meseret Taye and Vincent Tom of Vancouver Foundation. Some of the documents and passages you will find here, such as the Benefits of Neighbourliness, Starting with Yes, and Mapping Your Community, were written expressly for the Toolkit. Many others were compiled from my own work in the program and that of other NSG Coordinators and staff of Vancouver Foundation. It is, like most things in Neighbourhood Small Grants, a collaborative work rooted in community. I want to offer deep thanks to everyone who shared their best practices and supporting documents over the years, allowing them to inform the Toolkit and the program as a whole. Thank you also to the Communications Team at Vancouver Foundation and all of the work they did to make the Toolkit beautiful and easy to use.



This kind of collaboration is at the heart of NSG and the impact it has. I have learned through this work that not only do we all have gifts, but we are hungry to share them. The loneliness many of us feel at times is at least in part because we don't always have a place or a way to grow, harvest and pass on our gifts so that they can nourish others. This is how we evolved to survive and flourish as humans - together, weaving together our skills, resources and strengths into a sturdy fabric of reciprocity and interdependence. Each of us belonging, in our own ways.

Many of our current social and economic systems create barriers to this kind of belonging. I struggle with some of these myself. As a renter in a volatile housing market, I have watched many of my friends, family and neighbours be forced to leave because they could no longer afford to stay and know that I too may be displaced at any time. As a person struggling with chronic health issues, many forms of community building are inaccessible to me and I sometimes feel quite isolated. So many of us experience these kinds of challenges in one way or another.

Over the past few years, the COVID-19 pandemic, opioid crisis, intensifying climate change impacts, Me Too movement, and much-needed reckonings around racism, colonization, and white supremacy have shone a bright light onto the fracture lines of our society. It is obvious to most of us that we need a better way. But it can feel overwhelming - how do we address these massive and complex issues? Where do we start?

NSG certainly doesn't have all the answers, but it does hold some ideas worth exploring. We can start small. We can start local. We can start by inviting each other to the table and listening to each other, building trust and sharing what we have and what we know. We can start with getting to know our neighbours.

These are as good a starting place as any. In fact, they are an incredibly powerful and potentially transformative one. I've seen it, over and over again. Probably you have too.

There are people waiting for our gifts and for us to receive theirs. Let's begin.



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Introduction to Coordinating the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) Toolkit

Welcome to the Coordinating Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) Toolkit! This Toolkit is filled with guides, templates and other resources to help you implement and coordinate the NSG program in your area. Organized into modules that follow the timeline of a granting cycle, it will help you think about the bigger picture of the program, promote the grants, work with the Neighbourhood Grants Committee and complete the granting decision-making process, support people in your community to apply and in their experience as Project Leaders, make the program as accessible and inclusive as possible, and wrap up and evaluate a year in the program.

Two of the principles that guide the NSG program is that “where we live matters” and “local is best”. This Toolkit is meant to be customized to your local context. Like most things in the NSG program, this is not meant as a top down approach. You have full permission and encouragement to modify these documents, to use only what works for your community, and to customize all of it for your local context. There is no cookie-cutter approach to community development. Our hope in offering these documents is simply that they might free you up from some of the admin and coordination work, so that you can focus on the work that really matters: building relationships.

Although this Toolkit was developed particularly for the NSG program, the lessons, tools and practices may also be relevant for other community organizers and grassroots grantmakers. We encourage anyone who finds the content of this Toolkit useful to their work to take what they need and make it their own.

We hope that this is helpful to you as you support and empower community members to create and strengthen connections and make their neighbourhoods better places to live! We would love to hear about your experience and any feedback you have as you use the Toolkit. Please don't hesitate to reach out and let us know what you think or how this could be even more usable and useful to you by contacting us at nsg@vancouverfoundation.ca.



Some Technical Notes:

- Many of the documents are flexible templates included as Word documents you can download so that they can be edited to reflect the specifics of the NSG program in your area.
- When there is information in these templates that needs to be filled in because it will differ across NSG communities, it is in square brackets and highlighted in peach coloured text. However, you don't need to stop there - feel free to change these documents as much as you need to in order for them to be useful to you and your community.
- Many of these templates you'll only have to customize just once, but others you may want to look over each year to make sure that they are still up to date.
- Once you have updated a template in Word, please make sure to change it into a PDF before sharing it with others. Otherwise, the formatting will look different when the document is opened on different devices, and many people may be unable to read it.
- In newer versions of Microsoft Word, you can change it to a PDF by simply selecting "Save As", and in the "Save as type" drop down menu below the file name, select PDF.
- Other documents, including guides which reflect the NSG program as a whole, are included here as PDF documents already, and so will stay the same when opened on different devices.
- The guides in PDF format will be more difficult to edit. If you feel you need to change one of these documents, Word and/or InDesign versions of them are also available. If you would like access to these, please reach out to your contact at Vancouver Foundation or your Regional Network.



1

Getting Started

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 1 out of 9

Introduction to Module 1: Getting Started

Whether you are new to the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program or just new to the Toolkit, this is the place to start! The following list of resources was created to provide a foundation for people who are involved in the coordination of NSG or any grassroots grantmaking program.

You may have seen some of these during your orientation, but it can be worth reviewing them as you prepare for or begin your first granting cycle. Or, if you've been at this a while they can also be useful at any time. These are meant to be foundational materials that you can return to over and over.

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1.1

What is Neighbourhood **Small Grants?**



1.1

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WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD SMALL GRANTS?

What is Neighbourhood Small Grants?

This document introduces Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) and provides some resources for those familiarizing themselves with the program. There is a Word version of this in the Templates section of this Module ([see 1.8.4](#)) ↓ where you can modify or add details about your local NSG program to use as a resource.

“An ideal culture is one that makes a place for every human gift.”

MARGARET MEAD

Where you can find an NSG program →

neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/communities/

Have an idea to bring people together in your neighbourhood?

Grassroots grantmaking is a simple but powerful strategy that uses small scale grants to help people make positive changes in their own communities. NSG is a grassroots granting program that provides \$50-\$500 grants to empower community members to bring their neighbours together, create new connections, and make their neighbourhoods better places to live.

In less than a decade, the NSG program has more than tripled its reach. Developed and funded by Vancouver Foundation in partnership with local community organizations and foundations, it now serves communities across British Columbia. To see a list of where the program can be found, please see: neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/communities

The NSG program is committed to fostering local leadership and engagement in the following ways:

- NSG funds are administered by local community organizations and foundations who hire a Program Coordinator, themselves a resident of the area, to oversee the NSG.
- Each community establishes a Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) of local volunteers who review applications and make decisions about how the funding is distributed, ensuring that they are serving community goals and interests.
- Local people partner with a neighbour or friend from the same community to apply for a grant and create their projects. We refer to them as Project Leaders.

1.1

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WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD SMALL GRANTS?

2019 Final Report →

[neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/
wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2019-
Final-Report-NSG.pdf](https://neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2019-Final-Report-NSG.pdf)

NSG Toolkit Videos →

[youtube.com/playlist?list=
PLeWryyLHnL7z3_agYmHKLt
3xmQyoBFaW_](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeWryyLHnL7z3_agYmHKLt3xmQyoBFaW_)

Check out the [2019 Final Report](#) which provides an evaluation of the program based on insights from 26 participating communities.

One of the best ways to see the impact the NSG program has in communities is through stories. These [inspiring videos](#) share stories from past projects, and highlight different aspects of the program such as how the grants connect and engage neighbours, celebrate the diversity of communities, and help people share skills and knowledge with one another.



1.2

How an NSG Program **Works**



1.2

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HOW AN NSG PROGRAM WORKS

How an NSG Program Works

“The raw material for community-building are the assets of its individual members.”

JODY KRETZMANN & JOHN MCKNIGHT

The following are some of the activities involved in coordinating a Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) Program throughout a granting cycle. Although each NSG and grassroots grantmaking program may be organized differently, these are some of the main components you may want to consider in organizing yours. A Word version of this is available in the Templates section of this Module ([see 1.8.5](#)) ↓ where you can adjust it to your specific program and use as a resource.

Application Process: Applications are opened up once or twice a year depending on the community. The program begins with community outreach and a call for applications. A range of methods are used to promote the program and support people to apply, including holding information sessions, putting up posters in the community, and doing outreach through local media outlets and social media. Applications are mostly filled out online at [Neighbourhood Small Grants](#). Simplified paper applications in multiple languages are also available for those with language, literacy or technology barriers to filling out the online application.

Neighbourhood Grants Committee Recruitment and Orientation:

While applications are being received, Program Coordinators recruit Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members from their communities. This is the group of local volunteers who make decisions about how the grants are distributed in their community. The size of the committee varies, but they typically have 4-6 members. Program Coordinators provide an orientation workshop and continual mentorship and support to NGC members.

Application Review and Grant Decision Making: Once the application deadline closes, members of each NGC review grant applications and identify projects that meet the program principles, local program priorities and application guidelines. Once all the applications are reviewed, applicants are notified about whether they will be funded. Generally, it takes 6-8 weeks from application submission to granting decisions.

NSG website →
neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/

1.2

Project Leader Orientation: Once grant decisions are made, each community organizes a Project Leader Orientation event where Project Leaders receive their grants, learn about the program, and connect with other people involved in the program.

Implementation of Projects and Story Harvesting: Funded projects are implemented over a 6-8 month period. During this time, Project Leaders are provided with resources and encouraged to advertise their upcoming NSG projects and share their project stories in various ways.

Learning and Mentorship: “We learn together” is one of the principles of grassroots grantmaking. There are many opportunities for community members, Partner Organizations and funders to share, build and capture knowledge, skills and information that can be used within and beyond the NSG program. For example, these may include the NSG projects themselves, NSG community events such as the Project Leader Orientation and Wrap-Up Celebrations, various mentorship relationships, local workshops and conferences, and NSG Learning Days, which bring together program participants for networking, inspiration and skill building opportunities.

Evaluation: The NSG program is evaluated annually to measure how well we are fulfilling the program principles and to identify areas for growth and improvement. Surveys are circulated to the Program Coordinators, NGC members and Project Leaders to gather their feedback. This feedback gets compiled in a report that is shared widely and used to enhance the quality of the program in the future. Partner Organizations are also required to prepare a financial report detailing how the NSG funds are used and encouraged to reflect on the grant statistics from their particular granting cycle.

Wrap-Up Celebrations: Once all the projects are complete, the community wraps up the program with a celebration event. Wrap-Up Celebrations bring together Project Leaders, NGC members, Coordinators, Partner Organization staff, local officials, and project participants to acknowledge everyone’s contributions to their communities and showcase stories from the projects that occurred that year.

1.3

What is Grassroots Grantmaking?



1.3

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WHAT IS GRASSROOTS GRANTMAKING?

What is Grassroots Grantmaking?

Excerpted from [A Short Course on Grassroots Grantmaking](#) by Janis Foster Richardson and E. Gabriel Works, published by [Grassroots Grantmakers](#).

Grassroots grantmaking is a place-based grantmaking strategy that is simple yet powerful. Quite simply, it utilizes modest grants and common sense to help people reclaim their place as change-makers in their own community. It is about community engagement at the most human level. The strategy supports the determination and passion of people to actively join with their neighbors to create the community that provides the supportive environment they need to live the life that they want.

Grassroots grantmaking is powerful in that it recognizes the potential of a largely untapped resource for community vitality, resilience and justice - the informal associations at the community level that most frequently operate under the funding radar screen. These informal associations (the grassroots groups) serve as the locus for “active citizenship” in a community. Investing in grassroots groups provides a mechanism for activating a critical missing ingredient in more traditional community development strategies - the knowledge, passion, commitment and enduring presence of people who live in a community.

It is common for foundations wanting to support community change to fund service delivery organizations. Adding grassroots grantmaking as a strategy expands a funder’s repertoire to include two powerful but distinctly different tools for community change – effective service delivery systems (what we commonly think of as nonprofit organizations) and effective community engagement mechanisms (grassroots groups). Becoming knowledgeable about and comfortable using both of these tools, funders are better positioned to make effective use of their philanthropic resources to advance community change. As a strategy, many funders find that grassroots grantmaking generates a significant return on their investment by:

- Engaging and advancing all voices within a community,
- Connecting with marginalized segments of the community, and
- Strengthening community leadership

Many funders have found that grassroots grantmaking programs generate surprising benefits for small amounts of money. Grassroots grantmaking can also have significant benefits for the funding organization itself:

Course on Grassroots
Grantmaking →

[grassrootsgrantmakers.org/
training/publications/a-short-
course-on-grassroots-grant-
making](https://grassrootsgrantmakers.org/training/publications/a-short-course-on-grassroots-grant-making)

Published by Grassroots
Grantmakers →

grassrootsgrantmakers.org

new relationships and perspectives that inform other program areas, increased credibility as an entity that has deep knowledge and understanding about its community, and opportunities to create new partnerships with donors, local governments, and other philanthropies. Grassroots grantmaking can enhance a funder's position as a community leader and demonstrate its commitment to community accountability.

For funders with small grantmaking budgets and a strong connection to “place,” using grassroots grantmaking allows the funder to make small grants go a long way while building the knowledge and relationships that will inform larger funding efforts down the road. With grassroots grantmaking, grants of \$500 - \$5,000 typically yield results that are more significant than the grant dollars would have suggested because grants support the work of and connections between passionate residents.

This work is often low-cost in nature and depends on volunteer commitment rather than paid professional help. Frequent by-products of grassroots grantmaking are a renewed sense of hope and pride, increased citizen participation and enhanced community leadership, all of which inevitably spill over to positively affect other quality of life issues.

Building Community from the Inside Out

In their influential 1994 book, *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann observe that distressed communities are often over-flowing with programs that well-meaning outsiders have brought into the community as a caring response to the problems that they see. McKnight and Kretzmann believe that basing philanthropic investments on the premise that more services or a different approach to service delivery will drive change in challenged communities is a flawed approach. Further, they suggest that the expansion of the nonprofit sector over the past fifty years has had the unintended negative consequence of undermining civic engagement at the block level.

McKnight and Kretzmann believe that using services as the primary remedy to community challenges grows from a “needs-based mental map” on which many well-meaning community outsiders (including foundation staff) base their decisions. With attention primarily focused on the nearly endless list of problems and needs that are facing distressed communities, funders tend to rely on well-run nonprofit organizations that can expertly frame a problem, then design and implement a program to address that problem. However, by focusing strictly on needs and services, funders also overlook a community's local assets – the people themselves and their potential to engage in solutions.

1.4

Coordinator's Guide to the **Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking**



1.4

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COORDINATOR'S GUIDE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF GRASSROOTS GRANTMAKING

Coordinator's Guide to the Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking

“Citizens create satisfaction by recognizing their individual capacities and skills. We begin to see that the neighbourhood is a treasure chest. By opening the chest and putting the gifts together in many different ways we multiply the power of its riches.”

JOHN MCKNIGHT

Grassroots grantmaking provides place-based funding for community engagement at a neighbourhood level. It aims to create positive change around goals identified by local residents. [The Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking \(see 2.4\)](#) are the heart of the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program, meant to guide everything from promotions and outreach to supporting Project Leaders to use their grants and evaluating the program. The following document goes through each of the principles, what they mean, and some examples of how they can inform your work in coordinating a local program.

Everyone Has Gifts

NSG uses an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to build vibrant and sustainable communities by drawing on their already existing strengths. We believe that everyone has gifts to contribute to their community and that the passions, skills, and knowledge of neighbours are the building blocks of community development.

The three core steps of ABCD¹ include:

1. mapping assets - already existing strengths and resources in the community,
2. defining local values, goals and priorities,
3. mobilizing the strengths and resources to address the values, goals and priorities.

¹ Kretzmann, J. & McKnight, J. P. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets*. Evanston, IL: Centre for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University.

² McKnight, J. & Block, P. (2010). *The abundant community: Awakening the power of families and neighborhoods*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers

Everyone in the NSG acts as a powerful “community connector²” who connects people, groups, and resources to help their communities flourish. They see the richness of their community and work to build on and celebrate it. This is done in many different ways, but one that can be particularly powerful is looking at each individual as a resource themselves. Each of us has capacities that can help improve and enhance our communities.

Your Role: Empowering New Leaders

Part of the goal of grassroots grantmaking is to empower people to acknowledge and use their gifts. In our culture we are often used to seeing only certain kinds of people as experts, or having our problems addressed through what we buy and what services we consume.

We are also used to valuing certain people, with certain kinds of gifts (particularly those validated by degrees and jobs) more than others. Grassroots grantmaking is based on the assumption that all people, no matter their “qualifications” or personal struggles, have gifts to offer. When we support everyone in expressing and contributing their gifts, our communities are much better for it.

Part of the role of an NSG coordinator is to help people to become aware of their gifts, to know that they are valued, and to find the courage and support to share them with others. This requires that we build relationships with people - that we talk to them and really listen. What are they passionate about? What do they love doing? What problems do they want to solve, or what about their neighbourhood do they want to make better? What do they know a lot about? What skills and strengths do they have?

There can be a profound permission-giving that happens when we tell someone that we think they should apply for a grant or volunteer for our Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC). It tells them that we believe in what they have to offer - that their gifts, when combined with those of others, can make positive change. Not only do we believe that but we're willing to actually give them money or let them give out money to prove it!

One of the most rewarding parts of being involved in grassroots grantmaking is watching someone start out shy and hesitant, find the courage to apply or join the NGC and build confidence and self-esteem in the process. Now our community has a new leader, who will in turn empower others.

Small is Beautiful

³ Burns, T. & Downs, L. (2007). A legacy of leadership and support for grassroots grantmaking. Grassroots Grantmakers.

⁴ Richardson, J. F. & Works, E. G. (2013). A short course on grassroots grant-making. Grassroots Grantmakers.

We believe that small-scale actions and projects can have far-reaching and lasting impacts on people and places. Sometimes only a small amount of money is needed to get a project started and reduce financial barriers so that neighbours can focus on enjoying one another's company and bettering their neighbourhood.

Short term successes and tangible results can also spark neighbours' motivation, sense of capacity, and desire to collaborate with others and give back to their community. Small projects might inspire further ones and provide a sense of credibility so they can be scaled up over time with other partnerships and larger funding applications.

Your Role: Strengthening Organizational Support

One of the key factors impacting the success of grassroots grantmaking is the degree of organizational support for the program within the foundation³ or community organizations implementing it. This can include having "program champions" at all levels of the foundation or organization, and efforts to include the program within their core work, allowing it to inform and influence their other activities. As a Program Coordinator you can act as an ambassador, informing other people within your foundation⁴ or organization about the potential and impact of the program, emphasizing how even though these are very small grants, their impact can be anything but!

Because of its ability to engage local residents, grassroots grantmaking can potentially strengthen all other programs a foundation or community organization is involved in. The literature of grassroots grantmaking describes a number of returns on investment that these programs can provide, including:

- Providing organizations an avenue through which to connect with community members, including more marginalized groups who may have difficulty accessing larger grants – this can help them to gain a deeper understanding and new perspectives on the community's opportunities, challenges, and priorities.
- Building on broader organizational goals, for instance by developing customized NSG priority focus areas based on local priorities.
- Increasing the partner organization's visibility, credibility, and accountability within a community.

Local Decisions

⁵ McKnight, J. & Block, P. (2010). *The abundant community: Awakening the power of families and neighborhoods*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

From an ABCD perspective, local community members are experts in the opportunities, challenges and priorities in their neighbourhoods and have a unique ability to gain trust and foster participation amongst their neighbours⁵. Fittingly, NSG is powered by you as a local resident, as well as the NGC members and Project Leaders. We support local leaders by asking for and listening to their feedback, connecting them with resources, and facilitating peer mentorship to ensure they receive advice that is grounded in lived experience and local contexts.

Your Role: Building Local Capacity

Here are some ways you can build leadership capacity within your community:

- **Encourage NSG mentorship.** Project Leaders often find it very meaningful when Program Coordinators and NGC members attend their events and offer individual mentorship and advice on applications and projects. As much as possible, dedicate some time to connect in person with NSG applicants and visit NSG events, and encourage NGC members to do the same. You may also want to set up mentorship relationships between more experienced and newer Project Leaders when appropriate.
- **Consult local NGC members and Project Leaders when deciding on priority focus areas** for your granting (see next section for more info on this). What challenges or opportunities do they think most need to be addressed through the granting process?
- **Raise awareness of the program with any local organizations or networks** that can help outreach to people in the community.
- **Support equity and accountability in your NGC.** Do your best to ensure the NGC reflects the diversity of your community in terms of representation of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) and people of different ages, genders, abilities, sexual orientations and language communities. Discuss the expected time commitment and responsibilities for the NGC so that members know their accountabilities, and periodically check in about workload to identify early on whether additional committee members need to be recruited. When appropriate, ask more experienced NGC members to mentor and support those who are newer to the Committee.

Where We Live Matters

Grassroots grantmaking is place-based. As the NSG program expands into new regions, it strives to maintain this approach to community development, collaborating with local organizations and foundations to adapt the program to local contexts. NSG projects are envisioned, approved and implemented by local community members, so that change happens in a way that is unique to each area and the people who live in it.

Your Role: Adapting the Program for Your Community

Although the NSG program may share a basic organizational structure in all participating communities, local partners are welcome to modify various elements to suit local opportunities, needs and interests. As you plan the upcoming granting cycle, consider place-based adaptations you can make so that the NSG program resonates with your community members, addresses local barriers to accessibility, and celebrates the uniqueness of your neighbourhoods. Here are some examples:

Priority Focus Areas

- Consider creating priority focus areas that address your region's priorities and interests (e.g. youth engagement, projects that promote relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, promoting arts and culture, intergenerational projects, etc).
- Not all the funding has to go to these kinds of projects, but a certain amount can be earmarked for them, or they can simply be prioritized for funding.

Promotional Material

- How can you adapt promotional material to include stories and images that will resonate in your community?
- What are the best ways to promote the program and events in your community (e.g. shared calendars, e-newsletters, bulletin boards, email lists, social media pages)?

Feedback & Evaluation

- What information could help you better assess and support NSG's success in your area? Would you like to incorporate your own questions into the annual Project Leader and NGC feedback surveys, or develop your own assessment process?
- How can we support Project Leaders in documenting and sharing the stories of their projects as a way to evaluate the program and inspire others to get involved?

Accessibility and Inclusion

- Compare demographic data of your NGC members and Project Leaders with local demographics to identify gaps in representation and outreach priorities for your community.
- Create translations of promotional material and application forms in the languages spoken in your community or see if they are already available for use.



We Learn Together

Opportunities to learn together support the success and sustainability of grassroots programs such as NSG. The goal is to foster a spirit of life-long learning and to empower community members to contribute their knowledge and skills. Vancouver Foundation, NSG Regional Networks, and local Partner Organizations facilitate a wide range of networking and capacity-building opportunities for NGC members and Project Leaders, including training and orientation sessions, grant writing support, skill-building workshops, community gatherings, and the annual NSG evaluation surveys and final report.

Your Role: Supporting Knowledge Exchange and Skills Building

As a Program Coordinator, you play a key role in facilitating knowledge exchange and capacity building opportunities in your community. Recommendations based on feedback from past Program Coordinators, NGC members, and Project Leaders include:

- **Supporting Project Leaders in documenting their projects and sharing project stories** (e.g. providing photographers and videographers, connecting them with local media etc.).
- **Offering grant writing support** as widely as possible.
- **Inviting experienced Project Leaders to share their best practices** at local information sessions and your Wrap-Up Celebration events.
- **Taking time each year to incorporate feedback and recommendations** from Project Leaders and NGC members and the annual NSG evaluation surveys.
- **Encouraging NGC members and experienced Project Leaders to act as mentors within their community**, as previously mentioned.
- **Strengthening the capacity of Project Leaders and NGC members to use networking tools** such as social media, email groups, or other technologies.
- **Providing skill building opportunities such as local workshops or access to conferences and webinars** that can support a broader understanding of community development and how to take existing projects to a more advanced level and deeper outcomes.

Everyone is Invited

The NSG program is committed to accessibility and inclusion so that all neighbours feel welcome to contribute their leadership, lead projects, and participate in events. When all voices are heard, and all ideas considered, we can create visions for our neighbourhoods' future that are powerfully supported by the community. We can also increase neighbours' sense of belonging and create opportunities for people to form connections across differences.

Your Role: Fostering Equity and Inclusion

To have the program fully aligned with this principle, we have to think deeply about equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Who haven't we reached in previous years? Who may have barriers to participate and what might we do to address those? What groups may require more targeted outreach to engage? Even when we are knowledgeable and well connected, there is always more to learn about who makes up the communities around us and ways to think creatively about involving them in the program.

Tips for Promotion and Outreach

Since demographics can vary greatly between BC communities, NSG encourages Program Coordinators to use local demographic information to identify gaps in representation and targets for future outreach. Tip: it can be very helpful to use the [Census](#) to understand the makeup of your community.

A recent [NSG evaluation](#) revealed overall gaps in participation across all NSG communities, including an underrepresentation of youth, seniors, newcomers, BIPOC (black, Indigenous, and people of colour), and community members living in vertical communities (high rise buildings). The following tips offer a starting point for more targeted outreach to some of these communities.

Tip: it can be very helpful to use the Census to understand the makeup of your community →

www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E

You can see an example of a yearly report based on these evaluations here →

neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2019-Final-Report-NSG.pdf

Newcomers

- Promote participation as an opportunity to connect with neighbours (e.g.: “New to the Community? Apply for an NSG grant to help meet your neighbours!”).
- Host a neighbourhood-wide “meet and greet” session before the application deadline to create opportunities for newcomers or more isolated community members to make connections.
- Maintain an inventory of key resources for NSG projects to support potential Project Leaders who have fewer connections with the community.
- Provide promotional materials and applications in multiple languages.

Vertical Communities

- Identify “high-rise ambassadors” such as previous Project Leaders and NGC members or condo strata management, who can help promote NSG in high-rise buildings on bulletin boards or strata email lists, etc.
- Send NSG promotional materials (flyers, postcards, etc.) to individual addresses within high-rise buildings, highlighting stories of projects within vertical communities.

Youth and Seniors

- Establish partnerships with schools, senior centres, community centres, youth groups, youth leadership initiatives, etc. to support with promotion, outreach, and mentorship.
- Develop NSG mentorship initiatives for youth, for instance workshops to support youth with grant applications and project implementation, or pairing youth with more experienced Project Leaders as co-applicants on a project.
- Encourage multigenerational projects, such as ones that involve both youth and seniors.

1.5

The Benefits of **Neighbourliness**



The Benefits of Neighbourliness

“We welcome strangers because we value their gifts and need to share our own. Our doors are open. There are no strangers here, just friends we haven’t met.”

JOHN MCKNIGHT

What a neighbourhood looks like varies widely in different places – for example in a small town or rural area versus an urban center. All neighbourhoods have one thing in common though – they are how we define the place we live in and who we share it with, whether they are over a kilometer away in a rural setting or in the apartment next door in a city skyline.

Even if the term ‘neighbourhood’ doesn’t immediately resonate with us, we usually have some connection to the place where we live. When asked where we live, most of us name the city, town or area, but we often also name a smaller area: I live in Vesuvius on Salt Spring Island; I live in East Vancouver; I live in South Surrey. Or we may reference the place we live with others in a larger sense – I live on the shores of Clayquot Sound or near the Fraser River. These places give us a sense of identity as well as names us as part of the community of people who live nearest to us.

The reason the concept of neighbourhoods is so important in grassroots grantmaking is that these initiatives are about building place-based community. Many of us now mainly connect with others through communities of culture or interest – people who share similar identities and experiences (for example people from a particular religious community, cultural or ethnic group, or LGBTQ+ community) or a common activity, hobby or cause (for example, members of a class or program, activists working on particular issues, a sports team, or an arts group). While these kinds of connections are valuable, many of us are missing something else equally so: strong connections with the people who live closest to us.

People who live nearby are those who are best equipped to lend each other something, to check in on each other, and to support each other during an emergency or natural disaster. A neighbourhood is so much more than a geographically localized area. It is the place we call home, where our children play, and where we have the most invested financially and emotionally. And yet, many of us are no longer as connected to our neighbours as we might have been in the past.

Past surveys done by Vancouver Foundation have shown that few people visit their neighbours. Only about a quarter of survey participants in Metro Vancouver had invited a neighbour over to their house or apartment or been invited to their neighbours’ home in the past year. And patterns of neighbourhood connection are pretty much set after a few years. People who have lived somewhere for 20 years were no more likely to socialize with neighbours than those who have lived there for only a few years.

The more we know each other, the stronger we are.

We lead busy lives. We work hard and sometimes commute long distances. We have families to care for and errands to run. Who has time to socialize with their neighbours? We hardly even see them, thanks to automatic garage door openers and locked-down apartment towers.

Research and surveys find significant benefits to connecting with neighbours in more than just a superficial way. When neighbours know and trust each other, streets are safer, local businesses thrive, people are healthier and happier, our children do better in school and in their development, and there is less bullying, discrimination, and addiction in our communities.

When we know our neighbours, we are better off in many of the ways that matter. Communities of place offer a safety net where we support one another and act cooperatively. Other kinds of community can too, but our neighbours are often right where we need them when we need them most – close by.

The benefits of communities of place:

Resources and networks: Communities of place can provide a greater awareness of neighbourhood resources such as local spaces and organizations, and opportunities to build those resources as well as to collectively address local issues. They provide opportunities to meet diverse people, expanding our social network to include people of varied backgrounds, ages, identities, and interests.

Safety: The degree to which neighbours know one another and how often people are out in their yards and on the street are major contributors to the safety within an area. The more eyes on the street, the less crime. The more people are watching out for each other, the safer they are. Children are safer when they know which neighbours they can ask for help if a parent isn't near. We are all safer when we have the ability to provide mutual support in emergencies such as earthquakes or storms.

Local economies: Strong neighbourhoods help build a strong economy by helping to promote local businesses. Often neighbours are among the first to support a business when they are starting out. Neighbours, like other

kinds of social connections, can also support people economically in other ways such as lending and borrowing expensive items like yard equipment, helping each other fix things, assisting people to find jobs and so on. The stronger a local economy is, the more a community can weather difficult economic times, such as layoffs from larger corporations or food security issues.

Community involvement: Connections with neighbours are associated with other forms of neighbourhood and community involvement. People who have had neighbours over to their homes and have been invited over by their neighbours, are also most likely to have participated in a neighbourhood or community project in the past year, and to have attended a neighbourhood or community meeting. It can even mean that they are more likely to vote, read the newspaper and volunteer. The more people we know in our community, the more we feel responsible to help out and the more we feel invested.

Reducing isolation: Strong neighbourhoods also simply allow for daily and spontaneous social interactions, rather than ones we need to plan with people who live farther away. This reduces isolation, particularly for seniors, single parents, people living in poverty, people with disabilities and other people for whom it might be harder to connect with other kinds of community.

Building trust and belonging: When strangers living in close proximity become trusting neighbours, then trust can 'jump the fence' and spread to the larger community. Care and compassion can grow when people trust one another. People can set aside their differences and work together to solve small, local problems like cleaning up a park, or large, complex problems like poverty and homelessness. Trusting the people around us also increases our sense of belonging.

Creating a sense of village: Karen Reed, an NSG Project Leader and NGC member describes the process of building neighbourliness as "creating a sense of village". Karen writes about this process [here](#), for the Tamarack Institute.

Karen Reed writes about the process of building neighbourliness [here](#) →

www.tamarackcommunity.ca/latest/creating-a-sense-of-village-in-your-neighbourhood

1.5

Questions for Reflection:

- How does the concept of neighbourhood work in your community?
- What are the names of the different “neighbourhoods” in your community?
- Are there areas where place-based community is stronger than in others?
- What barriers do you see to having people connect with the people who live closest to them?
- What might improve in your community if people were more connected with their neighbours?



1.6

Mapping Your **Community**



Mapping Your Community

“We begin to see that the neighbourhood is a treasure chest. By opening the chest and putting the gifts together in many different ways we multiply the power of its riches.”

JOHN MCKNIGHT

This section helps you get to know your town, city or region better through demographic and asset mapping. Demographic mapping helps you deepen your knowledge of the social groups you'll be working with and consider whom you need to reach, connect with and engage to achieve the goals of the program and have it represent the diversity of your community. Asset mapping helps you deepen your knowledge of what resources are already available in your community, so that you can engage and build on these through your work.

Demographic Mapping

In NSG, connection and inclusion is both the process and the goal. In every step of the process, starting from the hiring of a Program Coordinator and recruiting a Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NCC), there are opportunities to ensure the program reflects the diversity of the communities you work with, to leverage existing connections and to create new ones.

When getting started with NSG in your town, city or region, a good place to begin is with the who. In other words, by deepening your knowledge of the communities you'll be working with and considering whom you need to reach, connect with and engage to achieve the goals of the program. Even when we are knowledgeable and well connected, there is always more to learn about who makes up the communities around us and ways to think creatively about engaging with them. We call this “demographic mapping”.

Interactive Map | British Columbia
Assembly of First Nations →
[www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/
interactive-map](http://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/interactive-map)

First Peoples' Map of B.C. →
maps.fpcc.ca

Census Profile →
[www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-
recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/
index.cfm?Lang=E](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E)

Some questions to get you started include:

1. What Indigenous communities are in or around your NSG area? Whose territory are you on? Tip: maps of First Nations territories can be found online. For example: [Interactive Map | British Columbia Assembly of First Nations \(bcfn.ca\)](http://www.bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/interactive-map) or [First Peoples' Map of B.C.](http://maps.fpcc.ca)

2. What cultural, language and social groups would you need to reach to make the program reflect the full diversity of the community? Tip: The [Census Profile](#) can give you clues as to the makeup of your community.
3. Who is pushed into the margins in your community? Who do you want to make an extra effort to engage? Who might get missed if you don't make an extra effort to engage them? Tip: Some groups of people you may want to consider in this way include youth, seniors, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour), newcomers, cultural and language groups, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Asset Mapping

Another way to deepen our understanding of our communities is through Asset Mapping. Asset Mapping is a tool often used in Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), which allows us to assess and build on what resources are already available in a community. The roots of the Asset Mapping process can be found in the book, [Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets](#), by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann.

As an NSG Program Coordinator, you will oversee multiple NSG projects, which gives you unique insight into the local resources and strengths that exist in your community. As such, part of your role can be to map local resources. Guides to local resources can support future Project Leaders in implementing their projects, including newcomers and more isolated neighbours who may not be aware of all the different kinds of support available in their communities.

They can also help us know where to promote the NSG program within the community. Often the more formal institutions that you can do outreach through to get the word out about the grants are relatively easy to find. They might include schools, community centres, social profit organizations, local networks, settlement agencies, media outlets, farmers markets, faith groups and community gardens. However, there may be many smaller and less obvious networks, groups and events where you might find the people you're hoping to engage, and these can take some research to find. Are there local email listservs? Facebook pages or groups? Housing coops?

The roots of the Asset Mapping process can be found in the book, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann →

resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/publications/Documents/GreenBookIntro%202018.pdf

1.6

Seniors, low income, or First Nations housing? Where do people gather – cafes, the bowling alley, parks? What local businesses are community -minded? Are there local newsletters or non-English language newspapers? Local events?

Asset mapping can involve creating a literal map (visual facilitators can be an excellent help with this process) or something else such as a report, a resource list made into a handout or brochure, a database, or a page of links on a website. Some of the research that goes into Asset Mapping can be done online, but typically at least some of it is done in a participatory way involving people from the community in person. This way, the process itself can help build relationships. You could even host a workshop inviting community members to map local assets, which can double as a networking opportunity and information session to promote NSG!

Even if doing a complete mapping process isn't possible right now, it is important for Program Coordinators, Partner Organizations, and NGCs to develop a working knowledge of community resources, both for outreach of the program and to pass along to Project Leaders when needed. This can also be developed over time less formally, added to each year the program runs.

Some community resources you may want to map might include:

- The leaders, mentors, and connectors that already exist in your community
- Social service and equity-seeking organizations that can become NSG champions, support people to apply and do their projects
- Places where your community currently makes decisions
- Free or affordable community spaces including accessible indoor and outdoor spaces
- Resources for applying for city permits, insurance, or other requirements for public events

1.6

PAGE 37 MAPPING YOUR COMMUNITY

- Local events or traditions that already exist that could be a place to promote projects, or could host a project as a part of larger activities
- Places to borrow project equipment such as tools, tables, chairs, and tents or get useful things for free (for example, many municipalities provide free soil or compost to garden projects)
- Potential community sponsors that might offer donations of goods or services
- Contact information of community volunteers who are interested in supporting local projects, residents willing to become co-applicants for potential Project Leaders who have fewer community connections, and previous Project Leaders who are willing to provide mentorship for people new to organizing community projects
- Sources of additional financial support for projects seeking to scale up or sustain activities in the long-term, beyond the scope of the small grants you provide
- Places for promotion of projects (as well as the program itself) and recruiting volunteers
- Existing communication platforms and networks (e.g. local media, social media pages, bulletin boards, newsletters, advertising spaces, and informal or grassroots networks for communication)

You can learn more about asset mapping at:

- Asset Mapping: Finding the Strength in Your Neighbourhood Webinar → tamarackcommunity.ca/library/webinar-asset-mapping-finding-the-strength-in-your-neighbourhood
- Participatory Asset Mapping – A Community Research Lab Tool Kit → communityscience.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/AssetMappingToolkit.pdf
- Asset Mapping A Handbook, by Tony Fuller Denyse Guy Carolyn Pletsch → cednet-rcdec.ca/sites/ccednet-rcdec.ca/files/asset_mapping_handbook.pdf
- A Guide to Community Asset Mapping by the Falls Brook Centre → tamarackcommunity.ca/library/a-guide-to-community-asset-mapping
- Building Collaborative Readiness: Mapping Community Resources → tamarackcommunity.ca/latest/building-collaborative-readiness-mapping-community-resources



1.7

Guide to Knowledge **Exchange and Skill Sharing**



Guide to Knowledge Exchange and Skill Sharing

The Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) community is rich in creativity, insight and experience. Here are a few of the ways in which we put our principles “we learn together” and “everyone has gifts” into action by staying connected, and sharing knowledge and skills with each other.

Basecamp: [Basecamp](#) is an online project management and team communication platform. It is used to connect NSG Coordinators and other stakeholders across the province, giving us a place to exchange ideas, pose questions, and to share feedback, knowledge, resources and best practices. The NSG Headquarters is for the province-wide NSG team and Regional Network Leads are now able to create their own community in Basecamp to communicate with each other in a smaller group. Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network in your area will invite you to the appropriate areas of Basecamp and you will then be prompted to create an account attached to your email address or Google account. To see a quick video and information on how Basecamp works, please see: [I've just been invited to Basecamp!](#) and [How Basecamp works](#).

Basecamp →
[basecamp.com](#)

I've just been invited
to Basecamp! →
[youtube.com/watch?v=D5IP-a4dJJr0&ab_channel=Basecamp](#)

How Basecamp works →
[basecamp.com/how-it-works](#)

Partner Meetings: NSG Partner meetings are usually held two to three times per year. These meetings can be attended in person or through video or teleconference. Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network in your area will send out an agenda prior to the meeting and are open to suggestions about what to include. In the past these meetings have included updates and chances for feedback on changes to the program, sharing of noteworthy projects and best practices, opportunities for group learning and discussion, and reviewing program evaluations from past granting years.

NSG Learning Days: NSG Learning Days, which are also sometimes called NSG Summits, bring together Program Coordinators, Partner Organization staff, Neighbourhood Grants Committee members and Project Leaders to connect, network, and share knowledge, skills and strategies. They often include interactive workshops, guest speakers, brainstorming sessions, and presentations by Project Leaders. In the past, these were organized by Vancouver Foundation for the entire province, but now most Learning Days will be organized regionally through the Regional Network model.

Professional Development: There are often other professional development opportunities throughout the year, which we try to share as broadly with each other as we can. These might include invitations to conferences and local workshops, bringing in guest speakers to present, or attending each other's Wrap-Up Celebration events. If there is something you're interested

1.7

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GUIDE TO KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND SKILL SHARING

in organizing or extending an invitation to, please reach out and see if there is interest and support available.

To learn more about Art of Hosting, visit →

aohbowenland.weebly.com

One professional development opportunity that many people involved in NSG have taken part in is the [Art of Hosting](#), a highly engaging residential training that usually takes place over 3 days on Bowen Island. It allows NSG participants to learn and share skills and processes of collaborative convening and engagement including:

1. processes of inviting, hosting, and harvesting meaningful conversations that are welcoming and inclusive of all voices,
2. skills and abilities to work within complex, uncertain and changing environments by engaging the insights and perspectives of diverse stakeholders together, and
3. how to apply their new skills to their role in NSG and other community initiatives.



Getting Started: Resources & Templates



1.8.1 NSG Definitions Template

This template lists common terms used in the NSG program.

1.8.2 NSG Coordination Checklist Template

This template outlines some of the main steps involved in coordinating the NSG program throughout a granting cycle. It can be used to provide an overview of the work, as a planning tool and/or to keep track of the activities as you complete them.

1.8.3 Coordinator Expense Tracking Template

This document lists a few of the ways in which we put our principles “we learn together” and “everyone has gifts” into action by staying connected, and sharing knowledge and skills with each other. These include the online platform Basecamp, NSG Learning Days, professional development opportunities and partner meetings.

1.8.4 What is NSG Template

This template includes an overview of the program and links for introductory information, including to the NSG videos.

1.8.5 How an NSG Program Works Template

This document provides an overview of the different activities involved in a granting cycle.

2

Neighbourhood Grants **Committee Recruitment and Orientation**

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 2 out of 9

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.

2.1

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 poster 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.

2.1

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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



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.

NSG 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.



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).

2.3


Guide to NSG **Decision-Making**



2.3

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GUIDE TO NSG DECISION-MAKING

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

2.3

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.

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

JOHN MCKNIGHT

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.

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 placed-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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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**



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.

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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.

3

Grant Promotion and Applicant Support

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 3 out of 9

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.

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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

3.1.1

Google Maps →
www.google.ca/maps

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

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 posterizing 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

3.1.1

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](https://craigslist.org) or [Kijiji](https://kijiji.ca).

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](https://mailchimp.com) 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](https://zoom.us), [Facebook Live](https://www.facebook.com) or [Google Hangouts](https://hangouts.google.com) 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.

3.1.1

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, NCG 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

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GUIDE TO NSG BRANDING BASICS

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.



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**





3.2

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/

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.

4

Managing **Applications**

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 4 out of 9

Introduction to Module 4: Managing Applications

This Module includes a guide to the online Grant Management System (GMS), which is used to manage applications both when they are in-progress and when they are submitted. It is where the Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) and Coordinator can enter comments about each application if they choose and where final decisions and grant amounts are entered. The GMS is also capable of other functions such as downloading application information into an Excel database and creating reports on grant statistics, including demographic data about the applicants.

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4.1

Guide to NSG Applications



Guide to NSG Applications

Most applications to the NSG program are made using the online application form, which then automatically becomes available in the online Grant Management System (GMS). However, this section includes where you can download shorter versions of the NSG application form in a variety of languages so you can provide them to applicants for whom the online application might create technical, literacy or language barriers.

Please note: it is important to ensure that you are using the most updated versions of the application forms each year.

English NSG Application

Although applicants should be encouraged and supported to apply online when possible, this can be a barrier for people without access to or comfort with the necessary technology. This application form is therefore available to be printed or copied into an email or word processing document to be filled out. It is also shorter than the online version, which may make it easier to fill out for those with literacy or language barriers. Once completed, the application will need to be entered into the online GMS by a staff person or volunteer involved in the program. Questions in the GMS application that are not included in this shorter version application can be left blank. [Here is an example of an English Application form.](#)

Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Filipino, French, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese NSG Applications

These applications can be used to offer applications in various languages that are spoken in your community. They can also be found on the website for download. These can be printed off and given to applicants to return completed, or sent to them by email for them to print off or copy into an email or word processing document to fill out and return. If a language that is spoken in your community is not included here, please work with your Regional Network or Vancouver Foundation to create a new translation.

In addition to the application being offered in the language they are most comfortable with, applicants can also be encouraged to apply in that language if this is helpful. Once they have submitted their application it will need to be translated before it is entered into GMS. If there are Partner Organization staff or NSG members who speak the language an application was submitted in and feel comfortable providing translation, then they can be provided with an honorarium to do so. Otherwise, professional translation services can also be used.

English application form →

neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Sample-English-Application.docx

For the multilingual application forms, please go to →

neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/multilingual-application-forms/

Coordinators Guide to the Online Application System



4.2 Coordinators Guide to the Online Application System

This document is a step by step guide to the online Grant Management System (GMS) and its various functions.

5

Granting **Decisions**

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 5 out of 9

Introduction Module 5: Granting Decisions

The Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) is the group of local volunteers who make decisions about how the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) funding is distributed in their community. In this module, you will find guides and templates to support the Committee through the process of making granting decisions and distributing your NSG funds. You will find more resources connected to recruiting, orienting and setting up your NGC in [Module 2: Neighbourhood Grants Committee Recruitment and Orientation](#).

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5.1

Granting Decision-Making



5.1.1

Guide to the Granting Decision Process

Each Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) organizes their granting decision-making process a bit differently. However, an overarching principle to keep in mind is that in Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG), the process is the same as the goal – to empower local leadership, support people to share their gifts, and build connections. For this reason, the ways we choose to conduct the granting decision meetings can be as important as the decisions that get made.

The NGC is, like everything in NSG, meant to be an embodiment of the [“Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking”](#) (see 2.4). As local experts guiding the granting decisions the NGC is one of the main ways we enact our principles of “local decisions” and “where we live matters”. As we strive to build an NGC that reflects the diversity of our communities, we fulfil the principle of “everyone is invited.” By taking the time to get to know our NGC members, their role can also be informed by the principle “everyone has gifts”. What are the gifts each Committee member brings to the table? How can we integrate their skills, interests, resources and areas of knowledge and expertise into the process? How can we divide tasks amongst NGC members according to their strengths and preferences? Focusing on the gifts of the Committee members, just as we do those of applicants, can help them flourish and grow in the work.

Of course, there can always be room for members to challenge themselves and try new things as well, which brings us to the principle of “we learn together”. What do the NGC members most want or need to get out of their time on the Committee? What do they most want to learn or what skills do they most want to practice? The learning process of Committee members begins in their interviews and the NGC Orientation, continuing on throughout the decision-making process. We may invite longer term NGC members to mentor new ones and provide opportunities for the members to attend local conferences, NSG summits, and workshops.

5.1.1

Elements of the NSG granting decision process

1. **Preparation:** Most Coordinators ask the Committee members to look over the applications before the first meeting. Access to the online Grant Management System (GMS) should be given to the NGC as soon as possible, and no later than a week before the application deadline. Once paper applications are put into the system, notify the Committee to go back in to read them, so that they do not get missed if a member has already gone over the other applications. You may want to also have NGC members prepare comments on each application. Comments can be made directly into GMS or be brought with them in writing. Members should also be encouraged to review their [NGC Manuals \(see 2.6.2\)](#) ⬇ before the first meeting.
2. **Length and Number of Meetings:** It can be hard to predict how much time an NGC meeting will take. It will depend on how many applications you have to review and how quickly the group is able to review them. It will also depend on many meetings you wish to have. Do you and the Committee members want to have fewer meetings that last longer or more that are shorter? An initial meeting may also require more time than a follow up meeting. Many Committees have an initial meeting to go through applications and split up the applicants that need to be contacted for questions or to make changes to their applications, and then a second meeting to go over what is learned through those contacts and to finalize decisions and grant amounts.
3. **Scheduling:** Online polls such as those available through [LettuceMeet](#), [When2meet](#) and [Doodle](#) can be useful in setting dates and times for meetings that work for all or most of the Committee members. It is best to do this at the Orientation or soon after, so that people have time to plan ahead. Many committees meet in the evenings or on weekends, depending on member schedules.
4. **Attendance:** Decision-making meetings must take place no more than 4-6 weeks after proposals have been received. A minimum of 50% of the members is required for making decisions. Although most meetings take place in person, they can also be done over video (for example on [Zoom](#)) or in person with some people joining through video if that helps with attendance.

Online polls for setting dates and times for meetings →

lettucemeet.com
when2meet.com
doodle.com

Video Meetings →

zoom.us

5.1.1

Online polls for setting dates
and times for meetings →

[bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/
interactive-map](https://bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/interactive-map)
maps.fpcc.ca/

5. **Territory Acknowledgement/Welcome:** Start the meeting by naming the First Nation(s) on whose territory the program is taking place. If you are a non-Indigenous person, you may also want to consider using this as an opportunity to reflect on the relationships between the local NSG program and First Nations communities in your area, and name some of the history, connections and work being done towards reconciliation and relationship-building. You can learn whose land your work takes place on here: [Interactive Map | British Columbia Assembly of First Nations](#) or [First Peoples' Map of B.C.](#) If an Indigenous person from the host territory is present you can also invite them to do a welcome, and provide an honoraria if they choose to.
6. **Sharing Food:** Depending on the time of day, you may want to offer lunch, dinner or snacks. Learn beforehand about any dietary needs or preferences of the Committee members. Sometimes it can be fun to share food that is made locally, as a way to set the tone for place-based aspect of the grants.
7. **Review Agreements and Ways of Being Together:** If there are any Committee members who haven't signed the "NGC Agreements" yet, then you can have them do so at the first meeting. Some Coordinators may also choose to review the Agreements at the first meeting or to return to the Agreements if any tensions or difficulties arise. The ["NGC Agreements Template" \(see 5.2.2\)](#) ⬇️ is available in this section, but remember to use your customized version if you've already worked on one. You may have agreed upon ["Ways of Being Together" \(see 5.2.3\)](#) ⬇️ at the NGC Orientation, in which case you may also wish to review them at the first meeting or have them printed on flipchart paper to put up during meetings. If you did not do this at the Orientation, then a template is available to use at the first meeting. You may want to offer the examples given and then have them decide together which ones to keep, whether they want to change any of the wording, and if there are others they would like to add.
8. **Review Decision-Making Principles, Concepts and Guidelines:** At the start of the meeting, check in to make sure everyone feels like they have a solid grasp on the principles and guidelines of the NSG program. These are both available in the ["Guide to NSG Decision Making" \(see 5.1.2\)](#) as well as in the [NGC Manual \(see 2.6.2\)](#) ⬇️. The "Guide to NSG Decision Making" is a shorter version that only includes information relevant for the granting decision process,

5.1.1

and so might be more convenient to have at meetings as a reference document. Some members may also wish to have the guidelines as a point form checklist which is available for as a [template \(see 5.2.4\)](#) ↓. Getting everyone on the same page right from the start saves time and opens up space for clearer, stronger decisions.

You may also want to remind the Committee of the “bigger picture” of the NSG program as needed during meetings. For example, if the group is starting to focus on the guidelines in a way that is overly specific, wanting to decline more grants than might be necessary rather than work with applicants to alter projects or understand the program better, you may want to foster discussions about the larger “spirit” of the program.

Sometimes the Committee members feel very responsible for the money they are handing out, wanting to make sure that the projects they approve are the “right ones.” It can feel strange extending the kind of trust it requires to put money directly into the hands of local residents with no promises about how they will use it. This trust, however, is at the core of what the program does and why it is so successful.

An easy way to bring the focus back to this trust is the concept of “starting with yes”, which implies that we want to consider each project as one we will say yes to unless there is a strong reason not to. Starting with yes helps us begin from a place of seeing the strengths in projects, discourages quick dismissals of projects, and redirects the discussion from criticism of applications to constructive feedback and a solutions-based focus. An exploration of the starting with yes concept is included in the [“Guide to NGC Decision-Making” \(see 5.1.2\)](#) as well as the [NGC Manual \(see 2.6.2\)](#) ↓. An [infographic \(see 5.2.1\)](#) ↓ that summarizes the concept is also available, and this can be printed and put on the wall or in the middle of the table during decision-making meetings.

5.1.1

NSG Video →

youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeWryyLHnL7z3_agYmHKLt3xmOyoBFaW_

To learn more about "Asset-Based Community Development" →

deepeningcommunity.org/abcd-canada-home

Refocusing the committee on the bigger picture and embracing the idea of starting with yes during decision-making can also include:

- asking "is there anything that could change in this application/project that would allow us to say yes to it?"
- taking a break in the meeting to watch one of the [NSG videos](#)
- reviewing the Principles of Grassroots Granting (see 2.4)
- discussing the applications through the lens of [Asset-Based Community Development](#) - what are the assets and gifts reflected in this application?
- letting the committee know that the grants are allowed to be a learning experience - they do not need to be perfect or do things the way someone with more experience (including the Committee members themselves) might do it
- if people have a lot of experience in a certain area and are therefore more critical of certain grants that involve elements of their expertise, asking them to offer resources or support to those applicants rather than focusing on how the project won't work or should be done differently
- before declining grants, taking one last look to see if the project reflects the principles of the program and if so, looking at how they could fit the guidelines as well
- writing out explanations of why any applications were declined and going back at the end to review them and make sure that they are consistent and strong

5.1.1

9. **Facilitation of Meetings:** As the Coordinator, you can facilitate the meetings yourself or choose to invite members with strong facilitation skills to do so. The facilitator is there to ease the group process and support inclusion. The Coordinator or other facilitator can bring a draft agenda and ask for any additional input from members. Other than leading the group through the agenda, the facilitator may also want to ensure that all members of the Committee are given a chance to speak, giving more time to members who speak English as an additional language or more introverted members, and to limit certain behaviors that affect NGC dynamics in a negative way (offensive language, discussing people instead of issues, focusing on finding faults in the applications etc.). In order to help share the work and provide learning and skill-building for less experienced Committee members, you could also have co-facilitators who assist the main facilitator with the group process.
10. **The Coordinator Role in Meetings:** Whether or not the Coordinator is facilitating, they can have a role in setting the tone of the meeting and supporting the group to make their decisions. Tips that other Coordinators have offered for effective grant approval meetings are:
 - listen carefully, reflect, seek clarity and summarize
 - be aware of the process as well as the content of the decision-making
 - be honest in addressing issues and involve members in finding solutions
 - create an appropriate balance between efficiency and caring for members
 - set a positive tone and provide reminders of key concepts such as “starting with yes”, the Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking and the NSG granting guidelines when needed

5.1.1

11. **Accessibility and Inclusion:** It can be good to give ample space for Committee members to let you know of anything they might need to support their participation on the Committee. Examples could include help figuring out childcare or transportation arrangements, for people to speak slowly or clearly, for other Committee members and/or the space you meet in to be scent-reduced or scent-free, a wheelchair accessible space or certain kinds of seating. Building rapport with members can also be helpful in creating a safe environment for them to participate. Sometimes facilitating mentorship by members who have been on the Committee for a year or more can also make participation easier for new members. It may be useful to also remind Committee members who have been in the role for many years to make sure they make room for new people to become part of the decision-making process and bring in new ideas and perspectives.
12. **Consensus and Voting:** 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.
13. **Coding and Organizing Applications:** At the first meeting, some Committees go through each grant one by one, assigning them a colour or a number (for example from 0-5 for how strong the grant is) or sorting them into “Yes”, “No” and “Maybe” piles.

An example of a colour-coding system that is inclusive of people who are colourblind would be:

Light blue

for “likely approve”

Medium blue

for “likely approve with some concerns or questions”

Orange

for “May approve but stronger concerns”

Black

for “likely decline”

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14. **Deciding on Grant Amounts:** Entering estimated amounts for projects that will likely be funded can also give the Committee a sense of how far the money will go. It can also sometimes be useful to set a base amount for certain kinds of projects, such as \$250-\$300 block parties, particularly if you have applications that request more than the available funding. This amount can be applied generally, with exceptions for projects that will receive a bit more or less because of the scope of their project ideas.
15. **Keeping Track of Decisions:** Some Coordinators choose to enter decisions, notes and amounts directly into GMS. Others find it helpful to have the grants downloaded into an Excel worksheet so that they can more easily see all of the decisions together and keep track of them. This also allows them to use things like colour coding to keep track of decisions.

You can also use Excel to keep track of the total amount of the grants in the “Amount Approved” column. As you tentatively add amounts for each approved application, this allows you to see if you are over or under your granting budget.

How to use Excel to add amounts
for approved applications:

1. Highlight all of the cells you want to add up
2. Press “autosum” in the home menu at the top of the screen
3. Find the totaled number below the highlighted cells, which update automatically as you change any of the grant amounts.
4. Look at the “Request Amount” column to get a sense of how much money has been requested in total

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Compare the “Request Amount” total to your total granting budget. This could tell you if you are potentially able to fund all of the applications fully, or if the requested amounts are over your budget and so you will need to fund less projects and/or some at a lower amount than they have requested.

An Excel database can be downloaded from GMS. All of the information from the applications will be included, and you can delete any unnecessary columns so you can see the main information you need at a glance. If a downloaded database is used to track decisions through the granting decision process, the final decisions and amounts will then need to be entered into GMS once they are made.

16. **Contacting Applicants for Clarifications and Changes:** After the initial meeting, the Committee members may have questions or concerns they need to address with applicants before moving forward with their decisions. What questions do they need to ask for more information and what requests can they make of project leaders to help their projects align with the NSG granting guidelines? This is a great chance to do some capacity building with applicants, helping them to think more deeply about the intention of their project and reflect on the principles of the NSG program. The applicant contacts can be split up amongst Committee members and the Coordinator. See the document [“Guide to Contacting Applicants” \(see 5.3.1\)](#) for tips on this process. Once applicants have been contacted, the Committee can go over those applications again, each member reporting on what they learned in their contacts with applicants. This usually happens at the next NGC meeting, but could also be done over email if needed.
17. **Finalizing Grant Decisions:** When all of the approved projects are chosen, grant amounts can be adjusted to keep the Committee within budget. Before finalizing amounts, the Committee members may want to go through one last time to make sure there is some consistency in the amounts given to projects that are similar in content and scope. When the Committee declines a grant, it is a good practice to record the reasons why the grant was not a fit so that this information can later be passed on to the applicants or the Partner Organizations if they have questions. This can also strengthen decision-making. Granting decisions including amount of money approved and reasons for rejection are compiled by the Program Coordinator. These are usually shared for review to all NGC members before notifications are

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sent to grant applicants. Partner Organizations may also wish to look through decisions before they are finalized. If you were using an offline database to record decisions and granting amounts, then make sure to enter the decisions into the GMS.

18. **Letters to Successful and Declined Applicants:** Once decisions have been finalized, letters can be sent by email to applicants to let them know whether their grant was successful. Templates are available both for successful applicants ([see 5.4.1](#)) ↓ and those whose application was declined for funding ([see 5.4.2](#)) ↓. In letters to those who are not funded, consider providing them some information on why they were declined and what they might need to do differently to be approved in the future. If they are a better fit with other funding streams, then consider letting them know where else they might apply.




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Guide to NSG Decision-Making

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

VIVEK H. MURTHY

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 Grant Committees (NGC) — made up of people living in the community — to review ideas submitted by other

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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.



5.1.2

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*.

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

JOHN MCKNIGHT

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.

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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 grant-making 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.

5.1.2

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

5.1.2

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

5.1.2

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.

Granting Decision Making: Resources & Templates



5.2.1 Starting with Yes Infographic

This infographic was designed for Committee members as a visual reminder of the “start with yes” framework used to approve applications. Reviewing this at the beginning of the meetings or returning to it when a reminder is needed can be helpful in setting the tone for decision-making. You may even want to have it displayed somewhere visible during meetings.

5.2.2 NGC Agreements Template

Before the decision-making begins it can be helpful to review whether all of the NGC members have signed the NGC Agreements. This is also a document you can choose to review at the first decision-making meeting or return to if there are any issues in the group process. If you have already customized this template for your area, remember to use the most updated version.

5.2.3 Ways of Being Together Template

If you weren’t able to create intentions for the ways the NGC members want to work together as a group at their Orientation, the first decision-making meeting is a good time to do this. While the NGC Agreements are the larger expectations of Committee members, these are more about the process of the group itself. You may also want to review these at the first meeting or even have them displayed somewhere visible during meetings. If you have already customized this template for your area, remember to use the most updated version.

5.2.4 Granting Guideline Checklist Template

This template provides a short checklist of the granting guidelines and can be used at meetings to review applications.

5.2.5 Template for Offering Additional Funding

NGCs who have the funds to do so may choose to offer extra funding to applicants that offer unique, creative or powerful ways of meeting the NSG goals of their community. This document includes a template email to send to applicants the Committee wishes to offer more funding and an amended budget template for them to fill out.

5.3

Granting Decision **Follow Up**



5.3.1

Guide to Contacting Applicants

In order to approve their grants, some applicants might need to be contacted in between decision-making meetings in order to ask them questions or to request they make changes to bring their project in line with Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) guidelines. These contacts can be split up amongst the Coordinator and Neighborhood Grant Committee (NGC) members. Here are some things to keep in mind when making these contacts:

Is phone or email a better fit? Having a phone conversation may allow you to get a better sense of where people are coming from and if they understand your concerns or the changes they need to make to their projects to have them approved. If you are uncomfortable using your private phone line, the Coordinator may be able to arrange for you to make calls from a community Partner Organization. If you do not have any luck getting in touch with someone by phone or if it is a very straightforward question, then email may be more appropriate.

Providing context: Make sure to introduce yourself when you phone or email, and explain how you are involved with NSG. For example, let them know that you are the Coordinator or part of a group of local volunteers who makes the decision about how the NSG funding is distributed in your area. Explain that the Committee is currently reviewing applications and that you are calling to ask some questions about their project application.

Specify the project: Always specify which grant application you are calling/emailing about, as some people are involved in more than one.

Keep NGC decision-making confidential: Details of the decision-making process, such as whether the Committee is leaning toward approving their project or how much money they are thinking of

providing the project, should be kept confidential until the decisions are finalized.

Empower and support applicants: Even when asking for improvements in someone's application, strive to be affirming and encouraging in tone, and do your best to explain why you have the questions or concerns that you do. This can be a great opportunity to explain the guidelines and principles of NSG, which can help make this or future projects more successful. Although what you learn will sometimes mean the Committee has to decline a project, keep in mind that this program is grounded in a belief that everyone has something to offer. Try to be aware of any personal biases you might have around the project and at this time, try not to request changes to the content of the projects except to ensure they align with the guidelines and goals of the NSG program. Make a mental note of any other kinds of support or mentorship the Project Leader may require for later, and bring this to the attention of the Committee.

Explain the process: End by letting them know approximately when you will be in touch to confirm whether the project was funded and how. If the date for the Project Leader Orientation event is already set and it looks like this application might be approved, you can also let them know to save the date.

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Guide to Engaging the NGC

Ideally, the Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) is involved in the program throughout the year both before and after granting decisions. However, it can be easy for participation to drop off after the granting decisions are made, and so this is a good time to touch base with the NGC members to discuss what comes next and ways they would like to stay involved. Here are some of the ways that you can continue to engage your Committee beyond the decision-making process.

Project Leader Orientation

If possible, it can be good to set the date for your Project Leader Orientation event before the granting decision-making is done, so that the NGC members can keep the date free. You will want to involve them in both the planning and execution of this event. In order for the event to run as smoothly as possible, choose a date and time when the majority of the NGC members are available to help.

Mentorship and Attendance of Projects and Story Harvesting

Many Committees assign a certain number of projects to each NGC member for mentorship and support if needed and attending events. This is an excellent way to encourage and support Project Leaders as well as harvest stories. If the NGC doesn't want to assign each project to a member, they could make a list of projects that might require mentorship. The Coordinator can then contact the Project Leaders to see if any support is needed, and if so, match them with an appropriate NGC member. Some Coordinators also set a minimum number of projects for each NGC member to attend and ask them to do short write ups and/or submit photos of the projects they attend as part of their story harvesting. We can also encourage them to apply for their own grants the next year if they haven't already, and use attending projects as a way to get inspired and think of ideas.

Wrap-Up Celebration Event

Let the Committee know you'll also be asking their help with the Wrap-Up Celebration Event and around when it will take place. You may want to give them a sense of the goals of this event so they have time to consider it and develop ideas or ask them to reflect on last year's event if they were present and what they'd like to do similarly or differently this year.

5.3.2

Learning Opportunities

You can also give them a sense of what learning opportunities may be available to them, including NSG Learning Days/Summits and local workshops or conferences. This can also be a good chance to ask if they have any requests for learning opportunities and to reflect on any kinds of skills-building you think might be helpful for the group.

Letters of Recommendation and References

For some NGC members, volunteering on the Committee is an important step towards other volunteer, educational or employment opportunities. You can offer to write letters of recommendation and references for them when this is useful. If they have certain skills they are trying to develop for their resume, this may be another opportunity to find new ways for them to be involved.

Recruiting New NGC Members

Once NGC members have a sense of the responsibilities of the Committee, they may be able to identify people in the community who would be interested in joining and who can be invited to interview when spots on the Committee open up.

Promoting the Grants and Doing Outreach

Especially in the second year and beyond, we want to get the NGC engaged in promotion of the program. At the end of the granting process it can be a good time to ask the Committee to reflect on ways they might help expand their promotions the next year and to keep an ongoing eye out for ways and places to promote in the future, particularly in areas or with groups that the program wants to better reach. This is also a great way to re-engage the Committee members as the next round of grants begins.



Other Roles

During their time on the Committee or after their term is done if they'd like to stay involved, we can also find other roles for people to play based on their gifts, knowledge and interests. Feel free to ask them if they have other ideas for ways they'd like to be involved and to think creatively about ways to continue to engage them beyond the decision-making. The possibilities are as diverse as the Committee members themselves! For example, they could:

- Assist projects who need it with designing their poster or getting permits
- Plan workshops or other learning opportunities for the Committee or for Project Leaders
- Photograph events or write articles on projects for the local media
- Host information sessions for applicants
- Help interview, train and mentor new Committee members
- Consult with projects who want more information on how to make their projects accessible for specific groups they belong to themselves, such as people with disabilities, youth, seniors or newcomers
- Liaise with municipal staff on how to best support projects that require municipal permits or approval processes
- Create resources for Project Leaders, such as list of local venues where events can be hosted for low cost or free
- Provide translation in languages they are fluent in, for projects wanting to extend invitations to neighbours in multiple languages

5.3.3

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GUIDE TO STORY HARVESTING

Guide to Story Harvesting

“Words are how we think; stories are how we link.”

CHRISTINA BALDWIN

NSG Website →

neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/stories/share-your-story/

Much of the impact of Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) is difficult to capture quantitatively, in numbers and statistics. It is most easily shared and understood through stories. As such, harvesting stories from the projects is key to evaluating the successes, learnings and challenges of each granting cycle. Working with projects to harvest their stories is a role that can be shared by the Coordinator and the Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC).

This can be an ongoing process that begins at the time granting decisions are made through the program evaluation at the end of the granting cycle and beyond. You may even be able to harvest stories from a project long after it was funded, as it continues to evolve and expand. Here are some examples of ways Project Leaders can be encouraged to share their NSG stories:

The NSG Website

Project Leaders can be asked to post on the NSG website on the [Share Your Story page](#). Nearing the end of the grant cycle you can choose to send out an invitation to everyone to post on the website, approach specific projects and ask them directly if they are willing to make a post about their project, or request this of any projects that are unable to make it to the Wrap-Up Celebration. These posts can include photos and videos. If they can't find their community on the drop-down list, ask them to choose “BC-wide” to upload their story. Ask Project Leaders to let you know once their story is uploaded so that you can take a look.

Social Media

You can also encourage Project Leaders to post on your local or regional social media accounts or on their own and tag or mention **#VFNSG**, **@VancouverFdn** and local hashtags or social media accounts.

Photos and Videos

Photos and videos from events are a very effective way of capturing the “story” of the project. Within the [Project Leader Manual \(see 7.1\)](#) ↓, Project Leaders will have access to the “Documenting Your Project” template that includes tips and ideas on how they can get consent from participants to be recorded.. You can also hire a professional photographer to take photos of some of the projects in your area. Vancouver Foundation or your Regional Network may be able to offer some funding for you to do so. This is a great way to get high quality photos to use in future promotional materials.

Attending Events

Attending events yourself and speaking with participants is another way to harvest stories, either just for your own use or with the Project Leaders permission, you can write up a bit about the project and/or take your own photos and videos. NGC members can also be asked to attend events and do a little write up after. Some NSG areas assign a certain number of projects for each NGC member to attend and report back about.

Local Media or Newsletters

If you are able to connect Project Leaders with local media to be interviewed, or can do this for your own newsletter or that of another local organization, this can be an excellent way of drawing out particularly impactful stories.

Creative Documentation

Sharing stories is another way Project Leaders can share their unique gifts. Many do creative documentation including interviewing their project participants, recording a podcast, creating an interactive activity at their events such as putting up sheets of paper with questions like “How do you think this project will make our neighbourhood better?”, or doing an artwork about the project.

Photovoice

Photovoice is an image-based storytelling approach that was developed by Dr. Caroline Wang at the University of Michigan, School of Public Health with the intention of empowering community members to tell their own stories using photography. Instead of relying on traditional reports and surveys, which often create barriers for participants to share back, this method allows us to truly see participant experiences that are created and interpreted by them.

5.3.3

To use Photovoice with Project Leaders, we would have them choose some photos from their project and then facilitate discussion around simple questions such as:

- What is your project about?
- How did your project make you feel?
- What was a surprise during the project?
- What did you struggle with most?
- How did this project make your community feel?
- What have you learned about your community?
- What brought you to NSG?

Click here to learn more about the method →

participedia.net/method/5016



Granting Decision Follow Up: Resources & Templates



5.4.1 Template Letter to Successful Grant Applicants

This template can be customized to send to the applicants of the projects that are successful, to let them know how much funding they will receive and the next steps in the process.

5.4.2 Template Letter to Applicants of Declined Projects

This template can be customized to notify applicants whose applications have been unsuccessful and will not be funded. It can be helpful to provide some feedback to the applicants on why their grant was declined to help them be successful if they reapply in the future.

6

Project Leader **Orientation and Cheque Issue**

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 6 out of 9

Introduction to Module 6: Project Leader Orientation and Cheque Issue

Once granting decisions are made, each Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) area hosts an event in order to orient Project Leaders to and connect them with other people involved in the program. This event is often also used to provide them with information and resources to support their projects and provide them with their cheques. This module includes guides and templates for coordinating this event.

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6.1

Guide to the Project Leader Orientation Event



6.1

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GUIDE TO THE PROJECT LEADER ORIENTATION EVENT

Guide to the Project Leader Orientation Event

Once the granting decisions are made, Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) areas host an event in order to orient Project Leaders to the program, connect them with others involved in the program and provide information and resources to support their projects. This is usually also where the distributing of the grant cheques happens. Below are some of the different components you may want to include in your event and some ideas to get you started.

Scheduling, Format, and Registration

- **Availability:** Do your best to hold the event based on Project Leaders' and Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members' availability. This often means evenings or weekends. Some communities organize two Orientation events at different times so people can attend the one that is convenient for them.
- **Save the date:** It is useful to add "save the dates" to materials sent to Project Leaders as soon as possible, as well as to provide them to the NGC and Partner Organization staff. These can just include the date and time, with announcement of the details of the celebrations being sent out at a later time. This will allow adequate time for people to make arrangements to come and increase attendance.
- **Format:** If needed, the event can be held online through video conferencing (for example, [Zoom](#)), or one in person and one through video, although in the case of video you will need to find an alternative way for people to receive their cheques. If it is only offered on video, this may prove to be a barrier to those with limited or no access to technology, so it is usually best to have at least one event in person.
- **Length:** This event should be between 1.5-2 hours in length.
- **Online scheduling platforms:** If you like, you can send out a poll with several dates to find out when the best date and time is for the largest number of Project Leaders and NGC members. The following online scheduling platforms are free and easy to use: [LettuceMeet](#) [When2meet](#) [Doodle](#)

Zoom Video Conference →

zoom.us

Online polls for setting dates and times for meetings →

lettucemeet.com

when2meet.com

doodle.com

6.1

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GUIDE TO THE PROJECT LEADER ORIENTATION EVENT

Eventbrite →
eventbrite.ca

- **Registration:** Many communities use [Eventbrite](https://eventbrite.ca) to send out free tickets so they have a sense of how many people are coming to the event, or otherwise have people RSVP by email.
- **Frame as a community building event:** Project Leaders who know they will receive their cheque at the event may want to drop in to pick it up and then leave. For this reason, some NSG areas do not let Project Leaders know that they will receive their cheques at the event, and stress instead that it is a mandatory orientation and chance to connect with others involved in the program. Others require that people stay through the event in order to receive their cheque at the end.

Set Up and Roles:

- **Food:** Consider offering food as an incentive for coming and to help warm the space. Make sure to have a range of food available, including those with dietary needs and preferences. Coffee, tea, juice and easy finger food can be provided, or even a sit down meal depending on the type of event you are planning.
- **Accessibility:** Always include accessibility information in your invitations to the event. For example, try to hold the event in an accessible space that is friendly for wheelchairs, other mobility devices and strollers and encourage people not to wear scents as many people are sensitive to them.
- **Schedule of activities:** It can be helpful to have a written schedule to provide invitees in advance and to have posted in the room during the event. This way, people have a sense of the flow of the event and will be less likely to miss something important.
- **Room setup:** Give some thought as to the best room set up to facilitate the activities in your event, including tables and chairs. You may want to consider your audio/visual needs including a microphone and places to plug in laptops for project displays. Give yourself ample time to prepare the room(s) before people arrive.

- **Staffing:** Ask NGC members and partner organization staff to play different roles at the event, including set up and take down, staffing a welcome table and the cheque distribution tables, and facilitating an icebreaker or other activities. Assigning these roles in advance during the event planning can be helpful, although of course some changes may be necessary on the day of the event.
- **MCs:** It can be helpful to have an MC or two that can lead the event. Invite NGC members or Project Leaders to MC, offering them guidance and support as necessary.

Welcome:

- **Door greeters:** Consider having someone at the door to greet people, provide nametags and answer questions as people arrive.
- **Acknowledgement of territory:** Begin the event with an acknowledgement of the First Nation(s) on whose territory the event is held or invite someone from a local Nation to do a welcome/opening to the event. Remember to look into local protocol around acknowledgements and honoraria for someone doing a welcome/opening. If you are a non-Indigenous person, you may also want to use this as an opportunity to reflect on the relationships between the local NSG program/Partner Organizations and Indigenous communities in your area, and name some of the history, connections and work being done towards reconciliation. You can learn whose territory your NSG program takes place on here: [Interactive Map | British Columbia Assembly of First Nations](#) or [First Peoples' Map of B.C.](#)
- **Welcome talks:** The MC, Coordinator and/or Partner Organization staff can welcome people and speak a bit about the event and the NSG program in general.
- **Housekeeping:** Let people know about food, bathrooms, name tags, the kids area etc. The MC can also point out the program staff and NGC members so Project Leaders know where to find them if they have questions or want to connect, and housekeeping matters such as food, bathrooms, and name tags.



Online polls for setting dates and times for meetings →

bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/interactive-map
maps.fpcc.ca/

Project Leader Orientation and Resources

- **Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking and Granting Guidelines:** Some NSG Coordinators do a more formal orientation as part of their event, where they go over the guidelines for NSG projects as well as the principles of the program. This could include a PowerPoint presentation if you choose. Try to make this as interactive as possible in order to engage the participants.
- **Tips and best practices:** The event can also include the presentation and sharing of best practices and tips for things like eco-friendly events, promotion and doing outreach to neighbours, deepening impact and connecting neighbours beyond one-off events, bylaws and permits, accessibility and inclusivity, budgeting and seeking support from local businesses and organizations, finding venues and so on.
- **Mentorship:** The Orientation event can be a good time to inquire about what projects might be needing more guidance and support and which more experienced Project Leaders or NGC members might be willing to provide this. This could happen, for example, by having sign up sheets for groups wanting mentorship and individuals willing to provide mentorship. Or, mentorship relationships can be set up ahead of time and the event can be a time for people who have been paired together to meet one another.
- **Written resources:** Even if you don't print handouts for all participants, consider having paper copies of any resources (including those already sent out by email) available for Project Leaders who may need this, for example because they don't have regular computer access or access to a printer. This will also encourage people who have not read them yet to do so.

Waiver Signing and Cheque Distribution

- **Cheque pick-up station:** Set up a station to distribute cheques. It can be helpful to have the cheques alphabetized according to the last name of the main applicants. If they are organized by project names, this can cause issues if people forget what they called their project on their application. However, because co-applicants may also come to pick up cheques, it can also be good to have a list of projects handy (including project names, main and co-applicant names, and the amount approved - a template ([see 6.2.3](#))  is available for this) in case you need to find the cheque another way.
- **Timing of cheque distribution:** As previously mentioned, if people pick up their cheques at the beginning of the event it may make them feel less motivated to stay for the rest of the event. As such, having the cheque distribution at the end of the event can be helpful in having people stay for the orientation and community building aspects of the event. You may also want to spread out cheque distribution in some way or have multiple stations, as otherwise there can be very long lineups.
- **Cheque sign out form/waiver:** Have the person picking up the cheque sign a waiver stating that they have received the cheque and agree to follow the guidelines of the NSG program and local municipal regulations. Many NSG areas also include a liability waiver as part of this process. [Cheque Sign Out Form Template \(see 6.2.4\)](#)  is available for this.
- **Check ID:** Have the person(s) at the cheque station look at the ID of the person picking up the cheque if possible. There is a place on the Cheque Sign Out Form template for the staff or volunteers to indicate that they have checked the person's ID. Not having ID can be a barrier for some however, so it is OK to make exceptions.
- **Other methods of cheque pick up:** If the applicants are not available the day of the Orientation event, you can consider allowing someone to pick up the cheque for them. If so, you may want to send the applicants the text of the waiver from the Cheque Sign Out Form (see 6.2.4) in an email so that they know what has been agreed to when the cheque is signed for by someone else. You can also ask for explicit written permission from the applicants to have someone sign for them. There may also be projects that have no representative available to come to the cheque event. Having a way for them to pick up the cheque and sign the waiver at the Partner Organization at a later date can also be helpful. Staff at the Partner Organization will need to be instructed on the waiver and to check ID. Or you may decide not to distribute the cheques at the event at all, and instead set up another way for Project Leaders to receive their funds.

Other Potential Activities and Presentations:

- **Allow for networking:** Celebrations are also about networking and sharing of information and so adequate time needs to be built within the event schedule to allow for this. You can facilitate discussion by providing name tags, doing icebreaker activities, or asking everyone to take a few moments to speak with the two or three people closest to them about their project.
- **Icebreakers:** An icebreaker can be a great way for the Project Leaders to meet one another and make it easier for people to start conversations about their projects. Icebreakers can also include a doorprize (perhaps something made and bought locally) as an incentive. [Icebreaker templates are available for use \(see 6.2.5\)](#) ↓.
- **Children's activities:** Consider offering children's activities so the event is family friendly. This could, for example, include an area with toys, games and colouring supplies.
- **Inviting local officials:** Partner Organizations may want to invite elected officials including MLAs, MPs and Mayor and City Council members, to NSG events. This is a great way to introduce government officials to the many NSG projects their constituents are involved in. If there is time, you can consider offering the option to speak briefly at the event. Below are some guidelines on how to formally address, write to or speak with elected officials.

Provincial Officials - Members of the Legislature

Address: Ms. Jane Doe, MLA

Salutation: Dear Ms. Doe

Conversation: Ms. Doe

Municipal Officials - Mayor

Address: Their Worship Mx. John Doe

Salutation: Dear Mayor Doe

Conversation: "Mayor Doe" first, then "Mx. Doe"

Note: Mx. is a gender neutral salutation

Municipal Officials -Mayor and Council

Address: His Worship John Doe and Council/
Mayor Doe and Council


Salutation: Dear Mayor Doe and Council

Municipal Officials -Councillor

Address: Councillor Jane Doe

Salutation: Dear Councillor Doe or Dear Mrs. Doe

Conversation: "Councillor" or "Councillor Doe" first, then "Mrs. Doe"

- **Sharing about projects in writing:** As some people may feel shy and time is limited, having attendees write about their project can also be a great way to share information. You can put big sheets of paper on the wall and provide markers. Label the sheet with instructions such as “Tell us about your project (don’t forget to put your email address in case people want to participate!).”
- **Discussion groups:** If there is time, you could place people in groups according to the type of project they are planning or based on topics they are interested in learning more about. For example, you could group together block parties, food related projects, gardening projects, art projects and so on or form groups on topics like promotion and outreach, accessibility, community building beyond the block party and so on. Invite them each to share a bit about their project and ask each other questions, or have facilitators guide them through a discussion.
- **Neighbourhood maps:** Invite attendees to write the name of their project (and email if they feel comfortable and there is room!) on a sticky note or sticker and place it on a large map so that other Project Leaders can see what events are happening close to where they live.
- **Marketplace of projects:** Some NSG areas also print forms, either prefilled with the project name and description or with places for Project Leaders to fill in this information, and with room for people interested in updates about the project to sign up with their name and email. These can be distributed later to the Project Leaders so that they have the ability to contact the interested parties as their project is implemented. A template for this activity is available ([see 6.2.6](#)) .
- **Project Presentations:** If there is time, consider inviting 1-2 previous year Project Leaders to do a presentation on their project. Ask them to include a few tips for other people organizing NSG projects and an opportunity for questions and answers.
- **Workshops:** Some NSG areas offer workshops on topics like community building, accessibility or promotion and outreach for interested Project Leaders during or after the main event.
- **Promoting ongoing online connection:** You can use the Orientation event as a place to get permission from Project Leaders to add them

6.1

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GUIDE TO THE PROJECT LEADER ORIENTATION EVENT

Google Groups work well for creating and managing email groups →

groups.google.com

You can use Facebook Groups as a way to stay connected with each other. Here's how to create one →

facebook.com/help/167970719931213/

to an email group ([Google Groups](#) works well for this), a [Facebook Group](#), or another way of staying connected with each other and inviting other Project Leaders and program staff and volunteers to their events. You can also encourage Project Leaders and NGC members to join local or regional NSG social media pages or newsletters at the event, so they know about what's going on in their regions. This could be through putting them up on a wall, speaking about them verbally and/or including them in any written materials that are distributed.

- **NSG Videos:** One of the best ways to see what the grants are all about is through stories. If there is time, one or two of these inspiring videos can be shown during the event. They are available [here](#).





Project Leader Orientation: Resources & Templates

6.2.1 Making an NSG Event Accessible and Inclusive Template

The NSG program is committed to everyone feeling welcome at and supported to participate in our events. This template includes some ideas for how to make an NSG event inclusive and accessible.

6.2.2 Inclusive Event Planning for Coordinators

This infographic summarizes a few of the main components of organizing an event, such as a Project Leader Orientation, that is inclusive of a wide range of people.

6.2.3 Approved Projects Template for Orientation Event

This template can be used to create a list of approved projects as a reference for distributing cheques. Rather than having to fill this out yourself, you can export the data from the online Grant Management System (GMS).

6.2.4 Cheque Sign Out Form Template

This template can be customized as a form for Project Leaders to sign when they receive their cheque. It acts as a way to keep track of what cheques have been picked up, a liability waiver, and a confirmation that the grantees are agreeing to follow the NSG granting guidelines and local municipal bylaws, regulation and permit requirements.

6.2.5 Icebreaker Templates for Project Leader Orientation Events

An icebreaker is an activity or game used to warm people up and get them to interact with each other. These icebreaker templates are designed to be used at Project Leader Orientation events.

6.2.6 Marketplace of Projects Template

As an optional activity at the event, this template can be filled out ahead of time or given to Project Leaders to fill out while at the event as a tool to gather contact information of those who are interested in attending or volunteering at or can contribute resources towards the project.

7

Project Leader Resources

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 7 out of 9

Introduction to Module 7: Project Leader Resources

This module has a range of resources you can provide to Project Leaders to support them in organizing their Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) projects. Here are some things to consider around these resources:

- Please customize them to your local NSG area and update each year as needed.
- The majority of the resources are compiled together in the Project Leader Manual. You can provide Project Leaders with the full larger document or you can pull out each resource from the Manual and create individual handouts. Do you think it's better for the Project Leaders to have one larger reference document, or do you think they are more likely to read the individual handouts? Or, are more people likely to read the content if it is sent out both ways — first as a Manual and then over time, as individual handouts?
- If you choose to offer the resources as individual handouts, you can decide if you wish to provide them all at once or spread out over time.
- You can provide these all by email or provide some as paper copies at the Project Leader Orientation event, either for anyone who wants them or for specific Project Leaders who do not have an email address, computer and/or printer.
- Feel free to be creative and continue developing or adding to these over time. There may also be Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members and Project Leaders who would like to help updating and creating these kinds of resources.

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Project Leader Manual



7.1 **Project Leader Manual**

This resource is intended for Coordinators to share with Project Leaders. It includes information on the bigger picture of the NSG program, as well as guidelines and tips for organizing, promoting, and documenting NSG projects.

Coordinators can create individual handouts from each section within the Manual if you think Project Leaders would benefit from having them.



Project Leader: Resources & Templates

7.2.1 Expense Tracking Sheet Template

This template can be given to Project Leaders to keep track of how the money they received in their grant is being spent. Because NSG is a trust based program this does not need to be turned in and is just for their own purposes.

7.2.2 Media Release Form Template

This template can be used at events to have participants provide permission for documentation through media like photos and videos. If someone is attending with children, they can be asked to sign on their behalf as well.

7.2.3 Asking for Donations and Support Template

This template is for use in approaching local businesses and organizations for support of and/or donations toward a project.

7.2.4 NSG Google Group Guidelines Template

Some NSG communities use Google Groups as a way to keep all of the Project Leaders, Partner Organization staff and NGC members connected with one another throughout the year. If you decide to create a Google Group, this template includes guidelines that you can adapt to send out to participants on how to use it.

7.2.5 Infographics to Support NSG Planning and Project Promotion

These infographics can be printed out and referred to when planning and executing your NSG project.

[Land Acknowledgment Infographic](#)

[Event Planning Logistics Infographic](#)

[Inclusive Event Planning Infographic](#)

[Inclusive Event Promotion Infographic](#)

[Social Media Promotion Infographic](#)

8

Wrap-Up and **Evaluation**

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 8 out of 9

Introduction to Module 8: Wrap-Up and Evaluation

This module includes information on finishing your Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) granting cycle through project wrap-ups, the Wrap-Up Celebration event, and program evaluation. This provides opportunities to foster more connections between people involved in the program, celebrate the gifts they contributed, and gather and consider their feedback. It is also the time when we reflect on how the program can reach an even wider range of people in the next granting cycle, and learn from the successes and challenges of the current year of granting.

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8.1

Project Wrap-Up & Celebration



8.1.1

Guide to Project Wrap-Ups

Although the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program does not ask for formal evaluations from Project Leaders, it can be helpful to check in with each project in order to harvest stories and conclude the NSG year. Project wrap-ups can happen in a number of ways, including:

- attendance at the Wrap-Up Celebration event, which usually entails bringing a display or doing an oral presentation about the project
- posting a project story on the NSG website or social media
- submitting photos, artwork, a video or a voice recording
- a simple email check in

Even filling out the evaluation survey can be considered a wrap-up. We want to hear back from each of the projects in some way, but to make the program as accessible, inclusive and low-barrier as possible, we can allow for that to take many forms.

You may wish to start both a digital and physical file of stories, photos and other information and items received from Project Leaders during the Wrap-Up process. For instance, these can come in handy when presenting to your board or Partner Organization staff, in your Coordinator's survey, for future promotional materials or to show at information sessions and Neighbourhood Grants Committee Orientations.

A [Project Wrap Ups List Template \(see 8.2.1\)](#) ⬇️ is available you can use to track project wrap-ups, with a column where you can briefly record the type of wrap-up that was received or other notes, such as that the project was given an extension or was incomplete and returned their funds, or that you did not hear back from the Project Leaders. [Project Follow-Up Templates \(see 8.2.2\)](#) ⬇️ are available and can be adapted to contact Project Leaders who return their cheques and those that have not yet wrapped up their project for the year.

When people return their cheques, it may be because they cannot do their project as they originally planned it, but with encouragement to do a simpler, smaller-scale project or slightly different project, they may be able to still use their grant. The second template is for projects who have not wrapped up their grants. It can be useful to send this after the Wrap-Up Celebration event to anyone who wasn't able to attend and that you haven't

8.1.1

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GUIDE TO PROJECT WRAP-UPS

yet heard from in another way. In doing so, you can offer them a range of easy ways to wrap up their grants, remind them of the feedback survey, and request that they return their funds if they are not able to complete their project.

If you have tried to be in touch with a project by both email and phone and have not heard back, it can be helpful to record this both here and in the online Grant Management System. If the Project Leaders or group apply again, the NGC may want to ask them to wrap-up their last project before funding them again.



8.1.2

Guide to the Wrap-Up Celebration

Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) Wrap-Up Celebrations bring community-minded individuals and organizations together to celebrate the power of simple ideas and small projects to build more connected and vibrant communities. The purpose of the celebrations is to showcase NSG-supported projects, celebrate achievements and inspirations through project stories, and to build and strengthen connections between Project Leaders, NSG program staff, Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members, funders and/or Partner Organizations. Below are some of the different components you may want to include in your event and some ideas to get you started.

Scheduling, Registration, and Format:

- **Availability:** Do your best to hold the event based on Project Leaders' and NGC members' availability. This often means evenings or weekends.
- **Online scheduling platforms:** If you like, you can send out a poll with several options to find out when the best date and time is for the largest number of Project Leaders and NGC members. The following websites are free and easy to use: [LettuceMeet](#) [When2meet](#) [Doodle](#)
- **Save the date:** It is useful to add "save the dates" to materials sent to Project Leaders as soon as possible, as well as to provide them to the NGC and Partner Organization staff. These can just include the date and time, with announcement of the details of the celebrations being sent out at a later time. This will allow adequate time for people to make arrangements to come and increase attendance.
- **Invitations and registration:** Many communities use [Eventbrite](#) to send out free tickets so they have a sense of how many people are coming to the event, or have people RSVP by email. [Templates for invitations are available \(see 8.3.3\)](#) ↓.
- **Format:** Ideally Celebration events occur in person, but if needed, the event can be held online through video conferencing (for example, [Zoom](#)). If it is only offered on video, this may prove to be a barrier to those with limited access to technology, but you could choose to hold two events, one in person and one online, if that would help increase attendance and accessibility.
- **Length:** The event should be between 1.5-2 hours in length.

Online polls for setting dates and times for meetings →

[lettucemeet.com](#)
[when2meet.com](#)
[doodle.com](#)

Many communities use Eventbrite to send out free ticket →

[eventbrite.ca](#)

Video Meetings →

[zoom.us](#)

8.1.2

Set up and Roles:

- **Food:** Consider offering food as an incentive for coming and to help warm the space. Make sure to have a range of different food available, including for those with dietary needs and preferences. Coffee, tea, juice and easy finger food can be provided, or even a sit down meal depending on the type of event you are planning.
- **Accessibility:** Always include accessibility information in your invitations to the event. For example, try to hold the event in an accessible space that is friendly for wheelchairs, other mobility devices and strollers and encourage people not to wear scents as many people are sensitive to them. More information on making your event accessible and inclusive can be found in the [“Making an NSG Event Accessible and Inclusive Template” \(see 8.3.1\) ↓](#).
- **Schedule of activities:** It can be helpful to have a written schedule to provide invitees in advance and to have posted in the room during the event. This way, people have a sense of the flow of the event and will be less likely to miss something important.
- **Room setup:** Give some thought as to the best room set up to facilitate the activities in your event, including tables and chairs. You may want to consider your audio/visual needs including a microphone and places to plug in laptops for project displays. Give yourself ample time to prepare the room(s) before people arrive.
- **MCs:** Consider having an MC or two that can lead the event. The MC role can be performed by NGC members or Project Leaders, with the Coordinator offering support as needed.
- **Staffing:** Ask NGC members and Partner Organization staff to play different roles at the event, including help with planning, MCing, set up and take down, staffing a welcome table, and facilitating an icebreaker or other activities, serving food and beverages, assisting Project Leaders with their displays, or taking care of any audio or visual equipment. Assigning these roles in advance during the event planning can be helpful, although of course some changes may be necessary on the day of the event.

8.1.2

Welcome:

- **Door greeters:** Consider having someone at the door to greet people, provide name tags and answer questions as people arrive.
- **Acknowledgement of territory:** Begin the event with an acknowledgement of the First Nation(s) on whose territory the event is held or invite someone from a local Nation to do a welcome/opening to the event. Remember to look into local protocol around acknowledgements and honoraria for someone doing a welcome/opening. If you are a non-Indigenous person, you may also want to consider using this as an opportunity to reflect on the relationships between the local NSG program and Partner Organizations and Indigenous communities in your area, and name some of the history, connections and work being done towards reconciliation. You can learn whose territory your NSG program takes place on here: [Interactive Map | British Columbia Assembly of First Nations](#) or [First Peoples' Map of B.C.](#)
- **Welcome talks:** You may then want to have the MC and/or Coordinator and/or Partner Organization staff do short welcome talks. This can include reminding people of their online NSG feedback surveys to fill out. You may even want to have some paper copies available for people to fill out on the spot. These surveys will be used to create the annual evaluation report and your local data will also be compiled and given back to you to use for reflection and learning.
- **Housekeeping:** The MC can point out the program staff and NGC members so that Project Leaders know where to find them if they have questions or want to connect, and housekeeping matters such as food, bathrooms, and name tags.

Online polls for setting dates and times for meetings →

bcafn.ca/first-nations-bc/interactive-map

maps.fpcc.ca/

8.1.2

Project Stories:

- **Oral presentations:** Wrap-Up Celebration events are a way for Project Leaders to share the stories of their projects. It is unfortunately not usually possible for stories of all funded projects to be orally presented within the few hours of a celebration event. However, Coordinators may consider selecting a few projects to showcase the diversity of projects funded. Oral presentations should be less than five minutes and do not need to be a “professional” speech or presentation. The main purpose of the story sharing is for Project Leaders to reflect on their experiences and learnings.
- **Project displays:** Other projects can be encouraged to bring a display that showcases their projects, such as a storyboard, photo album or computer slideshow, which can be set up in a trade show or fair type environment. Attendees can then move around the space, interacting with each other’s displays and mingling with one another. You will want to supply things like tape or other kinds of materials to affix things to the walls and extension cords and power bars so that people can plug in their laptops.
- **Active project demonstrations:** You can also consider inviting a few Project Leaders to more actively demonstrate their projects as one of the event activities, for example by playing background music, doing a performance or live artmaking, hosting games or group activities, hosting an arts and crafts table, serving food samples from their project and so on.
- **Other story-harvesting techniques:** Another way you can have Project Leaders share their story at the event include providing sheets for people to write or draw about a prompt such as “how our project built community and connection in our neighborhood”. They can include these with their visual displays and turn them in at the end of the celebration with the chance to win a doorprize. You can invite people to ask questions of other Project Leaders and enter them for a doorprize ([see the Icebreaker Template in Section 8.3.4](#)) ↓, create “storylines” where people can write out how their projects built community and hang them on a clothesline, or host a station where people can record their stories orally or on video.

8.1.2

- **Slideshow of projects:** Some NSG areas also put together a slideshow from a variety of current and/or past projects to be shown before the oral storytelling presentations or in the background of the event. This can even include photos from projects that weren't able to attend the Celebration and will help you to gather more "wrap-ups" from projects.

Making Connections and Acknowledgements:

- **Allow for networking:** Celebrations are also about networking and sharing of information and so adequate time needs to be built within the event schedule to allow for this. You can facilitate discussion by providing name tags, doing icebreaker activities, or asking everyone to take a few moments to speak with the two or three people closest to them about their project.
- **Be mindful of noise levels:** Many celebrations include music as background entertainment. If you choose to provide music, be sure to also offer quiet time for networking and conversations.
- **Acknowledging Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members:** The NGC volunteers are one of the most valuable assets of the program and as such, it is important to acknowledge them at the Wrap-Up Celebration event. Oftentimes, Coordinators provide small gifts at the event as well as acknowledging the NGC members verbally and asking for a round of applause on their behalf. A list of ideas for acknowledging the NGC members is available (see 8.1.3).
- **Inviting and acknowledging NSG supporters:** Project Leaders often receive financial and material contributions from local businesses and community organizations. Wrap-Up celebrations are a good time to acknowledge these valuable NSG supporters. If they are able to attend, it provides them with a chance to learn more about the program and the projects they've supported, which might increase their willingness to continue that support.
- **Inviting local officials:** Partner Organizations may want to invite elected officials including MLAs, MPs and Mayor and City Council members, to celebration events. This is a great way to introduce government officials to the many NSG projects that

8.1.2

their constituents are involved in. If there is time, you can consider giving them the option to speak briefly at the event. Below are some guidelines on how to formally address, write to or speak with elected officials.

Provincial Officials - Members of the Legislature

Address: Ms. Jane Doe, MLA

Salutation: Dear Ms. Doe

Conversation: Ms. Doe

Municipal Officials -Mayor and Council

Address: His Worship John Doe and Council/
Mayor Doe and Council

Salutation: Dear Mayor Doe and Council

Municipal Officials - Mayor

Address: Their Worship Mx. John Doe

Salutation: Dear Mayor Doe

Conversation: "Mayor Doe" first, then "Mx. Doe"

Note: Mx. is a gender neutral salutation

Municipal Officials -Councillor

Address: Councillor Jane Doe

Salutation: Dear Councillor Doe or Dear Mrs. Doe

Conversation: "Councillor" or "Councillor Doe"
first, then "Mrs. Doe"

Other Potential Activities and Presentations:

- **Children's activities:** Consider offering children's activities so that the event is family friendly. This could, for example, include an area with toys, games and colouring supplies.
- **Icebreakers:** An icebreaker can be a great way for the Project Leaders to meet one another and make it easier for people to start conversations about their projects. Icebreakers can also include a door prize of something made and bought locally as an incentive. Icebreaker templates are available for use.
- **NSG Videos:** One of the best ways to see what the grants are all about is through stories. If there is time, one or two of these inspiring videos can be shown during the event. They are available [NSG Toolkit Videos here.](#)

NSG Video →

[youtube.com/
playlist?list=PleWrylhnI7z3_
agYmhklt3xmoyobfaW_](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PleWrylhnI7z3_agYmhklt3xmoyobfaW_)

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GUIDE TO ACKNOWLEDGING NEIGHBOURHOOD GRANTS COMMITTEE

Guide to Acknowledging Neighbourhood Grants Committee

The volunteers who sit on the Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) are one of the most valuable assets of the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program. They are the local experts who help promote the grants, distribute the funding in their communities, help bring the Project Leaders together at the Orientation and Wrap-Up Celebrations, and assist the Coordinator in gathering stories from the projects.

During each granting cycle, time and budget should be put aside to acknowledge their time and energy and to celebrate their contribution to the program. Often this is done at the Wrap-Up Celebration event, but may also occur throughout the process.

Here are some examples of ways to appreciate the NGC in creative and meaningful ways that reflect the principles of NSG:

- Offer food from local restaurants or businesses at decision-making meetings as a way to show appreciation of their participation on the Committee as well as act as an incentive for coming.
- Verbally acknowledge them at the Wrap-Up event either personally, or by having a leader in the Partner Organization or community (such as an Executive Director, CEO, Board Chair or local official) do so. Including personal details about each member can make this feel more special.
- Purchase locally made gifts for them from local businesses, artisans or even from NSG projects that included creating a product (for example, food projects that made preserves, or arts and craft projects that produced something beautiful and/or useful). A gift certificate for a local market, store, service or restaurant, something bought from a local business that started as an NSG Project or books on community building can also be meaningful choices.
- Gifts can be personalized in some way or can include multiple options for them to choose from. Alternatively, a gift bag of various small items can provide a little something for everyone.

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GUIDE TO ACKNOWLEDGING NEIGHBOURHOOD GRANTS COMMITTEE

- Some granting areas have ordered specially-made NSG gifts, such as t-shirts, mugs, water bottles or aprons with the NSG logo and/or that of their Partner Organization.
- Gifts can also share a theme that is of significance to that year of grants. For example, if many of the grants were focused on pollinators, gifts could be purchased from a local beekeeper, or if there were a lot of garden related projects, plants or preserves might make a good gift.
- Personalized cards can be a nice touch, including ones handmade from project photos or by a local artist. Consider writing a little note in them that speaks to the strengths of each member and acknowledges the particular contributions they made to the program.
- Have them pose for a group photo and provide framed copies for each member.
- Take them out for a brunch or dinner at a local restaurant or host an event at your Partner Organization where they can enjoy each other's company, tell stories from the program, and reminisce about their favourite projects.
- Plan a "reunion" where you all meet up at one of the project events together and surprise them with a small token of appreciation, such as an item with your organization's name and logo on it.
- Facilitate appreciations among the Committee by asking each to anonymously write a short note acknowledging the strengths and gifts of each member and putting these into envelopes that each person will receive at the end of the granting cycle.
- Consider an extra appreciation for those leaving the Committee after completing their term, such as a bouquet of flowers and/or a verbal acknowledgement at the Wrap-Up Celebration.



Project Wrap-Up: Resources & Templates

8.2.1 Project Wrap-Ups List Template

This template can be used to track project wrap-ups, with a column where you can briefly record the type of wrap-up that was received or other notes, such as that the project was given an extension or was incomplete and returned their funds, or that you did not hear back from the Project Leaders.

8.2.2 Project Follow-Up Templates

These templates can be adapted to contact Project Leaders who return their cheques and those that have not yet wrapped up their project for the year.

Project Celebration: Resources & Templates



8.3.1 Making an NSG Event Accessible and Inclusive Template

The NSG program is committed to everyone feeling welcome at and supported to participate in our events. This template includes some ideas for how to make your event inclusive and accessible.

8.3.2 Inclusive Event Planning for Coordinators Infographic

This infographic summarizes a few of the main components of organizing an NSG event, such as the Wrap-Up Celebration, that is inclusive of a wide range of people.

8.3.3 Wrap-Up Celebration Invitation Templates

This template can be used to create invitations to your NSG Wrap-Up Celebration event. Many communities use Eventbrite to send out free tickets so they have a sense of how many people are coming to the event, or have people RSVP by email.

8.3.4 Icebreaker Templates for Wrap-Up Celebration Events

An icebreaker is an activity or game used to warm people up and get them to interact with each other. These icebreaker templates are designed to be used at NSG Wrap-Up events.

8.4

Project Evaluation



8.4.1

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COORDINATOR'S GUIDE TO NSG PROGRAM EVALUATION

Coordinator's Guide to NSG Program Evaluation

At the end of each granting cycle, we take time to look back over the year and evaluate our successes, challenges, achievements and areas for future growth. There are a number of ways that this is done at a larger level for the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program as a whole, as well as ways that you can do this on a local level.

Feedback Surveys and Yearly Evaluation Report

Vancouver Foundation and the NSG Regional Networks gather data every year through surveys sent out to the NSG Coordinators, Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members and Project Leaders. These surveys are based on the Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking, as found in the [“NSG Principle Focused Evaluation Framework”](#) (see 8.4.2). You are welcome to submit specific questions you would like to be asked as part of these surveys, to customize it to your program's needs.

The Coordinator in each NSG area will need to send these surveys out to their local Project Leaders and NGC and provide reminders to fill them out. Sometimes a small draw prize has been offered as an incentive for participation. The results of these surveys are compiled and your local data will be sent back to you so that participant feedback can be considered for future grant cycles and you can get an overall sense of how your program is doing. This may also be useful in doing presentations to your boards, City Councils and so on.

The data is also compiled into a yearly report on the entire program. This report usually includes recommendations based on the data and is distributed widely amongst NSG stakeholders and the community. You can find the 2019 report here: www.neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2019-Final-Report-NSG.pdf

2019 Report →

neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2019-Final-Report-NSG.pdf

Financial Reports

A Financial Report needs to be completed by each community after each granting cycle. This will be sent to you by Vancouver Foundation or your Regional Network. It is sometimes completed by the Coordinator, and at other times by the Partner Organization and/or funder.

Grant Statistics and Demographics Data

Local programs are also encouraged to look at the quantitative reports that can be generated through the online Grant Management System. Statistics from the grants in your area and compiled demographic data from the applications are available.

8.4.1

The demographic information that is collected on grant application forms and can be compiled in these reports includes age range, gender, how long someone has lived in their community, what languages they feel comfortable using, what kind of housing they live in (homeowner, renter, living in a high rise building, co-op, shelter or other housing arrangement), whether someone was born in Canada and whether they identify as Indigenous. This data is aggregated for confidentiality, or in other words, it won't be connected to the person's name or project.

This can help show, for example, if there are geographical areas, age groups, or communities the program is not engaging as successfully. This can guide your outreach efforts in future years. For example, if you didn't have many youth receive grants, you may want to target schools and youth centres during your next year's promotions.

Mapping Your Community

In addition to reflecting on the grant statistics and demographic data, go back to the asset and demographic mapping work you did with the [“Guide to Mapping Your Community” \(see 1.6\)](#). How well did your program utilize and build the assets of your community? How might you continue to do this next year? How well did your NSG program reflect the diversity of your community? Who was missing that you might want to make an extra effort to engage next year?

Story Harvesting

Much of the impact of grassroots grantmaking is difficult to capture quantitatively, in numbers and statistics. It is most easily shared and understood through stories. As such, harvesting stories from the projects is key to evaluating the successes, learnings and challenges of each granting cycle. Working with projects to harvest their stories is a role that can be shared by the Coordinator and the NGC. See the [“Guide to Story Harvesting” \(see 5.3.3\)](#) for a list of ideas to get you started.

8.4.2

NSG Principle-Focused Evaluation Framework

The annual Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) evaluation report is created with the data collected through surveys that are sent out to the Program Coordinators, Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members and Project Leaders. They will be provided to you by Vancouver Foundation or your NSG Regional Network. These surveys are based on the following framework. The Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking, described below, are the heart of NSG, and they guide our work throughout every step of the process, including how we evaluate the successes, challenges, learnings and areas for future growth in the program.

Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking	Description	Conditions and Factors
Everyone has Gifts	Use an asset-based community development approach to draw upon existing strengths and build strong communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using and showcasing of local resources—time, physical spaces, knowledge including cultural and traditional, experiences, skills, local businesses, non-profits, informal and formal groups in the community• Problem solving capacity of NGC members and project leaders• Continued involvement with the NSG program (eg. From project leader to NGC members or even a Coordinator or vice versa and the number of years that people participated in the program)
Small is Powerful	Support individual or informal group-led projects with budgets of \$500 or below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of place• Sense of self confidence and leadership• Leveraging resources for NSG projects• Starting and sustaining local traditions• Any unintended outcomes and/or ripple effects created as a result of participating in the program

8.4.2

Local Decisions	Ensure that decisions about projects are made locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGC as a reflection of the diversity of the community • Reflections of the decision-making process from Coordinators and NGC members • Motivation behind getting involved in NSG as a project leader and NGC members
Where We Live Matters	Take a place-based approach to building community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of people and place connections • People contributing to local issues • Creation of new resources • People working towards common goals in their geographic area
We learn Together	Provide community members opportunities with decision-making abilities and access to knowledge and resources to strengthen their community development skills and experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reciprocal and participatory learning at all levels (Project leaders, Committee members, partner organizations and VF) • Reflections on capacity building opportunities offered to Program Coordinators, NGC members and Project Leaders • New skills, information, perspectives and unintentional experiential learnings at all levels
Everyone is Invited	Promote accessibility and inclusion for all people across boundaries such as age, ethnicity, income level, cultural affiliation, gender, ability and sexual orientation within your community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Leaders, NGC and projects as a reflection of the diversity of the community (Demographics) • Outreach and invitation of people into the program as NGC members, project leaders and participants • Minimize barriers for participation of all involved in the program (Project Leaders, participants and NGC members)

8.4.3

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GUIDE TO STORY HARVESTING

Guide to Story Harvesting

“Words are how we think; stories are how we link.”

CHRISTINA BALDWIN

Share Your Story →

neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/stories/share-your-story

Much of the impact of Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) is difficult to capture quantitatively, in numbers and statistics. It is most easily shared and understood through stories. As such, harvesting stories from the projects is key to evaluating the successes, learnings and challenges of each granting cycle. Working with projects to harvest their stories is a role that can be shared by the Coordinator and the Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC).

This can be an ongoing process that begins at the time granting decisions are made through the program evaluation at the end of the granting cycle and beyond. You may even be able to harvest stories from a project long after it was funded, as it continues to evolve and expand. Here are some examples of ways Project Leaders can be encouraged to share their NSG stories:

The NSG Website

Project Leaders can be asked to post on the NSG website on the [Share Your Story page](#). Nearing the end of the grant cycle you can choose to send out an invitation to everyone to post on the website, approach specific projects and ask them directly if they are willing to make a post about their project, or request this of any projects that are unable to make it to the Wrap-Up Celebration. These posts can include photos and videos. If they can't find their community on the drop-down list, ask them to choose “BC-wide” to upload their story. Ask Project Leaders to let you know once their story is uploaded so that you can take a look.

Social Media

You can also encourage Project Leaders to post on your local or regional social media accounts or on their own and tag or mention #VFNSG, @VancouverFdn and local hashtags or social media accounts.

Photos and Videos

Photos and videos from events are a very effective way of capturing the “story” of the project. Within the [Project Leader Manual \(see 7.1\)](#) ↓, Project Leaders will have access to the “Documenting Your Project” template that includes tips and ideas on how they can get consent from participants to be recorded. You can also hire a professional photographer to take photos of some of the projects in your area. Vancouver Foundation or your Regional Network may be able to offer some funding for you to do so. This is a great way to get high quality photos to use in future promotional materials.

8.4.3

Attending Events

Attending events yourself and speaking with participants is another way to harvest stories, either just for your own use or with the Project Leaders permission, you can write up a bit about the project and/or take your own photos and videos. NGC members can also be asked to attend events and do a little write up after. Some NSG areas assign a certain number of projects for each NGC member to attend and report back about.

Local Media or Newsletters

If you are able to connect Project Leaders with local media to be interviewed, or can do this for your own newsletter or that of another local organization, this can be an excellent way of drawing out particularly impactful stories.

Creative Documentation

Sharing stories is another way Project Leaders can share their unique gifts. Many do creative documentation including interviewing their project participants, recording a podcast, creating an interactive activity at their events such as putting up sheets of paper with questions like “How do you think this project will make our neighbourhood better?”, or doing an artwork about the project.

Photovoice

Photovoice is an image-based storytelling approach that was developed by Dr. Caroline Wang at the University of Michigan, School of Public Health with the intention of empowering community members to tell their own stories using photography. Instead of relying on traditional reports and surveys, which often create barriers for participants to share back, this method allows us to truly see participant experiences that are created and interpreted by them.

8.4.3

To use Photovoice with Project Leaders, we would have them choose some photos from their project and then facilitate discussion around simple questions such as:

- What is your project about?
- How did your project make you feel?
- What was a surprise during the project?
- What did you struggle with most?
- How did this project make your community feel?
- What have you learned about your community?
- What brought you to NSG?

Click here to learn more about the method →

[participedia.net/
method/5016](https://participedia.net/method/5016)



9

Learning Days/ **Summits**

Coordinating NSG Toolkit
Module 9 out of 9

Introduction to Module 9: Learning Days/Summits

One of the ways that we put the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) principle of “we learn together” into action is through NSG Learning Days, or “NSG Summits”. These one or two day events bring together NSG Project Leaders and participants, Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members, Program Coordinators, and staff from Partner Organizations and funders of the program to share stories and skills, discuss best practices, attend presentations and workshops, and build relationships with one another. Although in the past they have sometimes been organized by Vancouver Foundation with province-wide participation, they are now usually organized by the Network Lead organization of an NSG Regional Network, bringing together the communities within that region.

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9.1

Guide to Planning **Learning Day**



Guide to Planning Learning Day

One of the ways that we put the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) principle of “we learn together” into action is through NSG Learning Days, called “NSG Summits”. These one or two day events bring together NSG Project Leaders and participants, Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) members, Program Coordinators, and staff from Partner Organizations and funders of the program to share stories and skills, discuss best practices, attend presentations and workshops, and build relationships with one another. They are usually organized by the Network Lead organization of an NSG Regional Network, bringing together the communities within that region.

The following is a list of potential steps involved in organizing an NSG Learning Day that also includes tips from past organizers and feedback from past participants. You can use this as a checklist, or simply as a general guide to get you started. Every NSG Learning Day event is different, so please feel free to add other items, delete those that aren’t relevant or rearrange the order of things. Or, just use this to get ideas and create your own!

The Planning Process

Tip: Ensure you give yourself enough lead time to organize the event - past Learning Days have required about 4 months of planning.

- Create a core team of organizers to work on the event planning. This group can have a lead organizer(s) to make final decisions, or each person can take the lead on a specific task or area.
- Consider who you want to have represented on your organizing team. Your team should include representatives that are or have been NSG Program Coordinators, Project Leader and NGC members as they will all have important perspectives that are useful in planning. Your team should also reflect the diversity of your communities.
- Choose how often to meet, taking into account the required work and organizers’ schedules. Do you want to have more frequent but shorter meetings or less frequent but longer planning meetings? Or longer meetings interspersed with shorter check-ins?

9.1

Google Docs →
docs.google.com/document

- Set some ground rules around decision-making and group process so that everyone feels comfortable with the process and that their voice is welcomed and heard.
- Decide whether the planning meetings should be facilitated and by whom - one core person or with a rotating chair?
- Create shared working documents that everyone has access to, such as through [Google Docs](#), to keep NGC members on the same page and keep track of the planning process. These can include detailed to-do lists and timelines for when different items need to be completed. It can even include this document with things checked off as you go!
- Begin the process by developing a budget for the event, and a calendar with major planning milestones that the Committee can refer to regularly throughout the process.
- Review the [“Making an NSG Event Accessible and Inclusive Template” \(see 9.3.5\)](#) ↓. When planning an NSG event, it is important to start planning for inclusion and accessibility early on

Reflect on the Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking

Tip: It can be helpful to explicitly integrate the principles into the agenda of the event as well into the planning. This could include opening remarks about how the principles were integrated into the planning of the event and making lots of space for the expertise and skill in the room.

- Throughout all of the planning process, reflect on the principles that guide the NSG program and find ways to integrate them into the event. This could include, for example, doing community consultation on different aspects of the event, inviting people already involved in the program as presenters and speakers, and highlighting strengths of the local community where the event takes place. See [“Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking” \(see 9.2\)](#) for more information on the principles.

Integrating Past Participant Feedback

Tip: Having clear documentation of the learnings and recommendations that emerge from the feedback and organizer's debriefing of a Learning Day can really help in future planning.

- Review feedback from last year's evaluations, if available and if this is the first time that you are putting together such an event, talk with communities that have organized it before to learn from their experiences.
- The majority of past participants named the Project Leader presentations as their main highlight, enjoying how they provided inspiration, ideas to take back to their communities, and a sense of the impact of the program. Other highlights that were most often named included interactive skill building workshops and small group conversations.
- Many people also mentioned enjoying the chance to feel like part of the larger NSG community, and being able to connect across communities but also across roles (Partner Organization staff, Program Coordinators, Project Leaders, and NGC members).. Opportunities to connect with and learn from each other was considered a highlight but also an area that could be expanded upon. A significant number of people mentioned the level of experience and expertise in the room and wanted further chances to share that with each other.
- The importance of having different ways to engage depending on learning needs or preferences was also mentioned a number of times in past feedback.
- Quite a number of participants suggested planning a range of sessions and activities so that people at different levels of experience could all be engaged/find something suitable for their learning, or expand on this. This could include, for example, having part of the day be workshop streams for people new to the program and more advanced participants. This was also suggested around different kinds of participants - that there be a balance of content provided for everyone and content provided specifically for different groups involved in the program such as Coordinators, Project Leaders and NGC members.

- Another area of feedback was around a desire for what one participant called “deeper dives”. Many participants wanted to use these days to learn how to be more strategic in their work and deepen the impact of their NSG programs, foster deeper and more ongoing relationships in the neighbourhoods where they live and work, and build their capacity to more effectively engage their communities in the goals of NSG. Many participants wanted time to go deeper through question periods, discussion and interactive elements in the workshops and presentations.
- A number of participants requested learning around building community cross-culturally and more diversity of content and presenters. Specifically, a need for more BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) presenters and facilitators, Indigenous-led content and skills building around forging relationships with and working respectfully with Indigenous communities was named.
- For a number of participants, having things run on time and clear communication around the flow of the day was considered a priority.
- Like in most events, finding the right timing for things was a challenge, with quite a number of people wanting there to be more time for the things they felt were important, but many also finding the workshops and presentations to be too long. This is a balance that can be hard to achieve, but something worth thinking creatively about during the planning process. A number of people suggested the event be spread over two days if this were possible.

Brainstorm and Research Content

Tip: As noted above, the hosts, presenters and facilitators should represent the diversity of the community and the NSG program in general.

- Brainstorm what kinds of activities you’d like to include in the event. Past events have included: short presentations by Project Leaders on their NSG projects; networking and brainstorming sessions; small group conversations; interactive activity stations, including mini-project demonstrations or activities led by NSG Project Leaders; light table topics for optional discussion during lunch; guest speakers;

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The Art of Gathering: Start with purpose →

pcma.org/priya-parker-dont-skip-over-purpose/

and skills building workshops, including ones offered in concurrent sessions so participants have options and can find something interesting to them.

- Consult with NSG Coordinators, NGCs and Partner Organization staff about potential themes for the event and ideas for workshops, interactive activities, and potential hosts, facilitators and presenters, including whether they would be interested in presenting or facilitating themselves. If there is new emerging content it may still require external experts, but many people already involved in NSG can offer workshops and facilitate sessions.
- Consider the purpose of the Learning Day. Priya Parker, the author of *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why it Matters*, explains why knowing the purpose of your gathering is so important. This article provides a good summary: [The Art of Gathering: Start with purpose](https://pcma.org/priya-parker-dont-skip-over-purpose/). If you have been part of the Art of Hosting training, then the materials from that workshop can also be very useful when organizing a Learning Day event.


Reserve Space

Tip: Priorities for the venue should include adequate room for the event's activities (including smaller rooms for concurrent sessions) and for participants to move around and interact, accessibility, location, parking, transit, nearby hotels, and a venue that can provide appropriate catering or accepts outside catering. Outside space, natural light and nice views are also great if you can get them!

- Brainstorm and research potential spaces and reserve a few of the best candidates. Make sure to reserve the venue starting from the afternoon before the event date so you can do the set up the day before.
- Do walk-throughs of potential locations, considering the suitability and accessibility features of each space. Keep the reservation of the best location and cancel the others.

Set Date and Begin Invitation Process

Tip: Consider the timing of the event within the larger timeline of the NSG program - it should be at a time when people are engaged with the program but not during the busiest parts of the year. In the month or two after granting decisions are made often works well.

- Consult with communities/potential partners and set the date.
- Send out a Save the Date notice to Coordinators and Partner Organizations about 6 weeks before the event. A template is available for this ([see 9.4.1](#)) .
- Determine how many participants from each community can be invited. Let Coordinators know the quota for their community and ask them to identify who they wish, with a cross section of Partner Organization staff, NGC members and Project Leaders.
- Discuss livestreaming the event for people who cannot physically attend and gauge whether there is interest in this among potential participants.

Invite Hosts and Indigenous Guests

Tip: As much as possible, following the grassroots grantmaking principles of “we learn together”, consider giving leadership roles such as hosting the event or facilitating group discussions to Project leaders, Neighbourhood Grants Committee members or Coordinators to enable them the opportunity to develop their skills. This may require mentorship and support that you will have to budget as part of the event planning process.

- A welcome from the First Nation(s) on whose territory the event takes place should begin the event. Contact Indigenous community members from the territory the event will take place on and inquire about a welcome, including the protocol around honorariums and gifts. Invite these guests to stay for the whole event if they choose to.
- Identify potential hosts to manage the flow of the event, introduce presenters, set the tone of the event, and make announcements. Hosts can be Project Leaders or NGC members.

- Once you have hosts and welcomers, consult with them about ideas for the event or invite them to participate on the organizing team.

Initial Content Development

Tip: Align the content to highlight and showcase the NSG principles. Plan to include some hyper-local content such as highlighting projects from the host community, hosts from the specific community/neighbourhood where the event is taking place and showcasing the local community and neighborhood's resources throughout the event. As much as possible, include learning opportunities that include justice and equity in order to tie in the principle of "everyone is invited".

- Decide on the number and types of skill building workshops and guest speakers presentations you'd like to include. Determine the number of Project Leader presentations that can fit within the allotted time. NSG project stories always receive the most positive feedback of any aspect of the event. As such, it can be a good idea to give them adequate time. Consider leaving room for discussion and questions after the presentations.
- Shortlist workshop facilitators and guest speakers and start to contact facilitators about their interest, availability and provide them the event details. Consider including mini-project demonstrations or activities led by NSG Project Leaders.
- Work with Coordinators to identify NSG projects to showcase, potentially including ones with an interactive component they can demonstrate.
- Plan an artmaking component as part of the concurrent sessions or during the break.
- Decide on where in the agenda you'll put networking and brainstorming sessions and small group conversations. Consider creating light table topics for optional discussion during lunch.
- Plan a strong ending to the day, such as a team building activity, an activity that includes music or movement, or a surprise announcement of a new aspect of the program. Ending on a high energy note leaves people feeling inspired and excited.

- Find something that provides hyper-local content to celebrate the community in which the Learning Day takes place.
- Leave time at the end for people to fill out a feedback form if they choose to do so on site and to make an announcement that a digital version will be sent out within 48 hours of the event.
- Develop the first draft outline of the day. Ensure that the amount of content is manageable with the time available and allows breathing space for transitions, interactive activities, and for participants to connect and discuss.

Preliminary Logistics and Event Registration

Tip: Try to have registration be digital/paperless. Having paper that needs to be signed at the event, such as a media release form, can be cumbersome. Instead try to have it be an opt-in/opt-out process when people register online before the event.

- Start tracking expenses. A “Learning Day Expense Tracking Template” ([see 9.5.2](#)) ↓ is available for this.
- Block rooms at a nearby hotel for people who may be coming from out of town.
- Identify potential caterers for breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks. Food must include options for people with food preferences, restrictions and needs. Add allergies or dietary restrictions to the registration form so that you know of any participant's have ahead of time and order meals accordingly. There should also be snacks, tea, coffee and other beverages available.
- Create a registration process (such as with [Eventbrite](#)). A registration notice and form template is available ([see 9.4.1](#)) ↓. About four weeks before the event, send the registration link out. Send weekly reminders until the registration deadline, which should be around 1-2 weeks before the event (give yourself time to open up any remaining spots if any of the communities couldn't fill their quota of participants).

Eventbrite is an easy online platform to manage registrations →

eventbrite.ca/?ref=affiliates

- Finalize contract with the venue.
- Begin to track registrations as they come in. A template for this is available ([see 9.4.2](#)) ↓. Start a waitlist if needed.
- If planning to livestream, which is highly recommended, look into what will be involved and notify people in the NSG community that they will also be able to participate in this way.
- Research local NSG-participant owned and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) led businesses that you can support for purchasing supplies, catering, graphic design, printing the program and so on.

Content and Agenda Development

Tip: Ensure that interactive activities on the agenda have enough time. For example, brainstorming often needs a few hours at least. Keep in mind the level of expertise that is already in the room, and leave space for that to be shared. Encourage facilitators to make sessions interactive and engaging.

- Review the draft agenda with the times/activities mapped out. A sample agenda is available for inspiration ([see 9.3.2](#)) ↓.
- With skill building workshops and group discussions, decide whether it makes more sense to have mixed participants, or if you want to break some into specific groups, such as beginners and more experienced participants or different kinds of participants (Project Leaders, Program Coordinators, and NGC members).
- Share the agenda with Partner Organization staff, hosts, Coordinators and so on for feedback.
- Begin to draft the program for the day. It can include things like the agenda, bios of presenters and information about the logistics of the day. It needs to be drafted and designed in time for feedback to be integrated. See the [“Learning Day Sample Program”](#) ([see 9.3.3](#)) ↓ for an example of a program.

- Set in-person or virtual meetings with the facilitators and presenters.
- Finalize the welcome from the local Indigenous community.
- Finalize hosts and begin to share details about the content of the event, including the theme and the goal of integrating the guiding principles of the NSG program into the event. To make the role of host successful, try to clearly communicate what you're looking for in the role, schedule multiple meetings to prepare them and get their input on the planning, do a site walk-through so they're familiar with the space and how it will be set up, provide detailed speaking notes and ask them to be as interactive with the crowd as possible.
- Contact Project Leaders through Coordinators and give them outlines/guiding questions for their presentations, using the principles as a foundation. Support Project Leaders to create their presentations if necessary or request that Coordinators provide this support.
- Finalize the interactive activities including art making, project demonstrations, brainstorming and networking sessions, table topics for optional discussion during lunch and the end activity. Prepare questions and approaches for networking/brainstorming sessions.
- Finalize content of workshops/presentations and get summaries and bios of facilitators/ presenters for the program.

Event and Space Logistics

Tip: On the day of the event, the people offering the Indigenous welcome, facilitators, presenters and hosts should be well supported, a role that can be divided amongst the organizing team and other program staff.

- Map out the space for the various activities.
- Consider if you want to have raffle tickets and gifts as an incentive for people to stay until the end and if so arrange this.
- Finalize catering for breakfast, lunch and snacks.

- Arrange for sound and tech set up and decide whether to hire a sound and tech support person.
- Find event support staff/volunteers to help set up and take down and help with food.
- Start to develop a supplies list and to purchase and gather the things you will need. Rent table linens, dining utensils, and centerpiece flowers if needed. Get photo backdrops, collaterals, and any display supplies needed.
- Prepare a PowerPoint for opening and closing remarks and for behind hosts.
- Get presentation files from facilitators and presenters.
- Send the program for design.
- Arrange for anything needed for the people doing the Indigenous welcome, the hosts, facilitators, presenters, people coordinating the interactive activities and so on.
- Assign roles to the organizers for the day of.
- Assign roles and do orientation for volunteers and event staff.
- Confirm details of livestreaming the event, including finding a staff or volunteer to coordinate and carry this out. Consider ways to include people watching the event through livestream in the event. Send out details about the livestream to potential participants.

Final Registration

Tip: Try to be aware of the participants who need to travel to come to the event - do they have special needs to make the trip feel possible and worth it?

- Once the first registration date passes, around 1-2 weeks before the event, open up remaining spots to participants from any community, even those who have filled their quota.

- If there are more participants interested than available spots, create a waitlist if you haven't already. If spots become available, email the waitlist to fill them.
- Send email to event attendees to confirm their reservations and attendance.
- Determine the number of people coming from out of town and do final reservation of accommodations.

Final Content Development

Tip: Become familiar with the IT needs of the presenters and facilitators, and ensure everything needed is in place for the day of. Having someone able to troubleshoot any problems on the day of can also be useful - this could be someone you hire, a volunteer or one of the organizers.

- A few weeks before the event, bring the organizers as well as a variety of stakeholders (Project Leaders, NGC members, Coordinators, Partner Organization staff) together to get feedback on and finalize the planning.
- Finalize speaking notes for the hosts and meet one last time to go over the agenda and notes together if needed.
- Give feedback on the program design. Receive final program and send it to event attendees.
- Update the participant feedback form ([see 9.6.1](#) ↓) and welcomer/host/presenter/facilitator feedback form ([see 9.6.2](#) ↓). Create a version that can be printed out, as well as one on Survey Monkey. Print copies of the feedback form for people to fill out at the end of the event.


Final Logistics and Checks

Tip: Name tags are always important and having ways to personalize them, including coloured markers and stickers, can be fun and act as an icebreaker for participants.


- Print name tags.
- Compile supplies.
- Do the room set up and final check-in/orientation on the day before the event.
- Check technology and sound system, including livestream.
- Do a final check of catering, event support staff, linen and flower orders etc.
- Do one final check with the hosts, welcomers, facilitators and presenters.

After Event:

Tip: Consider how often you want to host a Learning Day event so that you know when planning for the next one should begin. What is feasible for the organizers and budget-wise? Frequency should be often enough to foster ongoing connections and build capacity within the program while still feasible in terms of budget, time and energy investment.

- Set an initial debrief meeting for the organizers. See the [“Learning Day Organizers’ Debriefing Template” \(9.6.3\)](#) . Consider sending the debriefing template to the core team for them to consider before meeting.
- Compile the feedback forms that were filled out at the event. For those who prefer to do it online after, send a link within the 48 hours at a meeting.
- Send out the feedback form for the welcomers, hosts, presenters, facilitators and so on within 48 hours of the event, with a thank you email.

9.1

- Compile feedback from all of the feedback forms in an Excel spreadsheet and send the data to the organizing committee to go over at the debrief meeting.
- Hold the debrief meeting. As part of the debrief, review the participants' feedback and identify themes and ideas that can be included for next year. Write up notes of anything you want to capture for those organizing the next event.
- Request and pay invoices and honorariums. See the [“Invoice Template” \(9.5.1\)](#) .
- Track final expenses and create the final budget of the event.
- Have a celebration meal together! You can also consider small gifts for hosts and organizing team members as a token of appreciation.

9.2

Principles of Grassroots **Grantmaking**



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 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 that 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.

Event Planning: Resources & Templates



9.3.1 Learning Day Planning Template

This template lists some of the details you may want to track in one place while organizing an NSG Learning Day. This could, for example, be made into a Google Drive document that all organizers have access to and regularly update.

9.3.2 Learning Day Agenda Template

This is an agenda template for an NSG Learning Day that you can customize for your own event or simply use to prompt ideas on how to build your own.

9.3.3 Learning Day Sample Program

This is an example of a program from a past NSG Learning Day that you can use for ideas and inspiration.

9.3.4 Inclusive Event Planning for Coordinators Infographic

This infographic summarizes a few of the main components of organizing an event, such as an NSG Learning Day, that is inclusive of a wide range of people.

9.3.5 Making an NSG Event Accessible and Inclusive Template

The NSG program is committed to everyone feeling welcome at and supported to participate in our events. When planning an NSG event, it is important to start planning for inclusion and accessibility early on. This template includes some ideas for how to make a NSG event, including your Learning Day, inclusive and accessible.

Outreach and Registration: Resources & Templates



9.4.1 Learning Day Save the Date and Registration Templates

These templates can be adapted to notify potential NSG Learning Day participants to save the date for the event and when registration is open as well as to create the registration form itself.

9.4.2 Learning Day Registration Tracking Template

This template can be used to track the details of each participant's registration.

Event Financials: Resources & Templates



9.5.1 Invoice Template

This invoice template can be customized for processing honorariums. Most vendors and businesses will have their own invoices, but individuals or informal groups receiving honoraria may not.

9.5.2 Learning Day Expense Tracking Template

This template can be used to track the various expenses involved in your NSG Learning Day and to ensure you are staying within your budget.

Feedback and Reflection: Resources & Templates



9.6.1 Learning Day Participant Feedback Template

This template can be adapted to create a feedback form for participants of your NSG Learning Day.

9.6.2 Learning Day Welcomer/Host/Presenter/Facilitator Feedback Template

This template can be adapted to create a feedback form for the people involved in the Indigenous welcome, the hosts, presenters and facilitators at your NSG Learning Day.

9.6.3 Learning Day Organizers' Debriefing Template

This template is for the organizers of an NSG Learning Day to use to debrief after the event has taken place. It can be customized to capture successes, learnings and what you hope to add, change or address next time an NSG Learning Day is organized.

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