

Exploring & Initiating Neighbourhood Small Grants



**Neighbourhood
Small Grants**



Introduction

This Toolkit is for anyone who is interested in exploring and setting up a partnership with an organization that is considering having NSG in their community. These resources will help you explore whether the potential partner has the right understanding and tools to support NSG in their community. The resources here will also help the potential partner understand their role in NSG and should they feel they are a fit for the program, formally begin the process of initiating the program.

You will find helpful templates and guides to support this process; from MOUs to Resources on Grassroots Grantmaking, this Toolkit will support you and the potential partner's process in understanding how NSG can benefit their community.

Table of Contents

Exploring Potential NSG Partnerships	3
Initiating New NSG Partnerships	12

1

Exploring Potential **NSG Partnerships**

This section of the Exploring and Initiating Toolkit focuses on exploring new partnerships with potential Partner Organizations who are interested in establishing an NSG program in their communities. These resources are meant for Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network Lead that would be coordinating this process, as well as some of them are meant to be modified and sent to the potential Partner Organizations.

Guide to Exploring New NSG Partnerships

This guide focuses on exploring new partnerships with potential Partner Organizations who are interested in establishing their own grassroots grant-making program, and is meant for Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network Lead that would be coordinating this process.

The exploration phase is a process of learning whether a new Partner Organization has the practical tools, community development skills or support and community knowledge in order to establish an NSG program in their community, and shares in the core values of grassroots grant-making, such as:



- Asset based community development (ABCD)
- Individual or informal group-led small scale projects with up to a \$500-1,000 budget
- Resident-led decision making
- Place-based strategies to connect neighbours
- Community capacity building
- Accessibility and inclusivity

This guide provides notes on how to explore NSG partnerships with potential Partner Organizations. This process will allow the boards and staff of these organizations to get a good sense of what is involved in coordination of the program, as assess whether it is a good fit for them.

Please keep in mind that this document is only meant to provide a starting place. Please modify the process as you see fit and in order to make it appropriate for the community that is exploring a possible NSG partnership. Some, including for example Indigenous communities and other equity denied groups, may wish to integrate their cultural protocols or values into the program. This program is meant to be responsive to local contexts, and to change and evolve as it moves into diverse communities. The Regional Network Lead can provide support for adapting the program in this way if needed or desired.

Preliminary Questions and Criteria

When a new community partner contacts us to express their interest in NSG, there are a few steps we can take to explore whether they will be a good fit for the program:

- Set up an initial meeting with the potential partners and to have an informal conversation about their organization to learn more about them.
- There are some preliminary questions we may wish to ask to get a sense of who they are, the work they do, who they serve, their values, and their experience with community development and working with diverse communities. These can be found in the [Preliminary Questions for Potential Community Partners Template](#)  document.
- At this same time, we can send them a customized version of the [Criteria for Establishing NSG Partnerships Template](#)  document, asking them to self-assess whether NSG is a good fit for their organization. If there are any criteria from this list that they do not fulfill, then a conversation can happen about whether and how this can be addressed before moving on to the next step.

Presentation to Potential Community Partners

Often, there will be a presentation made to the board and staff of potential Partner Organizations to discuss what grassroots grantmaking and NSG are, the principles and frameworks that guide them, the overall NSG program structure and the details of establishing the program if they choose to do so. Documents to support this presentation can be found in [Resources & Templates](#) at the end of this section.

Next Steps

If the organizations would like to move toward setting up a Partnership, at this stage, we can inform them of the next steps. These are explored more in depth in the Initiating New NSG Partnerships section of the Toolkit.

Memorandum of Understanding: Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network Lead will work with the organization on creating a Memorandum of Understanding where the roles and responsibilities of the two organizations, timeline of program activities as well as funding details will be co-developed. A template is available for this, and can be modified in the way that works for their community.

Cocreating the payment structure: If the potential Partner Organization is a community foundation, the expectation is that they will make financial contributions to the program of at least 30-50%. If the Partner Organization serves equity-denied groups, then Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network will provide the full funding.

Setting the timeline: The new Partner Organization(s), in close consultation with Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network, will set dates for the pilot year of the program, including a grant application opening and deadline, orientations for Neighbourhood Grants Committee members, a Project Leader Orientation event, the timeline for Project Leaders to implement projects, and the wrap-up and evaluation process. This will also need to include time for establishing the new program, including negotiating the Memorandum of Understanding, as well as hiring and orienting a new Program Coordinator.

Hiring and orienting a Coordinator: A part-time Program Coordinator will be hired or appointed by the Partner Organization to coordinate the overall program. This may be a staff person at the organization or an independent contractor.

Coordinating NSG Toolkit →

[neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/
our-resources/resources-for-
partners/](https://neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/our-resources/resources-for-partners/)

Support for coordinating the program: A range of supports are made available to new communities in their first year of implementing an NSG program, including:

- The [Coordinating NSG Toolkit](#) which provides guides, templates and resources for coordinating an NSG program
- Promotional materials and help with promotions
- Communication with and support from other NSG stakeholders through an online project management platform, partner meetings and NSG Learning Days
- A comprehensive orientation session for new Program Coordinators as well as Partner Organization staff and board as applicable (this usually takes place over 1.5 days)
- An optional online Grant Management System

Resources & Templates: Preliminary Questions & Criteria



When a new community partner contacts us to express their interest in NSG, there are a few steps we can take to explore whether they will be a good fit for the program:

- [Preliminary Questions for Potential Community Partners Template](#)

This template includes preliminary questions that can be used in a first meeting to get a sense of who the potential Partner Organization(s) are, the work they do, who they serve, their values, and their experience with community development and working with diverse communities.

- [Criteria for Establishing NSG Partnerships Template](#)

This template includes criteria potential Partner Organizations can use to self-assess whether NSG is a good fit for their organization. If there are any criteria from this list that they do not fulfill, then a conversation can happen about whether and how this can be addressed (for example by bringing in other partners) before moving on to the next step.

Resources & Templates: Presentation to Potential Community Partners



- [Guide to Presenting to Potential Community Partners](#)
This guide provides an overview of considerations for presenting to the boards and staff of potential Partner Organizations who are interested in establishing their own grassroots grantmaking program
- [Agenda Template for Presentation to Potential Community Partners](#)
This template offers a sample agenda for a presentation to the board and/or staff of potential Partner Organizations.
- [Presentation to Potential Community Partners - Presenter's Notes Template](#)
These presenter's notes can be customized to create the content of a presentation to the board and/or staff of potential Partner Organizations.
- [Presentation to Potential Community Partners - PowerPoint Template](#)
This PowerPoint template is designed to complement the Presenter's Notes Template and provide the visuals for a presentation to the board and/or staff of potential Partner Organizations.



Resources & Handouts

Resources can be sent ahead by email to the potential Partner Organization(s) or used as handouts at the presentation. They are there to help outline the intent and impact of grassroots grantmaking and the NSG model as well as to assess a potential partner's organizational readiness for implementing the program in their community. They are included here in a suggested order, but this can be modified.

- **Resource List for Potential Community Partners:**

This list provides an overview of these resources and suggested uses for them.

- **To send before the presentation:**

- ▶ **ABCD at a Glance**

This resource from the [Tamarack Institute](#) introduces Asset Based Community Development (ABCD).

- ▶ **Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking**

The Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking guide our mission of harnessing local skills and experiences to make neighbourhoods better places to live. They are at the heart of the NSG program.

- ▶ **The Benefits of Neighbourliness**

This document introduces the concept of place-based community building, which is central to grassroots grantmaking.

- ▶ **Benefits of Establishing a NSG Program**

This document outlines some of the benefits offered to Partner Organizations when they form an NSG partnership.



Resources & Handouts

- To review at the presentation:
 - ▶ [Organizational Readiness for Grassroots Grantmaking](#)

This document is meant to help potential Partner Organizations assess their readiness to establish a grassroots grantmaking program in their community.

2

Initiating New **NSG Partnerships**

This section of the Exploring and Initiating Toolkit focuses on initiating NSG partnerships with new Partner Organizations. These resources are meant for Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network Lead that would be coordinating this process, as well as some of them may be useful for new Partner Organizations.


Guide to Initiating a New Neighbourhood Small Grants Partnership

This guide provides notes on how to initiate Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) partnerships with new Partner Organizations who wish to establish the program in their community. In the initiating phase, an agreement is reached about financial contributions and the details of the partnership are formalized.

The first steps in setting up the new NSG program are taken in partnership between the new Partner Organization(s) and Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network Lead. These include setting the timeline for the first granting cycle, hiring and orienting a Program Coordinator, and introducing the supports that are available for coordinating the program. It can be helpful to have a meeting with a new Partner Organization to walk through these initial processes and to provide the first tools needed for them to initiate their NSG program.

Please keep in mind that these documents are only meant to provide a starting place. Please modify them as you see fit and in order to make them appropriate for the community that is exploring a possible NSG partnership. Some, including for example Indigenous communities and other equity denied groups, may wish to integrate their cultural protocols or values into the program. This program is meant to be responsive to local contexts, and to change and evolve as it moves into diverse communities. The Regional Network Lead can provide support for adapting the program in this way if needed or desired.

Funding Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network Lead will work with the organization on creating a Memorandum of Understanding where the roles and responsibilities of the two organizations, timeline of program activities as well as funding details will be co-developed. A [Memorandum of Understanding Template](#)  is available for this.

This will include determining the co-funding agreement. If any of the potential Partner Organization(s) are a community foundation, the expectation is that they will make financial contributions to the program of 30-50%. If the Partner Organization serves equity-denied groups, then Vancouver Foundation or Regional Network may provide the full funding.

Partners receive financial and resource support from Vancouver Foundation or their Regional Network Lead until such time that the program is fully established and has the potential to leverage funding from other sources. Once these conditions are in place, Vancouver Foundation's funding will be gradually reduced over a certain timeframe as agreed upon by Vancouver Foundation or Network Lead and the Partner Organization.

NSG Partnerships can include the following types of agreements:

- 1. Financial resources matched by in-kind contributions:** Long-standing partners and equity seeking organizations match Vancouver Foundation's financial and resource support through in-kind contributions including space, staff time, and community knowledge.
- 2. Cost and knowledge sharing:** New partners provide at least 30%-50% of the funding for the program to match Vancouver Foundation's financial and resource support. Partners also provide community knowledge and share information and learnings specific to their communities.

NSG Partner Organizations are encouraged to partner with other organizations such as municipalities to secure funding or engage various ways of fundraising to sustain the program for the long term. Once the program is established and the impact has been demonstrated, often other local partners are willing to step in to keep the program going.

Setting the timeline

The new Partner Organization(s), in close consultation with Vancouver Foundation or Regional Network Lead, will set dates for the pilot year of the program. Several templates are available to modify and provide to a new NSG community in order to support this planning process.

Aspects of the timeline that will be decided include:

- a grant application opening and deadline
- orientations for Neighbourhood Grants Committee members
- granting decision-making meetings
- a Project Leader Orientation event
- the timeline for Project Leaders to implement projects
- and the wrap-up and evaluation process, including a celebration event

First outreach

Some communities will want to begin outreach and promotions before a Program Coordinator is hired, in order to build momentum and awareness about the grants. The following guides are available and can be sent to a new NSG community to help with this:

- [Guide to NSG Promotion](#) ↓
- [Guide to NSG Branding Basics](#) ↓
- [Mapping Your Community](#) ↓

In some communities, it can also be helpful to map out the boundaries of the NSG area. This can be done with Google Maps or through a graphic design program, such as this one from East Vancouver that has three smaller areas that each have a separate Neighbourhood Grants Committee but work together collaboratively.

Hiring and orienting an NSG Program Coordinator

A part-time Program Coordinator will be hired or appointed by the Partner Organization to coordinate the overall program. This may be a staff person who already works at the organization, someone who is hired to work at the organization or an independent contractor. It is crucial that this person has experience, knowledge and skill in community development, particularly if the Partner Organization hasn't done a lot of this kind of work in the past. Estimation of hours and wages, job description, interview question and reference check templates are available to be sent to the new Partner Organization for use in hiring a Coordinator.

Once a Program Coordinator is hired, they will be offered space in an upcoming NSG Orientation. NSG Orientations usually take place over 1.5 days and provide in-depth learning, discussion and best-practice sharing around the coordination of an NSG granting cycle. Depending on how often new people are entering the program, this orientation may happen regularly once or twice a year, or whenever there are a number of new participants that require orientation.

The Orientations will most likely be facilitated by Regional Network Lead staff and a Program Coordinator from a well-established NSG program. Although these Orientations are customized for Program Coordinators, some Partner Organizations also send some of their staff or board, so that they too can become more familiar with the NSG program and provide the Program Coordinator with better support.

Support for coordinating the program

A range of supports are made available to new communities in their first year of coordinating the program. A template is available that describes each of these supports in more detail, and this can be customized and then sent to a new Partner Organization. It can also be used by Vancouver Foundation or Regional Network lead to ensure that the appropriate supports have been provided to a new NSG community. These include:

Coordinating NSG Toolkit →

[neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/
our-resources/resources-for-
partners/](https://neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca/our-resources/resources-for-partners/)

- [Coordinating NSG Toolkit](#)
- Promotional materials and help with promotions
- Learning and Professional Development
- Recruiting and orienting Neighbourhood Grants Committee (NGC) Members
- An optional online Grant Management System
- A program evaluation process

Resources & Templates: Getting Started



- [Memorandum of Understanding Template](#)
Vancouver Foundation or the Regional Network Lead will work with the organization on creating a Memorandum of Understanding where the roles and responsibilities of the two organizations as well as funding details will be co-developed.
- [Support for Coordinating a New Program Template](#)
This template describes the kinds of support made available to new communities in their first year of coordinating the NSG program.

Resources & Templates: Setting the Timeline



The new Partner Organization(s), in close consultation with Vancouver Foundation or Regional Network Lead, will set dates for the pilot year of the program, including a grant application opening and deadline, orientations for Neighbourhood Grants Committee members, a Project Leader Orientation event, the timeline for Project Leaders to implement projects, and the wrap-up and evaluation process. Templates available for development of the timeline are:

- [NSG Program Activities Template](#)

This template provides a general overview of the main activities involved in coordinating an NSG Program throughout a granting cycle.

- [Granting Cycle Timeline Template](#)

This template can be used to create a timeline of the program to help new Partner Organizations plan out their first granting cycle as well as understand the time commitment and schedule of activities they will be involved in as they establish their NSG program.

- [NSG Coordination Checklist Template](#)

This checklist outlines some of the specific steps involved in coordinating an NSG program throughout a granting cycle.

Resources & Templates: First Outreach



Some communities will want to begin outreach and promotions before a Program Coordinator is hired, in order to build momentum and awareness about the grants.

- [Guide to NSG Promotion](#)

This guide from Module 3 of the Coordinating NSG Toolkit provides 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.

- [Guide to NSG Branding Basics](#)

This document in Module 3 of the Coordinating NSG Toolkit provides a few of the basics of NSG program branding for promotional materials.

- [Mapping Your Community](#)

This document helps you get to know your town, city or region better through demographic and asset mapping. Demographic mapping can be particularly useful at this point in the process, as it 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.

Resources & Templates: Hiring a Program Coordinator



A part-time Program Coordinator will be hired or appointed by the Partner Organization to coordinate the overall program. This may be a staff person who already works at the organization or someone who is hired to work at the organization. It can also be an independent contractor. The following documents are available to support this hiring process:

- [Time and Wage Estimation for NSG Coordination Template](#)

This template includes an estimation of how many hours of coordination are involved in an granting cycle and wage recommendations to help budget for the Program Coordinator.

- [Program Coordination and Job Description Template](#)

This template offers a job description that can be used to hire and train a new NSG Program Coordinator.

- [Program Coordinator Position Interview Questions Template](#)

This template can be adapted for interviewing candidates for the NSG Program Coordinator position.

- [Potential Program Coordinator Reference Check Template](#)

This template includes sample questions to ask the references of a candidate for the NSG Program Coordinator position.

Neighbourhood Small Grants
www.neighbourhoodsmallgrants.ca
nsg@vancouverfoundation.ca

