

## **2026 FOUNDATION GRANTS PROGRAM: GUIDELINES**

Through its Foundation grants program, the Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen (“the Foundation”) supports a wide range of projects, programs and activities that benefit residents and communities throughout the South Okanagan Similkameen.

Foundation grants will be made to non-profits and charities in good standing. Successful grant requests will meet our eligibility criteria, align with our charitable purposes, and support our vision for a healthy, caring, inclusive and thriving South Okanagan Similkameen region.

Each year, the Foundation determines the size and range of grants based on priorities and funds available. The final decision on all granting rests with the Foundation’s Community Impact Committee, on the advice of an independent Grants Evaluation Committee.

Based on our experience with recent grant cycles, we expect significant competition for our available funding. We may not be able to support all requests that align with our charitable purposes, vision, and priorities.

### **Timeline**

The Foundation grants program is delivered annually. **Applications for this year’s grants cycle will be accepted from September 2 through October 20, 2025.** Decisions will be communicated by the end of January 2026.

Prior to submitting their application, organizations must submit a Letter of Interest. **The acceptance period for Letters of Interest will run from September 2 through 30, 2025.** Letters of Interest will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria for the program. Once a Letter of Interest is accepted, the organization will be invited to submit a full application.

### **Priorities**

The Foundation’s funding is typically disbursed across a wide range of fields of interest. We are committed to being responsive to changing community needs with our grantmaking.

Applications are encouraged which **address demonstrated needs** in the community, **build effective community collaborations and partnerships**, **have positive and measurable impacts on the issue being addressed**, and are **sustainable** beyond our grant funding.

The Foundation has identified **food security** as the Impact Focus of its current strategic plan. Applications addressing this focus are encouraged.

The Foundation is also concerned about the impacts of **climate change**, and supports action toward **reconciliation with Indigenous peoples**. We welcome applications that address either of these issues.

Our donors may also set their own priorities for their funds that will impact how we allocate grants through the program.

### **Eligible Requests**

We encourage applicants to request funding to support what is needed most in their organization. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Operating costs
- Ongoing program/project delivery
- New or pilot projects/programs
- Purchasing or upgrading equipment or technology
- Repairs and renovations
- Research costs

Multi-year requests (up to three years) for operational or programmatic support are welcome. While we currently have limited capacity to fund multi-year requests, we recognize they provide much-needed organizational resilience and sustainability.

### **Ineligible Requests**

Grants will not be awarded:

- To establish or contribute to endowment funds, operating reserves, or capital campaigns
- To sponsor a fundraising event
- For projects promoting political or religious activities or beliefs

### **Review Criteria**

The following are some of the Grant Evaluation Committee's considerations when reviewing applications:

- **Community Need:** has the application described how the project, program or activity is needed, or is filling an identified gap in the community?
- **Impact:** Does the application outline the expected impacts of the work funded by the grant? Does it describe how those impacts will be measured?
- **Community Collaboration & Partnerships:** Will the applicant collaborate with other community organizations/groups to implement the project, program, or activity? Is the work widely supported in the community?
- **Alignment:** Will this program, project or activity help the organization deliver its mission?
- **Sustainability:** How will the project, program or activity be funded in the future?
- **Budget:** Is it clear, reasonable, and achievable?

### **More information**

Questions about these Funding Guidelines should be directed to Kevin Ronaghan, Community Investments Manager, at [grants@cfso.net](mailto:grants@cfso.net).