

Application Instructions CIF Project Proposal

What is the Consumer Initiative Fund?

The Consumer Initiative Fund (CIF) is a unique and progressive program that funds and supports events that are organized and run by people with lived/living experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges (also called peers). CIF holds the belief that peers are experts of their lived experience and have innovative ideas for activities that can support others in recovery.

Our Guiding Value:

*CIF strives to **empower** peers through **meaningful involvement***

What is a CIF Project?

CIF projects are proposed, developed and led by people with lived/living experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges (peers).

We are looking for motivated peers to take the expertise they have acquired through lived experience, identify activities that could benefit peers in the community of Vancouver, and then bring their vision into reality.

Projects can take many different forms, including workshops, support groups, and social activities that build community. Regardless of the form a project takes, the top priority is to create a safe environment that supports individual wellness and recovery.

Support is not about fixing someone or deciding what their journey should look like. Support is about walking beside someone on their journey and reminding them they are not alone. To accomplish this, we encourage CIF project leaders to:

- Connect with participants and meet them where they are at
- Approach individuals with understanding, empathy, and respect for their current emotional, mental, or situational state
- Allow individuals to grow at their own pace

We hope projects funded by this grant will showcase the diversity of lived experience and help participants feel inspired by seeing other peers in action.

Eligibility

You can apply if you meet all the following requirements:

- Adult (18 or older)
- Identify as a peer with lived or living experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges
- Hold project activities in the City of Vancouver or online

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Funding

This is a **reimbursement grant**. Funding is not provided upfront.

- This means the project leader pays for costs first and then submits receipts to be reimbursed
- Note: If enough notice is provided, some larger costs (ex: venue rentals) can be invoiced to CIF, which may reduce the amount paid out of pocket

Applicants can choose between two funding options, but cannot apply for both at the same time:

Option 1: 6 month project – up to **\$4000**

Option 2: 12 month project – up to **\$8000**

Funding can be used to pay for:

- Fees for Service – to pay project leaders and assistants for time
- Venue Rentals
- Consumable supplies, such as paper, pens, name tags, cleaning supplies
- Equipment rentals
- Food/Refreshments
- Transit vouchers, parking
- Honorariums – to pay helpers, guest speakers

Funding **cannot** be used to purchase:

- Equipment (rentals are ok)
- Fuel/gas

Steps to Apply:

1. Complete the Application Form
 - Provide 2 character reference letters
 - Attach any additional requirements, if applicable
2. Complete the Budget Form
3. Submit completed forms and reference letters to the CIF Coordinator
Email: Megan.Brummitt@vch.ca
Mail or Drop Off: 200-520 W 6th Ave, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4H5

Download Proposal Application and Budget Forms from our website:

SpotlightOnMentalHealth.com/CIF/Projects/Proposals

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Criteria for CIF Proposals

We are interested in funding community projects that:

- Offer free participation for individuals in recovery who have self-identified as having lived experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges
- Address a specific need in Vancouver without copying existing CIF projects
- Offer validation, hope, and a sense of belonging
- Empower individuals rather than organizations
- Provide a safe environment for participants to interact
- Create opportunities for at least one of the following
 - Personal growth – build skills and knowledge that support individual wellbeing
 - Professional growth – develop skills and knowledge that help with future employment
 - Community growth – form new relationships, friendships, and networks of support

Proposals will NOT be considered if they:

- Provide therapy
- Generate profit, either directly or indirectly
- Require paid staff to run activities
- Require too much development, and plan to involve participants only at the end

Written proposals should:

- Clearly describe what activities will take place, who will take part, and how they will benefit
- Demonstrate a plan that is manageable and achievable
- Show how CIF funding will be used
- Disclose partnerships with other organizations providing funding and/or in-kind support

Review and Selection Process

Eligible proposals are reviewed by a Selection Committee of peers, who assess which projects would best benefit the community. We often receive more proposals than we can fund, so the selection process is competitive. With recommendations from the Selection Committee, the CIF Coordinator can make the final decision when needed.

Timeline:

- The review and selection process takes **5-6 weeks**
- Note: Start date for project activities must be **at least 8-10 weeks after the proposal deadline**

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What to Expect if Your Proposal is Funded

Leading a CIF Project comes with a lot of responsibilities and can be challenging at times. However, it can help to build skills like problem-solving, managing finances, and interpersonal communication. These leadership skills can really stay with an individual long after a project has ended and be applied to other work or life opportunities in the future. Here's what to expect!

Responsibilities of Project Leaders:

- Plan, organize, and facilitate all project activities to ensure they run smoothly and meet proposed objectives
- Create and distribute posters and other marketing materials
- Book venues, respond to inquiries and handle participant registration
- Purchase and distribute approved supplies and materials
- Track spending to stay within the approved budget
- Stay in regular communication with the CIF Coordinator – share updates and raise any concerns
- Work with the CIF Coordinator to resolve challenges together
- Attend all required CIF-related meetings
- Follow all VCH policies and procedures
- Material/content developed for a CIF project can be reused or repurposed by the creator, provided they credit CIF and VCH as a funding source for the development

Requirements for Project Leaders and Assistants:

- Sign a contract with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)
- Complete a brief online course for VCH Privacy and Confidentiality course (no cost)
- Complete a Criminal Record Check (we cover the cost)
- Complete brief survey for program statistical purposes
- Prepare and submit all required paperwork, including:

Payment Requests

- Fees for Service Invoice
- Expense Form

Track Participation

- Attendance
- Participant Feedback Form

Final Report

- Written Final Reflection

View required paperwork at [SpotlightOnMentalHealth.com/CIF/Projects/CIF-Forms](https://www.spotlightonmentalhealth.com/CIF/Projects/CIF-Forms)

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Proposal Budget Form – How to Complete

1. Download the Proposal Budget Form from SpotlightOnMentalHealth.com/CIF/Projects/Proposals
2. Save a copy to your computer
3. Type in the information into the fields as needed
 - It is a fillable PDF that calculates totals automatically

The Proposal Budget Form is a tool to communicate how much funding you are requesting, and how it will be used. The form is divided into 3 sections:

- 1. Fees for Service** – Funding to pay Project Leaders and Assistants for time
 - It can include tasks like hosting events, registering participants, creating posters, etc
 - Enter the rate of pay (\$/hr) and number of hours, the total will calculate on the right
 - Maximum total depends on project duration
 - 6 month project – max Fees for Service is \$2600
 - 12 month project – max Fees for Service is \$5200

- 2. Expenses** – Funding to reimburse for out-of-pocket purchases
 - It can include materials, supplies, venue rentals, honoraria, etc
 - Equipment cannot be purchased (rental of equipment is ok)

Monthly Costs – for expenses that repeat monthly

- Enter a category and brief description
- Enter the cost (\$/month), number of months, the total will calculate on the right
- Ex: Space rental – Community Centre – \$150 – 6 months – Total \$900

One-Time Costs – for expenses that do not repeat

- Enter a category and brief description
- Enter the total cost on the right
- Ex: Supplies – Name tags, paper, markers – Total \$40

Unexpected Expenses – for backup in case costs unexpectedly increase

- 10% of total budget set aside, required for all proposals
- To ensure project can continue
- Can only be used toward items identified on budget
- Ex: 6 month project – Total budget is \$4000 – Unexpected Expenses is \$400

- 3. In-Kind Items** – Resources that are zero-cost and contribute to running the project
 - It can include donated materials, volunteer labour, use of equipment already owned

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Proposal Application Form – How to Complete

The purpose of the proposal is to communicate your idea in writing. Eligible proposals are evaluated by a Selection Committee of peers to help determine which projects to fund.

1. Download Project Proposal Application Form from [SpotlightOnMentalHealth.com/CIF/Projects/Proposals](https://www.spotlightonmentalhealth.com/CIF/Projects/Proposals)
2. Save a copy to your computer (changes made to the online form may not be saved)
3. Type in the information under each section

The application form is organized into 13 sections. As you complete each section, consider presenting your project idea as though you were explaining it to someone for the first time.

Section 1: Applicant Information

A brief introduction to yourself

- Why you are passionate about your project idea
- What relevant qualifications you have
- Your contact info

Section 2: Name of Project

Descriptive name that makes the topic of the project clear

- Maximum 5 words
- Keeping the name short will help make it stand out and easier to design posters

Section 3: Description

Detailed explanation of the project idea

- How the project is a good fit for CIF (how it empowers peers)
- Who will participate
- How many people the project will serve
- How participants will grow by being involved in the project

Section 4: Summary

Short explanation of the project idea (1-2 paragraphs)

- Include some details from the description, but do not include names
- Purpose is to engage potential participants
- To be used for marketing on our website

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Section 5: Objectives/Goals

Describe what you hope to achieve with the project. It could:

- Be about working toward a final product, or about the journey
- Be about individual participants, or community connection
- Identify a specific need/demand and explain how the project will meet it

Section 6: Strategies/Activities

Describe what work is involved to accomplish your goals

- If there are different sections of the project
 - Start up and development
 - Running project
 - Project ending
- If you will partner with other agencies, explain what that will involve
- How you will measure outcomes (how you will evaluate that you have met your goals)

Section 7: Back-up Plan

Describe how the project will continue if you become unable to lead the project

- If you are unexpectedly called away on family business, or become sick
- Is there a project assistant that can take over in your absence?
- Do you have a plan to notify participants if an activity is cancelled?

Section 8: Marketing

Describe how you will get the word out about your project

- Create and distribute posters/graphics
- Physical posters, digital marketing, social media
- If there is a specific audience, explain how you can appeal to them

Section 9: Resources

Describe the logistical, material, and human resources you will need for the project

- Where the project will be held (if in person, what venue?)
- What materials are required for the project
- Who will be involved to help run the project
 - Project Co-Leader or Project Assistant
 - Guest speakers
 - Volunteers

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Section 10: Timeframe

Provide an overview of project events using the table provided

- Indicate how long it will be (6 months or 12 months)
- Outline when activities should start and end
- Identify key milestones within your project to help track progress and deadlines

Section 11: Budget

Use the Budget Form to communicate how much funding you are requesting, and how it will be used

- See page 5 for a full description of how to download and complete the form

Section 12: Character References

Provide two letters of character reference in support of you as project leader

- Identify what makes you qualified to be a Project Leader
- Does not have to be related to work experience
- Attach copies to the proposal

Section 13: Additional Requirements

Attach any additional information relevant to the proposal

- Only if applicable
- Ex: Food Safe Certification

Submit Application

Submit completed forms and reference letters to the CIF Coordinator

Email: Megan.Brummitt@vch.ca

Mail or Drop Off: 200-520 W 6th Ave, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4H5

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Questions? Please reach out!

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