

Application Instructions

Ripples of Belonging Micro Grant

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 Ripples of Belonging?

Ripples of Belonging is a micro grant initiative for the community of mental health and substance use peers. It helps cover costs for community events that focus on building social connection. We are looking for motivated individuals with lived or living experience to plan and host free community events in Vancouver.

Humans are social by nature. Strong social connections play an important role in the well-being of all people, especially those living with mental health challenges or recovering from substance use. Sharing space with others who have faced similar challenges can be remarkably powerful.

During the pandemic, lockdowns left many of us feeling isolated. At the time, most in-person gatherings shifted to virtual formats, and virtual meetings have largely remained the norm. In-person gatherings can offer more meaningful, high-quality connections that are hard to replicate online. Body language, tone, and shared energy help people feel seen and understood, which are key remedies to isolation.

With an abundance of virtual offerings already available, **Ripples of Belonging prioritizes applications for in-person events.**

We are interested in funding community events that:

- Encourage social interaction
- Create safe and welcoming spaces for peers
- Offer validation, hope, and a sense of belonging
- Create opportunities to form new relationships, friendships, and networks of support
- Empower individuals rather than organizations

Hosting a community event is not just about a single day – it's about the ripples that follow, often in unexpected ways. Showcasing the diversity of lived experience, we hope events funded by this micro grant will help participants see themselves as part of a shared story that fuels future connection.

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Eligibility

You can apply if you meet all the following requirements:

- Are an adult (18 or older)
- Identify as a peer with lived and/or living experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges
- Live in the City of Vancouver
- Hold the event(s) in the City of Vancouver

Funding

This is a reimbursement grant

- Funding is **not** provided upfront
- This means the event organizer 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
- Funding must be spent within 6 months of being awarded

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

Option 1: Single event – up to **\$500**

Option 2: Series of events – up to **\$1,000**

Funding **can** be used to pay for:

- Venue rentals
- Food/Refreshments
- Consumable supplies – such as paper, pens, name tags, cleaning supplies
- Equipment rentals
- Transit vouchers, parking
- Honorariums (up to 20%) – to pay helpers, guest speakers

Funding **cannot** be used to purchase:

- Equipment (rentals are ok)
- Fuel/gas

Criteria for Ripples of Belonging Events

What kind of events are supported?

- Game nights
- Walking or run-training groups
- Craft or creative groups
- Grassroots initiatives and many more!

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What kind of events are NOT supported?

- Events that are already running
- Personal events that offer limited community benefit
- Events that require additional funding from external partnerships

Events **must include** the following components:

- Offer free participation for individuals in recovery who have self-identified as having lived experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges
- Focus on social connection
- Take place in Vancouver or online (priority is for in-person events)
- Allow drop-ins (no closed groups)
- Offer enough spaces to meet minimum participation:
 1. One event: at least **10 participants**
 2. Series of events: at least **5 participants per event**

Steps to Apply:

1. Complete the Application Form
 - Describe your idea – explain how the event will help peers connect socially
 - Describe how you plan to make the event happen
 - Provide 1 character reference letter
2. Complete the Budget Form
3. Submit Forms and Reference Letter to the CIF Coordinator
Email: Megan.Brummitt@vch.ca
Mail/Drop Off at: 200-520 W 6th Ave, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4H5

Download the Ripples of Belonging Application and Budget Forms at:
SpotlightOnMentalHealth.com/CIF/Ripples-of-Belonging

Review & Selection Process

All applications are reviewed by the CIF Coordinator and screened for eligibility and suitability. Applications are shortlisted based on how well they promote social connection, build skills and confidence, are realistic to complete, and provide benefit to the community. A community voting process is then used to gauge real-life interest in attending event activities. A survey containing a summary of each shortlisted application is distributed to the general community of peers for feedback. The CIF Coordinator makes the final funding decision.

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Timeline:

- If your application is shortlisted, you will be notified 1-2 weeks after the application deadline, and a summary of your event(s) will be included in a community survey
- Final funding decisions are made approximately 3-4 weeks after the application deadline
- Note: Start date for events must be at least 8 weeks after the application deadline

What to Expect if Your Event is Funded

As a reimbursement grant, it comes with more responsibility than most micro grants. It also offers a chance to build skills and may be a useful stepping stone toward larger, longer-term community projects, such as CIF Project Proposals.

Responsibilities of Event Organizers

- Plan, organize, and facilitate event(s)
- Book venues, respond to inquiries, handle participant registration
- Purchase approved supplies/materials and distribute to participants
- 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
- Follow all VCH policies and procedures

Requirements for Event Organizers

- Sign a contract with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)
- Complete a Criminal Record Check (we cover the cost)
- Complete a brief online course for VCH Privacy and Confidentiality course (no cost)
- Prepare and submit all required paperwork:
 - Expense Form
 - Attendance
 - Participant Feedback Form
 - Written Final Reflection

View required paperwork at SpotlightOnMentalHealth.com/CIF/Ripples-of-Belonging

Questions? Please reach out!

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