



SMART Fund – Funding Guidelines*

About the SMART Fund

The Sharon Martin Community Health Fund (SMART Fund) is a Vancouver Coastal Health grants program that invests in community-based health promotion programs. Since 1997, SMART Fund has been supporting non-profit organizations to provide programs for vulnerable population groups to empower these groups to better address and manage their health needs.

Guiding Principles

SMART Fund is guided by the following principles:

VCH mandate – SMART Fund aligns itself with the strategic goals and objectives of Vancouver Coastal Health to promote better health for the communities in the health region by improving health outcomes and by reducing health inequities through health promotion programs.

Social Return on Investment – SMART Fund recognizes the Social Return on Investment (SROI) that health promotion achieves. SROI is a way of reporting on value creation, assessing value in part on the perception and experience of stakeholders, finding indicators that tell the story of what has changed (impact), and, where possible, using monetary values to communicate non-financial value.

Community health intervention – SMART Fund aims to facilitate community members to identify the community's health issues, mobilize resources, and implement solutions.

Community capacity-building – SMART Fund strengthens the capacity of communities to address their own health issues. *Community* refers to a group of people who identify as having some characteristics in common such as similar health concerns, religion, age or culture. Communities may or may not be bounded by geographic areas and, while they are often imagined to be homogeneous groups sharing similar interests and needs, communities are often internally diverse with varied priorities.

Collaboration – SMART Fund sees partnership as a fundamental component of health promotion and recognizes that coordinated multi-sectoral responses are needed to address the complex needs of vulnerable populations. Only by working together can organizations provide the web of support required to achieve the desired impact for this population group.

Innovation – SMART Fund encourages the implementation of new ideas that create value and achieve better health outcomes for vulnerable population groups.

Promising practices – SMART Fund supports promising practices in health promotion – practices that have strong quantitative and qualitative data showing positive outcomes.

* This document consolidates existing SMART Fund principles and guidelines relating to community agency eligibility for funds, what the grants cover, obligations of grantees, granting period, etc. In some cases, principles or guidelines have been rearticulated to provide greater clarity but remain faithful to their original intent.

Purpose of Grants

SMART Fund grants are for health promotion programs that build the capacity of vulnerable population groups in the VCH health region to increase control over and to manage their own health needs and to improve their health status by taking action on the determinants of health outlined in SMART Fund's priority areas.

Definitions:

Health promotion: the process of enabling people to increase control over and to improve their health. It is an upstream process that involves taking action on the determinants of health.

Vulnerable populations: those made vulnerable by their financial circumstances or place of residence, age, functional or developmental status, ability to communicate effectively, presence of chronic or terminal illness or disability, or face other systemic barriers in accessing health care.

Capacity building: enhancing skills, knowledge and other such assets so that individuals, families and communities can manage their own health needs and improve their health status.

VCH health region: includes the following geographic area in British Columbia: Richmond, Vancouver, North Shore, Sea to Sky, Sunshine Coast, Powell River, Central Coast, Bella Bella and Bella Coala

Priority Areas

SMART Fund grants support capacity building health promotion programs that target at least one of the following determinants of health for at least one vulnerable population group:

- Access to health care services – by this we mean information and referral activities, not the direct provision of health care services
- Access to low threshold employment
- Community food security
- Early childhood development
- Support for people experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness
- Management of chronic conditions
- Social connectedness

What SMART Fund Grants Cover

SMART Fund grants can be used for the following expenses:

Labour:

- Staff wages – only for staff time spent directly on the health promotion program
- Staff benefits – the employer’s share of CPP, EI, vacation etc.
- Stipends – money paid to program participants for work done in relation to the program
- Contracted services – people hired on a contractual basis to provide services for the delivery of the health promotion program (e.g., temporary help, translators, etc.)

Program-related, Non-Labour:

- Space and utilities – but this does not include your organization’s ongoing operational expenses (see next section “What SMART Fund grants do not cover”)
- Program-related supplies – this includes any supplies that are directly required for the delivery of the health promotion program
- Program-related travel – this includes any travel costs directly related to the health promotion program (e.g., driving participants to a community centre, etc.)
- Communications – this includes telephone, internet, newsletter, posters, printing, postage, and courier services that are required for the delivery of the health promotion program
- Other program expenses – this includes any other costs that are directly related to and required for the delivery of the health promotion program

Other allowed expenses:

- Administration – this includes broad administrative costs that are associated with the operations of the organization as a whole and are not directly related to the health promotion program. The administrative costs cannot exceed 10% of the total SMART Fund grant.
- Conferences, symposia and other such events and travel/to these events – the events need to be related to the health promotion program in some way (e.g., staff professional development, strategic networking, etc.). These costs cannot exceed \$1000.

What SMART Fund Grants Do Not Cover

SMART Fund grants **cannot** be used for:

- Research
- Capital expenditures
- Ongoing operational expenses -- for example, rent for the organization’s office that would be paid even if the health promotion program were not funded
- Direct welfare supports – any financial or in-kind support that is provided directly to program participants. For example: housing subsidies, food banks, meal services, cash honoraria, etc.
- Direct health services – any health care service, medical equipment and medical facilities. For example, services that would normally be covered by the health authorities, the Ministry of Health, and extended health insurers.
- Services that clearly fall under the mandates of other government bodies – any services that are or were formally funded by the provincial or federal government

Mandatory Organizational Criteria

All organizations that receive SMART Fund grants must:

- Be a registered non-profit society in British Columbia
- Be fiscally sound, maintaining financial audits in good standing
- Have an independent, active governing body (Board of Directors) composed of non-remunerated volunteers. Note: the organization's staff cannot be voting members of the Board of Directors.

Conditions of SMART Fund Grants

SMART-funded health promotion programs must meet all of the following conditions and expectations:

- **Health-promoting** – SMART Fund grants are to be used for health promotion programming – defined as programs that enable people – specifically, vulnerable populations – to increase control over and to improve their health.
- **Community-defined** – The reason for the establishment and continued existence of the SMART-funded health promotion program must be due to a community-identified need and have an ongoing mechanism whereby program participants and community members can be involved in program development, identifying solutions, determining the format of program delivery, etc. SMART-funded health promotion programs are also required to have an active program advisory group with representatives from the vulnerable populations that the program targets.
- **Capacity-building of vulnerable populations** – SMART-funded health promotion programs must build the capacity of vulnerable population groups to manage their own health needs. Capacity-building is about enhancing the skills, knowledge and other assets of program participants to improve and to increase control over their own health. Vulnerable populations are those made vulnerable by their financial circumstances or place of residence, health, age, functional or developmental status, ability to communicate effectively, presence of chronic or terminal illness or disability, or personal characteristics.
- **Serving the VCH Service Delivery Area** – SMART-funded health promotion programs must serve residents in all or parts of the VCH health region: Richmond, Vancouver, North Shore, Sea to Sky, Sunshine Coast, Powell River, Central Coast, Bella Bella, Bella Coola.
- **Demonstrating connections and partnerships** – It is expected that the SMART-funded organization demonstrate strategic links with other programs, non-profit organizations, as well as VCH services. Collaborators may be involved in different ways. For example, a partner may be co-delivering the health promotion program or providing financial or in-kind support or serving on a program advisory committee. Strategic connections can be directly or indirectly linked to the SMART-funded health promotion program. For example, the SMART-funded organization could develop a quality referral process between its health promotion program and VCH services, or it could host a community network for organizations that work on related issues or with clientele similar to those participating in the health promotion program, etc.

Recognition

SMART Fund grant recipients are expected to acknowledge the SMART Fund in media releases, on web sites, at special events, in newsletters, in annual reports, and in public announcements.

Accountability

SMART-funded organizations must complete a progress report and a financial report every year and submit these reports by the date(s) specified in their grant contract. These reports must be completed using the templates and forms provided by SMART Fund.

Progress Report

SMART-funded organizations must develop and operationalize an outcomes measurement framework to report on the activities and impact of the program for which they are receiving funding.

Financial Report

SMART-funded organization must complete a financial report that reports on the status of funds for the grant and outlines expenditures associated with the grant.

Granting Period and Renewal Process

SMART Fund grants are for a 1 to 3 year period with the possibility of renewal.

A SMART Fund grant may be renewed based on the health promotion program's performance and on the continued alignment and compliance of the program and of the funded organization with SMART Fund's funding guidelines.

The renewal process involves the VCH Population Health Community Investments Team reviewing the community organization's progress and financial reports, as well as assessing the alignment and compliance of each funded program and community organization with the SMART Fund funding guidelines.

The Community Investments Team notifies each organization of the approaching grant review and renewal period. If the Team needs further clarification about any of the above aspects (progress report, financial report, funding guidelines, etc.), the Team may contact an organization to set up a meeting. SMART Fund grants are not guaranteed to be renewed, but the Team does try to work with an organization if there are performance, alignment, and/or compliance issues; and, if issues remain, the Team supports the community organization through a process to transition off of SMART funding.

Sustainability Planning

Since ongoing SMART Fund funding is not a guarantee, SMART Fund encourages all SMART-funded organizations to have a sustainability plan in place for their health promotion program to ensure its ongoing operation over the long term.

Contact Info

Community Investments Team

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Information Sources

SMART Fund Funding Criteria (revised July 2010)

SMART Fund Guiding Principles (no date)

SMART Fund Proposal Requirements (revised May 2005)

SMART Fund Strategic Plan (2009-2014)

SMART Fund web site