



Vital Ideas 2012

Application Guidelines

Deadline: 5 p.m. on December 1, 2011

Increasing the effectiveness of high-impact initiatives in Toronto through one-time strategic capacity-building grants.

Vital Ideas grants are awarded to high-impact programs or organizations that are currently in operation and that have a solid track record of success making Toronto a better place to live, work, learn and grow.

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO VITAL IDEAS GRANTS SUPPORT?

Vital Ideas grants support strategic activities that help make the impact of an already high-impact program or organization more sustainable. The Vital Idea grant is not program funding but is a capacity-building grant to be used to increase the effectiveness of a program or organization and to position it for even greater impact in the future.

These grants enable proven, effective organizations to expand their reach, share their experience and better sustain their impact. The support of these strategic activities is meant to be a one-time investment in building the capacity of not-for-profits.

The Community Foundation provides grants of up to \$30,000 over one year (April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013) for activities such as:

- Replication: Encouraging increased use of the program by other organizations and/or neighbourhoods and setting the groundwork for the expansion required.
- Documentation: Ensuring that the beneficial impact of the program is clearly understood.
- Promotion: Communicating the benefits of the program among those who can use it or help support it to grow.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The Vital Ideas program is open to any charitable organization registered with Canada Revenue Agency that is located in the [City of Toronto](#) whose work directly benefits the quality of life of Toronto residents. For organizations that do not have charitable status, but would still like to be considered for the Vital Ideas grant stream, please see the "[Who Can Apply?](#)" document on our website for information on how to establish a partnership with a charitable organization and what elements must be included in a signed agreement.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Applications should make the compelling case that:

- The program or organization is on a trajectory of success:
 - they do their programming well, and have a solid track record of past success;
 - they have a strategic plan which they are currently positioned to activate;
 - the activities proposed for the use of Vital Ideas funds align with that strategic plan and will enable the organization to have greater impact in the future.
- The program or organization demonstrates solid understanding of current good practice in the issue(s) it addresses and may also advance knowledge in that field.
- The impact to date of the program or organization presents a compelling opportunity for the Community Foundation's investment to make a significant difference in Toronto's quality of life.
- The program or organization is at a stage of its development that justifies the support requested.
- The funding requested presents a strategic approach to strengthening the impact and sustainability of the program or organization.
- The organization is high-impact:
 - they work for social change through education and/or advocacy (not a band-aid solution);
 - they adapt and innovate to ever changing needs and conditions;
 - they inspire participants or end-recipients to become effective advocates;
 - they nurture networks and partnerships with other organizations;
 - they have a diversified funding base;
 - they share leadership and best practices with others.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

By e-mail and in hard-copy: the complete application must be received by 5:00 p.m. on December 1, 2011. Submissions will not be accepted by fax. All applications received will be acknowledged by e-mail within three weeks.

1. In hard-copy:

One copy of the Application Form in hard-copy and signed by the organization's Executive Director or Board Chair, including all attachments. Please mail or drop off at:

Vital Ideas
Toronto Community Foundation
33 Bloor St. E, Suite 1603
Toronto, ON. M4W 3H1

2. By e-mail to ngodkewitsch@tcf.ca

WHAT IS THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?

Community Foundation staff will review all applications and will contact the short-listed applicants in January 2012. All other applicants who did not make the short-list will receive email notification that their request for grant funds has been declined. A volunteer Selection Committee (comprised of Toronto Community Foundation Fundholders, Board Members, partners, and previous grant recipients) will deliberate on the short-listed applications in March of 2012 and final granting decisions will be made at the end of March and grantees will be notified in April. Confirmation of the status of declined applications and feedback on proposals will be available in April 2012 once all final decisions are made.

SHARING YOUR STORY

[Eligible organizations](#) that are selected for the short-list will be invited to have their organization profiled on the Community Foundation's [Community Knowledge Centre](#) – a website which tells the stories of high impact organizations working across the city and shares those stories with philanthropists, the media, and Torontonians. More information on how to participate in this collaborative project will be provided to short-listed organizations early in 2012. Initiatives funded by the Community Foundation and its donors through the Vital Ideas program will be announced to our donors, volunteers, supporters, other community stakeholders and the media to further promote these initiatives.

HOW TO FILL IN THE VITAL IDEAS APPLICATION FORM

The Vital Ideas 2012 *Application Guidelines* are intended for use with the Vital Ideas 2012 *Application Form*, to help you populate your application with information on your organization. We encourage you to be as clear (no jargon) and concise as possible. Brevity is key. To this end, in most cases we have limited the number of characters you can populate in sections of your profile. Please respond to questions within the word limits requested.

To get a sense of how other organizations have articulated answers to some of the questions below, please see the profiles of organizations on the [Community Knowledge Centre website](#).

The *Application Form* has three sections, plus attachments, that need to be completed before submitting your application for review:

- Section A: Cover Sheet – organization contact information
- Section B: Profile - about the applying organization and the high-impact program which you seek to enhance through this one-time strategic investment
- Section C: Request - detailing the grant request
- Attachments

The profile and request should be accurate, brief, clear and concise, keeping in mind that volunteers reviewing your application for funding consideration may have varying levels of familiarity with the work of your organization. The profile and request present your argument for why your program or organization should be funded and should emphasize your track record, impact and philanthropic opportunity.

Note:

- Please DO NOT PDF the *Application Form* before submitting it.
- Incomplete or late submissions will be declined.
- Only one application per organization will be accepted.
- The Vital Ideas program does not fund:
 - Initiatives that have not yet been fully developed, researched or tested,
 - Initiatives that have not been evaluated for impact or benefit,
 - Program expenses,
 - Activities that have already been fully funded,
 - Budget deficits.

For more information, please contact:

Nadien Godkewitsch, Program Officer, E-mail: ngodkewitsch@tcf.ca

SECTION A: COVER SHEET – ORGANIZATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Name and mailing address of applying organization

- If your organization is not a registered charity, please provide the name of your charitable partner as well as your organization's name. You will also need to supply a letter of agreement indicating the partnership with the charitable organization.

Charitable registration number

- Indicate if this is your organization's charitable number, or if it belongs to your charitable partner.

Name of Program or project seeking Vital Ideas grant

Street address of organization

- Mailing address of organization including postal code

Organization contact name and title

- This could be program or fundraising staff – whomever is best positioned to answer questions about this application

E-mail address of organization contact

Phone number of organization contact

Organization's web site address

Amount requested (up to \$30,000)

Total current annual operating budget for organization

- Provide the total dollar figure estimated for the current year's expenses for the organization as a whole.

Total current annual operating budget for program seeking Vital Ideas grant

- Provide the total dollar figure estimated for the current year's expenses for the program or project seeking Vital Ideas grant.

Name and signature of the lead staff or volunteer

- Executive Director or Chair of the Board authorizing the application

SECTION B: PROFILE - ABOUT THE APPLYING ORGANIZATION AND THE PROGRAM SEEKING A VITAL IDEAS GRANT

The Organization

Information provided in this section is used to assess whether your current existing program is high-impact and whether it's at the right stage for a Vital Ideas strategic grant.

1. **Organization's Mission** (Limit: 620 characters – approx. 100 words).

2. **Toronto's Vital Signs® issue area(s) addressed by organization** – (see www.tcf.ca for more information on the issue areas).
 - Our annual Toronto's Vital Signs® Report is a consolidated snapshot of the trends in our city, highlighting progress we should be proud of and challenges that need to be addressed. The Report is compiled from current statistics and special studies which look at eleven different, yet interconnected, issue areas that are critical to the well-being of our city and its residents. The goals of the Toronto's Vital Signs® Report include inspiring civic engagement, providing focus for public debate, and guiding donors and stakeholders who want to direct their resources to the areas of greatest need.
 - For more information, and to view electronic copies of the latest Report highlights and Full Report with citations (including links to original sources), please visit the [Toronto's Vital Signs®](#) page on our website.
 - It is quite likely that your organization as a whole works to address a number of Toronto's Vital Signs® issue areas, but we ask you to select a maximum of two which represent the best fit.
3. **History of organization**
 - Provide a brief history of your organization. (*Limit: 620 characters – approx. 100 words*).
4. **Accolades and accomplishments**
 - Provide information on any awards and successes, including how long the organization has been working and any relevant impact statistics. (*Limit: 1,150 characters – approx. 200 words*).
5. **Organization's programs and activities**
 - List your organization's main programs and services with a one-sentence descriptor of each. (*Limit: 1,700 characters – approx. 300 words*)

The High-Impact Program

Information provided in this section is used to assess whether your current existing program is high-impact and whether it's at the right stage for a Vital Ideas strategic grant. If your organization runs only one initiative, please feel free to articulate your organizational model in this section.

6. **Program name and description**
 - Name of the program you are putting forward for a Vital Ideas strategic grant.
 - Describe the high-impact program's objectives and activities. (*Limit: 1,700 characters – approx. 300 words*).
7. **Funding and program partners**
 - Identify any major funding or program partners that can have supported this program. (e.g.: "The Ontario Trillium Foundation has generously supported the inception of this program in 2003, and the Metcalf Foundation provided a strategic grant (2007). This program is delivered in partnership with Organization XYZ."). (*Limit: 1,150 characters – approx. 200 words*).

8. Program impact and results

- Provide a description of the program’s impact and past success including numbers served, and the outcome or difference this program makes in your community.
- Provide and relevant statistics to show what the program has achieved.(e.g.: “Since 2001, the XYZ program has worked with X# of youth in ABC neighbourhood, to help decrease the high-school drop-out rate by 75%”).
- Please also indicate the numbers of people impacted by the program per year. (*Limit: 1,150 characters – approx. 200 words*).

9. Best practices

- What is uniquely effective about your approach or how does your program differ from or improve upon other programs or projects in the community addressing the same issues? (*Limit: 620 characters – approx. 100 words.*)

10. Collaborations

- Are there partnerships and/or unique collaborations with other organizations that are involved in the program? If so, what is the scope and nature of these collaborations? (*Limit: 620 characters – approx. 100 words.*)

11. Populations served

- Please select all groups to whom your program is targeted (i.e., you would select ‘Women’, if your program specifically targets female participants.)

12. Neighbourhood(s) served

- Please refer to our [Neighbourhoods Google Map](#) for an explanation of the city’s quadrants. Select the quadrants where you provide your programming. Feel free to select all of them, if your impact is city-wide.

13. Toronto’s Vital Signs® issue area addressed by program

- Please select one or two of the eleven Toronto’s Vital Signs® issue areas which best fit with the issues and trends that your program addresses (for more information, www.tcf.ca).

14. Toronto’s Vital Signs® indicator addressed by program

- Please review the Toronto’s Vital Signs® Report and quote a statistic or indicator that best justifies the need for your programming. If you don’t see a good fit between your work and the information in the [newspaper highlights](#) version of the Report, take a look at the [Full Report](#). Both are on our website.
 - We also know that there may not be a quote which is a perfect fit for your work, but we ask you to find the closest match. You are welcome to include one or a maximum of two sentences under this quote to contextualize how your programming is working towards addressing this issue. (*Limit: 600 characters – approx. 100 words.*)

15. Participant story

- Please supply a story or simple description of one person’s experience with your program, identifying the issue/challenge they face and how your programming has made an impact on their quality of life. Using quotes and

the words of the person impacted makes your story stronger. (*Limit: 1,150 characters – approx. 200 words.*)

16. Volunteer opportunities

- The Toronto Community Foundation is exploring opportunities to facilitate partnerships between corporations and short-listed applicants. Please provide a short paragraph identifying potential opportunities your organization has for highly skilled volunteers who might be in a position to provide strategic advice and support.
- Skills-based volunteer opportunities might include activities such as: event planning, marketing/communications, strategic planning, board membership/committee work, accounting/finance/tax, information technology, and grant proposal writing/fundraising. (*Limit: 1,150 characters – approx. 200 words.*)

SECTION C: REQUEST - DETAILING THE VITAL IDEAS GRANT REQUEST

The Grant Request

Information provided in this section is used to assess the strategic activities to be undertaken with Vital Ideas grant funds.

17. Requested amount and summary of strategic activities

- What is the amount of funding you're requesting and how will it be used strategically to grow and sustain the program seeking Vital Ideas funds? (*Limit: 1,425 characters – approx.250 words.*)

18. Grant impact statement

- Provide a one-sentence description about the potential impact of the Vital Ideas grant (e.g.: "With an investment of \$30,000 in 2012, organization XYZ will be able to revise our communications materials and embark on building partnerships and replicating the ABC program into X# new communities, ultimately serving an additional X# new participants in 2013.") (*Limit: 620 characters – approx. 100 words.*)

19. Potential to grow impact

- What evidence can you provide (research or statistical backup of need, interest or opportunity) to demonstrate the potential for your program or organization to grow its impact and further improve Toronto's quality of life? (*Limit: 850 characters – approx. 150 words.*)

20. Qualified principals

- Who is responsible for the development and operation of the program or organization and what particular qualifications (knowledge, skills, and experience) do they bring to the initiative to make it successful? (*Limit: 620 characters – approx. 100 words.*)

21. Telling the story of impact

- In the interest of building your organizational capacity as well as sharing compelling stories about grantee successes, between 10-15% of each grant must be earmarked to undertake a documentation/evaluation process. Please

identify a plan that will enable you to do the following: document process/best practice of your organization and the program requesting Vital Ideas funds; collect and share stories of impact (quotes, photographs, video, etc.); and increase capacity of your organization to engage in future communications and/or fundraising. *(Limit: 1,150 characters – approx. 200 words.)*

ATTACHMENTS

Audited Financials

Provide in hard copy and via e-mail the latest signed audited financial statements including notes. If your organization is a not-for-profit, and you have a charitable partner, please provide financials for both.

Board

Provide in hard copy and via e-mail a list of your board of directors, the terms for each, and the total number required according to your organization's by-laws.

Note: we do not require annual reports, newsletters or letters of support.

Grant Request Budget

- Vital Ideas grants are one-time strategic capacity-building grants intended to cover the costs of activities you otherwise would not be able to achieve.
- You can request up to \$30,000 to be used over one year (April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013) for strategic activities such as:

Replication: Encouraging increased use of the program by other organizations and/or neighbourhoods and setting the groundwork for the expansion required (we cannot fund program expenses for the expansion, but can support activities that help to set the ground work for that future expansion, e.g. needs assessment, partnership development, consultations, etc.)

Documentation: Ensuring that the beneficial impact of the program is clearly understood (e.g. research to further evaluate the outcomes of programming). Please ensure you weave-in a dissemination plan if your proposal includes documentation activities.

Promotion: Communicating the benefits of the program among those who can help support it to grow (marketing and promotional activities).

- You will need to earmark 10-15% of the full grant towards telling the story of impact (see question 21 above).
- You can earmark 15-20% of the full grant towards administration and oversight costs.
- Please break down how you plan to use the requested funds in a one-page budget document in chart form with the following columns (examples below):

Vital Ideas 2012 Grant Request Budget

Name of Organization:

(Please note: the text below is to serve as an example only)

Activity	Detail	Outcomes	Amount Requested from Vital Ideas	Other support
Research, and evaluation of organization's best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canvassing key stakeholders to harvest key findings from current staff & founding members (Summer student) • Research – to gather data, archival information (Summer student) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical archive of organization's processes and foundational documents that will enable long term viability for the organization 	\$7,000.00	\$3,250 contributed by HRSDC for a summer student who will support these activities
Planning & creation of formal governance model and operations manual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research other similar community engagement models (Researcher) • Gather information on operations and programming systems (additional hours for Program Manager). • Establish and document a coherent governance model and operations manual (Consultant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming that is more inclusive of, and informed by a more diverse stakeholder community • Strengthen core operations, resulting in reduced redundancy • Greater ability to train new staff and volunteers • Ability to share our key findings with other organizations who can then have an impact on their respective communities 	\$8,000.00	
Documentation and Promotion – telling the story of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video planning, shooting and editing of year-round community engagement strategies and correlated programming components (Videographer) • Website enhancement: content updates and dissemination of key findings and open-source documents on the website (Web designer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced ability to profile and tell the story of the program and organization • Evaluation of the community engagement process • Ability to share our unique process with other community organizations and leaders in the field • Strengthen the profile and story of the organization • Archive our work and practices to date 	\$9,500.00	\$5,000 In Kind contribution by a member of our board for the video editing
Administration and overhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Manager and Executive Director management and oversight 		\$4,500.00	\$5,000 In Kind contribution from XYZ organization
<i>TOTAL</i>			\$29,000	