

Principles of Grassroots Grantmaking



The following principles guide our mission of harnessing local skills and experiences to make neighbourhoods better places to live. They are at the heart of the Community Connections Benefit (CCB) program.

Everyone has gifts: We use an *asset-based community development* approach to draw upon existing strengths and build sustainable communities. The passions, skills, and knowledge of neighbours are the building blocks of community development. When neighbours are encouraged and inspired to share and connect their assets, communities are strengthened, and meaningful and lasting change can come from the ground up. Connecting local assets also increases relational networks, helps new groups and associations to form, and grows the neighbourhood's sense of ownership, pride, and ability to work towards common goals.

Small is beautiful: We believe that small scale actions and projects can have far-reaching impact on people and places. We support individual or informal group-

led projects with budgets of up to \$500. No project is too small, and when counted collectively these projects create lasting impact and become a powerful movement of neighbour-led change.

Local decisions: We believe that neighbours know what is best for their communities, so we make sure that decisions about projects are made locally. We rely on Neighbourhood Grants Committees – made up of people living in the community – to review ideas submitted by other neighbours and decide which ones to fund. We support our volunteer leaders as experts, solicit and listen to their feedback, offer guidance and skill sharing opportunities, and connect them with each other and resources to help build on their success.

Where we live matters: We take a place-based approach to building community. Though our grassroots grantmaking program areas share many commonalities, they are each designed or adapted to meet unique local conditions. In building community, it is the community that is the expert. Projects are done at the neighbourhood level, and these neighbourhoods are defined by the people who live in them. The neighbourhood a person identifies with can provide a rich set of resources and relationships. Projects are led by people who bring these local resources and relationships as contributions to the work, and change happens in a way that is unique to each neighbourhood and the people who live in it.

We learn together: Building a sense of belonging and creating a sustainable community requires certain skills and resources. We seek to empower community members with decision-making abilities and access to knowledge, resources, and opportunities so they can effectively act together to achieve collective goals.

Everyone is invited: We are committed to welcoming and listening to all voices in local solution-building, and making opportunities for participation accessible and inclusive. We must be conscious of the barriers to action and supportive of efforts to overcome them. When all voices are heard and all ideas considered, projects will represent and highlight the diversity of each community and neighbours will form connections with one another regardless of potential boundaries.