GUIDELINES:

Grant Writer Services

Peace River Regional District

May 2023

This document was prepared by Clear Course Consulting Limited for the Peace River Regional District.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. OVERVIEW

Non-profit community groups often rely on fundraising initiatives, such as grants, to fund their programs and projects. Since applying for grants can be a complex and time-consuming undertaking, the Peace River Regional District's Grant Writer Services (GWS) program is designed to support community groups and non-profit organizations within the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) with applying for grants – specifically:

1. finding suitable grants for your project;
2. completing a grant application;
3. assisting with additional documentation and technical requirements required by the funder (e.g., letters of support); and
4. providing feedback on unsuccessful applications.

If your community group is eligible for the GWS program (see section 2) and is seeking assistance with a grant, or you would like to know if there is any funding available to support your project, please contact the PRRD's GWS at **least four weeks** before the grant deadline. Reviewing a project and assembling all of the required information for a grant application can take a substantial amount of time—especially if the funding is competitive—so the more time you can allow for writing your grant application and gathering supporting documentation, the better chance your application will be successful. If a letter of support is required from the PRRD for a grant application, please allow a minimum of three weeks to obtain board approval.

If you would like to stay in the loop on upcoming funding programs, subscribe to the *Grant Opportunities Email Newsletter* on the PRRD's website (https://prrd.bc.ca/services/grants/#newsletter-sign-up).

The PRRD's Grant Writer Services program is funded by the PRRD and the Northern Development Initiative Trust's Grant Writer Support Program.

To contact the PRRD's Grant Writer Services, email grantwriter@prrd.bc.ca.

2. GRANT WRITER SERVICES PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Carefully review the following eligibility criteria to ensure your community group is eligible to use the PRRD's Grant Writer Services (GWS) program.

Community groups may access the GWS program if:

1. the community group is located within the Peace River Regional District;
2. the community group is at least <u>one</u> of the following:
   - not-for-profit registered society or charity
   - church group
   - community hall operator
   - parent advisory council (PAC)
   - fall fair association
   - museum association
   - not-for-profit tourism provider
   - sporting group
   - emergency services association
   - organization providing services for the relief of poverty;
3. the proposed project (which requires funding) will benefit one or more communities within the Peace River Regional District; and
4. the community group agrees to:
   a) complete a short customer satisfaction survey once a grant application has been completed by the PRRD's Grant Writer Services; and
   b) report back to the PRRD on the final result of any submitted grant applications (i.e., successful, unsuccessful or otherwise).

> If you are unsure if your community group is eligible,
> please contact Matthew Bascom at grants@prrd.bc.ca.

3. UNDERSTANDING GRANTS

Understanding how grants work and what you may need to consider when searching for and applying to grants is especially helpful if you are new to grant writing. In addition to knowing where to look for grant opportunities and how to write award-winning grant proposals, it also helps if you are familiar with different types of grants and the various requirements associated with them. The GWS program is here to help you navigate many of these requirements; understanding them in advance of your next grant deadline will help you be better prepared.

3.1. Grants vs. Loans

The key difference between a grant and a loan is repayment. A grant is non-repayable; however, a loan requires you to repay the money that you have been loaned. There are usually conditions associated with both grants and loans.

3.2. Funding Agencies

There are a variety of funding agencies and organizations that offer grants (and loans) to all types of organizations, individuals, businesses, community groups, etc. The amount of funding and the requirements associated with a grant program will vary depending on the type of funding agency. The most common types of funding agencies are:

- Government, Crown Corporations, and Administrative Branches of Government – including local, provincial/territorial, and federal agencies (e.g., City of Dawson Creek, Peace River Regional District, Government of BC, BC Arts Council, Canada Post, and BC Hydro)
- Foundations – including family-based, private, public, and community foundations (e.g., Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Air Canada Foundation, and Vancouver Foundation)
- Trusts (e.g., Northern Development Initiative Trust, South Peace Mackenzie Trust)
- Corporations (e.g., Alta Gas, Canfor, and Air Canada)
- Co-operatives (e.g., Mountain Equipment Co-op and Vancity)

In addition to granting funds, corporations may also sponsor projects. This is referred to as corporate sponsorship. Both entities enter into a mutually beneficial partnership agreement. For example, Canfor may provide funds for a summer soccer camp program in exchange for the program being named the Canfor Summer 2021 Youth Soccer Program. The GWS program does not provide corporate sponsorship services but rather focuses on grant writing.

3.3.   Grant Sectors

Funders usually specify the types of projects and programs that they will support through their grant programs. When searching for funding that is suitable for your project, you can narrow down your search to include specific sectors. These may include:

- agricultural
- arts and culture
- business
- childcare
- clean energy
- climate change
- conservation
- economic development
- education
- emergency planning and management
- employment
- energy
- entrepreneurs
- environmental
- farming
- food security
- green spaces
- harm reduction
- health and wellness
- heritage
- housing
- Indigenous
- infrastructure
- land stewardship
- language
- marketing, branding, media
- natural resources
- product development
- public safety
- recreation & sport
- research & development
- seniors
- social services
- technology
- tourism
- training
- transportation
- youth

3.4.   Grant Eligibility

Grant funding is available to a wide variety of groups, including:

- non-profit organizations and registered charities
- unincorporated groups
- government and government agencies
- Indigenous recipients
- for-profit organizations
- social enterprises
- businesses
- academic institutions and researchers
- hospitals

Be sure to check which types of recipients are eligible for a grant before applying.

3.5. Matched Funding Requirements

Grants are often conditional awards that require a community group to cover a specific amount of the project costs to offset funds awarded through a grant. This is commonly referred to as matched funding. For example, a funder will provide a grant that covers 75% of the total project costs, leaving the community group to cover the remaining 25%. A funder may request proof of matched funds as a requirement of a grant application (i.e., before a grant is awarded). Depending on the funder's requirements, project costs covered by a community group may be cash or in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions are non-cash contributions provided to the project in the form of goods or services to which a value can be attributed, and that would have been otherwise purchased and paid for during the project, e.g., volunteer labour, equipment, or donated services.

The amount of matched funds varies from grant to grant; many grant programs don't require any matched funds, with the funder covering 100% of eligible project costs.

Applicants may be required to provide to the funder, along with their application, proof of any matched funds. This may be in the form of a Council or Board motion or a copy of the community group's financial records.

3.6. Grant Timelines

Funders will often define in their grant requirements that a project must start and be completed by specified dates. For example, a funder may require that a project not start until funding is awarded and start no later than July 1, 2023. They may also require that the project be completed by December 31, 2024.

Grant outcomes (or award announcements) also vary and are typically stated in the grant guidelines. The final decision as to which applicants will receive funding can range anywhere from one to eighteen months.

It is important that when you are considering a funding stream for your project that you ensure your community group has the capacity and ability to meet any specific grant timelines.

3.7. Limitations on Use of Grant Funds

Funders will often limit how funds can be used on a project, i.e., eligible expenditures. For example, a grant may be used to cover project costs including professional consultants, materials, labour, and marketing; however, the funder may not allow for the funds to be used to purchase land, pay for staff salaries, and cover any regular scheduled maintenance costs. Be sure to read through the requirements of a grant before applying to ensure there aren't any limitations on the use of the grant funds that would impact your project. Grant recipients will also need to report on how funds were spent, so adhering to

the grant budget is imperative for building trust and rapport with funders who often fund organizations year after year.

3.8.   Grant Reporting

Often a funder will require that a grant recipient complete one or more progress reports throughout the duration of their project and a final report (or "close-out" report) that provides information about the completed project and grant expenditures.

A progress report may include a summary of funds spent to date, completed milestones, and any variances or concerns about the progress and cost of the project to date.

The final report may include financial statements, a summary of what was completed, items that weren't completed (but may have been part of the initial proposal), the number of jobs created by the project, photos, testimonials from project partners, and greenhouse gas calculations to demonstrate gained energy efficiencies.

It is important that when you are considering a funding stream for your project that you ensure your community group has the capacity and ability to meet any specific reporting requirements and timelines. Details of reporting requirements may also be noted in a funding agreement that is often signed before the recipient receives any funds.

4. ENSURING YOUR PROJECT IS GRANT-READY

4.1. What is a grant-ready project?

A grant-ready project (also referred to as project-ready or shovel-ready) means that your community group is prepared to submit detailed information about your project with the grant application and, if successful, use the awarded funds to implement your proposed project within the required timeframe. This usually means that:

- you have a solid understanding of your project goals and objectives;
- you have a confirmed budget (which includes estimates from contactors);
- you have a timeline for implementation and completion (e.g., a commitment from all contractors to commence work and/or tenders ready to post);
- you have support from your community and other involved or affected groups;
- you've secured matched funding; and
- you have staff, volunteers and/or a project manager available to oversee the project.

While it is preferable that you have a grant-ready project when working with a grant writer, they can support community groups to move projects from an idea to a grant-ready project, if appropriate.

4.2. Project Checklist

Most grant programs are targeted at grant-ready projects. If you are unsure if your project is grant-ready, use this checklist to flush out the details of your project. The complexity of grant applications varies significantly, so be prepared with as much information as possible.

- Project name
- Project description
- Statement of need – why is this project needed? Why is it important? How does this project align with your organization's mission and objectives?
- Benefits – who and how many people will benefit and how will they benefit? How many communities will benefit and what are their populations?
- Timeline – start date, key milestones, and completion date
- Project budget (see Appendix 1 for budget example) – be as detailed as possible, seek multiple quotes, if possible, and ensure that you include a contingency, especially if the grant isn't awarded for a few months or there are high risk activities (e.g., infrastructure projects that are subject to construction increases)
- Jobs – will there be any new part-time or full-time jobs as a result of this project?
- Ongoing maintenance – can you demonstrate that your community group can afford to maintain any project assets once the project is complete?

- Project sustainability – for longer term initiatives, how will they be sustained/funded over time? For example, if funding is being requested for seed funding for a new program, how does the organization plan to sustain the initiative once the seed funding has been spent?
- Environmental and Indigenous impacts (mostly larger projects that involve infrastructure) – what are they, and how will they be addressed?

Another important thing to consider when preparing to apply for a grant is whether you have access to the following documents for your application. Note that these documents are not always required to apply for grants. Required documents are typically listed in the grant application guidelines.

- Financial statements (often from the last two fiscal years)
- Current organization budget
- Annual Report
- Current Strategic Plan
- Organizational information (articles of incorporation and bylaws, charity or society registration certificate, number of employees, organization structure, governance structure, etc.)
- Letters of support from partners, agencies, local government, supporters, and other community champions
- Certified documents for infrastructure grants (e.g., Engineering reports, certified estimates)
- Board or Council Resolution to show support for the project (note that this often takes a minimum of two weeks to obtain)
- Greenhouse gas calculations (often required for infrastructure and clean energy grants)

5. WORKING WITH THE PRRD GRANT WRITER

If your community group is eligible for the PRRD Grant Writer Services (GWS) program and you have identified a grant you want to apply for, or you are seeking funding for a project and need to find a suitable grant, then:

1. complete the Community Group Intake Form available at www.prrd.bc.ca/services/grants; and
2. email your completed to grantwriter@prrd.bc.ca.

A grant writer from the GWS program will contact you and set up a meeting to initiate the grant application process. At times, the grant writing team may be at capacity, so it is best to initiate the process as early as possible. There is no fee to eligible community groups to access the program.

If you have submitted a past grant that was unsuccessful and would like feedback from a grant writer on how you could improve your application (either for a resubmission or to apply to a different funding program), please email grantwriter@prrd.bc.ca to discuss.

If you would like to stay in the loop on upcoming funding programs, subscribe to the *Grant Opportunities Email Newsletter* on the PRRD's website (https://prrd.bc.ca/services/grants/#newsletter-sign-up).

If you are unsure if your community group is eligible to use the GWS program, please contact Matthew Bascom at grants@prrd.bc.ca.

If you are unsure if your project is grant-ready or you have questions about the GWS program, please email grantwriter@prrd.bc.ca.

6. PRRD'S GRANT WRITING SERVICES (GWS) PROCESS

Step	Description
1. Ensure eligibility for GWS program	Review eligibility criteria at www.prrd.bc.ca/services/grants to ensure that your group is eligible to access the services.
2. Community group completes Intake Form	To help the grant writer understand your community group and your project, download and complete the Community Group Intake Form available at www.prrd.bc.ca/services/grants. Email the form to grantwriter@prrd..bc.ca. If you would like feedback on unsuccessful grant application, you are not required to complete this intake form; instead, send an email to grantwriter@prrd..bc.ca detailing your request and attaching the unsuccessful grant application.
3. Discovery Meeting: Grant options, grant eligibility & suitability, organizational readiness, and timelines	At this stage of the process, you will be assigned a grant writer who has the most expertise and knowledge about the subject matter of your project. During this meeting, they will collect requirements and information about your organization, your project, grant-readiness, grants already identified, key project contacts, and more. They will identify next steps and provide a summary of the meeting to keep both you and the grant writer on track.
4. Grant search (if applicable)	If you are seeking grant funding for a project but do not have a grant identified, the grant writer will conduct a grant search and provide up to three top results. The grant writer will work with you to determine which grant is the most suitable.
5. Grant preparation & development	The grant writer will flush out the details of your project, collect grant requirements, and draft the grant application and associated support documents. Even though the grant writer will guide the writing process, this is a collaborative part of the process.
6. Review draft with community group	The grant writer will meet with you to ensure the narrative of the application reflects your project vision and details and make any necessary changes.
7. Final review & submission	This is the final review of the grant where the grant writer will proofread the document and ensure all the required documents are included. They will guide you on how to submit the application (e.g., online or by email), and email you the final copies of materials submitted for your records.
8. Complete service delivery survey	The grant writer will send you a link to the *GWS Service Delivery Survey* to gather feedback so that the PRRD can revise and improve the GWS program.
9. Inform Grant Writer of funding outcome	The PRRD is required to report on funding outcomes to measure the success of this program. The grant writer will follow-up with you to confirm the success of your grant application.

7. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if I'm unable to confirm all of the details about my proposed project, e.g., a final budget?

Often funders recognize that you may not have all of the final information required to start your project. You may only be required to provide estimates. However, if the funding is for a "shovel-ready" project, you will be required to provide estimates, drawings, plans, and other project details that are as final as possible so that the project can begin as soon as funding is awarded. Each grant is different, so reading the guidelines is important.

Can you help obtain estimates or quotes to inform the project budget?

No. Clear Course is not able to support you in obtaining quotes or cost estimates that maybe required for a grant application.

What if a grant deadline is less than three weeks away?

The more time you can allow for preparing your grant application, the better chance your application will be successful. However, we recognize that sometimes this isn't possible. Depending on the number of grant applications currently being prepared, the PRRD's grant writers will do their best to support your grant application within the limited timeframe.

Who is the PRRD's Grant Writer?

As of March 2021, the PRRD's Grant Writer Services program is provided by Clear Course Consulting Ltd. for a one-year term. Clear Course's team includes a number of experienced grant writers who will assist community groups with their grant applications. Please email grantwriter@prrd.bc.ca to contact a grant writer.

What if I need a PRRD Board resolution for my application?

Community groups need to plan for a minimum of two weeks in order to obtain a PRRD Board resolution. Clear Course can support with this process and draft the necessary documents.

Can you help prepare corporate sponsorship packages?

Corporate sponsorship is outside of the scope of the Grant Writing Services. Clear Course focuses on researching and writing grant applications.

What is my role during the grant application writing process?

Even though the grant writer will be assisting with your grant application (and likely doing most of the writing on your behalf), they will most likely require your support as they learn about your project and begin to build your application. Depending on the funder and the type of grant, the amount of information required can range from simple to very complex. The grant writer will work with you (and possibly other members of your community group) to flush out details about your project (including history, benefits, jobs created, long-term operational plans, and marketing plans) and assist you with gathering all of the required documentation to support your application.

Who submits the grant application?

Ideally, a grant application is submitted by the organization or the community group that is applying for funding. The grant writer will work with the applicant to coordinate submission. Submission often happens through an online portal or by email. Online portals often require that a user first register for an account; this can take upwards of two weeks to confirm so please ensure you allow enough time to apply for an online account in order to meet your grant deadline.

What are stacking limits?

Stacking limits are most often linked to grants where applicants can apply for both federal and provincial funds. Limits are set to ensure that funds contributed to applicants do not account for more than 100% of eligible costs.

What does it mean to leverage grants?

Often grants do not cover 100% of project costs. Applicants are required to contribute cash or in-kind contributions (also referred to as matching funds). Applicants can apply to multiple sources to secure the required matching funds so that the total project costs are covered by grant funding, from multiple sources. Stipulations may apply, especially with respect to government funding.

How will I know that my grant application has been successful?

The community group that is officially applying for a grant (i.e., the Grant Applicant) must designate a person as the main contact. The funder will notify the Grant Applicant with the outcome of their funding decision.

How will the PRRD use the responses to the Service Delivery Survey?

All responses are confidential, and you will only be contacted if you elect to provide your name and email address at the end of the survey. Data will be stored securely through the PRRD's survey tool and data will only be used in aggregate form for the purpose of improving the Grant Writer Services program and reporting on the overall performance of the services.

How much do the Grant Writer Services cost?

Nothing. There is no cost to eligible community groups to use the PRRD's GWS program.

Can I include in my grant application the costs associated with applying for the grant (e.g., hiring professionals for estimates)?

Usually, no. Unless a funder is offering seed funding to help develop a project so that it's grant-ready, the costs associated with applying for a grant are the responsibility of the applicant.

When are the Grant Writer Services available?

There is no time limit on when you can access these services. Services are available year-round; however, please know that service availability will depend on the current volume of applications in progress. Please contact grantwriter@prrd.bc.ca to discuss your grant application.

I have more than one grant application that I need help completing. Can I use the PRRD's Grant Writer Services?

Depending on the volume of grant applications currently underway, the PRRD's GWS may or may not be able to assist with multiple applications for one group. Preference may be offered to community groups that are seeking assistance with one grant application before multiple applications for the same community group are considered.

I would like to work on my community group's grant application, but I need some support. Can I contact the PRRD's Grant Writer Services for assistance?

The PRRD's Grant Writer Services program is available to support eligible community groups with their own grant writing. Please contact grantwriter@prrd.bc.ca.

I submitted a grant that was unsuccessful and would like feedback from a grant writer on how I can improve my application for future submissions. Is this service provided?

Yes, please send an email to grantwriter@prrd.bc.ca detailing your request and attaching the unsuccessful grant application. A grant writer will review your application and provide feedback.

Why is it important to execute projects as outlined in the grants?

Granting agencies provide funds to community groups and organizations for projects that typically align with the vision and strategic priorities of the agency. When grant recipients stray too far from the original project, the alignment between the funder and the project can be compromised. This can cause mistrust, disqualify applicants from applying for future funding, and impact any final payments for funds awarded. If you need to change your project, contact the funder and explain the proposed changes. This is why project planning for grant funded projects is important.

If you have another question,
please contact the PRRD's Grant Writer Services at grantwriter@prrd.bc.ca.

8.   APPENDIX

8.1.   Budget Sample

Budget - Art Gallery Community Art Celebration

PROJECT EXPENSES	Description of Expense	Funders requested from funder (funding request)	Funds from other sources (matching funds)	Totals
Artist fees	10 artists, $1000 each	$ 10,000	$ -	$ 10,000
Artist supplies	Paint, easel, canvas for 30 participants	$ 2,300	$ 200	$ 2,500
Room rental	5 nights at $300 each		$ 1,500	$ 1,500
Subtotal		$ 12,300	$ 1,700	$ 14,000
Total Expenses (requested and matched funds)		$ 12,300	$ 1,700	$ 14,000

GRANT REVENUES	Description	Status	Date to be confirmed (if applicable)	Amount
Peace River Regional District Grant in Aid	Artist fees	Pending	April 1 2021	$ 2,000
Subtotal - Grant Revenues				$ 2,000

PRIVATE REVENUES	Description	Status	Date to be confirmed (if applicable)	Amount
Corporate Gift - Encana	Artist fees	Confirmed	N/A	$ 1,000
Communiyt Hall	Room Rental - in kind	Confirmed	N/A	$ 1,500
Subtotal - Private Revenues				$ 2,500

EXPECTED REVENUES	Description	Status	Date to be confirmed (if applicable)	Amount
50/50 draw at event	Project materials	Pending	June 1 2021	$ 200
Subtotal - Expected Revenues				$ 200

TOTAL BUDGET	Expenses	Confirmed Revenues (other grants, private revenues, and expected revenues)	Pending Revenues (other grants, private revenues, and expected revenues)	FUNDING REQUIRED
Total Amounts	$ 14,000	$ 4,500	$ 200	$ 9,300

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