

Community Network Grant

2025-26 Guidelines

Government recognizes the importance of community-based organizations in advancing equity and anti-racism in Nova Scotia. As part of the [Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy](#), funding is available for community-based organizations who support underrepresented and underserved communities to undertake projects that align with the goals of the strategy to address systemic hate, inequity, and racism.

Community-based organizations are invited to submit applications by Friday, October 31, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. (ADT), for funding of up to \$40,000 per project. For questions and assistance with applications, please email OEEngagement@novascotia.ca.

Who are considered underrepresented and underserved communities?

- **Underrepresented:** An underrepresented community refers to a group of people who are not adequately represented or have limited presence or visibility in certain domains or contexts, such as social, political, economic, educational, or cultural spheres. These communities typically experience marginalization, discrimination, or exclusion due to various factors, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics.
- **Underserved:** The term “underserved” implies that the community is not receiving/has not received an adequate level of support or attention from institutions, organizations, or government agencies. This lack of access can manifest in various areas, including health care, education, employment, housing, transportation, and social services.

Eligibility

To be eligible for funding:

- The organization must be a registered non-profit organization or charity based in Nova Scotia.
- The organization must have a primary mandate and/or objectives relevant to equity and anti-racism.
- The project must have a clear purpose related to addressing systemic hate, inequity, and racism.
- The project must not have received a Community Network Grant in previous years.

Eligible Projects include:

Type of Project	Project Examples
Awareness and Education Projects that raise public awareness and understanding of equity, diversity, inclusion, and human rights. This includes initiatives that promote cultural sensitivity, celebrate diversity, and foster inclusive environments in schools, workplaces, and communities.	• Develop and distribute a series of short educational videos on equity and anti-racism for social media. • Hosting public talks or art exhibits that highlight lived experiences
Capacity Building Projects that build the skills, knowledge, and capacity of individuals, organizations, or communities to address hate, racism, and discrimination. This may include training programs, workshops, or leadership development focused on equity and inclusion.	• Development of resources and workshops for community groups on how to embed equity and anti-racism into their operations and governance. • Organizational strategic planning.
Community-Building, Support and Advocacy Projects that provide opportunities for cultural and intercultural community-building, direct support, resources, or advocacy for underrepresented or underserved communities disproportionately affected by systemic inequities. This includes services that improve access, safety, economic development, and well-being for these groups.	• Establish a peer support network for a specific community • Develop a community-led report card assessing inclusivity and equity, with recommendations for improvement
Systemic Change, Research, and Policy Projects that aim to identify and address systemic barriers and discriminatory practices in public institutions and services such as education, healthcare, justice, employment, or housing. This includes initiatives that use data, research, and community insights to inform policy development, institutional reform, and evidence-based decision-making.	• Community-led research projects • Initiatives focused on policy change
Innovative Community-Led Solutions Projects that do not fall under the categories above but clearly demonstrate a commitment to advancing equity and anti-racism in Nova Scotia. Applicants must clearly explain how their project aligns with the goals of the grant program.	You tell us!

Ineligible Expenses and Projects

- Fundraising events or activities that generate revenue.
- Operating expenses (e.g., existing/permanent staff salaries, heat, rent, etc.).
- Major building development or major equipment purchases.
- Projects in which the main objective is employment.
- Costs and expenses incurred prior to the application deadline.
- Cultural events not clearly linked to the objectives of the funding program.

Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by OEA and a committee of representatives from other government departments. OEA and the committee will review applications using the eligibility requirements noted above and score applications using the following criteria:

- Clarity of alignment with the purpose of the fund to promote equity and anti-racism.
- Feasibility of project – does it have realistic timelines, deliverables, and budget?
- Overall benefit to and engagement of underrepresented or underserved Nova Scotians
- Organizations that serve rural communities, as well as those who have not received funding from government, will receive additional points to support geographic representation and to ensure newer organizations with less experience applying for government grants have an equitable opportunity to receive funding.

Reporting Requirements

- Organizations that receive funding must submit a final report, including financial reporting within 30 days of the project's end date.
- All organizations that receive funding will be expected to register and contribute to OEA's [Community Network Site](#). This includes sharing information on the project (e.g., sharing resources developed, advising of upcoming engagements and meetings, essay-style postings about the project and any results).

Terms of Funding

- Payment is made in the name of the organization or group shown as the applicant on the application form. Payments cannot be made to individuals.
- Funds must be used for the project activities as described in the application.
- Any proposed project changes must be approved by OEA, including start and end dates, location(s), or any other significant changes.
- If the project is not undertaken after payment of the grant, the recipient must return the funds to OEA.
- Funding cannot be used to generate revenue for an organization.
- Funding recipients are subject to provincial audit. All accounting records and all supporting documentation must be held for a period of three (3) years after the date of final payment by the Province of Nova Scotia.

Submitting Applications

Applications can be [submitted through the online application](#) or submitted as a document to OEAengagement@novascotia.ca by Friday, October 31, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. (ADT). If submitting

through the portal or by email doesn't work for you, please reach out to us to discuss alternative arrangements that better meet your needs.

Community Network Grants FAQ

1. What is the Community Network?

The Community Network was created to provide a virtual space to better connect communities with each other and with government for meaningful, sustained dialogue. It is one part of government's efforts to engage with and support underrepresented and underserved communities, and was a requirement established in the [*Dismantling Racism and Hate Act*](#).

2. Can organizations who are not registered as a non-profit or charity apply for funding?

No, only registered non-profit organizations or charities are eligible. This includes:

- A society incorporated under the *Societies Act* (1989);
- A non-profit association incorporated under the *Co-operative Associations Act* (1989);
- A non-profit incorporated under the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act* (2009);
- A non-profit incorporated under an Act of the Nova Scotia Legislature; or
- A charity registered under the *Income Tax Act* (Canada).

This is to ensure funds are used for public good and that recipients have the legal authority and capacity to carry out projects. If your application does not clearly demonstrate that you meet this eligibility requirement, your application will not be considered.

3. Are municipalities, schools, post-secondary institutions, and hospitals eligible?

No, Community Network Grants are for community-based organizations with a primary-mandate relating to equity and anti-racism. Public bodies and other levels of government may qualify for other grants and/or are already in receipt of operating funding from the provincial government.

4. What are some examples of a primary mandate and objectives relevant to equity and anti-racism?

These can include but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- Reducing or removing barriers to equity and inclusion by addressing systemic hate, inequity, and racism in education, healthcare, the justice system, public services, employment, or public life.
- Promoting public awareness on equity, race relations, and anti-racism or anti-hate including raising consciousness and understanding within the community about the importance of fairness, justice, and actively opposing hate, inequity, and racism.
- Promoting cultural and intercultural community-building, and economic development for underrepresented and underserved groups (e.g., Mi'kmaq and/or Indigenous, African Nova Scotians, people of African Descent, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with a disability, newcomers and/or refugees).

- Responding to and reducing gender-based violence, specifically for underrepresented and underserved groups.
- Offering training and capacity-building programs for individuals, organizations, and institutions interested in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives.
- Promoting and increasing availability and accessibility of data, evidence and community insights on equity and race related issues in Nova Scotia.

5. Why do rural organizations receive additional points in the scoring criteria during evaluations?

Rural community-based organizations will receive additional points in the scoring for Community Network Grants to address the unique challenges they face with such endeavors. These areas typically have fewer resources and face greater obstacles in accessing funding. By providing extra points, our grant program aims to ensure that rural community-based organizations have a fair and equitable chance.

6. If my project has received other external funding, can I still apply?

You can apply for the Community Network Grants even if your project has received other funding. In your application, you are **required** to provide details of all funding that your project has received to date (including sources and amounts). Your application should clearly demonstrate why additional funding is required. If you have any specific questions or need further clarification on how existing funding may affect your application, please feel free to reach out to us.

7. If my project received a Community Network Grant in previous years, can I still apply?

No, the Community Network Grant is intended to support a wide range of emerging community projects. Previously successful projects are not eligible to receive funding again. Organizations that have previously received a Community Network Grant are eligible to apply for funding for a different project.

8. What are the organization's obligations regarding records for review or audit by the Province of Nova Scotia?

The organization shall make such books and records available to the Province of Nova Scotia for review or audit within ten (10) days following receipt of a request from the Province of Nova Scotia to do so. The organization agrees that it shall retain all such books and records and make them available for review or audit by the Province of Nova Scotia for a period of three (3) years after the date of final payment by the Province of Nova Scotia. Any review or audit by the Province of Nova Scotia shall be carried out by the Province of Nova Scotia at the Province's expense.

For further inquiries and case-specific questions, please email oeaengagement@novascotia.ca.