



LONDON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

Community Vitality Grant Program

2026 Applicant Guide



Contents

1. Overview	3
2. About London Community Foundation	3
3. Who Can Apply	4
3.1 Eligible Applicants	4
3.2 Non-Qualified Donees	4
3.3 Subsequent applications from past recipients	4
4. Vital Signs 2024	4
4.1 Issue Areas	4
4.2 Arts	4
5. Funding Requests	5
6. Expenditures	5
6.1 Eligible	5
6.2 Ineligible	5
7. Geographic Catchment Area	6
8. Criteria & Evaluation	6
8.1 Eligibility Criteria	6
8.2 Allocation Method	6
8.3 Evaluation Criteria	6
9. How to Apply	8
9.1 Letter of Intent (LOI)	8
9.2 Application Stage	8
9.3 Meeting Stage	9
10. Notification of Decision	9
11. Requirements of Supported Applicants	9
12. Program Dates	9
13. Application Assistance	10
Appendix A - Organization Profile & Stage One Letter of Intent Questions	10

1. Overview

Thank you for your interest in applying to the London Community Foundation's COMMUNITY VITALITY GRANT program – a response to London's Vital Signs Report.

"For too many in our communities, the foundations of a healthy and connected life are not equally accessible. In fact there is a widening gap in many areas of daily life that separates those who thrive from those who struggle against systemic barriers – from the basics of shelter and food security to the fundamental principles of gender equality and racial equity."

lcfvitalsigns.ca

In 2026, the program will provide funding to local projects contributing to systems-change and long-term solutions and changes that:

- Demonstrate potential for transformative impact;
- Are accountable and measurable;
- Act on the concept of nothing about us, without us; and
- whenever possible, improve/leverage resources and investments as well as involve collaboration/strategic partnership.

The Community Vitality program has granted over \$14M since 2011. When considering a proposal submission, it will be helpful to review past recipients ([listed on this page](#)) to see the types of projects supported.

2. About London Community Foundation

OUR MISSION: Transforming generosity into hope, action, and lasting community impact in London, Middlesex, and neighbouring First Nations.

OUR VISION: London Community Foundation inspires and stewards generosity by:

- Enabling donors and fund holders to make a difference today and build lasting impact for generations to come.
- Supporting and uplifting charities and communities to advance well-being and build a stronger, more inclusive present and future.
- Bringing people and ideas together to spark positive community change.

OUR VALUE PRINCIPLES:

- Emphasize prevention rather than remediation
- Encourage networking and collaboration among organizations
- Demonstrate innovative or interdisciplinary approaches
- Develop local leadership capacity
- Reflect diversity and inclusivity
- Provide leveraging possibilities

3. Who Can Apply

3.1 Eligible Applicants

[Qualified donees](#) are eligible to apply to the Community Vitality program. Qualified donees are specific kinds of organizations registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (registered charities, municipal governments, Indigenous governing body, etc.).

3.2 Non-Qualified Donees

Many community service organizations (CSO), such as non profits, are not qualified donees. These CSO's may partner with a qualified donee who serves as the applicant.

An agreement between the qualified donee/non-qualified donee is required. A copy of the agreement and must be submitted to the Foundation at the application stage.

3.3 Subsequent applications from past recipients

Past recipients are eligible to apply with a project distinct from the one for which it received a Community Vitality grant.

4. London's Vital Signs 2024

4.1 Issue Areas

The proposal must primarily address one of the issue areas (below) from the [Vital Signs report](#) – a report that takes the pulse of our community and invites efforts that come together to increase the possibility for positive change.

- Climate & Environment
- Zero Hunger
- Gender Equality
- Good Health and Wellbeing (includes arts and culture)
- Housing
- Reduced Inequalities

4.2 Arts

Proposals for arts-based projects are encouraged consisting of innovation and impact beyond the art discipline and/or arts organization itself.

5. Funding Requests

- Applicants are welcome to request a grant of any amount between \$50,000 minimum and \$350,000 maximum with a minimum annual disbursement of \$50,000.
- Proposals requesting more than \$350,000 will not be excluded from consideration.
- It's suggested that only up to 50% of the request consists of capital expense related to the proposal's project/objective.
- Disbursement may be requested over one, two, or three years ; however, there is a minimum annual disbursement amount of \$50,000.
- Up to 15% of the request can be for overhead/administrative costs.
- It is preferred that the proposal includes pending and/or secured revenue sources in addition to the request of the Foundation.

6. Expenditures

6.1 Eligible

The Foundation will consider supporting reasonable and essential expenditures required to implement the proposal with a few limitations:

- Staffing expenses must be directly attributable to the project that is the proposal's basis; and
- Capital expenses, such as the acquisition of fixed assets (equipment) and/or space renovation must be directly attributable to the project that is the proposal's basis and it is suggested that total capital expenses do not exceed 50% of the total grant amount requested.
- Only up to 15% of the request can be for overhead/administrative costs.

6.2 Ineligible

The following expenditures are ineligible and will not be supported by the Community Vitality Program:

- Land acquisition;
- Building purchases; and
- New construction.¹

¹ London Community Foundation's Social Impact Fund creates positive change in the community by providing loans to social enterprises and affordable housing projects. Check out our website for more details.

7. Geographic Catchment Area

The proposal must have a priority impact on some, or all, of London Community Foundation's catchment area, which includes:

- City of London
- County of Middlesex
- Oneida Nation of the Thames
- Chippewas of the Thames First Nation; and
- Munsee-Delaware Nation.

Projects that impact areas outside of the Foundation's catchment are eligible as long as the Community Vitality grant is fully used within our catchment.

8. Criteria & Evaluation

8.1 Eligibility Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated for eligibility according to this criteria:

- Applicant is a qualified donee;
- Responds to an issue area highlighted in the most recent Vital Signs report;
- Implemented within and directly benefits the Foundation's catchment area;
- Is requesting a minimum of \$50,000 with planned disbursement(s) of a minimum of \$50,000; and
- Funding request consists only of eligible expenditures.

8.2 Allocation Method

- The Foundation reserves the right to provide full or partial funding.
- There is no pre-determined number of projects to be funded.
- London Community Foundation prefers not to be the only monetary funder. The Foundation can be the first, second or last source of funding for a proposal; order is not important. There is no matching formula requirement; only the required intent to leverage whenever possible.

8.3 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the Foundation's Grants Committee based on the extent that the project demonstrates the following required criteria:

- **Transformative Impact:** Proposes significant change (versus transactional/adaptive) to the current situation, through:
 - Altering the system; or
 - Taking an undesirable trend and turning it around; or
 - Substantially improving results of current methods; or
 - Filling an important, unaddressed gap in the community.

- **Accountability and Measurability:** Demonstrates capacity, competence and commitment through:
 - Grounding the proposal's assumptions in evidence or a credible change theory; What makes the approach plausible?
 - Articulating a plan to achieve demonstrable outcomes
 - Providing evidence of capacity to deliver on the proposal's progress and outcomes; is there the necessary experience & expertise?
 - Is the proposal realistically scaled; and is the plan feasible? A small project has the potential to deliver big impact and the reverse is true.

- **Acts on the concept of "nothing about us, without us:"** meaning proposals that:
 - Are led by and/or meaningfully engage those who are directly affected by the issue being addressed by the project; and
 - Are inclusive of community members with diverse lived experiences, including ethnicity, language, gender, sexual diversity and orientation, socio-economic status, age, and physical abilities; and
 - Identify the relationships established - or the plan to establish - with those intended to benefit from this project (including equity-seeking groups and those with specific socioeconomic needs).

The following criteria are also required of all proposals with the suitable conditions to include these elements. In other words, a proposal that requires these to be feasible and achieve its intended impact.

- **Involves collaboration or strategic partnerships between at least two parties that demonstrate:**
 - Collective understanding of the issue;
 - A clear and detailed understanding by all partners of their individual roles;
 - Agreement of financial input and/or sharing of the Foundation's contribution;
 - The right skills, knowledge, behaviours, and support structures in place; and
 - Appropriate governance arrangements alongside senior leadership commitment and support.

- **Improves, or leverages resources/investments to increase impact by:**
 - Attracting monetary or in-kind contributions from other sources
 - Sharing and using local resources and expertise more effectively
 - Finding innovative efficiencies in systems or services
 - Having a way to sustain it - if applicable - beyond the Community Vitality grant term; detail a clear plan to secure other funding sources particularly with consideration to, if applicable, staffing and programmatic costs.

9. How to Apply

The Community Vitality Grant Program is administered as a three-stage process.

9.1 Letter of Intent (LOI)

The purpose of the LOI is to convey your unique proposal within three pages and in your own words. It should demonstrate serious plans around accountability, capacity, collaboration, and leveraging; plans must be 'doable.' Clarity and conciseness are key – less is more. Plain language is preferred rather than acronyms, technical or professional terminology. Citations for data/statistics are not required in the LOI, or if provided, should be put in the application and not the letter.

LOI Deadline: January 20, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

- A.** Applicants use the online system to submit the LOI along with an organization profile (**Three page maximum**) at: Logon - Grant Lifecycle Manager (grantinterface.ca)
- B.** The LOI is due **January 20, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.** Any submission made after the deadline date will be deemed ineligible. Using the online system is preferred, however if you require an alternate submission format, please contact Lindsay Ralph, Grants Officer at lindsay@lcf.on.ca or 519-667-1600 x106. No other documentation will be accepted after the deadline, unless it is provided in response to a London Community Foundation inquiry.
- C.** All eligible LOI's will be reviewed by the Foundation's Grants Committee. By **February 27, 2026** all applicants will be notified as to whether they are invited to the application stage.

9.2 Application Stage

A selection of applicants from the LOI stage will be invited to submit a comprehensive application using the online application system provided by the Foundation.

Application Deadline: March 24, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

- A.** Applicants use the online system (grantinterface.ca) to complete the application which includes a work plan, budget, qualified donee's financial statements, board of directors listing, and confirmation that key governance policies are in place. If any one or more of the project partners will be receiving a portion of the funding greater than \$25,000 for their role, an agreement is required to be submitted to the Foundation at this stage. Applicants may provide additional documentation to further convey the proposal's premise.
- B.** The application and required documents must be submitted online by **March 24, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.** Any submission made after the deadline date will be deemed ineligible. Using the online system is preferred, however if you require an alternate submission format, please contact Lindsay Ralph, Grants Officer, Lindsay@lcf.on.ca or 519-667-1600 x106. No other documentation will be accepted after the deadline, unless it is provided in response to a London Community Foundation inquiry.
- C.** All applications are reviewed by the Foundation's Grants Committee to determine which applicants to invite to attend an meeting.

9.3 Meeting Stage

- A. By **May 1, 2026** applicants will be notified as to whether they are invited for an meeting.
- B. The meetings will be held in person on **May 21, 2026**. An invitation will include your scheduled time, a location, and questions/points of clarification to address. Applicants can talk with a staff member on London Community Foundation's Grants team to discuss the questions/points of clarification.
- C. Upon conclusion of meetings, the Grants Committee will deliberate and select which applications to recommend to the Foundation's Board of Directors for support with a Community Vitality grant.

10. Notification of Decision

By **June 12, 2026** applicants will be notified if their proposal has been chosen as a Community Vitality recipient and what the next steps will be.

11. Requirements of Supported Applicants

By **August 31, 2026** applicants approved for funding will be required to review and sign a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the proposal's objective, use of The Foundation's funding, grant period, amount, installments, reporting and publicity guidelines as well as provisions should entire funds not be spent or the project discontinued. If any one or more of the partners will be receiving a portion of the funding greater than \$25,000 for their role, the completed and signed-off agreement is required to be submitted to The Foundation.

12. Program Dates

London Community Foundation reserves the right to extend the dates at any time.

November 20	Grants team staff begin hosting <u>drop-in sessions</u> on Thursday afternoons to answer questions and provide feedback on grant ideas.
January 20 at 2:00 PM	The portal closes to letters of intent for the Community Vitality grant program.
February 27	The Foundation's volunteer Grants Committee invites selected organizations to apply for the grant, based on their letters of intent and the criteria of the grants program.
March 24 at 2:00 PM	Selected organizations submit full applications for a Community Vitality grant.
May 1	The Foundation's volunteer Grants Committee invites selected applicants to attend a short in-person meeting to discuss their project, based on the committee's review and assessment of each application.
May 21	Meetings are held between the Foundation's volunteer Grants Committee and applicants to answer outstanding questions
June 12	Applicants are notified of the decision on their grant application. Successful applicants receive information about next steps, including plans for photography and media promotion.
August 31	Memorandum of Understanding completed

13. Application Assistance

Please contact Lindsay Ralph, Grants Officer | Lindsay@lcf.on.ca | 519-667-1600 x 106 who will manage requests for technical and application assistance. For a virtual (Microsoft Teams), please book a meeting [here](#). Informal drop-in sessions will be held on Thursdays at 2-3 p.m. from November 20th to April 2nd in the London Community Foundation Boardroom.

These sessions are open spaces where we can answer any questions you might have, and aren't intended to be for formal presentations.

Appendix A

Organization Profile & Stage One Letter of Intent Questions

ORGANIZATION PROFILE

London Community Foundation has changed their application intake system for the Community Vitality process in the fall of 2024. Because of this when you first sign into the online portal you may need to create an organization profile. The information required is similar to what you may have provided in a previous application.

Tell us about your organization's purpose and administration. Be concise.

- Contact Name: *This will be pre-populated using the data in your account for this application.*
- Email: *This will be pre-populated using the data in your account for this application.*
- What is your relationship to the organization?
- Phone Number:
- Name of Canadian Charitable Organization or Qualified Donee:
- Registered Charity Number (if applicable):
- Website (Optional):
- Complete mailing address
- About the Organization (mission, purpose):

This organization serves the population of

- London, Ontario, CANADA
- Middlesex County, Ontario, CANADA
- Oneida Nation of the Thames
- Munsee-Delaware Nation
- Chippewas of the Thames First Nation

Who does your organization serve? Provide the two demographics, the Age group and the Population your organization serves. *Note on Age & Population selections* If you select "All Ages", please **do not select** the separate Age options. If you choose "General Population", please **do not select** the separate Population options.

- All ages
- Children – up to 11
- Youth – 12 to 18
- Young adults – 19 to 29
- Adults – 30 to 64
- Seniors – 65 and up
- General Population
- LGBT2Q+
- Newcomers
- People with Disabilities
- Diverse Cultural Communities
- Women
- Men
- Indigenous

What is the organizational structure?

Is it completely volunteer-run? Or is there a staff and volunteer mix? Provide approximate numbers and explain reasons for the structure if not self-evident.

How is the organization funded?

Describe how your organization sustains its activities, including major funder names and amounts - be concise.

Community Vitality Stage One Letter Of Intent

VITAL SIGN ALIGNMENT

Your project must align with one or more of the following Vital Signs issue areas. Please choose at least one and up to three Vital Sign issue areas that align with your project.

- Climate & Environment
- Zero Hunger
- Gender Equality
- Good Health and Wellbeing
- Housing
- Reduced Inequalities

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

- Proposal Name (70-character limit)
- Short Description of Proposal (25-word limit) *This value must be between 5 and 25 words.*
- Estimated Total Cost of Your Proposal (\$)
- Community Vitality Grant Amount Requested (\$)
- Number of years (up to 3) for Disbursement (#)

LETTER OF INTENT – Three-page maximum

On your organization's letterhead, upload a document (three-page maximum) signed by the organization's leadership including the Executive Director, CEO, President, etc. AND the Board Chair, President, etc. Citations for data/statistics are not required in the LOI, but if provided, should be listed within the three pages.

Explain the proposal in a narrative form and be sure to include all of the following details:

- List the benefits of completing the project,
- Describe how the project will be carried out,
- Who else will be involved and what are their roles; include the community members you serve and how your project has 'nothing about us, without us" in its concept,
- Describe why the applicant and its partners have the capacity to undertake this proposal and achieve the outcomes identified,
- Describe at high-level the project's budget and funding needs including which funders have been secured/will be approached. Be sure to indicate to which specific expenses London Community Foundatin granting will be allocated.

If you are not able to upload this document, please contact Lindsay Ralph, Grants Officer, for assistance.
Lindsay@lcf.on.ca | 519-667-1600 x 106



2024 Recipients

Front: Alzheimer Society Southwest Partners, STEAM Education Centre, Progressive Animal Welfare Services, Southwest Middlesex Health Centre, Ontario Nature & Chippewas of the Thames First Nation.

Back: John Howard Society of London and District & Goodwill Industries, Type Diabeat It, Growing Chefs! Ontario, Forest City Film Festival

