

Community Development Fund Application Tips

Talk to a Community Development Advisor:

We know you want to increase the chances of your project being funded and that you don't want to waste time preparing an application if your organization or project is not eligible. We highly recommend you contact one of our advisors, well in advance of application deadlines, to discuss your project idea and the requirements of the program, as well as to ask any questions you might have. Our advisors can also provide input into draft applications, if requested well before the application deadline.

Phone: (867) 667-8125 Toll Free: 1-800-661-0408 Ext. 8125 Web: cdf.gov.yk.ca

Filling out the Application Form:

Section 1 – Applicant Information

Project Name

Choose a title for your project that is clear and self-explanatory. This will help your stakeholders and your funders to know instantly what your project is about.

Main Contact Person

This is the person who will be responsible for managing the project. They must be able to respond to questions regarding the project and we must be able to contact them in a timely manner after you have submitted your application for additional information, clarification, updates, etc.

The main contact person should be from within the organization (either a staff or Board member) rather than an outside consultant, who may be contracted to implement the project (or part of the project).

Please keep in mind that Board members cannot earn financial gains while serving on the Board. A Board member who gains employment through a project will have to step down from the Board.

How long has your organization existed?

Most applications are read by people who have no prior knowledge of your group or organization, so provide clear concise information on the history of your organization (i.e. mandate, vision, objectives, past achievements, past/current activities).

Section 2 – Project Information – should contain the following:

Project Background:

Tell us what has prompted the need for this project. Where did the idea for this project come from? What has occurred leading up to identifying the need for this project?

Project Description:

You should describe exactly **what** you want to do, **how** you want to do it, and what the results (or deliverables) will be. Basically you should answer the question – **What specifically are you going to do and how are you going to do it?** In the case of an event, this should contain information on where the project will be held and how many people will participate.

Project Management:

You should describe the organizational and management structure(s) needed to carry out the activities described in the Project Description. Be specific in demonstrating that your group or organization has the capabilities of successfully undertake the project.

Who will ultimately be responsible for the project? If different people will be responsible for different aspects of the project, you should outline things like what the reporting relationships will be, if there a foreperson on site, and who will provide the day to day direction.

How is your community supporting this project?

Community support is very important to the success of community development projects. Please provide a list of those organizations and others that are supportive of your project. This may include those who may benefit from the project as well as those who just think it is a good idea and they want to see it happen. **You must get a signed support letter from those who support your project. The letters should clearly outline why they think your project will benefit the community.**

When support groups or individuals write their own letters of support rather than the applicant writing a generic letter for groups to sign, it provides a stronger feeling of support. We encourage specific groups or individuals to tell us in their own words why they are supportive of the project.

Demonstrate how and why this project is valuable to the community.

Describe **why** this project is important to the community and/or your organization. Describe **who** will benefit from this project and **how** they will benefit. **(Remember that your “project” is the specific project for which you are applying for funding assistance).**

How will your organization determine whether the project is successful?

Your proposal should include measurable objectives that you can use to determine if the project has been a success. Try to use simple, measurable indicators. Conferences and events for example may set attendance targets and use an exit survey to determine participant satisfaction. You should specify what will be monitored, who is responsible for the monitoring and what will be done with the information. How do you plan to capture and record what you learn from your project so it can be applied in the planning and execution of future projects.

Section 3 – Project Sustainability

Sustainability can be a big issue for capital projects. Often groups include one sentence in the application that says they will assume responsibility for the project when completed, but they do not explain how.

If the project will result in any operating, maintenance or programming costs after it is complete, applicants must provide a formal letter from the organization taking on the responsibility that clearly outlines they will be responsible for the ongoing costs and how they will do so.

General Tips:

Many applications are unsuccessful not because the CDF does not like the idea, but because the application is incorrectly completed, documents requested are missing, or it simply does not meet the stated criteria.

Proper research, preparation and early consultation with a Community Development Advisor will eliminate the possibility of this happening, increase your chances of success, and ensure your time is not wasted.

Preparation Step 1: Your project

Plan Ahead:

Allow yourself plenty of time for writing a funding application. Make note of the deadlines for submission and the “turnaround times for decisions”.

Be realistic:

The best projects are usually small, but have a direct measurable impact that can be considered a success. The most important thing is that you show you are addressing a proven need and that your goals and objectives are clear and realistic. A project that is achievable, useful and focussed will show that it has been well planned and organized.

Stay focused:

Make sure that you maintain sight of your project plan and your original aims, as this will increase your chances of success. Make sure your organization remains clear about your goals, especially why the project is important, and how you will specifically use the funding to achieve your goals.

Designate someone to coordinate the project and ensure everyone in the organization knows who this is. If certain tasks need to be delegated, be certain this is done before the planning process gets started, as this could slow things down and waste time.

Benefits:

Remember that the CDF is interested the need for the project, who will benefit from the project, and what those benefits are. Demonstrating this can be done in several ways.

Statistics – use surveys, census, records or any statistics that will help to support the need for your project.

Be specific – avoid making vague statements and be as specific as possible about why your project is needed at this time.

Explain - use plain language to explain who will directly benefit from your project and how they will benefit.

Project Costs:

Be realistic when preparing your project budget. People sometimes think that by asking for less they have a better chance of being successful. However, if the budget is too low, you won't be able to achieve the goals you have identified for the project. Over-inflating project costs causes advisors to question the value of a project. Project costs should be realistic and supported by documentation such as quotations.

Ensure that you are contributing **a minimum of 10%** toward the cost of your project. Leveraging funds from other sources also strengthens your project. Reducing the amount required from CDF allows the program to spread its funds further and demonstrates partnership in the project

Monitoring & Evaluation:

The CDF needs to feel confident that your group or organization can competently manage the project and the funds. You will need to demonstrate this capacity in your application. One way of doing this is by setting up a clear monitoring and evaluation system. Describe in detail how the project will be evaluated when it comes to an end. Some projects will be easier to evaluate than others. How will you show what you have accomplished, that you have met your objectives?

As CDF does not provide ongoing funding, if this is a project that will continue, you will need to show that you can survive once its funding has ended. State clearly what you will do once the initial project and funding come to an end.

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

When completing the application form answer each question thoroughly. Don't rush - a successful funding application takes time and effort.

Documents – provide all supporting documents required. Funding applications can be rejected if supporting documents are missing or incomplete.