



Information and Application Guidelines

Catherine Donnelly Foundation Application Guidelines

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Part 1 – Background and General Information

1. Our Story

Established in 2003, the Catherine Donnelly Foundation is the human and financial legacy of the Sisters of Service, a remarkable group of women religious. The Foundation is a living testament to the Sisters' tradition of response to need in communities across Canada.

The Foundation honours and builds upon the spirit of service and dedication that inspired Catherine Donnelly, the founder of the community. It affirms the inherent dignity of every person and the sacredness of creation. It seeks to extend the Sisters' radical commitment to social change and to empower the marginalized.

The Foundation is a lay-religious alliance that supports projects and programs designed to promote social and ecological justice and to engage those that have been overlooked and excluded.

2. Philosophy

The Catherine Donnelly Foundation is committed to promoting positive social change by funding and financing initiatives related to the environment, housing and homelessness as well as adult education. Our efforts are intended to promote joint action and networking by helping organizations work together and build on one another's strengths to pursue radical systems change.

3. Scope & Focus

The Catherine Donnelly Foundation has been established to provide a long-term way to serve specific community needs anywhere in Canada. Generally, The Catherine Donnelly Foundation will use its endowment to fund projects and organizations that address community needs in three primary areas: Civic Engagement for Social Change, Environment, and Housing.

3.1 Civic Engagement for Social Change

The Foundation will consider applications from groups and organizations that use popular education processes to promote a more just, equitable, and democratic society especially for groups systemically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social and civic life.

3.2 Environment

The Foundation seeks to foster a diverse and inclusive climate justice movement, where communities and voices that are under-served lead the path forward to a climate-safe, resilient, caring, and socially-just future.

3.3 Housing

The Foundation will consider applications for projects that address homelessness and the scandalous lack of affordable housing through research, policy development, effective communication initiatives, capacity building and advocacy within the sector.

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Values

4.1 Dignity of the Person

The Foundation will fund projects that recognize the inherent dignity of the person and the human capacity: to take charge of one's own development, to participate in the execution of the project and to contribute to the common good.

4.2 Spirituality of Service

The Foundation will support projects responding to the real needs of people in each of the program areas that demonstrate service with compassion and justice.

4.3 Proactive, Creative, Imaginative

The Foundation will support promising initiatives that demonstrate proactive, creative and imaginative responses to needs in the three granting stream areas.

4.4 Root Causes

The Foundation will support undertakings that address systemic or root causes of needs in each of the three program areas.

4.5 Synergy

The Foundation prefers creative projects and/or initiatives that address more than one of the program areas.

4.6 Earth's Ecological Integrity and Environmental Sustainability

The Foundation is biased toward projects that strive to contribute to the critical need for ecological integrity and environmental sustainability out of a profound conviction that a fundamental shift toward a more holistic, earth-centered value system is imperative.

Part 2 - Application Guidelines

Please read the following information before submitting an application.

Potential applicants are strongly advised to contact the Foundation staff prior to submitting a letter of inquiry.

1. General Criteria

The Foundation seeks applicant organizations that:

- Are registered Canadian charities or registered not-for-profit organizations
- Can provide evidence that their operative values are consistent with those of the Catherine Donnelly Foundation
- Work in areas where the needs are greatest
- Work with persons not served or reached by traditional programs
- Are undertaking projects or programs that have promise as a model for imitation in other Canadian communities and will train others to set up similar programs
- Partner with other like-minded organizations to achieve shared goals

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2. General Exclusions

The Catherine Donnelly Foundation will not consider funding the following:

- Retroactive funding
- Fund raising campaigns
- Operating deficits
- Projects outside of Canada
- Emergency appeals
- Purely commercial recordings or film projects

3. Application Process

A) Civic Engagement for Social Change

We are committed to supporting projects that promote active citizenship, democracy, personal and social transformation by fostering the development of critical consciousness and skills required to promote a more just, equitable and sustainable society in Canada (see Appendix 1 for additional criteria).

Part One

Applicants seeking a grant in this area are required to submit a Letter of Inquiry via our on-line application process. The inquiry letter would include:

1. A short overview of the project and purpose for which assistance is required;
2. A brief description of how the project achieves the goals of the Foundation;
3. Briefly, your philosophy of adult education and the role it plays in your organization;
4. The mission and/or vision of your organization;
5. Along with a brief budget and time-line of activities.

Due dates are posted on the website and may change from time to time. Currently the Foundation accepts letters of inquiry twice yearly (in February and July). The Foundation cannot offer extensions on the due dates under any circumstances.

Please note that the Civic Engagement for Social Change stream does not fund:

- Children and youth literacy/educational programs
- Basic numeracy, reading and writing skills
- Group or individual counseling
- Job skills training or vocational training (including on the job learning)
- Conferences and/or symposiums

Part Two

Those organizations invited to submit a full application will receive notification via phone call and email approximately 8 weeks after submitting their Letter of Interest.

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B) Environment

The Foundation seeks to foster a diverse and inclusive climate justice movement, where communities and voices that are under-served lead the path forward to a climate-safe, resilient, caring, and socially-just future.

Our Environment funding strategy is aimed at promoting climate justice and supporting initiatives that accelerate the transition to a post-carbon world. Our approach recognizes an inseparable bond between nature and intersections with other social movements and a desire to address the root causes of climate change. We are committed to building an inclusive society where no one is left behind, upholding UNDRIP, respecting inherent Indigenous rights, and to reconciliation with First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people.

Part One

Applicants seeking a grant in this area are required to submit a Letter of Inquiry via our on-line application process. The inquiry letter would include:

1. A short overview of the project and purpose for which assistance is required;
2. A brief description of how the project achieves the goals of the Foundation;
3. The organization's history and objectives, and;
4. A brief budget and time-line of activities.

Due dates are posted on the website and may change from time to time. Currently the Foundation accepts letters of inquiry twice yearly (in February and July). The Foundation cannot offer extensions on the due dates under any circumstances.

Part Two

Those organizations invited to submit a full application will receive notification via phone call and email approximately 8 weeks after submitting their Letter of Interest.

Please note that the Environment stream does not currently fund:

- Travel to and/or attendance at conferences, competitions, symposia, or annual events (unless part of a broader project proposal)
- Event sponsorship (unless part of a broader project proposal)
- Bursaries, scholarships, and/or awards (unless part of a broader project proposal)

C) Housing

The Foundation will consider applications for projects that address homelessness and the scandalous lack of affordable housing through research, policy development, effective independent communication initiatives, capacity building and advocacy within the sector. We want to hear from groups engaged in collective efforts to examine and craft solutions for the root causes of Canada's housing crisis. We particularly want to support innovative and cutting-edge projects that give priority to First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, and to newcomer/refugee/immigrant communities.

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Part One

Applicants seeking a grant in this area are required to submit a Letter of Inquiry via our on-line application process. The inquiry letter would include:

1. A brief description of how the project achieves the goals of the Foundation;
2. A short overview of the project or purpose for which assistance is requested;
3. The organization's history and objectives, and;
4. A brief budget and time-line of activities.

Due dates are posted on the website and may change from time to time. Currently the Foundation accepts letters of inquiry twice yearly (in February and July). The Foundation cannot offer extensions on the due dates under any circumstances.

Part Two

Those organizations invited to submit a full application will receive notification via phone call and email approximately 8 weeks after submitting their Letter of Interest.

Please note that the Housing stream does not currently fund:

- Capital campaigns (construction/renovation)
- Purely emergency response or support service provision by transitional housing organizations.

4. Application Review Process

- A Review Committee will evaluate completed applications for their alignment with CDF objectives and criteria and then make recommendations to the Catherine Donnelly Foundation Board.
- The Foundation Board will meet twice annually to determine successful applications based on the recommendations of its committees (in May and November).

5. Application Deadlines

Currently, we have two grant rounds per year: a Spring Round and a Fall Round, with deadlines for Letters of Inquiry in February and July, respectively. On occasion, certain streams may be closed to unsolicited applications. Application deadlines are posted on our website along with information about which streams are accepting applications, so please check there for the most up-to-date information.

****Please note that the Foundation cannot offer extensions on the due dates under any circumstances.***

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6. Responsibilities of Successful Applicants

Funding Recipients will be required to enter into an agreement with the Foundation laying out the Terms and Conditions of the support, along with communication, accountability and evaluation requirements.

7. Multi-Year Funding Policy

Organizations may apply for one-year or two-year funding in all three grant streams through our open LOI process. The Foundation is committed to funding social change and will seek out longer-term partnerships with social change agents and groups that share its vision and objectives. Often our longer-term multi-year grants (3-5 years) emerge through relationships the Foundation has built through funding and other collaborations.

8. Communication

Inquiries regarding the online application process, Letter of Interest or your project idea should be directed to:

Hamshaa Sivaruban, Grants & Logistics Coordinator
hsivaruban@catherinedonnellyfoundation.org

Inquiries regarding longer-term funding partnership opportunities should be directed to:

Anne Mark, Director of Programs
amark@catherinedonnellyfoundation.org

Appendix 1: Civic Engagement for Social Change

Civic engagement for social change fosters active citizenship and personal and community popular education processes to strengthen democracy and promote a more inclusive, just and sustainable society.

As a society we see the need to support collective, community-learning efforts that build awareness, critical consciousness, leadership, skills and action among those facing discrimination and marginalization. Transforming our society depends on it.

Our Funding Objectives

This funding stream was previously known as Adult Education. We have renamed it to use language that is more accessible and understood. We continue to support initiatives adopting a popular education process where individuals, as the source of knowledge, voice their experiences and needs to define goals to work as a group toward community action and change. Adult education as a model builds on collective knowledge and strengths and offers opportunities for more equitable power-sharing, especially for groups systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

Our Approach

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The Foundation supports projects that use adult education or popular education processes to assist equity-seeking groups to collectively name the racism, poverty, violence or other forms of exclusion and oppression they experience.

CDF funds initiatives that engage those underserved groups to develop a critical analysis of the social, political or economic roots of problems they experience and then develop strategies for change by recognizing their group strengths and organizing for systemic change.

We encourage groups that develop leadership, communication, organizational skills and participatory research allowing equity-seeking people and allies to develop and implement strategies for change, particularly initiatives that amplify voice and strengthen community response and democracy.

What We Look For

We look for participatory processes:

- Where everyone teaches and everyone learns
- That begin with the experience of the group engaged in the program and
- Involve a high level of participation, critical dialogue and reflection that helps develop new knowledge, consciousness, attitude, leadership and skills
- Culminating in action for empowerment and social and systemic change

The Foundation also embraces the significant role faith can have in motivating and sustaining social action for change. As a result, we consider multi-faith projects that draw upon religious and spiritual traditions in support of social change, such as work for peace, human rights, equity, and social justice. Such projects could take place within a specific faith community, multi-faith or secular context.

Appendix 2: Environment

Context

Social, economic, and environmental justice are intimately connected and integral to our collective wellbeing and survival.

We recognize many challenges such as: climate impacts that are borne unequally by different communities including those who are racialized, low-income, and who are unhoused; the need to address inequity and polarization in ways that promote dialogue, mutual understanding and shared action; and the importance of building reciprocal connections between people, communities, and with the land and waters from coast to coast to coast. This moment is a reminder that the status quo must be disrupted.

We see an opportunity to support and catalyze climate justice to build the future we need by being bold, imaginative, collaborative, and inclusive.

Funding Objectives

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The Catherine Donnelly Foundation seeks to foster a diverse and inclusive climate justice movement, where communities and voices that are under-served lead the path forward to a climate-safe, resilient, caring, and socially-just future.

Our Environment funding strategy is aimed at promoting climate justice and supporting initiatives that accelerate the transition to a post-carbon world. Our approach recognizes an inseparable bond between nature and intersections with other social movements and a desire to address the root causes of climate change. We are committed to building an inclusive society where no one is left behind, upholding UNDRIP, respecting inherent Indigenous rights, and to reconciliation with First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people.

Our Priority Areas

We support initiatives that address climate change and climate justice through a wide range of approaches and disciplines, including: community ways and knowledge, civic engagement, law/policy reform, finance/ economics, ecosystem health, communications, and working alongside labour and other social movements to build power.

What We Fund:

- Support for climate justice leaders and innovative initiatives that build a diverse and inclusive movement;
- Projects that demonstrate to people in positions of decision-making power that there is an appetite for fast action on climate solutions.
- Projects that inform and seed public opinion and/or support public engagement and mobilization, including grassroots or organizing work.
- Creation and sharing of positive and empowering narratives that offer hope and a vision for how we want to live together in a post-carbon world.
- Broadening a collective power base through collaboration and mutual learning across diverse communities, sectors, disciplines, geographies, and messengers.

We have particular interest in projects that:

- Arise from or engage with communities and voices that are under-represented and excluded such as racialized, low-income, Indigenous, and youth in building greater climate stability and resilience.
- Are Indigenous-led - to better sustain the health of the land, waters, climate and community and to advance climate and environmental justice in ways determined by Indigenous leaders and communities.
- Support capacity within First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities and sharing their worldview of an interconnected relationship with nature as a foundation or model for building a sustainable future.

(read more about CDF's commitment [here](#))

Appendix 3: Housing

The Foundation supports projects that address homelessness and the scandalous lack of affordable housing through research, policy development, effective and independent communication initiatives, capacity building and advocacy within the sector. We want to hear from groups engaged in collective efforts to examine and craft solutions for the root causes of Canada's housing crisis.

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We particularly want to support projects that advance the cause of affordable and appropriate housing in collaboration with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, and that advance the cause of affordable and appropriate housing for newcomer, refugee and immigrant communities.

Housing Values & Objectives

The Catherine Donnelly Foundation seeks to collaborate with organizations whose initiatives target the prevention and elimination of homelessness, as well as those advancing the cause of safe and affordable housing. We also wish to partner with groups seeking to move from an emergency response model to a systems-based approach to housing in order to affect real change in the housing situation of marginalized and low-income populations.

Projects that the Foundation will consider supporting may include projects that:

- Mobilize public engagement/education, animate action through information dissemination and that advocate for sustainable solutions to Canada's homelessness and affordable housing crisis;
- Advance public policy development in the housing sector;
- Strengthen networks and collective strategies among non-profit housing groups and organizations.

Priority will be given to projects that involve partnerships across organizational and sector lines (non-profit, public and private) and that value collaboration in pursuit of collective impact and sustainable change in the housing sector. Where possible, projects should be replicable.