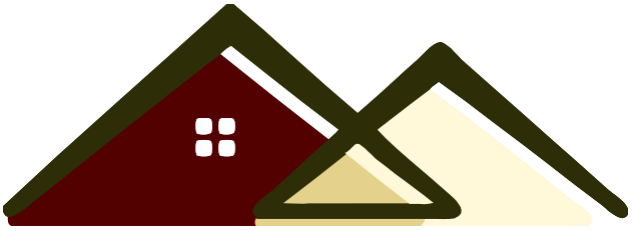

VANCOUVER
HERITAGE
FOUNDATION

HERITAGE CONSERVATION GRANTS PROGRAM

Program Guidelines 2026

Application Deadline: October 14th, 2026

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Heritage Conservation Grants Program: Guidelines

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Introduction

VHF advances the appreciation and conservation of our city's diverse heritage places and their stories. We provide practical support for heritage conservation, and we raise awareness of the vital contribution that heritage makes to a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community. VHF is a federally registered charity # 891765968.

VHF's grant programs have been providing economic support to building owners for the planning, maintenance, restoration, repair, and rehabilitation of their heritage buildings since 1999. In 2019, VHF received additional municipal support to launch a new conservation grants program.

Heritage Conservation Grants Program

VHF provides funding opportunities through two categories of heritage conservation grants: Planning Project Grants and Conservation Project Grants. Both categories support heritage site owners or site stewards in the care for their historic buildings and sites with professional guidance and a commitment to high standards of heritage conservation practices, ensuring the longevity of the sites.

VHF encourages all applicants to consider first applying for a Planning Project Grant or undertaking appropriate conservation planning before putting forward an application for a Conservation Project Grant.

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Planning Project Grants will provide heritage site owners and stewards an opportunity to work with a Heritage Consultant. Planning projects can take the form of research and/or required documentation for nominating a building, structure, or site to the City of Vancouver's Heritage Register. They can also support the creation of long-term informed conservation reports that map out a prioritized schedule for maintenance, repairs, restoration, or rehabilitation of the site.

Conservation Project Grants provide the next step in supporting a heritage site's conservation for the long term and focus on the maintenance, repair, restoration and rehabilitation of a site's exterior fabric and character-defining elements that embody its heritage values.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Private Owner
  - Individual(s)
  - Strata corporations
- Registered non-profit society or federally registered charity
  - including those with a long-term lease (minimum of 10 years) in a municipally-owned building with responsibility for heritage character elements eligible for work.
  - Authorized agent of a site, with written permissions from the site owner
- First Nations

What type of site is eligible?

The property must be located within the City of Vancouver.

The building or site must be:

- Listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register, or
- In the process of being added to the Heritage Register before completion of the grant project, or
- Applying to the program for a grant to assist with documentation to apply for addition to the Heritage Register, or
- A site of Indigenous cultural significance

The following types of sites can be eligible for the program:

- Buildings
  - House typologies and similar scale structures
  - Components of other types of buildings critical to the heritage value, for example, the porch or façade elements of a larger building that does not qualify for other support
- Stand-alone structures
- Other historic resources
  - Landscape features
  - Historic signs
  - Built Features (e.g.- statuary, constructed symbols)

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Designated Sites

While all site types above are eligible and encouraged to apply, heritage buildings and sites that are protected by a legal **heritage designation** will be eligible for larger funding amounts. Heritage designation provides legal protection from demolition or alteration and is enacted by the municipality or the province. Unsure if your site has heritage designation? This is indicated on the Vancouver Heritage Register with a (M) or (P). If interior elements are designated, this is indicated by (I).

Heritage Revitalization Agreements

Properties designated through an HRA are not eligible to access the Heritage Conservation Grants program until a period of 10 years has elapsed. Sites that have entered into a Heritage Revitalization Agreement will have (H) next to the address listing in the Heritage Register.

Sites with Indigenous Cultural Significance

Sites which have indigenous cultural significance but have not been formally recognized on the Vancouver Heritage Register can and are encouraged to apply for support. These sites are eligible for funding at the same level as a site listed on the register, with the same increase in funding available for Non-profit and First Nations ownership. Sites of this type will be asked to provide evidence, such as oral histories or written testimonials of the site's significance to an Indigenous community.

Taxes and Insurance

There must be no municipal taxes owing or liens on the property. If there are taxes owing or liens on the property, please explain why in your application. Mortgages are not considered liens for the purpose of the grant program.

The owner/homeowner/steward may be required to show proof of an insurance policy for the building and property that includes home, fire, and earthquake insurance.

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What type of work is eligible?

Planning Projects

A Planning Project Grant may provide support for consultation with an approved Heritage Professional to produce the following types of research and documentation:

- Heritage Assessment to apply for addition to the Vancouver Heritage Register*
  - Original building permit and/or water application
  - Summary of ownership/tenancy by year
  - Archival images (if available) – of the site and people associated with it to provide social historical context
  - Fire Insurance Maps
  - Photos of all sides of the site, exterior and interior where notable and photos of neighbouring site(s) to provide context
- Statement of Significance
- Conservation Plan
  - History of the site
  - The site's neighbourhood context
  - Statement of Significance
  - Site description and images
  - A description of all exterior architectural elements and their condition
  - Conservation guidelines
  - A list of prioritized activities to achieve conservation of the site
- Maintenance Plan
  - A detailed account of required maintenance
  - A list of prioritized activities and inclusion of conservation best practice approaches to guide building owners in their choices.
- Building Condition Assessment Reports
  - Critical structural investigations related to the conservation of heritage buildings and structures.
  - Can include seismic and foundation assessments and drainage assessments, undertaken by a Professional Engineer

*Planning Projects undertaken with the goal of a site being added to the Vancouver Heritage Register (the preparation of a Statement of Significance or Heritage Assessment) may apply for up to 100% of the project costs to remove any financial barrier to a site being nominated to the Register.

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Conservation Projects

A Conservation Project Grant may provide support for the following types of projects:

- Conservation projects that support the repair of a historic site, enabling the longer life of the historic resource, for instance:
  - Conservation of exterior character-defining elements including original shingles, siding, stucco, windows, doors, chimneys, masonry elements, porches, etc.
- Restoration projects that focus on bringing a site back to a specific period in its history, for instance:
  - Identification of the original paint colours on a building and painting in a historically authentic colour scheme using the VHF True Colours palette (for buildings built 1880s – 1920s) or another documented historical scheme. See below section for more detail.
  - The removal of an enclosure from a once open porch.
  - Rebuilding heritage-equivalent wood windows where the original windows have been lost.
- Rehabilitation projects that enable new uses or continued use of a heritage site while respecting character-defining elements, for instance:
  - Seismic strengthening of a building structure. For larger grant awards, consideration of improving seismic resiliency will be expected.
  - Structural and envelope preservation such as roofing, foundation repair/renewal and rainwater management.
  - Accessibility and other work can also be considered where directly related to the conservation of the structure.
- Sustainable retrofits that improve building performance where directly related to preserving eligible heritage elements, for instance:
  - The addition of interior or exterior storm windows for historic windows.

Eligible project costs include materials, labour and professional fees but do not include GST or permit fees.

Additional guidance for conservation projects

All work completed under the **Conservation Project Grant** must use best practices as outlined in the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places In Canada. VHF will provide additional feedback and guidance throughout the grant process. If your project necessitates the use of replacement materials, VHF must approve them prior to their installation.

Grant participants are strongly encouraged to hire consultants and contractors with professional experience on heritage projects, relevant credentials and positive references that speak to their standards of excellence in the application of the standards and guidelines. Contractors who are unknown to VHF may be required to provide references to complete grant funded work.

Grant recipients are responsible for researching and obtaining all necessary authorizations and permits from the City of Vancouver before the work commences

Painting

VHF supports painting of a structure in a historical scheme, either in the VHF True Colours palette (for homes built 1880s – 1920s) or using other documented evidence. For more information about guidelines for painting projects, see the VHF Painting and True Colours Project Guidelines.

Roofing

Roofing work can relate to the rehabilitation of a structure and/or the conservation of its character-defining elements. Program participants are expected to use good-quality shingles that are compatible with their building's heritage appearance. Generally, unless the roof itself is a distinct architectural feature of the building, the look of the roof should be subtle and low-profile. Replacement roofing should replicate the original style and details of the roof as far as possible. All projects will be expected to follow best practices as detailed in Victoria Heritage Foundation's Roof and Flashing Requirements.

Windows and Doors

Original wood windows and doors are a significant character-defining feature on many heritage homes and buildings. Although they may become deteriorated over time, in many cases they are repairable and with proper maintenance and care can have a long lifespan. In order to improve energy efficiency and performance of windows, participants are encouraged to consider a project that features repair and the addition of interior or exterior storm windows to provide an additional thermal and sound barrier.

For potential grant applicants interested in a window conservation project, VHF can provide a list of companies and professionals, and further guidance on preparing a conservation-oriented project proposal. For more information on the repair and maintenance of wood windows, see the resources on Windows in VHF's Building Owner's Guide.

What type of work is NOT eligible?

- Intervention planning costs, feasibility studies, cost estimates, or permit fees.
- Interior elements that do not have heritage designation on the Vancouver Heritage Register.
- Emergency stabilization or mid-project requirements for structural stabilization not preapproved during the application process.
- Archeological work, including Archaeological Impact Assessments

- Projects that are part of a larger commercial development that would have access to other incentive programs or that are subject to a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA).
- Renovations, additions, new construction, or new stand-alone structures.
- Inappropriate conservation, repair, replacement, or maintenance of original historic materials or features with new materials or construction for example, the unnecessary replacement of original wood windows or the replacement of deteriorated windows with new metal or vinyl windows.
- Work on existing features that are not regarded as having heritage value.
- Work that is deemed routine maintenance such as gutter cleaning, moss removal, repair of broken steps, touch-up painting.
- Hazardous materials remediation, unless as a component of a larger, eligible, project
- Work that is not of a standard or authenticity acceptable to VHF.
- Work that was started prior to the grant approval.
- Work that does not comply with the specific scope of work approved for the grant.
- Work that does not fall to the responsibility of a tenant within a building lease agreement unless provided with written permission from the legal owner.

Grant Funds

The Heritage Conservation Grants Program will provide a matching grant of up to a maximum of 50% of the eligible costs** and typically in the range of 25%-50% for the defined scope of work approved.

Ownership Types & Heritage Protection	Private Ownership	Private Ownership. Heritage Designation*	Non-profit / First Nations Ownership	Non-profit / First Nations Ownership Heritage Designation*
Planning Projects	$2,000**	$2,000	$3,000**	$3,000
Conservation Projects	$7,500	$10,000	$10,000	$25,000
5-year maximum per site	$20,000	$25,000	$30,000	$70,000

*Sites that have received municipal or provincial legal protection to care for, preserve and retain the heritage character-features of a site are considered to have **Heritage Designation.** The Vancouver Heritage Register will identify these sites with a (M) or (P) next to the address listing.

**Sites applying for a planning grant to support addition to the Vancouver Heritage Register can apply for up to 100% of the cost (excluding GST) to these maximums.

Grant funds will be disbursed **after** the completion of the project following the submission of the final grant report and claims form including all relevant paid receipts from eligible work and an onsite visit by a VHF grant program staff member if deemed necessary. Non-profit organizations with larger projects may receive special consideration for a percentage of the financial support to be disbursed mid-project.

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Application Process

Potential applicants must contact the grant program staff at VHF to verify the eligibility of their project a minimum of one week prior to the application deadline.

Complete the online application process by **October 14th, 2026**

Please see the Pre-application Planning Worksheet on the Heritage Conservation Grants webpage for application details. While filling in the online application you are able to save your file, however as a backup it is recommended that you first create a word document using this worksheet.

Application Review

Following the application deadline, the VHF Granting Committee will meet to review all eligible grant applications. The Granting Committee is a volunteer group of industry professionals who have expertise in diverse areas of heritage planning and conservation. The Granting Committee will evaluate each application and make recommendations on the proposed project and funding amounts to the VHF's Board of Directors who will make the final approval decisions. Applicants will be notified of the application status by email in November 2026.

Evaluation Criteria include but are not limited to:

- Meeting The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada
- The demonstrated ability of the project to proceed and be complete by **September 30th, 2027**
- A commitment to conservation shown through a well-maintained site, or plans for a high standard of conservation and repair of dilapidated / compromised building(s)
- The projects most in need of support or incentive to proceed
- Vulnerable sites in urgent need of conservation
- The visibility of the project where the public benefit can be most appreciated
- For painting, projects that accept a historically authentic paint scheme.

If approved, all funded projects must be completed with grant reports and claims forms submitted to VHF within 60 days of the project completing and before **September 30th, 2027**. Grants are awarded at the sole discretion of Vancouver Heritage Foundation. VHF is under no obligation to award a grant and reserves the right, without incurring any liability, to reject applications even if a site meets all criteria. In exceptional circumstances, larger grants may be awarded at the discretion of the VHF Granting Committee's recommendation and VHF Board's approval.

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Contribution Conditions and Agreements

Successful applicants are required to sign a **Fund Agreement** outlining the respective responsibilities of Vancouver Heritage Foundation and the grant recipient. Conditions and Agreements include (but are not limited to):

1. As part of the review of applications, VHF staff and a consultant may visit the site to assess the accuracy of the application submitted.
2. There will be no municipal taxes owing or liens on the property. Exceptions may be granted, upon review by VHF staff. Mortgages are not considered liens for the purposes of the grant program.
3. The owner will have an appropriate insurance policy for the building and property
    a. In select cases a certificate of insurance naming Vancouver Heritage Foundation as an additional insured party may be required.
4. For a building or structure that is not legally protected from demolition and receives a grant above an established threshold, the owner(s) may be required to sign a legally-binding agreement to repay the granted funds to Vancouver Heritage Foundation in the future if the structure or the part of the structure that the grant was applied to is demolished or significantly altered. This agreement would expire after a set amount of time and/or would apply to subsequent owners of the building.
5. Allow the funded project to be made visible through VHF's platforms and used for future promotion of VHF programs, educational and fundraising opportunities.
6. Place a provided sign on the property indicating the site is a participant in the VHF grant program.
7. Information about projects that receive a grant will be shared by VHF with the City of Vancouver for the purposes of reporting about the program. This may include address, type of work, photographs and grant amount, and other information. VHF's annual report about the program to the City of Vancouver is publicly available.

Thank you for your interest in VHF's Heritage Conservation Grants program. If you have any questions about the program do not hesitate to get in touch with us at meghan@vancouverheritagefoundation.org or call 604 264 9642.
Individuals interested in applying are encouraged to contact us as soon as possible and at least one week before the application deadline to discuss their intended project.