



**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA**
all for community

**FONDATIONS
COMMUNAUTAIRES
DU CANADA**
ensemble pour tous

2021 Community Foundations Conference

Bid Guide

Conference Overview

This guide is intended for community foundations interested in hosting the 2021 Community Foundations Conference.

In the past, our biennial conference has moved between Canadian cities and regions selected by Community Foundations of Canada (CFC). The conference is the largest event of its kind, bringing together Canada's community foundation network and like-minded organizations from across the country and around the world every two years.

This is our second time inviting community foundations to bid on the opportunity to host our next conference in 2021. This guide outlines the role of the Host Community Foundation(s) and will help you think about the process, steps and engagement required to host our international 2021 conference in your community.

This guide is meant to provide background information on how to prepare an application. However, we encourage you to [contact us](#) as soon as you are interested so that we can help answer any questions and guide you through the application process.

One last thing - be creative! Several community foundations may choose to work together to host the 2021 conference, or perhaps you think the conference should be held somewhere other than traditional hotels or venues. We're open to all ideas - the more creative the better.

Why Host the 2021 Conference

As community builders and connectors, hosting and placemaking are deeply embedded in our values, culture, strategy and impact of our work. To host is to lead and with leadership comes a wide range of benefits – some expected, but just as many unexpected.

Hosting an international conference in your community might sound like a big task, but great challenges are often followed by even greater rewards.

Here are a few of the many reasons why a community foundation, or several community foundations collaboratively, might decide to host our 2021 Community Foundations Conference:

- Strengthen relationships with donors and bring new donors to the table
- Build and develop new and existing partnerships for the long-term
- Demonstrate your leadership to our global community foundation movement
- Broaden your awareness through national communications channels
- Receive media interest and drive social media engagement
- Strengthen relationships with municipal government, private sector and local industry
- Position your foundation as an economic developer and community builder
- Engage staff, Board members and volunteers by working together on a big, bold project
- Showcase the best of what your community has to offer!

Core Conference Elements

Our conference changes every two years, but several core elements remain consistent from one year to the next and provide a shell for our preparations. Some of the core elements that characterize our conference include:

- **Intentional networking:** This is the only gathering that brings our entire network together, so we place a premium on time for in-person connections with peers and partners. We create space and opportunities for what we like to call “catalytic connections” through session formats, curated conversations, plenary discussions, social events, conference app sharing, and even hallway interactions.
- **Inspirational:** We want people to be inspired and think beyond their day-to-day work - leaving with a renewed energy to tackle what matters most and take some of the innovation they have learned from others back to their communities.
- **Educational:** Not all sessions need to be big picture and aspirational. We also know that community foundations value practical, hands-on learning to take their daily operations up a notch.
- **Conference Design Team:** Our conference has typically been led by two co-chairs (or a chair and a conference host) along with staff members from Community Foundations of Canada. A conference design team comprised of leaders from approximately 10 community foundations of all shapes and sizes also come together throughout the preparations to generate ideas and build out a meaningful conference experience.
- **Language:** The conference aims to be bilingual in French and English, although most of our concurrent sessions are held in English.
- **Financial:** To put on a high-quality conference with a wide reach involves considerable cost. Each event draws upon funding from registration, community foundation support (in the form of bursaries, travel subsidies, etc.), host community foundation contributions, and partners who sponsor various conference elements.

For a closer look at our current and past events, please visit the websites for our [2017 conference](#) and [2015 conference](#).

Conference Format

We’re always on the lookout for new ways to inspire, engage and stay ahead of the curve with the location, format and content of our conference events. We welcome new ideas and are open to pushing the boundaries of what a conference experience can be. At the same time, here is some of the foundational format elements that keep our conferences grounded:

- **Length:** 1 full-day and 2 half-days (or 2 full-days and 1 half-day). For example, in 2017 we began on May 11th at 1:00 p.m. and ended on May 13th at 1:30 p.m. A pre-conference day is added to accommodate peer gatherings, topic specific workshops and other gatherings.
- **Pre-conference:** The pre-conference agenda is a time for groups in our network to get together for deeper conversation and learning. These gatherings include peer groups, board members, and other individuals wanting to connect prior to or alongside our conference. There are about 300 people in total that attend these various pre-conference events. For 2017, the pre-conference was offered as a half-day on May 10th and a half-day on May 11th just prior to the opening of conference.
- **Plenary sessions:** Plenary sessions are an opportunity for all conference participants to hear from inspiring speakers and experience some fun elements and surprises. These events usually host between 600 - 800 people. For some plenary sessions, we may sell tickets or open the doors for the broader community to attend.
- **Concurrent sessions:** This is a chance for smaller groups of conference participants to dive deeper into topics of interest and choice. For our 2017 conference, we offered 4 blocks of time when concurrent sessions were offered. There are usually between 10 -15 concurrent sessions taking place at one time.
- **Site visits:** Many conference participants enjoy learning about on-the-ground activities in different communities. Site visits take place either as part of a pre-conference agenda or during the conference.
- **Hallway activities:** During breaks we like to use venue hallways and other open spaces for networking activities, interactive exhibits, labs, and other fun elements to keep people engaged and entertained.
- **Social program and evening events:** The two evenings of the conference usually take place off-site to explore the best sights, sounds and tastes that a community has to offer. One of these evenings is typically a host event put on by a community foundation. It's a chance for participants experience some local flavour and entertainment.

Location and Venue

The Community Foundations Conference moves between communities every two years. Past conferences have recently been hosted in Ottawa (2017), Calgary (2015), Winnipeg (2013), Vancouver (2011), and Montreal (2009). Although we prefer to host our event in different regions of Canada, we can make exceptions depending on the strength and opportunity of a bid.

The ideal conference venue and facilities would accommodate up to 700 delegates in one plenary room and would support 10 to 15 conference rooms capable of holding 700 people split

unevenly between the rooms. Community foundation hosts are encouraged explore cost effective options, such as a hotel or university.

The basic guidelines for an ideal conference location are:

- Within one hour from a community with a major airport
- Sufficient accommodation that is reasonably priced within walking distance of the venue
- Modern space with natural light, lots of room for networking, and easy flow for conference participants
- Accessibility: Some delegates and speakers require mobility accommodations such as wheelchair access. Service animals, such as guide dogs, may also need to be accommodated.

Past Conference Statistics

For a breakdown of conference participation in 2017, please see these stats:



Applying to Host the 2021 Community Foundations Conference

Host Community Foundation Overview

The Community Foundations Conference is our biggest event held every two years and takes a lot of enthusiasm and effort to put on. Our conference design team is made up of a professional conference organizer, CFC staff, Host Community Foundation staff and volunteers, and partners. The conference Co-chairs oversee the event as a whole and engage with the Host Community Foundation, CFC staff and Board members to help inform conference themes and elements.

Roles and responsibilities

Community Foundations of Canada is responsible for most of the event's detailed management and financial operations, including:

1. Planning and design:

- Hosting conference design team
- Planning meetings
- Session design and themes
- Speaker recruitment and hosting
- Staffing at conference event

2. Financial commitment:

- Oversight of budget and accounting
- Sub-contracting professional services (ex: event coordinator, AV, WiFi, etc.) as needed
- Food and beverage costs
- Work with Host Community Foundation on partnership fundraising (see below for Host Community Foundation responsibilities for host events)
- Registration and payments
- Bursaries (Canadian and international)
- Hotel venue contract (including supporting the Host Community Foundation in negotiation and selection of conference hotel rate) and costs
- Cost of transportation
- Pre-conference gathering costs
- First evening social event (planned by the Host Community Foundation)

3. Hotel and venue

- Work with Host Community Foundation to secure host venue and hotel
- Work with venue on rooms and planning
- Work with hotel on room blocks and timing

4. Partnership and marketing activation:

- Developing a conference theme and logo
- Website development and promotional material
- IOS/Android app development
- Developing and designing the conference program (print and electronic versions)
- Name tags and swag bags
- On-site signage
- Audience engagement
- Livestream of the conference

5. Social events:

- Work with the Host Community Foundation to support planning and budgeting
- Provide staff as needed

The Host Community Foundation is responsible for:

1. Planning and design:

- Being prepared for an announcement at the 2019 Community Foundations Conference on Saturday June 8th 2019 during the final plenary session
- Participate as a member of Community Foundations of Canada's 2021 conference design team
- Provide information on local points of interest
- Recommend one of the conference Co-Chairs
- Planning for both evening event activities
- Sourcing volunteers for roles such as registration, welcoming, trouble shooting, off-site coordination, etc.
- On site staff

2. Financial commitment:

- A minimum financial contribution of \$100,000 (for the host event expenses that include: venue, food and beverage, A/V, entertainment, speaker fees, promotional material, miscellaneous expenses, etc.) and other conference expenses
- In-kind staff and volunteer time
- Securing partnerships for the host event
- Additional sponsorships, partnerships, as well as financial and in-kind contributions will enhance your application

3. Hotel and venue:

- Hotel venue option(s) selection and recommendations to Community Foundations of Canada
- Coordinating registration desk coverage with Community Foundations of Canada
- Transportation negotiated and three recommendations provided to Community Foundations of Canada for participants to travel to and from the airport

4. Partnership and marketing activation:

- Leading conference promotions in the region; assisting with conference promotions more broadly (nationally)
- Assisting with partnerships and sponsorships
- Assisting with packing delegate swag bags and organizing registration materials
- Local media activation
- Assisting with livestream of the event

5. Social events:

- Planning for two evening social events. The Host Community Foundation is responsible for all planning aspects of the social events on the first evening, including: venue(s) that can hold up to 700 people, entertainment, speakers, food and beverage, organizing transportation, staffing and volunteers. The social event on the second evening will be designated as the 'host event' and paid for by the Host Community Foundation.
- Organizing site visits if part of program
- Arranging 'culture shock' moments or entertainment
- Organizing all travel to a social event
- Coordinating hallway interactive exhibits, fun elements, networking during break times, physical activity elements as needed

Conference Design Team (which the Host Community Foundation will be a part of typically one Co-chair and one other staff/volunteer)

- Assisting with the development of conference themes
- Provide advice and input into the design and development of the conference agenda, including program theme, elements, speakers and presenters and the overall conference structure.
- Advising Community Foundations of Canada on language and accessibility issues
- Identifying and introducing Community Foundation of Canada to potential sponsors and media contacts
- Participating in conference evaluation
- Other duties as identified by the committee

Financial commitment

The Host Community Foundation will sign a terms of reference that outlines the key responsibilities and roles of both Community Foundations of Canada and the Host Community Foundation. Based on past conferences, we anticipate that the minimum financial contribution that the Host Community Foundation will be responsible for is \$100,000. This includes the host event (venue, food and beverage, AV, entertainment, speaker's fees, miscellaneous expenses, etc.), and other conference expenses but does not include support such as staff and volunteer time. Additional financial contributions from the Host Community Foundation will be used for expenses outside of the host event. To supply additional contributions partnerships will be a great assistance and enhance your application.

Partnerships are key to a successful conference experience for all involved. We encourage you to seek out partners that will sponsor the host event, work with venues to receive discounts or free space, and support additional conference elements. Local sponsorship is primarily the responsibility of the Host Community Foundation.

Making an application

Community foundations interested in hosting the 2021 Community Foundations Conference may submit an application using the form that accompanies this guide.

The important dates for applying to host the conference in 2021 are:

- September 18, 2017 Application process opens
- January 10, 2018 Application process closes
- January 12, 2018 Shortlist chosen by conference design team
- January 29, 2018 Presentations of the bid to conference design team
- February, 2018 Location and host selected
- March 30, 2018 Hotels and venue booked
- June 8, 2019 Host announced with promotional material given to participants

Possible conference dates

Conferences are typically held between late April and early June. The Host Community Foundation will work with Community Foundations of Canada to determine the best possible timing. There are always other conferences held during that period, and together we will check to avoid major conflicts. Other important dates to avoid are Easter, Mother's Day, Victoria Day, and other major holidays.

Additional selection criteria

In addition to the above details, these factors (in no particular order) will be used to differentiate between bids. Submissions should ideally provide information to help gauge these factors:

- Levels of support evidenced for the bid, both internally at your community foundation and from community partners
- Quality of the venue facilities; travel connectivity to the rest of Canada; range of available and affordable accommodations near the conference venue
- Understanding and ability to meet and exceed the level of financing needed to host the 2021 conference event (see section on financial commitment)

- Expected medium- to long-term impact of holding the 2021 conference event on your community, local industry and government. In other words, what positive impacts will holding the conference leave in the local "ecosystem" after it's all over?