



# Community Foundations of Canada

Website Beginner's Guide

A brief guide to updating, building  
or maintaining your first Community  
Foundations of Canada website

# Beginner's Guide to Creating or Maintaining Your Community Foundation Website

Your community foundation website: you know it is a crucial tool in reaching out, building awareness and sharing the news of the organization. It is often a first point of contact to your foundation for potential donors and other stakeholders. And yet, it's common for foundations and other organizations to experience the following:

- *Our website doesn't reflect who we are as a foundation or what we do.*
- *It doesn't tell a story.*
- *It's hard for our visitors to find what they need.*
- *It just feels dated.*
- *I don't know where to start.*
- *I don't have much to invest in creating or refreshing my website.*

Creating, maintaining and refreshing your website or digital properties often gets sidelined by other priorities, ie, something we know we should get to but never seem to have time to do.

This resource is a very brief guide to updating or building your first community foundation website — what are some key components you might consider? What steps should we keep in mind? What resources will we require? How do you ensure it's sustainable?



## FIRST STEPS:

### 1. Determine how your foundation might use a website

Visit other foundation websites to see how they convey messages, display information and engage their users. Links to the network of Canadian community foundation sites can be found at [www.communityfoundations.ca](http://www.communityfoundations.ca)

#### Develop basic goals for your website

- What do you want to achieve by having a website?
- What basic objectives do you want to fulfill?
- Who are the primary visitors and audiences you want to reach?
- What business goals do you want to achieve?
- If you have a website, where are your users currently going to find the information they want?
- What are some of the barriers users may face in accessing information?
- What messages are you eager to communicate?
- Will you only use your website to post information for others to view?
- Will your grantees need to interact with it by signing up for events or sharing information with you?
- Will your site need to integrate a grants management system, donation function or board portal?
- How will your site link to your social media accounts if you are using platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Instagram?

#### Define a budget and scope for the project

- Website costs vary widely. It's important to define your scope and resources from the beginning.
- You can keep costs low by using free software and more cost effective hosting solutions, templates and tools as well as free design elements. Alternatively, you can choose to work with an agency that helps you develop the project from A to Z and supports the project management, the design and development and maintenance.

#### Decide how your website will work once it's in place

- Develop a simple content strategy for your website and social media channels. A website is not a static destination. It grows and evolves over time. Creating even a basic content roadmap and web publishing schedule can help you better plan your work and deliverables. You will find some template copy at the end of this document if you're just getting started.
- Develop a simple maintenance plan: Who will do basic maintenance on your website? Even simple sites will need periodic updating to update, archive or delete content that may no longer be accurate. As you plan your website project, decide who will be responsible for this function and how frequently you wish to audit and review the content. There is no hard and fast rule: some organizations do this on a quarterly basis others annually or even biannually.

- Create a simple governance strategy: Who is responsible for writing and publishing content? Who needs to see it and approve it before publication? Who decides when it can be archived or removed? It's worth taking some time to establish basic website governance principles. If an external consultant is doing the work, designate a point person within your organization.

## 2. Get your website project going

Pick a domain name that reflects your foundation name succinctly and register it with a domain registrar. Different registrars will have slightly different fees, services and types of customer support. Check out:

<https://cira.ca/ca-domains/register-your-ca> as a good place to start.

### Build your website using one of the following options:

Build the site in-house. **Many web building and web hosting or blog companies** offer simple, customizable templates that make it easy to build a website and adapt it to their needs. Companies like Wordpress, Blogger, SquareSpace, Wix, Weebly and SnapPages allow users to create sites by using very basic HTML or even no coding experience at all.

- Work with an agency, freelancer developer to build your site on spec. If you have some resources, retaining the services of an expert can help. Increasingly, this is not off limits even on a shoestring budget as digital technology becomes ever-more present. Affordable options are available. Connect with CFC if you are looking for recommendations for freelance developers or referrals to agencies or ask a foundation whose website you admire for recommendations.
- Design and content are key parts of any web project. Decide how and who will develop the architecture or organization of content (and sections) for your site and write or source the visual content for it. Consider establishing even brief guidelines for style and brand to stay consistent as your site evolves. We have provided some draft content below that you are welcome to copy and paste or use as inspiration. Be in touch if you have any questions!

## 3. Preview and test your website

- Be sure to allow for time to test for quality assurance and troubleshooting as part of your overall project.
- Ask your colleagues to dedicate time for review and feedback on content, website navigation and reach out to CFC if you need support with testing. We are happy to help.

## 4. Share your work with your communities

- Once you've designed and set up your website, be sure to let your grantees, potential grantees, donors and others in your community know that it's live. Begin to include the web address in your email signature, update your online profiles and your letterhead and be sure to link to Community Foundations of Canada with our logo somewhere on your site! You can find our logo and brand guidelines here:

<http://communityfoundations.ca/resources/cfc-logos-and-guidelines/>



## ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIALS

### What makes a good community foundation website?

#### Core components:

Most community foundation websites have seven main landing pages — Welcome, About Us, Grants, Donors, Professional Advisors, News/Blogs and Contact. Below is an overview of each of the pages and potential content to include in your website.

#### A. Homepage

##### Landing Page: Welcome

##### Who Are You?

- Brief explanation of your Community Foundation
- Message from the Chair of the Board/Executive Director
- Links to other pages that will be on your site ie.
- About Us
- About our Work
- Apply For A Grant
- How To Donate
- Professional Advisors

#### B. Main Page: About Us

##### Subpage:

##### The Foundation

- History
- Mission and Vision
- Board of Directors
- Partners or Sponsors
- Contact Us
- Blogs or News Section

## 1. About your community foundation

The [Name] Community Foundation is part of a worldwide movement of foundations whose objective is to help build stronger and more vibrant communities. In Canada we are a part of Community Foundations of Canada, a network organization to more than 191 community foundations from coast to coast to coast. The (Name) Community Foundation reaches out to (geographic area).

### We play three key roles

- We are leaders in identifying local community needs and advocating for meaningful social change. Each community has unique experiences and challenges. Our strength is in bringing people together to address these needs.
- We work with donors who wish to make meaningful and lasting contributions to the well-being of their community
- We support charitable organizations that provide programs and services for the community

Community foundations bring local knowledge, experience and a network of community relationships to our grant making. We are a charitable public foundation created by and for the people of [Community] and have a deep knowledge of local needs and opportunities. We act as champions for issues that matter and direct grants to everything from shelter, education, and care for those in need, to the arts, environment and recreation.

We make charitable giving easy, flexible and effective. We work with you and your advisors to maximize the value of charitable gifts. Our goal is to help you meet important needs in the community, fulfill your charitable goals, and maximize your tax advantages.

Gifts can support any cause you can imagine. We believe in the power of individuals and organizations working together to effect positive change in our community.

Gifts are pooled and invested and form permanent community assets. Earnings from these assets are granted back into the community each year to registered charities. Registered charitable # 0000 0000 RR0001.

## 2. History of your community foundation

How, why, and when your Community Foundation began (Insert your story here). This is your place to share why your foundation is important.

### Example:

"More than ten years ago, a group of community-minded leaders imagined what a community foundation could do for Wood Buffalo. It was a time of falling oil prices, corporate cutbacks and fundraising challenges. They knew a community foundation could fill some of those gaps, but under the guidance of the Suncor Energy Foundation, they also knew the time wasn't quite right.

Early in 2016, the idea of starting a community foundation was put forward once again. Wood Buffalo's social profit sector had matured, but another economic downturn was affecting the sector's ability to support the social, environmental, arts and other needs of the region. After the devastating wildfire of May 2016, the needs of the community became even more evident.

In November 2016 a small group of volunteers, supported by Community Foundations of Canada and the Suncor Energy Foundation, determined the time was right to start the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation. A Steering Committee was formed and our work has progressed a long way in a few short months. Wood Buffalo Community Foundation was incorporated on March 29, 2017 and we have applied for Charitable Status. The organization was formally launched in Fort McMurray on June 8, 2017.

The next phase of development is to build our endowment funds so the Foundation can begin granting funds to support community needs. We will continue to recruit to our Board of Directors while building awareness among potential donors and grantees.

While many of the leaders who envisioned a community foundation for our region over a decade ago are no longer working and living in Wood Buffalo, their connection to this place remains strong. That's one of the many things we learned in those heart wrenching days of May 2016. Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo will always be our home.

There is no better way to show our thanks for all we have received as residents of this remarkable region. It's time for the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation to take root and grow."

— <https://www.wbcfoundation.ca/history/>

### A brief history of the movement

To ensure the long-term success of his community, banker and lawyer Frederick Goff founded the first community foundation, the **Cleveland Foundation**, in 1914.

His vision was to pool the charitable resources of Cleveland's philanthropists, living and dead, into a single, great, and permanent endowment for the betterment of the city. Community leaders would then forever distribute the interest that the Foundation's resources would accrue to fund "such charitable purposes as will best make for the mental, moral, and physical improvement of the inhabitants of Cleveland."

**The Winnipeg Foundation** was Canada's first community foundation, established in 1921. Today, there are more than 191 community foundations across Canada and nearly 1900 around the world.

The (Name) Community Foundation is a proud partner of **Community Foundations of Canada**, the national network organization for the 191 community foundations across Canada. [Learn more about Community Foundations of Canada.](#)



**Website Tip:** Community Foundations of Canada can provide you with instructions on how to upload the Community Foundations of Canada logo on your website.

## 3. Your community foundation vision, mission and values

### Vision (Example)

The vision of the Community Foundation of Whistler is to improve the quality of life in Whistler and beyond.

### Mission (Example)

The Community Foundation of Whistler is a catalyst for improving the quality of community life by:

- Providing philanthropic leadership by responding to changing community needs and challenges;
- Serving as a vehicle for generous citizens and corporations that want to contribute to the community, by attracting and managing charitable gifts mainly cash, pledges, bequests, memorials and proceeds from life insurance;
- Investing donations prudently and using earnings to make creative grants alone, or in partnership with others, to qualified donees involved with charitable activities.

## 4. Board members and staff

Our board members are individuals who generously volunteer their time, expertise and energy on our Board of Directors and committees. Their knowledge of the community and dedication help guide our work in the community we serve.

### Board Members

#### BOARD MEMBER NAME

Information about the member

**Example:** JEANETTE SMITH, BOARD MEMBER

*Jeanette was drawn to our community in 2010 through a wonderful career opportunity with ABC Financial. Immersing herself in the social profit sector, Jeanette quickly became known as a community builder. "The big spirit of the region continues to engage me" reflects Jeanette. "I have met the most caring, community minded people here and they've helped me fall in love with the community". Jeanette believes a community foundation is vital to the well being our residents as we continue to build a stronger, more resilient tomorrow.*

### Staff (if your organization has staff or a key contact person)

Insert images and contact information of your staff members (link this page back to your contact us page)

### Our Team

 <p><b>Alison Sidney</b> Coordinator, Outreach &amp; Special Projects</p>	 <p><b>Andrea Dicks</b> Vice President</p>	 <p><b>Andrew Chunilall</b> Chief Executive Officer</p>	 <p><b>Annie Aningmiuq</b> Engagement Coordinator</p>
 <p><b>Carolyn Leslie</b> Coordinator, Administration and Logistics</p>	 <p><b>Cindy Lindsay</b> Director of Member Services</p>	 <p><b>David Venn</b> Director of Communications</p>	 <p><b>Erin Kasungu</b> Manager, Foundation Animation</p>

## C. Main page: Grants

### Subpages:

#### About Grants

- Grants Schedule
- Grant Eligibility
- Grant Application

### Subpage: About grants

The [Name] Community Foundation makes grants that promote and support community initiatives and charitable organizations. We bring local knowledge, experience and a network of community relationships to our grant making. In making its grant decisions, the Foundation relies on the expert advice of a Grants Committee, which is made up of volunteers who are knowledgeable about local issues and activities.

Visit the grants schedule below to view the type of applications that are currently being accepted. To ensure you do not miss a funding opportunity, we encourage community organizations to subscribe to our social media (provide links) or visit this web page monthly to view our granting schedule.

### Grants schedule

We invite charitable organizations to apply for grants to the following grant programs listed below. Please read the application guidelines to ensure that your organization qualifies for the programs being offered — as each program has specific criteria. In addition, please review the eligibility information below.



**Website Tip:** Does your foundation have different grant programs? If so, use this space to explain them, the criteria and application deadlines. Use links to direct people to the application or for more information on the programs.

### Subpage: Grant eligibility

*Who is eligible?*

All applicants must review the General Application Guidelines to determine eligibility and to learn more about what we do and do not fund. Your organization should verify that it qualifies for the grant program prior to submitting an application. If you would like to discuss your project before completing an application, please contact our office.

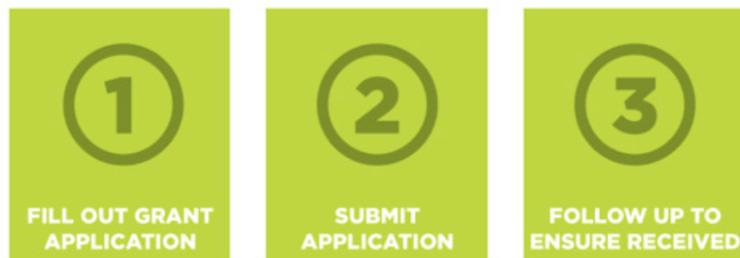


**Website Tip:** provide a link to your application guidelines.

### Subpage: Grant application

*How-to steps on how to apply for a grant*

[Name] Community Foundation will accept and review grant proposals [X times] per year. Each year the call for proposals will be announced on our website and through social media.



Please contact us at xxx@abcfoundation.ca prior to spending a lot of time on your application. We can give you a general idea if your application will qualify before you spend undue time.



## D. Main page: Donors

### Subpage

- Why Donate?
- Tax Benefits
- Ways to Give
- Types of Funds
- How to Donate

### Why donate to your community foundation?

Your community foundation plays a crucial role in helping people give back to their community in meaningful ways. We connect individuals, families and companies with causes that inspire them. We pool resources, knowledge and expertise, working with others for even greater impact. And we help you realize your philanthropic goals by matching their interests with community needs and finding innovative ways to make every donation count for the long term.

#### FOR INDIVIDUALS:

You're supporting your favorite causes in lots of ways. Volunteering, serving on boards, donating food and clothing, celebrating at events and purchasing products that support a cause are just a few of the ways you are making a difference in the lives of others. At the center of your philanthropy is charitable giving. By working with us and setting up your own fund or supporting an existing fund, you can organize and maximize your financial support of charitable organizations.

#### FOR FAMILIES:

Have you found yourself thinking it's time to get a little more focused with your giving? Do you want to involve your kids, or grandkids in your giving? Perhaps philanthropy is already an important part of your family's traditions and values but you want to look for high-impact opportunities. Not only do you want to deepen those intergenerational connections, but you also are committed to leaving a legacy to your children, grandchildren, and community. You can do all of this through planning and tools to continue support of the causes you love. That's exactly what we will help you do.

#### FOR BUSINESSES:

As a local business leader you know the importance of creating opportunities and working with your employees to create impact. That is why many companies choose to partner with us to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of their charitable giving; we are up to date on current best practices to help your business direct donations and achieve impact.

We manage all financial, reporting and due diligence aspects with the charity on your behalf. You have the benefit of seeing your donation at work and achieving corporate recognition for your company's philanthropy.

By establishing a corporate fund, you can work with us to organize, streamline requests and celebrate your company's financial support of organizations that inspire you.

## Are there tax benefits from donating?

Insert information regarding any tax benefits that come from donating to your Community Foundation

### EXAMPLE:

"The ABC Community Foundation is a registered charity. The government offers generous tax credits for donating to charity. For example, a gift of \$100,000 may only cost you \$53,650. Tax benefits may depend on your income. We recommend that you consult with your accountant and/or financial advisor(s) to ensure you receive the best tax treatment possible.



**Website Tip:** You may want to include the link to CRA's [tax calculator](#). This will allow a donor to calculate the tax benefit of their gift.

Tax benefits may also depend on the structure of your gift. You can donate almost any type of asset: cash, stocks, property structured as a trust, insurance policy, estate bequest etc. Consult our [Charitable Gift Matrix](#) for more examples of gift examples and benefits.

## Ways to give

Anyone can be a philanthropist. You don't need wealth and it doesn't have to be complicated. Giving to the [Name] Community Foundation is simple: we provide the flexibility and knowledge to help you make the difference you want to make.

**Gifts of cash:** A very straightforward way of making a gift to the [Name] Community Foundation is by way of cash or cheque. This is an attractive form of gift for anyone who has cash readily available and wants to make an immediate donation. The Foundation is able to invest the donation to generate funds to support charity — you enjoy immediate tax savings.

**Gifts of Appreciated Securities:** Gifting appreciated securities enables you to give the most to the [Name] Community Foundation for the least cost. The 2006 Federal Budget reduced the capital gains inclusion rate for these donations to zero. In effect, taxpayers can now donate qualifying securities with appreciated gains to a charity and not have to pay any tax on the capital gain that would otherwise be realized.

**Gifts of Insurance Policies:** A gift of life insurance, by either making the Foundation the owner and beneficiary of an existing policy or purchasing a new policy and making annual premium payments, has many benefits. It allows you to make a significant gift at a fraction of the value from their disposable income. The annual payments are generally modest and eligible for tax credit, giving annual income tax relief.

**Charitable Bequest:** A bequest in a will may specify a certain sum of money, a particular asset, or a portion of an estate, to be donated to the Community Foundation. You may specify that a bequest be used to establish a new fund in their name, be added to an existing fund or be added to a fund that the family has established during your lifetime.



**Website Tip:** You can link to CFC's [sample will clauses](#)

Gifts of Retirement Funds Use tax-deferred assets (ie. RRSP, RIF) accumulated for retirement to provide a gift to the Community Foundation. Convert an 'end of life' tax liability into a meaningful gift. Moreover, retain control to easily make revisions should your future circumstances change.

Gifts of other Assets The Foundation will consider gifts of other assets (property, art, royalty interests, closely held corporate securities, gifts-in-kind) on an individual basis because there are a number of factors to consider with each type of gift. Please contact the Foundation office if you are considering this type of gift.



**Website Tip:** Check out Community Foundations of Canada's [Ten reasons people choose community foundations](#). You may want to add this to your website or provide a link.



**Website Tip:** The [Types of Gifts](#) and [Types of Funds](#) (following page) descriptions are also available on Community Foundations of Canada's website. You can easily link this to your website.

## Types of funds

### FIVE GREAT GIVING OPTIONS.

Choose the one that's right for you.

Establishing a Fund with our community foundation is simple and effective. A community foundation takes care of all the administration work so you can focus fully on your charitable interests.

Any of the Funds below can be established during your lifetime or through a bequest in your Will. We will help you determine which type of fund fits your needs best. All gifts made to your Fund will be invested professionally, and a portion of the total value of the Fund is available each year for distribution to any registered Canadian charity.

**Unrestricted Funds:** Your gift is used to meet ever-changing community needs and priorities, including those that may not even be known at the time you made your gift. A community foundation evaluates all aspects of community well-being – arts and culture, environment, health and social services, youth and more. Your trust in a community foundation makes it possible for us to make decisions in response to our community's most pressing needs and priorities.

**Field of Interest Funds:** You identify your area(s) of interest when you establish your Fund. A community foundation makes the decisions about which organizations to support taking your interests into consideration.

**Designated Funds:** You recommend specific charities you wish to support at the time you set up your Fund. A community foundation manages the annual distribution to those charities.

**Donor Advised Funds:** You or your named successor make choices annually about which charities you wish to support. You may support any registered Canadian charity or other qualified donee as defined by the Canada Revenue Agency.

**Scholarship Funds:** A Fund in your name or a loved one can provide student scholarships that benefit youth in your area(s) of interest. A community foundation helps you define the scholarship criteria, handles all administrative details, and awards scholarships to deserving students in the name of the Fund you establish.

**Agency Endowment Funds:** Charitable organizations can establish an endowment with a community foundation to provide a permanent source of funding for their organization. If you wish to leave a legacy to your favourite charity benefit, you can rest assured that a trusted organization is managing your Fund so the charity can concentrate on its community mission.

## How to donate

### THERE ARE THREE SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN DONATE:

#### 1. By phone

You can call us and we'll take your donation information by telephone at: (insert phone number here).

#### 2. By mail

You can also download a [donation form](#) (this is an example from the Niagara Community Foundation) that you can use to send in a donation through the mail, or save and forward it to us via email (insert your email address here).

#### 3. Online

You can make an immediate donation online to any Fund in any amount via our link to the CanadaHelps website (include the link to your page).



**Website tip:** Make sure you include a "Donate Now" if you offer online donations via CanadaHelps or other portals. Include it on your home page and other areas of your website so it is visible and accessible. Be sure to work with Canada Helps to update your donation page with relevant and timely information. Make it easy for donors to contact you and donate!

## E. Main page: Professional advisors

We are proud to offer easy ways for professional advisors to work with the community foundation to meet the philanthropic planning needs of clients. With 84% of Canadians contributing to charity on an annual basis, charitable giving is becoming an increasingly important part of your client's overall financial plan.

Add charitable planning to your practice – or enhance what you already do – with practical online tools and resources designed for you and your clients.

Your community foundation can help you build a stronger relationship with your client and make a difference in your community at the same time.

Visit our [Professional Advisors eResource](#)

## F. Main page: News or blogs

### Blog Posts

All your written blogs or news pieces can be found under this landing page.



**Website Tip:** Check out CFC's blog posts and share stories about the work of community foundations.

## G. Main page: Contact us

### Contact information

- Phone:
- Email:
- Address:
- Hours Of Operation:
- Facebook:
- Twitter:
- Newsletter sign up:
- Registered Charitable number:
- Staff Directory: A link to your staff page which contains contact info of every staff member or key board members.



**Website Tip:** Don't forget to add links to your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media accounts you may have.



**Website Tip:** Include both your mailing and street address if they are different. People need to easily reach you and find you.



**Website tip:** If you use a general info@email address, make sure you check it frequently. A potential gift may get lost in a backlog of emails!



## 10 WEBSITE TIPS

- 1 Keep everything **short and simple** (the less clutter the better)
- 2 Add **images and visual content to explain** things or to link other website materials. Photos of your community, donors and organizations can give strong visual messages. For example (taken from [www.wbcfoundation.ca](http://www.wbcfoundation.ca))



- 3 **No more than 4-5 subpages** per dropdown menu
  - a. 3 subpages in a dropdown menu is the best option (minimal)
- 4 Be sure your **Homepage is a clear quick summary** of your Community Foundation
- 5 Avoid using terminology that is complex (**no jargon**, stick to familiar terms)
- 6 Ensure your **layout is usable** and makes sense
- 7 Don't be repetitive in content, if something is already said somewhere just link it and remove the duplicate
- 8 Include a call to action often, a 'Donate Now' at the top right corner of your page or at the bottom of every page is ideal
- 9 Keep your website **up to date**
- 10 Visual content (including photographs, infographics, videos etc) are a great way to make your site seem friendly, dynamic and engaging.
- 11 Make it **easy for visitors to contact you** — put your contact information in multiple places so it's easy to find



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