



# Community Development Grants

How to Find and Apply for Funding Opportunities

## Community Development: The Power of Collective Action

Community development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. It encompasses tangible outcomes, such as infrastructure projects, and intangible outcomes, like community cohesion or capacity building. The main aim of community development is to improve the quality of life in a specific locality or community.

The broad community development field encompasses everything from urban planning and infrastructure development to social programs and economic initiatives. Whatever the specific focus, the overarching aim is to create better social, economic, and cultural outcomes for a community.

Community development often focuses on empowering individuals and groups to take actions that improve their situations rather than relying solely on external agencies or bodies, and by allowing community members to participate in the decision-making process actively, the process ensures that decisions made are relevant to the community's actual needs and desires.

Grant programs may require or encourage community involvement in decision-making, which promotes a sense of ownership among community members, ensuring they are active participants in the projects that affect them.



## Several key aspects of community development include:

### **Participative Engagement**

Allowing community members to participate actively ensures that decisions are relevant to the community's needs and desires.

### **Empowerment**

Community development often focuses on empowering individuals and groups to take actions that improve their situation rather than relying solely on external agencies or bodies.

### **Skill Development**

A significant aspect is building the skills and capacities of community members, which in turn can lead to autonomous communities.

### **Holistic Approach**

Rather than addressing issues in isolation, community development often takes a broader, holistic approach, considering how varied factors interplay and impact one another.

### **Asset-Based**

Instead of just focusing on what's lacking in a community, asset-based community development looks at the strengths and resources already available and how they can be leveraged.

### **Sustainability**

The goal is often to create long-term sustainable solutions, meaning they can continue without ongoing external support or intervention.



## Community Development is Not a New Thing

Our ancestors appreciated the potency of collective community development. The Mesopotamians built their society around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Their sharing of knowledge about irrigation and planning for food storage is remarkable, and their urban planning skills are impressive<sup>1</sup>. In the Amish communities of North America, barn raisings are community events where everyone lends a hand. These events are more than construction projects; they are about collaboration and strengthening communal ties<sup>2</sup>. While grants funded neither of these examples, they are a window into communities coming together for the common good.



### What Are Community Development Grants?

Grants provide a crucial lifeline for numerous community-based initiatives. With the financial support of grants, communities can kick off programs that would otherwise be impossible due to budget constraints. This economic boost acts as a catalyst, driving development activities and fostering an environment of growth and sustainability. The significance of grants can be classified into several areas:

#### Financial Support

At the most fundamental level, grants provide funding for projects that may not otherwise have the financial resources to begin or continue. This ensures that vital projects can be undertaken.

#### Stimulating Innovation

Grants often encourage communities to be imaginative. With funding available, communities can explore novel solutions to persistent problems.

<sup>1</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10814-019-09136-7>

<sup>2</sup> <https://amishamerica.com/what-happens-at-an-amish-barn-raising/>

### **Leveraging Additional Resources**

A grant can act as a seed fund, attracting additional investments from both the public and private sectors. With a grant as a foundation, projects can be scaled up or extended, benefiting more people.

### **Skill and Training Development**

Grants can be directed towards training and skill development, empowering community members with the tools and knowledge necessary to drive their development initiatives in the future.

### **Encouraging Collaboration**

Community development grants often require collaboration between different entities – NGOs, local Governments, community groups, and more. This encourages a multi-stakeholder approach to problem-solving, which can lead to more holistic and sustainable solutions.

### **Addressing Systemic Issues**

Some grants focus on systemic community issues, like social injustice, lack of educational resources, or healthcare disparities. These grants go beyond short-term solutions, seeking to create long-lasting change.

### **Validation and Credibility**

Grant approval often serves as a validation of a community's initiative. This can enhance the project's credibility, making garnering community support and additional resources easier.

### **Accountability and Monitoring**

Grants usually come with stipulations for regular reporting and monitoring. This ensures that funds are appropriately used, and objectives are met, creating a culture of transparency and accountability.

### **Fostering Civic Participation**

Grant programs may require or encourage community involvement in decision-making. This promotes a sense of ownership among community members, ensuring they are active participants in the projects that affect them.

### **Addressing Immediate Needs**

While some grants target long-term systemic change, others address immediate community needs, such as disaster relief or urgent infrastructure repairs, ensuring communities receive timely assistance in critical moments.



## Local governments can use grant funding to support many areas of community life.

Grants provide funding to stimulate transformation, teamwork, and long-lasting development. They benefit numerous sectors, turn visions into projects, and foster inclusive communities. Below are the primary sectors in which community development grants are critical.

### **Housing**

Constructing affordable houses and refurbishing old buildings.

### **Infrastructure**

Roads, public transportation, and utilities.

### **Health**

Community health centers, mental health initiatives.

### **Education**

Building schools, funding educational programs, and research grants.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

These principles represent an organizational commitment to recognizing and appreciating individual differences, ensuring fair treatment for all, and creating environments where all individuals feel valued and can thrive. Many NGOs and businesses have adopted DEI initiatives to build stronger, more representative, and inclusive cultures.

Each grant has its unique flavor. For instance, the [Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\)](#) in the U.S. has a distinct urban development focus. Meanwhile, the [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation \(CMHC\)](#) centers around housing initiatives.

## Why Should City Clerks Care About Grants?

Grants are invaluable resources for city clerks. For example, consider local governments that faced challenges during the pandemic that necessitated adjustments to traditional voting processes. These expenses can include the adoption of mail-in voting, implementation of health and safety protocols, acquisition of additional equipment, and compensation for increased staff hours.

The financial support provided by grants helps alleviate budgetary pressures on towns. Moreover, the accessibility and relative simplicity of the grant application process make it a practical option for clerks seeking additional funding. In summary, grants are instrumental in helping town clerks navigate unforeseen challenges.

In 2010, the Southampton, NY, city clerk announced that the town had been awarded a \$11,771 grant from the New York State Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF). This grant was essential for enhancing local record management systems to help optimize services for the public. During her four-year term, the clerk had secured three grants totaling over \$77,000 for equipment purchases and improvement of the town's archives through ongoing digitization projects, expanding both internal and public access.



## Case Studies

Here are a few examples of instances where grant funding might be sought to solve specific problems.

### Connecting Frequent 911 Callers to Comprehensive Support

In Montgomery County, Maryland, there was a significant rise in 911 calls for emergency medical services, with just 100 individuals accounting for 3% of the 84,000 calls in 2013. Most of these calls weren't genuine emergencies but were instead linked to issues like behavioral health, substance abuse, or chronic illnesses. Many of these frequent callers were unaware of the non-emergency resources.

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) collaborated with the County's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to address this challenge. Their integrated approach combined data sources to identify these regular callers, ensured they were informed about social services, maintained a strong collaboration with local medical institutions, and even made home visits when needed.

As a result of this collaboration, there's been an effective redirection of frequent 911 callers from MCFRS to DHHS. This allows DHHS to address the root causes of the frequent calls, offering tailored social services to these individuals. Since 2015, the County has observed a substantial annual reduction in these calls.<sup>3</sup>

### Text Reminders in Tulsa

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Municipal Court's Time Pay Order system offers residents a one- to six-month extension to pay court fees following a criminal case. Annually, around 22,000 such extensions are issued. However, over 70% of these orders, translating to about 16,000, result in failure-to-pay warrants. This non-compliance leads to repercussions like suspended driver's licenses, extra fines, and deeper involvement in the justice system. Furthermore, the city faces over \$500,000 in unpaid fines yearly.

In 2018, the Tulsa Mayor's Office of Performance Strategy and Innovation, in collaboration with the Tulsa Municipal Court, deduced that most residents failed to pay due to forgetting the deadline or misplacing their paperwork. A new text message reminder system was piloted from March to September 2018. Recipients of the Time Pay Orders were sent reminders leading up to their due date.

<sup>3</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10814-019-09136-7>



## Text Reminders in Tulsa

Upon assessing the effectiveness of the text reminders, it was found that there was a significant decrease in the number of failure-to-pay warrants for those who received the reminders. 63% of the reminded group cleared their dues, a 15% increase compared to those who didn't get reminders. Annually, this strategy could result in about 320 more residents paying their fees on schedule, generating an extra \$187,000 in revenue, and reducing the negative effects of municipal warrants by 15% for affected individuals.<sup>4</sup>

## Rising Sea Levels in Campbell River, BC

The City of Campbell River, located on the coast of Vancouver Island, BC, recognized the need to address the growing threats from rising sea levels, which were putting local communities, infrastructure, and natural habitats at risk. Given the significant impact on residents and the environment, including local wildlife such as salmon, the city decided to create a comprehensive and adaptable action plan.

Aiming to develop strategies that would resonate with the community and respect local values, the city embarked on extensive public consultations and educational efforts. They worked closely with experts to understand the risks and engaged with the community to explain the challenges and gather input on preferred solutions. Additionally, collaboration with the neighboring Wei Wai Kum First Nation was essential, as they were directly impacted and owned land critical for several proposed interventions.

The action plan that emerged focused on a balance between protecting the environment and bolstering infrastructure. It included innovative yet practical solutions, such as monitoring and relocating at-risk plant species and designing infrastructure that could be adapted over time. One notable example was the creation of small bays to both dissipate wave energy and provide valuable habitats, highlighting how ecological and infrastructural goals could be achieved in tandem.

Despite being a long-term issue, which can be challenging to prioritize in the face of more immediate concerns, the City remained committed to addressing sea-level rise. They found creative solutions to initial funding challenges, including conducting preliminary assessments in-house and utilizing a co-op student for initial research, which helped secure grant funding for further expert input.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [https://results4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/TulsaCaseStudy\\_Final-2.pdf](https://results4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/TulsaCaseStudy_Final-2.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/case-studies/case-study-campbell-river-bc-develops-plan-protect-against-rising-sea-levels>

# Who Can Apply for Community Development Grants?

## Nonprofits

Usually at the forefront, with a direct connection to ground realities.

## Local Government

Equipped with regulatory powers to expedite projects.

## Educational Institutions

Universities or schools seeking funding for community-centric educational projects.

## Private Businesses

Particularly those with a corporate social responsibility (CSR) focus or those involved in public-private partnerships.

## DEI - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

These principles represent an organizational commitment to recognizing and appreciating individual differences, ensuring fair treatment for all, and creating environments where all individuals feel valued and can thrive. Many communities have adopted DEI initiatives to build stronger, more representative, inclusive cultures.

## Locating Grant Opportunities

Locating grant opportunities online requires a systematic approach. Here are several strategies and resources to guide you:

### Dedicated Grant Search Engines and Databases

- [Grants.gov](#): The official grant search tool of the U.S. federal government. It lists all federal funding opportunities.
- [Foundation Directory Online](#): This platform provides information on private foundations offering grants in the U.S.

### **GrantWatch:**

An online database for nonprofit grants, federal grants, and grants for small businesses.



**GrantsAlert.com:**

Like the previous directories, GrantsAlert helps you find grants and provides additional resources.

**Professional and Industry Associations**

- Some professional or industry-specific groups offer grants or have lists of funding opportunities relevant to their sector.

**University and Institution Websites**

- Many universities have offices dedicated to research and grants. They often maintain lists of grant opportunities for their faculty, students, and sometimes the public. Check out [NYU's Community Fund](#) as an example.

**Nonprofit Websites**

- Organizations like the [National Council of Nonprofits](#) have resources and tools for grant seeking, including lists of grant opportunities.

**Use Search Engines**

- Simple Google searches can be effective. Use keywords such as "environmental conservation grants" or "arts grants in California" to narrow down results.

**Library Resources**

- Many local libraries offer access to the Foundation Center's (now known as [Candid](#)) resources or other grant databases.

**Canadian Province, Territory, and Federal Government Websites**

- For province, territory, and Canadian federal government opportunities, check out [Canada Grant Watch](#), [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#), and [greenmunicipalfund.ca](#). For grants the Canadian Government offers, visit the [Government of Canada grants site](#).

**Social Media and Online Groups**

- [Follow grant-related groups or forums](#) on platforms like LinkedIn or Facebook. Many professionals share grant opportunities or insights into the grant-seeking process.

**Newsletters and Email Alerts**

- Many grant databases or related organizations offer newsletters that regularly update funding opportunities. Sign up for these newsletters to get alerts directly in your inbox.

**Network with Industry Professionals**

- Online networking [events, webinars, or forums related to grant writing](#) or your specific industry can be rich sources of information on upcoming or lesser-known grant opportunities.

**Check Out Regional or Local Foundations**

- Local community foundations often have grants available for projects within their communities. Their websites can provide details about these opportunities.

**Affinity Groups and Collaboratives**

- Some groups, such as women's foundations or organizations focused on specific ethnic or cultural communities, offer grants and funding opportunities.

When identifying potential grant opportunities, thoroughly review eligibility requirements, deadlines, and application guidelines. If you're serious about seeking grants regularly, consider investing in grant management software or tools to track and manage opportunities.



# Understanding Grant Sources

Various entities offer grants with distinct goals, priorities, and application processes. Here's a concise overview of the primary grant providers and their characteristics:

## Federal Government Grants

Federal agencies distribute funds to organizations, institutions, and occasionally individuals for public benefits, covering areas like health, education, research, and infrastructure.

## State/Provincial Government Grants

These grants provided by state or province-level government departments or agencies primarily support projects beneficial to that state's residents.

## Local Government Grants

Offered by municipalities such as cities or counties, these grants emphasize local community projects and initiatives.

## Foundation Grants

Often set up by individuals, families, or companies, foundations distribute grants from their endowment returns or receive donations for charitable objectives.

## Corporate Grants

Companies dispense these funds, typically through their corporate social Responsibility (CSR) arms or associated foundations, aligned with the corporation's ethos or areas of interest.

## NGO and Nonprofit Grants

Prominent NGOs or nonprofits sometimes support smaller entities or projects that resonate with their overarching mission.

## Educational Grants

Academic institutions like universities or colleges grant funds, often centered around research, novel solutions, or societal challenges.

## Individual Grants

Affluent individuals may designate a portion of their assets for causes they champion, independently or via foundations.

## Trust-based Grants

Trusts, formed to govern and use assets for specified intentions, might be oriented towards backing charitable endeavors or distinct objectives.

## Grants from Religious Bodies

Religious establishments often disburse grants for community outreach, humanitarian causes, or endeavors reflecting their spiritual beliefs.

To optimize the chances of obtaining a grant, you must comprehensively understand the provider's goals, stipulations, and application guidelines. Crafting a proposal that synergizes with a grantor's vision and objectives enhances the probability of gaining approval.





## Best Practices for Applying

### 1. Focus/Priority Funding Areas

- Check the grant's focus areas (e.g., health, education) to see if it aligns with your project.

### 2. Service Area

- Ensure your community operates in the specified geographical area of the grant.

### 3. Demographics of Service Area

- Some grants require data on the demographics you serve, like low-income populations. Use resources like the [Census Bureau](#) website in the U.S. and [Statistics Canada, Census data](#)

### 4. Grant Cycles/Disbursement

- Understand the time frame for grant approval and fund disbursement. Often, there's a significant gap between application and receiving funds. Distribution can take between one and three months. The grant funder will set a date.

### 5. Alignment of Missions

- Prioritize grants that align with your organization's mission. Avoid the trap of "chasing money" – ensure a genuine fit between your objectives and the grant's focus.

## Before Starting the Search: Organizational Assessment

### **Mission Statement/Project Idea:**

Ensure you have a clear mission or project idea. Align your funding needs with your community's mission and strategy. Your mission statement should:

- Concisely convey your community objectives. While some target specific issues, others have broader, dynamic aims.
- Balance current and future goals for consistency in your mission.
- Reflect on your community's values and their influence on your mission.
- Stick to facts and avoid over-selling.
- Offer a compelling story/backstory: Share the inception story of your project, aligning it naturally with the grantmaker's mission.
- Don't deviate from the core message: Communicate why your community is the most suited for the grant while avoiding unnecessary details.

### **Type of Funding Needed**

- Decide whether you're seeking general operating funds; they provide the essential capital nonprofits require for daily functioning—or project-specific funds. Understand the differences in application and reporting requirements.

### **Time Allocation**

- Designate dedicated time for grant research. Understand that this is a time-intensive process that can't be an afterthought. The writing process can take up to 100 hours (about 4 days), depending on complexity.

### **Budget**

- The grant budget is vital to your proposal as it clearly illustrates how the funds will be used to the grantor. While a persuasive narrative is beneficial, a detailed budget explicitly highlights your intentions.

## Other Best Practices

### **Solution-Centric Approach**

While highlighting challenges is essential, shift the focus towards your project's solutions, emphasizing the positive impact.

### **Vision for the Future**

Start with a clear vision statement that encapsulates your long-term goals. Break this down into phases or milestones to give a roadmap of your project's trajectory.

### **Sustainability and Adaptability**

Highlight strategies for future funding and resource conservation. Also, emphasize the project's flexibility to adjust to unforeseen challenges, ensuring resilience over the long term.

### **Monitoring and Continuous Engagement**

Describe the metrics and indicators for tracking progress. Outline strategies for maintaining active stakeholder engagement, ensuring alignment with evolving needs.

### **Capacity Building**

Shed light on initiatives to enhance the skills and capacities of your team, beneficiaries, and stakeholders. This prepares the groundwork for the project's longevity and adaptability.

### **Legacy and Lasting Impact**

Consider the long-term benefits and the enduring legacy your project aims to establish, assuring funders of sustained benefits from their investment.

### **Feedback and Learning**

Always seek feedback, especially from declined proposals. This provides insights for refining future applications.

### **Collaborations and Diverse Revenue Streams**

Highlight collaborations and partnerships, showcasing broader community support. Also, mention other committed or potential funding sources, displaying a multifaceted support strategy.





## Right-Sizing Grants for Your Community

Grants aren't one-size-fits-all. It is essential to tailor approaches to fit a community's specific needs, characteristics, and aspirations. In a bustling city, a grant might be best used for initiatives like tech incubators, public transportation improvements, or affordable housing projects, tapping into the urban dynamics and addressing pressing issues that impact a larger populace.

On the other hand, in a serene countryside town, the focus might shift towards sustaining the natural habitat, boosting local agriculture, or preserving cultural heritage, ensuring that the unique essence and slower-paced lifestyle are maintained while fostering growth and development.

Thus, grant proposals and subsequent projects must be conceived with a deep understanding of the local context, leveraging the existing assets of a region while aiming to mitigate its challenges. Crafting strategies with community input and a grounded sense of local nuances can pave the way for more effective and successful grant usage, fostering organic and sustainable development. Moreover, it encourages innovation and creativity in problem-solving, utilizing a place-based approach to enhance the community's well-being while respecting its inherent identity and spirit.

## Assessing the Scale

With grants, understanding your community's capacity is paramount. Overreaching can lead to mismanagement, where resources are stretched too thin, projects become unsustainable, and the objectives are not met, disappointing the community and potentially jeopardizing future funding opportunities. It can also foster a climate of stress and burnout among team members, derailing the project's timeline and affecting the quality of the outcomes.

Conversely, underutilizing the grant can mean missed opportunities – an insufficient scale of intervention might fail to address the underlying issues effectively, leaving significant potential benefits on the table. It can negatively affect the community's ability to maximize available resources, not fully leveraging the grant to facilitate substantial change.

By keeping a finger on the pulse of the community's capacity, leaders can devise ambitious yet grounded strategies, innovative yet feasible, effectively avoiding the pitfalls of overreaching or under-utilization and guiding the community towards a path of successful and harmonious development.

## Seeking and Finding Expert Help

Finding a grant-writing expert can be crucial for obtaining funding for projects, nonprofits, or research. Here are some methods to locate experienced grant writers:

### Professional Associations

Many professional associations related to grant writing or nonprofit management have directories of their members. For example, the [American Grant Writers' Association](#) (AGWA) offers resources and a list of certified grant writers.

### Job Boards & Freelance Platforms

Websites such as Indeed, Glassdoor, LinkedIn, or specialized nonprofit job boards often have listings for grant writers. Freelance platforms like Upwork, Freelancer, and Guru have many freelance grant writers you can hire for a project.

### Universities and Colleges

Many higher education institutions have their grant writers to assist faculty with research proposals. Sometimes, these professionals take on freelance projects or can refer you to someone who does.

### Recommendations and Referrals

Ask around in your professional and personal networks. Word of mouth can be one of the most effective ways to find quality professionals. If you know people involved in nonprofit work, academia, or research, they might have worked with a grant writer before and can recommend someone.

### Consulting Firms

Some consulting firms specialize in nonprofit management, fundraising, and grant writing. Hiring a firm might be more expensive than an individual, but they often come with a team and additional resources.

### Workshops and Training

Look for workshops, webinars, or training sessions on grant writing in your area. Attendees and instructors can be valuable resources.

### Library Resources

Some libraries offer resources and lists of local grant writers.

### Google Search

Entering "grant writing experts" or "grant writers in [your location]" can yield many valuable results. Check reviews or ask for references when considering someone you find online.

### Specialized Directories

Some websites or organizations maintain directories of grant-writing professionals.

## When you're considering hiring a grant writer:

### **Ask for Samples**

Always ask for samples of their previous work.

### **Check References**

Ask for and contact references to understand their success rate and work style.

### **Understand Their Fee Structure**

Some grant writers charge a flat fee, and others charge an hourly rate.

Remember that choosing the ideal grant writer isn't solely about their writing prowess. It also hinges on their grasp of your industry, their capacity to encapsulate the core of your project or organization, and their track record in obtaining funds.



## Post-Grant – Execution, Monitoring, and Reporting

Effective execution ensures community transformation. Regular monitoring and transparent reporting are non-negotiable. The post-award phase is a critical stage in the lifecycle of a grant, marked by the actualization of the project, continuous reporting, auditing, and the final closeout process.



**Implementation:** Once awarded, you must execute the grant project diligently and faithfully as agreed upon.

- **Reporting**

- Ensure open lines of communication with your grant and program officers for a smooth workflow.

- **Monitoring**

- The awarding agency may oversee your progress, financial activities, and adherence to performance metrics.

- **Report Submission**

- Always be aware of and meet the specific reporting requirements of your grant. This could be periodic or at particular milestones.



**Auditing:** All parties, from the grant-making agencies to the grant recipients, are audited to ensure transparency and correctness.

- **Agency Auditing**

- Various entities such as GAO and OIG monitor grant-making agency's policies and expenditures.

- **Recipient Auditing**

- The performance and compliance of grant recipients are also scrutinized.

- **Single Audits**

- Non-Federal entities with an expenditure of \$750,000 or more in Federal awards in a fiscal year must undergo a single audit, ensuring they have correctly managed and spent the funds.



**Closeout:** The last step in the post-award phase.

- **Reports**

- Recipients submit the final financial and programmatic reports.

- **Deadlines**

- Be sure you understand all required reports and when they must be submitted after the grant's expiration or termination.

- **Confirmation**

- The award is deemed complete only when the awarding agency confirms the recipient has fulfilled all grant terms.

- **Property Management**

- If the grant money was used to acquire property, its management is critical, as the grant prescribes.

- **Record Retention**

- Keep all grant-related records from the final expenditure report for at least three years.

After receiving an award, the phase involves ongoing tasks such as implementation, reporting, auditing, and finalization. It's essential to stay ahead, comply with the grant's conditions, and consistently communicate transparently with your grant officials.



## Trends in Community Development Grants

In today's digital era, grants prioritize technological innovations to build stronger, more creative communities. They support virtual communities, bridging gaps and offering universal access to information. Emphasis on digital infrastructure ensures all have access to resources, aiding diverse needs from remote work to telemedicine. With sustainability at the forefront, grants back green tech, conservation, and education that promotes environmental responsibility. Grant applicants are urged to be innovative and embrace a broader definition of success, encompassing connectivity, knowledge dissemination, and digital proficiency, equipping communities with a future filled with digital challenges and opportunities.

## Conclusion & Further Resources

Community development empowers groups to address shared challenges, prioritizing their genuine needs collaboratively. By actively involving community members in decisions, it fosters a sense of ownership and engagement. Grant programs amplify this by emphasizing community participation, enhancing the likelihood of success, and improving quality of life. Community development is pivotal in achieving enhanced social, economic, and cultural well-being for communities.

## Let's Recap

- Community development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems.
- It aims to improve the quality of life in a specific locality or community by creating better social, economic, and cultural outcomes.
- Community development encompasses tangible and intangible outcomes, such as infrastructure projects, community cohesion, and capacity building.
- The process empowers individuals and groups to take actions that improve their situations rather than relying solely on external agencies or bodies. By allowing community members to participate in the decision-making process actively, the process ensures that decisions made are relevant to the community's actual needs and desires.

## Common Terms & Acronyms

### **Block Grant**

Block grants are federal funds for specific state/province or local initiatives. While backed by federal money, they are managed by state or local governments, as these authorities are deemed more apt for addressing local challenges. Typically, these grants aim to enhance social welfare programs.

### **CDBG - Community Development Block Grant (U.S. and Canada)**

Both in the U.S. and Canada, CDBG offers yearly grants to states/provinces, cities, and counties to foster urban development, mainly for the low- and moderate-income population.

### **FCM - Federation of Canadian Municipalities (Canada)**

FCM offers grants for municipal environmental projects, emergency preparedness, anti-racism, equity and inclusion, Indigenous partnerships, and about 40 other community development categories, each with multiple grant opportunities.

### **GMF - Green Municipal Fund (Canada)**

Green Municipal Funds are for environmental grants.

### **EDA - Economic Development Administration (U.S.)**

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) is the sole federal agency dedicated to economic development. EDA supports local economic growth nationwide by emphasizing that sustainable development should be driven by local needs and conditions, working directly with communities to enhance their economic development capacities.

### **DED - Departments of Economic Development (U.S.)**

These are often found within states and may have different names, such as New York's Empire State Development.

### **NLC - National League of Cities (U.S.)**

NLC is an association consisting of city, town, and village leaders dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for their present and future residents.

### **CDFIs - Community development financial institutions (U.S.)**

CDFIs are specialized lenders that bring capital to low-income, low-wealth communities. CDFI financial products and services support small businesses, affordable housing, community facilities, and more nationwide.

## Common Terms & Acronyms

### **NGOs - Non-government Organizations (U.S. and Canada)**

An NGO, or Non-Governmental Organization, is a nonprofit group that operates independently of any government, typically to address a social or political issue. NGOs can be local, national, or international in scope. They are usually funded by donations and often run by volunteers. NGOs can cover a wide range of sectors, including health, environment, education, human rights, and more, and they often play a crucial role in promoting social change, development, and humanitarian efforts worldwide.

### **General Operating Funds**

General operating support refers to funds granted to back a core mission rather than individual projects or programs.