

Trailblazer Micro-Grants Program: A Guide for Circular Economy Transformation for Squamish Organizations

INTRODUCTION

The District of Squamish is pleased to launch the Circular Economy Micro-Grants Program for 2024, supported by the Province of BC's Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP). With a total funding pool of \$50,000, these micro-grants provide up to \$5,000 per organization, helping businesses and non-profits shift from traditional linear models to more sustainable circular operations. These funds can support a range of projects, activities and purchases that promote circular economy principles, ultimately helping organizations achieve sustainable wins. This guide is designed to assist organizations in preparing their applications, ensuring they can effectively utilize the grants for both environmental and economic advancements.

Recognizing the benefits of a circular economy, including job creation and environmental sustainability, in October 2023, the Council endorsed a comprehensive [Circular Economy Roadmap and Implementation Plan](#) (Plan). This Plan focuses on developing a local circular business ecosystem, enhancing connections with the research community, and supporting local businesses. It aligns with Squamish's [Community Climate Action Plan \(2020\)](#) and [Zero Waste Action Plan \(2022\)](#), providing structured efforts to meet community needs, address challenges to circular adoption, and amplify the impact of local and regional initiatives. In Squamish, there is ample opportunity to integrate these principles, particularly within the key sectors of the built environment, food systems, and textiles, as outlined in the CE Plan.

The Micro-grants Program aims to fund local organizations to adopt and enhance circular practices, supporting projects that demonstrate a sustainable win, big or small. While this guide suggests various potential uses for the grants, applicants are welcome to propose innovative projects from any sector that align with circular economy values, ensuring flexibility in funding to meet the community's sustainability goals.

POTENTIAL USE CASES OF MICRO-GRANTS FUNDING

<p>1 Investing in Equipment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Purchase or upgrade equipment that enables more efficient use of resources and waste reduction. • Example Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Buying composting systems to manage organic waste. ○ Investing in reusable packaging systems or materials. ○ Purchasing a dishwasher to move away from single-use items. ○ Upgrading to more energy-efficient manufacturing tools. ○ Other relevant activities.
<p>2 Waste Audit and Diversion & Reduction Improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Identify key areas where your organization can increase waste diversion, reduce waste, and implement improvements. • Example Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conducting waste audits to track and analyze waste generation, identify opportunities for diversion and reuse. ○ Consulting with waste management experts to develop reduction strategies. ○ Implementing waste sorting and recycling stations throughout the business premises. ○ Other relevant activities.
<p>3 Exploration for Circular Strategy Development or Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Allow organization owners and staff to invest time or resources in developing and assessing plans that advance circular principles. • Example Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocate staff time towards researching and/or assessing circular practices for financial viability, technical feasibility, market demand, or environmental impact. ○ Allocate staff time to engage other staff, manager, stakeholders, partners. etc. in circular strategy development, assessment or business plans that advance circular practices. ○ Hire a consultant/advisor to support assessment of circular practices where in-house expertise is lacking e.g., product lifecycle analysis. ○ Allocate paid time for staff to research and write grants to leverage more significant funding opportunities. ○ Other relevant activities.
<p>4 Staff Training on Circular Economy Opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Educate and train employees on circular economy principles and practices. • Example Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshops led by experts in circular economy strategies. ○ Online courses and certification programs. ○ Development of training materials tailored to your business's specific needs. ○ Allocate staff time to train other staff. ○ Other relevant activities.

5 Promoting Circular Programs and Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective: Increase awareness and engagement with your organization’s circular economy efforts. ● Example Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organizing community or industry events to showcase your circular projects. ○ Creating marketing materials (e.g., brochures, videos) that highlight your circular initiatives. ○ Engaging with local media to promote events and initiatives. ○ Other relevant activities.
6 Idea Generation Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective: Foster innovation and collaborative problem-solving regarding circular practices. ● Example Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hosting hackathons focused on developing new circular business models or products. ○ Organizing brainstorming sessions or innovation workshops for employees and stakeholders. ○ Engaging external innovators or students to bring fresh perspectives. ○ Other relevant activities.
7 Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective: Identify initiatives specific to your organization that can advance circular practices.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Through the Province of BC’s REDIP funding, the District of Squamish plans to allocate \$50,000 to be distributed among successful applicants. These funds will be administered through Community Futures Howe Sound, the District of Squamish Economic Development partner organization. The maximum funding request is set at \$5,000. Applications seeking funding exceeding this amount must demonstrate strong community engagement, collaboration, and benefits and applicants are encouraged to explore the Innovation Challenge offered by the Economic Development Department.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible organizations

- Squamish or Squamish Nation entrepreneurs with a circular economy concept, who do not yet have a Squamish business license.
- Existing businesses and non-profits organizations with a Squamish business license.

Eligible projects/activities

- Projects and activities must demonstrate alignment with one or more of the core principles of a circular economy, including reducing the use of virgin materials, prioritizing regenerative

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resources, extending the lifetime of products, and using waste as a resource. Please refer to the ['Potential Use of Micro-Grants Funding'](#) section for examples of projects.

- Each organization may apply for funding for only one project or activity under the micro-grants program. However, the same organization can also apply for both the micro-grants and the Innovation Challenge with the same idea. The Innovation Challenge proposal must include a partnership with other organizations aimed at solving a community problem. The micro-grants application should focus on addressing an organizational challenge related to circularity.

KEY DATES

1. Application Submission	This is an ongoing application period, with applications accepted until 27 September 2024 . In your application, please outline how you intend to use the micro-grant to enhance your business's circular activities. Refer to Appendix A for the required application format and minimum proposal criteria. Applications will be reviewed and approved on an ongoing basis until all funds are allocated or the deadline is met.
2. Approval and Disbursement of Funds	<p>Priority will be given to applicants based on the order of their submission, with funding distributed on a first-come, first-served basis and upon meeting of eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The District of Squamish will assess proposals based on their potential impact and feasibility. Successful applicants will be notified by 15 November 2024, regarding the disbursement of funds. These funds will be administered by Community Futures Howe Sound, the District of Squamish's Economic Development partner organization.</p>
3. Spending Cut-off and Reporting:	Successful applicants must fully utilize the funds by 31 March 2025 , and submit a report to the District of Squamish Economic Development team by 1 May 2025 . The report should detail the amount requested and how it was used for the proposed purpose.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. APPLICANT SUBMISSIONS

Using the application form outlined in [Appendix A](#), applicants should submit proposals via email in Word or PDF document format. Submit your application via email to Economic Development Department at the District of Squamish at economicdevelopment@squamish.ca with the subject line “Trailblazer Micro-Grants Application”.

2. REVIEW AND AWARD

The District of Squamish will evaluate proposals for their potential impact and feasibility. Priority will be given to applicants based on the order of their submission, with funding distributed on a first-come, first-served basis and upon meeting of eligibility criteria.

Successful applicants will be notified by **15 November 2024**. Each approved proposal may receive up to \$5,000 in funding. Details of approved submissions will be made public following their approval.

3. REPORTING

Approved funds must be strictly used for the purposes specified in the application in accordance with the terms provided by the District of Squamish. Successful applicants must fully utilize the funds by **31 March 2025** and submit a report to the District of Squamish Economic Development team by **1 May 2025**. The report should detail the amount requested and how it was used for the proposed purpose. The District of Squamish reserves the right to modify or cancel the Micro-Grants program at any time.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The District of Squamish is bound by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (British Columbia) and all documents submitted to the District of Squamish will be subject to the provisions of this legislation.

SUBMISSIONS, QUESTIONS AND CONTACT PERSON

Questions and submissions are to be directed to Economic Development Department, at economicdevelopment@squamish.ca.

DISCLAIMER

This Micro-Grants program is a grant program only. The grant funds will be administered by Community Futures Howe Sound, a partner organization of the District of Squamish. A contract will be established between Community Futures Howe Sound and the applicant for the disbursement of the funds.

Award of funding will be at the discretion of the District of Squamish and such discretion will not be fettered by this application process. The District of Squamish reserves the right to only partially proceed with this funding or to abandon the Micro-Grants program. All information submitted through this application process is subject to the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act.

APPENDIX A

APPLICATION FORM OUTLINE

Your application should follow the outlined format below, which can be submitted as either a Word or PDF file, and at a minimum, cover the following topics. (**Word count: maximum 750 words**)

1. **PROJECT NAME**
2. **MAILING ADDRESS, AND APPLICANT CONTACT DETAILS**
3. **ORGANIZATION AND APPLICANT DETAILS**

Provide a description of your organization, including its products or services, and detail the experience and qualifications of the applicant (e.g., resume, organization profile, organizational chart), and how it meets the eligibility requirements.

4. **MICRO-GRANT FUNDING UTILIZATION** Provide a description of how the micro-grant will be utilized for your project. Ensure to include all of the below-requested information:

MICRO-GRANT DESCRIPTION

- **Project or Activity type:** Identify the project or activity type from the Potential Uses table. If there is a different type of project than those listed, please explain how it aligns with one or more core principles of a circular economy.
- **Project Use:** Explain how the micro-grant will fund the specific activities or purchases.
- **Project Stage:** Explain the current status of your project.
- **Problem Addressed, Deliverables and Circular Economy Alignment:** What specific issue is your project designed to solve? Describe the deliverables you will achieve with the funding and how these activities support circular economy principles.

5. MICRO-GRANT EXECUTION AND BUDGET

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Explain the staff roles and responsibilities of those responsible for the specific project.
- **Timeline:** Provide a timeline for the project's execution.
- **Budget:** Specify the budget request, detailing the amount up to \$5,000 and how it will be allocated.

Submit your application via email to Economic Development Department at the District of Squamish at economicdevelopment@squamish.ca. with the subject line "Trailblazer Micro-Grants Application".