



Applicant Guide

Community-University Engagement Support (CUES) Fund

2024/2025 Program Intake

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Program Overview

Community-University Engagement Support (CUES) is a funding program that supports eligible community organizations in British Columbia to build partnerships and pursue shared projects with faculty, staff and students at The University of British Columbia (UBC). We support partners undertaking collaborative, community-engaged research, knowledge exchange, and teaching and learning projects that benefit communities across the province.

A total of \$700,000 is available for the 2024/25 cohort, paid directly to community partners, if applicable.

Community-university partnerships can enrich UBC research and education, support the non-profit sector, and help communities thrive. The CUES fund prioritizes reciprocal, inclusive engagement, and seeks to remove or reduce financial barriers to relationship development and partnership activities so all communities — especially those who are historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized— can benefit.

Jointly administered by UBC Community Engagement and the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, CUES supports UBC’s commitment to “engage ethically through the exchange of knowledge and resources for everyone’s benefit” as stated in UBC’s [Strategic Plan](#).

CUES Overview	
Purpose	To explore and build foundations for new community-university relationships; to grow and strengthen existing community-university relationships through shared action.
Type of partnerships supported	<p>CUES funding supports both new and established partnerships.</p> <p>For new partnerships, CUES funding can help get ideas and projects off the ground, and enable the time needed to build trust, identify knowledge gaps, and design collaborative projects that will benefit a community-identified need or priority.</p> <p>For established partnerships that have already been working together and want to do more, CUES can help you scale or implement the findings of a previous or ongoing collaboration that will benefit a community identified need or priority.</p>
Funding amount	\$10,000- \$25,000 per project
Project length	Up to 18 months
Example activities <i>(This is not an exhaustive list)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship-building activities or networking events • Needs assessments or programmatic evaluations • Piloting community-level programs or services • Developing or delivering community-level training • Co-producing guides or decision-making tools

Principles of Engagement

CUES-funded projects embody the following principles of engagement:

Principles of Engagement	
<i>Reciprocity</i>	Exchanging resources and knowledge in a manner that benefits everyone involved.
<i>Flexibility and Openness to Learn</i>	Listening to and learning from each other, admitting to and addressing mistakes, and adapting approaches to changing contexts, needs, or priorities.
<i>Transparency</i>	Having clear, honest, and ongoing dialogue about process, ownership, access and motivation.
<i>Diversity and Inclusion</i>	Listening to and learning from communities that have been historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized. Recognizing, respecting, and valuing diverse knowledge, experiences, and contexts.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

CUES funding supports relationship building and shared projects that are co-led by at least one eligible **principal community applicant** (external to UBC), and one eligible **UBC principal applicant** (faculty, staff or students). Before you start planning your CUES application, please check to ensure all partners meet these minimum eligibility criteria:

The principal community applicant organization:

- Is a registered charity, a registered non-profit organization*, or other qualified donee* listed by the Canadian Revenue Agency ([click here to search your organization’s charitable status](#));
- First Nation band council without qualified donee status are welcome to contact us at cues.fund@ubc.ca to explore eligibility options.
- If you are unsure of your eligibility, please email cues.fund@ubc.ca with the full name of your organization, along with its GST, BN or Tax Exemption Number.

*In cases where a community partner is unable to accept a grant, funds may be dispersed to the partnering UBC department or unit.

The UBC principal applicant:

- Is a current faculty member, staff member, post-doctoral fellow, or student. **Please note that adjunct, clinical, emeritus faculty or lecturers, post-doctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students must have a faculty sponsor who is willing to co-sign their application.**
- Is associated with a UBC campus (Vancouver or Okanagan) or site, such as a UBC-affiliated hospital.

- Is responsible to ensure the proposal complies with ethics review board requirements, if it is research-based and involves human participants. Please use the following links to find out more information from the Office of Research Ethics at [UBC Vancouver](#) and [UBC Okanagan](#).

Both partners:

- Must ensure that majority of their project activities are based in British Columbia. Activities outside of Canada are not eligible.
- Are able to commence CUES-funded work together in Spring 2025 (within 60 days of receiving funds) and co-lead the proposed activities throughout the entire funding period (up to 18 months).
- Are not submitting as principal applicants on other CUES grants concurrently. Community and UBC applicants may be involved in more than one active CUES project at a time, but not as principal applicants.

Have questions about eligibility? Send us an email at cues.fund@ubc.ca.

Expense Guidelines & Budget Reciprocity

CUES funding is intentionally flexible to support the different costs associated with community engagement activities. Below are general expense guidelines and some examples of eligible and ineligible expenses.

Eligible Expenses

CUES funds are intended to serve as an alternative source of funding for expenses not typically eligible under tri-agency research grants (such as CIHR, NSERC, or SSHRC).

Expenses must be related to the proposed relationship and/or partnership-building activities and outcomes, or activities that help support community-engaged research, knowledge exchange, civic/public engagement and/or engaged teaching and learning projects. Examples of eligible expenses include:

- Salary/wages for project team members supporting relationship building and/or partnership-development activities.
 - **Important note:** CUES funds can be used by a community partner to hire a UBC student if they find the student to be the most suitable candidate for the position. However, CUES is not intended to support student placements that are part of mandatory or elective degree programs (i.e., when a student is hired to fulfill program requirements). CUES should not be relied upon to meet structural or ongoing needs for student placements. If hiring a UBC student, no more than 50% of the CUES budget may go to this line item.
- Honoraria and/or equitable compensation for community members, elders, leaders, and knowledge keepers.
- Training or education fees necessary for project team members to fully participate or contribute.
- Program or organizational evaluations or assessments.
- Engagement, hospitality, and catering costs for events and meetings, including travel, accommodation, and facilities/space rental fees.
- Equipment and supplies that directly support relationship and/or partnership-building activities.
- Administrative costs related to running the project or working with a financial intermediary (if necessary); please consult with CUES program staff before including this line item in your budget.

Please note this list is not exhaustive, these are only common examples we have seen over the years. A good rule of thumb to determine if a cost is eligible or not is: **would the community organization be taking on this cost as a result of working with UBC?** If the answer is yes, the expense is likely eligible.

Ineligible Expenses

- Direct costs of academic research, such as those already covered by tri-agency funding bodies (CIHR, NSERC, or SSHRC).
- UBC faculty or staff salaries
- Core costs/expenses for community partner organizations, such as salaries associated with the organization's daily operations, programming, or office equipment that are not directly related to the project
- Retroactive expenses
- Costs of alcohol/liquor licenses.

Reciprocity in the Budget

Strong applications will apply the principle of **reciprocity** in their budget and show alignment with community practices on salaries, stipends, and honoraria. As you prepare your budget, consider if your proposed salaries, stipends, and honoraria are appropriate and fair. Consult or confirm what the community best practice is and what wage expectations are for the type of work being undertaken. Applicants are encouraged to refer to UBC's [Indigenous Financial Guidelines](#) for payments to Indigenous partners and community members (page 20).

How to Apply

Applying for CUES is a two-step process:

Step 1: Develop and submit your Notice of Intent (NOI)

Deadline: September 27, 2024

All CUES co-applicants are required to submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to verify their eligibility and provide a brief overview of who they are, what their proposed project is about, and who it will serve. The NOI is for administrative purposes and will only be reviewed by the Community Engagement Office. Everyone who submits an NOI and meets the eligibility requirements will be invited to submit a full application. Email invitations will go out by October 4, 2024.

Before drafting the NOI, co-applicants are encouraged to review this guide and the [CUES website](#), confirm their eligibility and outline their shared project. **Please do not submit an NOI without first consulting with and gaining approval from your co-applicant.** Responses to questions in the NOI can be prepared in advance ([questions are available here](#)), then copied and pasted into the webform before the submission deadline of September 30, 2024.

After submitting an NOI, both co-applicants will receive a confirmation email with the information provided. If there are issues with eligibility, CUES program staff will reach out within 5 business days.

Step 2: Develop and submit your full application

Deadline: November 30, 2024

All eligible applicants who submitted an NOI by September 27th will receive an **email invitation** to submit a full CUES application. This email will contain a link to the CUES application webform, the CUES application questions, budget template, and instructions for submitting the complete application. (These items are also linked below.)

Applicants are encouraged to download and review the CUES application questions early. This will help them familiarize themselves with the questions, prepare their responses, and gather any additional information that is necessary. Before submitting, the Principal Community Applicant, the Principal UBC Applicant, and any UBC Faculty Co-signers (if applicable) are expected to review and approve of the application.

To submit the full 2024 CUES application, please complete the following steps:

1. Draft your [CUES application](#) with your co-applicants. When you have completed the questions, please pdf the document and title it using the naming convention “**2024 CUES Application Principal Community Applicant Last Name_Principal UBC Applicant Last Name**” (e.g. 2024 CUES Application “Walker_Gercken”)
2. Complete the [budget spreadsheet](#). When you have finished drafting your budget, please pdf the document, using the same naming convention “**2024 CUES Budget Principal Community Applicant Last Name_Principal UBC Applicant Last Name**” (e.g. 2024 CUES Budget Walker_Gercken)
3. Fill out the [CUES application webform](#) (webform questions can be prepared in advance using this [template](#)).
4. Upload the pdf CUES application questions into the webform.
5. Upload budget spreadsheet into the webform.
6. Click “submit”. All completed applications must be submitted by **November 30, 2024**

Each Principal Community Applicant, Principal UBC Applicant and UBC Faculty Co-signer (if applicable) will receive a copy of the submitted application.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact us at cues.fund@ubc.ca.

Tips for a Strong CUES Application

#1. Review the CUES website and applicant guide thoroughly before you begin.

Familiarize yourself with the purpose of the fund, the principles of engagement and the evaluation criteria. Double-check both partners' eligibility and ensure the community partner is registered charity, qualified donee or a registered non-profit. Contact us if you have any questions before submitting your NOI.

#2. Work collaboratively with your partner.

Start the discussion early and check in often to ensure that you remain in agreement on your shared goals and roles in both the proposal development process and subsequent project activities. The strongest CUES applications clearly and honestly reflect the voices and interests of both UBC and community-based partners.

#3. Clearly define the community your project will impact, and how you are connected.

Successful CUES projects work in service of a particular community or communities. Strong proposals clearly identify all communities that are engaged and impacted by the project, and state clear plans for their involvement.

#4. Make explicit your commitment to reciprocity AND mutual benefit

Strong applications clearly state anticipated benefits for everyone involved: the community partner, the UBC partner, and the communities they intend to engage. Outline how community members, in addition to the community co-applicant and UBC co-applicant, co-construct the project and share knowledge. Explain both *how* you will work together and *what* you each hope to get from it.

#5. Paint a clear picture.

You may have a clear picture in your head of the proposed work you will do together, but your project and its community context could be brand new for the application reviewers. Please explain your project in the clearest terms possible using plain language. Spell out acronyms. Remember to describe the activities you will undertake together in detail. Be as concrete as possible, with a detailed project timeline of activities that and their related milestones and deliverables. **CUES is a community-focused fund, so your application should be clear and accessible, using less academic language than typical research funding applications.**

#6. Keep the evaluation criteria and principles of engagement top of mind.

The evaluation criteria for CUES applications are explained in the following section of this document. Each set of questions in the full application addresses an evaluation criterion. As you develop your answers, ensure that you are addressing the relevant key criteria and the associated principles of engagement. It might help to re-read your proposal from the perspective of a reviewer. On which criteria does your proposal score highest? Which areas may need more clarification or development? Do this exercise early so you have time to make any necessary changes.

How Proposals Are Evaluated

CUES applications are adjudicated by a multidisciplinary review panel composed of UBC faculty members, staff members, and community representatives from across British Columbia. Each application is reviewed in-depth and scored by three assigned reviewers using the evaluation criteria listed below. The scores are then averaged, which provides a ranking of applications. The review panel then convenes to discuss any applications with a high standard of deviation in scoring between the reviewers, finalize the rankings and to make recommendations for funding.

Evaluation Criteria

CUES applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria (see Table 1).

Applications may receive up to 5 points for each of the 7 evaluation criteria, to a maximum total score of 35. A score of “Excellent” or “5” will exceed the key criteria, while also making clear linkages to the [Principles of Engagement](#)

Table 1: Evaluation Rubric

Application Section	Criteria Addressed
Community Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directly addresses a well-defined, community-identified opportunity, priority area, or need. Demonstrates a commitment to engage with groups that have been historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized.
Partnership Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines if this is a new or existing partnership/collaboration. Articulates a clear commitment and desire to work with one another. Outlines the shared goals of the project. (If an existing partnership) Explains how the proposed work will grow or strengthen an existing relationship and advance previous work undertaken together. Important note: Whether or not a project has received previous funding, should be considered alongside other application details and not be the sole basis for deciding its eligibility for funding.
Community Benefits & Engagement Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulates how the project will benefit the community partner(s) and affected communities. Presents a community-driven approach for evaluating proposed activities and outcomes for affected communities. Includes a well thought out approach to engagement with community partner(s) and any affected communities. Explains how the project will integrate diverse perspectives into the work.
Academic Benefit	<p>Articulates how the project will advance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An area of academic study or research; Teaching or learning delivery; Public or civic engagement; or Knowledge exchange practices (If applicable) Outlines new curriculum, new course material and/or student engagement
Reciprocity & Resource Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly identifies each co-applicant’s respective role and how they will work together towards mutual benefit. Demonstrates equitable sharing of resources (e.g., funding, expertise, knowledge) between and among partners.
Project Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a detailed timeline of all relevant activities with clear start and end dates. Project activities, milestones and deliverables are reasonable and achievable. Project activities, milestones and deliverables are linked to project outcomes
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a reasonable and appropriate budget that reflects community priorities.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget items are clearly linked to proposed activities.• Budget items add up to project totals and includes an itemized breakdown (cost per item).• (If applicable) references other funds that will be leveraged |
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What to Expect if You're Approved

CUES is a highly competitive, with an average success rate of around 30%. Last year, an exceptional increase in applications resulted in a success rate of 24%.

If your project is approved:

- Successful applicants will receive a notice of approval by email. A Letter of Agreement (LOA) and an invoice template will be sent via **DocuSign**. Both co-applicants will be asked to sign the LOA while only the authorized community co-applicant (the contact who is expected to receive and manage the funding) will be asked to fill out the invoice template.
- Upon receiving the signed LOA and completed invoice, CUES staff will process the grant. Turnaround time for this process can range from 4 to 6 weeks.
- CUES projects are expected to begin no more than 60 days after funding approval is granted. Projects may run up to 18 months from the funding receipt date. Extensions of up to 6 months will be considered as necessary, but we ask that these be made before the project passes its 12-month mark).
- The CUES Program Manager will schedule an interim check-in approximately 6 months after the project start date.
- After completing the CUES project, recipients are asked to submit a project report within 2 months of the end date. Reporting options include:
 - Written report (a template will be provided)
 - Recorded interview or podcast (facilitated by the UBC Community Engagement team)
 - Site visit with the CUES Program Manager
 - Other- If you have another idea in mind for how you would like to report out on your project, please reach out to the CUES Program Manager to discuss options.
- All recipients will be asked to complete a CUES evaluation survey to help our team improve program delivery.

Contact Us

We are always happy to hear from potential applicants to answer your questions and help you interpret the application guidelines. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to CUES program staff at cues.fund@ubc.ca.