

Food Systems Program Grant FAQs & Examples

What are some examples of eligible projects and expenses under the \$5,000.00 Food Systems Program activity grant fall intake?

Please note: the fall intake specifically focuses on activities that can take place over the fall and winter months. All activities must be completed and all funds expended by March 31, 2026. This is not an exhaustive list. If you have an idea for a project and are unsure if it fits the project scope, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Provincial Coordinator, Sonja Grosse – Broemer.

- Indigenous Food related activities historically happening in the fall/winter, such as hunting, gathering, fishing, wild farming, foraging and related workshops.
- Planning for gardens, long term Food Sovereignty/Security, and/or the revitalization of food systems.
- Food preservation, preparation, and related knowledge sharing and gathering opportunities.
- Training workshops related to food and food relations.
- Putting community gardens, backyard gardens to rest for the winter and/or prepping them for early start up in spring.
- Seed starting, crop planning, fall cropping.
- Community kitchens.
- Butchering, smoking, seed saving, medicine making, traditional food tool making, and related workshops.
- Harvesting activities, celebrations & feasts with a knowledge sharing component.
- Building of related infrastructure or purchase of equipment/tools, such as garden boxes, gardening tools, greenhouses, root cellars, smokehouses, dipnets, and harvesting tools.
- Purchase of materials, such as soil, seeds, garden or harvesting tools etc.
- Honoraria and wages for food related labour and workshops/knowledge sharing sessions.
- And any combinations of these or other food related activities, provided they take place during the fall and winter months.

What are not eligible expenses or projects under the \$5,000.00 Food Systems Program grant?

- Administration fees above 10% are not an eligible expense.
- Providing or supporting pure access to food without any knowledge sharing or capacity building component in relation to food knowledge is not an eligible activity/project. For example, the creation or continuation of snack or meal programs, Food Hampers, and/or Food Banks are NOT eligible activities UNLESS there is a significant food skills or knowledge sharing component, such as the food provided is grown in the community garden or foraged on the land/in the water, people cook together for their meals or snacks. Food can **NOT** just be bought in the store and provided to people.

How soon will my application be reviewed?

Once an application is submitted, it will be reviewed by the Provincial Coordinator for completeness. The Provincial Coordinator may follow up to clarify aspects of your application. The review panel will assess the application after the intake is closed, and a decision will be made within five weeks after the deadline.

Does my application guarantee funding?

No, there will be an open call for proposals, and all applications will be reviewed by an internal and external committee. An approved Food Systems Program grant does not guarantee funding for the Learning Together, Growing Together Top Up.

Will our participation guarantee funding in future years?

No, at this time I-SPARC has only received a funding commitment for one year and therefore cannot make any guarantees or commitments. However, I-SPARC is working to partner with different organizations, to increase and diversify funding sources so that more communities and organization can receive funds in the future.

How are grant decisions made?

Applications will be reviewed for their alignment with the funding criteria. Components (among others) that we are looking for include:

- Population served: Our mandate is to serve Indigenous populations within BC. Therefore, while the applicant organization can serve other populations, the Indigenous population served by the specific proposed project must be **at least 75%**.
- The Project cannot just provide access to food, there **must be** a knowledge sharing and/or capacity building component in relation to food.
- Is there a long-term food security or food sovereignty vision within the community and for the proposed project or program?
- Ability to complete the project and meet its goals and objectives by March 31, 2026.
- Demonstrates involvement of community/population served.
- Balanced and realistic budget.
- Is this project a component of a larger scale program, endeavour, or plan?
- The impact the proposed project has on the community or the role it plays within the long-term food security or food sovereignty vision.
- Strong links between proposed project, the need for this specific project, and the community's long term food security/sovereignty vision.
- Is there a capacity building component?
- Is there a knowledge sharing component?

What funding amounts can be requested?

Any amount between \$500 and \$5,000 can be requested for the Food Systems Program grant and any additional amount between \$500 and \$3,000 can be requested for the Learning Together, Growing Together Top Up.

What can this grant money be used for?

The purpose of the Food Systems Program is to support food related activities, including the purchase of tools, equipment, materials, and/or the building of infrastructure that serve the long-term goal of food security/sovereignty within the population served. The purpose of the Learning Together, Growing Together Top Up is a community-led and strength-based approach to building capacity and increasing knowledge around food within respective populations.

Both leave it up to the community or organization to determine what their needs are and how to bridge those gaps best and with whom. However, both projects must be connected and serve the same long-term vision. They must also mainly serve an Indigenous Population.

What are some example activities for the Learning Together, Growing Together Fund?

The following activities are examples of what can be supported through the Learning Together, Growing Together Top Up.

Supported types of capacity building activities are:

- Hosting knowledge sharing sessions or delivering workshops in person.
- Participating in gatherings, conferences, knowledge sharing sessions, or attending training related to food security/sovereignty offered by a different community or external organization.
- Hosting webinars or participating in webinars.
- Development of learning/teaching materials.

Supported content of capacity building activities are:

- **Hosting** knowledge sharing sessions, webinars, workshops related to:
 - ➔ Indigenous Foods related activities.
 - ➔ Gardens and growing food.
 - ➔ Project planning, development, and implementation.
 - ➔ Food preservation.

➔ Food preparation.*

- **Attending** training, webinars, gatherings, conferences, knowledge sharing sessions, workshops provided by external organizations or communities related to:
 - ➔ Gardens and growing food.
 - ➔ Indigenous Food related activities.
 - ➔ Project planning, development, and implementation.
 - ➔ Food preservation.
 - ➔ Food preparation.*

*This is not an exhaustive list. Other activities may be considered if the application clearly demonstrates a connection to knowledge sharing and/or capacity building in relation to your community's food security or food sovereignty vision.

Can public schools and similar organizations apply to these grants?

Applicants must be either Indigenous led and/or serve Indigenous populations. In case of a public schools and similar organization it must be shown that the project:

- Is led by an Indigenous person or team, and/or guided by Indigenous peoples; and
- Serves mainly Indigenous Populations (at least 75% of the population served by the specific project must be Indigenous, please provide number of Indigenous Peoples served or percentage).

If you are a non-Indigenous teacher, education assistant, employee etc. you are welcome to apply, but you must demonstrate that there is Indigenous leadership within the project, and that the project serves Indigenous populations.

Can we only apply for one of the grants?

You can apply to the Food Systems Program grant as a stand-alone grant, however the Learning Together, Growing Together Fund is a top-up to the program grant. Only successful applicants of the Food Systems Program grant are eligible to receive the Learning Together, Growing Together top-up.

What if my grant proposal for the Food Systems Program grant is denied, can I still receive the Learning Together, Growing Together Top Up?

No, the Learning Together, Growing Together Fund is a top-up to the Food Systems Program grant and can only be received if your program grant application is approved.

How will I receive my grant payment?

Once you have been approved for a grant, we will reach out to request your direct deposit information, unless it was provided previously, or you provided it along with your application. To

register for direct deposit with I-SPARC please fill out the I-SPARC Direct Deposit Form and upload it together with a void cheque to your application or send both to food@isparc.ca.

Download the direct deposit form: [I-SPARC Direct Deposit Form](#)

What if our plans change after we have been approved for funding?

We understand that things can happen and that plans change. If yours do, please contact the Provincial Coordinator at your earliest convenience to discuss those changes so that the application can be updated.

What are the final reporting requirements for an approved grant?

All successful applications will be required to submit a final report by March 31, 2026. The final report template will be provided to all successful applicants.

What if I have not reported on a past Food Systems Program grant with I-SPARC?

This is additional funding that the Food Systems Program received and wants to make available to communities & organizations this year. If you received funds through the spring intake and are currently active within the Food Systems Program, you remain eligible to apply.

Can I save my application if I have not fully completed it? Will the application save?

Yes, the application form can be partially filled out, saved, and returned to later. Please refer to the overview and explanations provided at the beginning of the application form.

Can I obtain a copy of my application?

You have access to all applications (completed and in-progress via your account on the Granting Platform. Please contact the Provincial Coordinator Sonja Grosse - Broemer if there are any concerns or questions.

Food Systems Program: Examples of previously funded projects

The Food Systems Program follows a low barrier, flexible, trust based, and community driven approach that respects the unique needs, priorities, resources, realities, strengths, and challenges of each community. The Food Systems Program grant is purposefully broad to support a wide variety of projects. **Please note** that all activities must be completed by March 31, 2025 and applications should focus on activities that can take place during the fall and winter months.

Examples of previously funded projects

In the 2024/25 season we provided funding to a few schools that integrated knowledge centered around food into their curriculum. Some focused on Indigenous Food Knowledge, bringing kids out on the land, to hunting, foraging, and fishing camps, teaching them protocol and how to handle and preserve the harvested produce. Others focused on growing food in school gardens and teaching kids how to take care of plants, harvest them, and prepare or preserve them afterwards. Either project brought in people from the community, parents and Elders as mentors to teach the next generation.

There is a lot of examples of communities who used this funding in the past to build up their gardens and now that they are running more smoothly, they turned their focus on learning and teaching about Indigenous food knowledge. Oftentimes, involving Youth. Some are working on revitalizing historical harvesting areas, mapping their territory, and developing knowledge books and calendars.

We have communities in the project that are very remote and where a lot of the funding is spent on transportation to get needed material, and we have other more urban organizations where children in care are paired with Elders to learn more about Indigenous Food practices.

There are bigger scale farms within the project and some that just have a couple of gardening boxes. There is gardens and Indigenous food practices, such as hunting and fishing camps, there are projects that focus on infrastructure such as greenhouses and root cellars, as well as storage, processing, and mobile butchering facilities, and others that focus on preservation or food preparation techniques and methods.

A lot of communities and organizations are using these funds to complement other funds that have been received, such as bringing a more hands-on approach to a planned workshop series, prolonging activities, including more people.

The Learning Together, Growing Together Fund is more restrictive in its scope as it focuses on capacity building and knowledge sharing. Most projects focus on either offering workshops to their members, providing assistance for their members to attend gatherings or workshops with a food focus outside of their communities, or developing learning and teaching materials.

There are lots of possibilities and we are always happy to talk and discuss options. If you have a project idea or plan and you are unsure whether it fits within the scope of the Food Systems Program grant or the Learning Together, Growing Together Fund, please do not hesitate to reach out.