RMH COMMUNITY GRANTS

Application Guide

RURAL MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT
YEAR 5

PURPOSE OF RMHP COMMUNITY GRANTS

SUPPORT COMMUNITY ACTION TEAMS TO DEVELOP & IMPLEMENT LOCAL ACTION PLANS

The Rural Mental Health Project (RMHP) Community Grants program aims to support rural Community Action Teams as they identify local priorities and create action plans that advance community mental health, recovery, and wellbeing. Siloed approaches to community well-being are still predominant in rural Alberta; however, community advancements cannot be made by the actions of a single person or organization. The purpose of this grant is to fund community-owned, multi-sector efforts that improve community-wide collaboration. The Community Action Team can discover local priorities and develop possible solutions together. Collective action is proven to increase reach and impacts related to health and wellness in rural Alberta.

FIND AND STRENGTHEN EXISTING ASSETS AND RESOURCES

There are many services, programs, and supports available in each region of Alberta. The RMHP Community Grant encourages each community to become more aware of those assets, and to leverage local and regional strengths and assets within people, institutions, and spaces. Stronger coordination and connection across community-based and expert-based initiatives enhance the reach and use of available resources, improving community and individual outcomes.

APPLY NETWORK PRINCIPLES & TRAINING TO THE UNIQUE COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The RMHP approach and principles are evidence-informed, weaving across many bodies of knowledge, including academic, practice-based, and lived experiences. Animator training and RMHP Community Grants are rooted in the RMHP principles, providing flexibility for local action plans to reflect the unique circumstances and readiness within each community. Funded projects must apply these in meaningful ways in their communities. Principles are described on the following page.

PROMOTE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SUPPORT RURAL MENTAL HEALTH

The RMHP and Network aims to promote equitable access to funding and supports to rural Alberta. Often smaller communities do not receive the same amount of funds and resources as larger urban centres and may not have the capacity required to apply for funding opportunities. Different funding streams and supports are available to best suit local experience and capacity.

APPLICATION TIMELINES

- **December 16, 2024 -** Applications open
- **January 31, 2025** - Applications close
- **February 2025 -** Adjudication teams receive, review and adjudicate applications
- **March 2024** - Applicants are notified of the results of their application. Conditions may be included in the notice, with 2-3 weeks to review and respond.
- **April 2024** - Grant agreements shared, with all parties signing off, and funds are then distributed.

RURAL MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT PRINCIPLES

COMMUNITY-BASED
This grant aims to support rural Community Action Teams, comprised of citizens of all demographics, to participate in leadership, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. Successful communities will effectively demonstrate that citizens and multiple actors across sectors co-develop the goals and activities.

STRENGTHS-BASED
All communities have assets. Every community has people with valuable experiences, ideas, and talents. Every community has built, natural, social, and digital spaces that shape wellbeing. These assets are opportunities that can be celebrated, enhanced and woven into local action plans. This grant encourages communities to make better use of existing assets, which often go underused or unnoticed.

5 IN 5 PEOPLE HAVE MENTAL HEALTH
Mental health is not simply the absence of mental illness. All people have mental health. A person can have a mental illness and be mentally healthy. Conversely, a person may not have a diagnosed mental illness, but they could still feel mentally unwell.Our work aims to support strategies that build better mental health for all people (5 of 5) in the community. By thinking more broadly about mental health, we can start to consider ways of supporting flourishing, mentally healthy communities.

WHOLE COMMUNITY VIEW
There are many factors within communities that shape our mental health. Services are needed, but not sufficient to improve mental health. Therefore, we aim to fund activities that weave across multiple determinants of health, creating opportunities for change, improvement, and innovation.

COLLABORATIVE
Collaboration is the only process that can lead to lasting, meaningful change related to health and wellness. Local partnerships and a collective vision are essential elements at all levels of action, decision-making, and planning. Collective leadership is proven to increase reach and impacts related to health and wellness in rural Alberta and improve capacity and skill development among citizens. Therefore, successful applicants will clearly demonstrate collective leadership from the planning process to the evaluation.

DEVELOPMENTAL, LEARNING & LEGACY
Just like people, communities change over time. Learning cycles embedded in the action plan are needed to continually adjust actions as new information comes to light.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: Animators, Project, & Backbones

Carefully read all eligibility requirements before submitting an application.

1. ANIMATORS
To be eligible, communities must have an active Animator who meets the following criteria:
- Be *actively* facilitating the Community Action Team throughout the project/proposal *development* and implementation
- Complete all 7 training modules
- Be at least 3 months post-Animator Training
- Complete the Discovery Phase using the Community Discover fund ($2650) within the first 12 month following Training
- Submit a Summary Report, including an account of the $2650 allocated for community discovery work. For multi-community grants, each participating community must have an active Animator involved in co-writing the proposal and co-implementation.

2. PROJECTS
Please pay close attention to what is and is not eligible projects and features.
- Projects must be tailored to specific communities, using and building on existing strengths and assets (i.e., cannot copy-paste the same project across several communities in the same county).
- Proposals must sufficiently demonstrate that the proposed priority areas, objectives, and activities reflect the wishes of multiple, diverse community groups and sectors, not just a single person or organization's mandate.
  - If the project is focused on *establishing* a Community Action Team, the anticipated milestones and activities must be described (e.g., collective vision plan, rapport and trust activities, collaborative methods).
- Programs, activities, or events developed solely by the backbone organization are not eligible.
- Existing programs or a duplication of previous applications and activities are not eligible.
  - Community Action Teams may apply to expand on existing *community-led* initiatives or projects. To be eligible for this:
    - Application must sufficiently capture how the project builds upon legacy, learnings, and impacts
    - Demonstrate a reasonable change from the initial project
    - Additional funding is not guaranteed
- Compensation for Animators-only may be included but can be no more than 50% of the overall budget.
  a. Non-Animator honorariums are eligible within reason.
- Infrastructure and capital expenses, including costs for buildings, facilities or equipment, cannot exceed 25% of the total project budget.
- Projects focusing exclusively on service provision (e.g., counselling) are not eligible.
- Completion and quality of previous reporting may impact new applications.

3. BACKBONE ORGANIZATIONS

Each proposal must have a community backbone organization. The organization must be: a Non-Profit, Registered Charity, or affiliated with a local government (i.e., FCSS Office, First Nation, Métis Settlement, Municipality, Municipal District, or Special Area). Ineligible backbones include:
- A for-profit entity
- AHS and Health Advisory Councils
- Animator cannot be the sole director of a non-audited organization.
- The Animator cannot be the backbone main contact.
  - A separate person with signing authority (who is not directly supervised by the Animator) must be the Backbone Contact. Otherwise, a new Backbone Organization will have to be identified.

Non-audited organizations will have additional financial reporting requirements.
All projects must adhere to applicable municipal, provincial, and federal guidelines regarding public health and safety.

ELIGIBLE & INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Compensation related expenses – Expenses must be for individuals whose duties are directly and primarily related to activities undertaken as part of the project as stated in the grant agreement. Ineligible items include, but are not limited to:
- Discretionary severance and separation packages

Travel and Subsistence costs – Travel and subsistence costs include reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in accordance with standard Government of Alberta rates for fieldwork, research and other related activities, provided they are directly related to and necessary to carry out the activities under the project as set out in the grant agreement. Travel and subsistence costs must comply with and must not exceed the maximums allowable under the directive applicable to Government of Alberta employees. Ineligible items include, but are not limited to:
- Commuting costs between residence and place of employment

Equipment and supplies – Expenses include reasonable costs for the purchase of equipment and supplies which are directly related to and will be used primarily for the project as set out in the grant agreement. Ineligible items include, but are not limited to:
- Insurance costs for equipment
- Costs of construction, renovation of laboratories, offices

Computers – Computers are not an eligible expense under the RMHP Community Grant.

Services – Reasonable expenses for services that are directly related to the funded project activities as set out in the grant agreement. Expenses where a personal benefit could be derived are ineligible. Ineligible items include, but are not limited to:
- Alcohol
- Staff awards and recognition
- Professional training or development costs
- Insurance costs
- Monthly parking fees (unless required for project field work)
- Clothing costs

GRANT STREAMS

MICROGRANT
MAXIMUM: $5,000

Description:
The Microgrant is intended for individual communities seeking to implement small-scale projects to support Animators' work in their community.

INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY GRANT
MINIMUM: $5,001
MAXIMUM: $25,000

Description:
The Individual Community Grant is intended for individual communities seeking to implement medium- to large-scale projects in their community.

MULTI-COMMUNITY GRANT
MINIMUM: $25,001
MAXIMUM: $40,000

Description:
The Multi-Community Grant involves partnerships between Animators in different communities who are teaming up to create a broader or regional project that will support their respective communities. This stream aims to foster collaboration and allow Animators to work together and leverage each other's strengths and assets on a broader scale. Each community in the partnership must have an active trained Animator who is involved in the project.

APPLICATION WALK-THROUGH

The RMHP Grants support the implementation of collaborative action plans that the Animator and the Community Action Team develop to advance community mental health and wellbeing, according to local realities. The intention is to support rural communities as they use evidence-informed principles to guide actions and behaviours and apply them according to each community' assets, readiness and qualities. All 3 application forms focus on the same core concepts, with some variations. There are 3 streams of grants, so communities can apply for the stream that best suits their needs and capacity, including experience with grants.

The application has been streamlined this year. While simplified, this guide will serve as a helpful resource, providing additional details to consider including in your responses. Each section/question of the application will include all or some of the following components to guide you through the process:

1. **The Why** – This explains the reason behind the question, helping you understand its purpose and what the adjudicators are looking for.

2. **Tips for Success** – These are important points to include in your response to strengthen your application and increase your chances of success in securing the grant.

3. **Considerations** – These are optional insights that can provide valuable context and help adjudicators better understand your project's potential impact. They can also serve as helpful reminders for you to keep in mind as you implement your grant.

4. **Helpful Resources** - References to relevant sections of the training worksheets to assist you further.

The Guide, Rubric, and other appendices are designed to support your community's success.

OVERVIEW AND CONTACT INFORMATION

This page is straightforward, however there are often many mistakes that can become problematic during the application process. Here are helpful tips based on common mistakes.

- **Project Title** – Be descriptive and creative! It will be promoted on our website and to partners. Plus, a name created together in the community can be a source of pride and interest.
- **Community** – For multi-community grants, include each participating community.
- **Amount Requested** – Don't forget to name the specific amount that aligns with the budget. If it is for the max amount, state that.
  - USE THE CORRECT FORM! Each stream has a different application. Before getting started, check the top right-hand corner for the correct form.
- **Animator Name** – Recall the eligibility section, only active Animators are eligible. If multiple communities, then EACH active Animator must be named and actively involved.
- **Backbone** – Check eligibility section regarding backbone and project eligibility.

- **Signatures** – Each Animator and the Backbone contact (with signing authority, NOT the Animator twice).

Length requirements of each section. Each section has a 250-word maximum. Answers that are too short may not provide enough information for Adjudicators to evaluate your application, so be sure to include all key details.

Ask someone to read and edit before submitting! Be sure to have a friend or colleague that is NOT familiar with the project to review it for edits. Their questions may highlight information that should be added!

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Question: Tell us about your project in 250 words or less.

1. **The Why**

This question asks you to provide a concise summary of your project. It helps adjudicators quickly understand what your project is about, its goals, and its overall purpose.

2. **Tips for Success:**
   - *Be Clear and Concise* - Describe what your project is about and how you plan to carry it out. Keep it simple and ensure that it is easy to understand for a wide audience. This provides context to the Adjudication team as they read through your application.

Question: (For Multi-Community Grants) Tell us how your communities came together to plan this project.

1. **The Why**

The more inclusive and collaborative the planning process, the stronger and more effective the project will be. When all communities are equally invested, the likelihood of success and long-term sustainability increases. Understanding how the communities came together ensures that the project addresses each community's unique challenges and opportunities, while also creating a broader impact.

2. **Tips for Success:**
   - *Emphasize Collaboration:* Highlight how all the communities worked together to plan and write the grant application. Show how the partnership helped identify shared goals, strengths, and resources, and how blending ideas from all communities created a unified project vision.
   - *Build Shared Ownership:* Demonstrate that all communities have equal ownership in the project, from planning to decision-making.

PROJECT GOALS AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

<u>**Question:**</u> **How do you hope this project will support community wellbeing?**

1. **The Why**

This question allows you to demonstrate the impact your project will have on the community. It provides an opportunity to explain how the project will address key issues related to mental health, social connection, and overall wellness, showing how it aligns with the community's needs and priorities. This question helps adjudicators understand the long-term benefits of the project, not just in terms of immediate outcomes, but also how it will foster positive change and contribute to the overall wellbeing of the community in the future.

2. **Tips for Success:**
   - *Local Priorities***:** Show how your project will tackle the most important issues related to mental health or community wellbeing that your community has identified. Make sure to align your goals with the needs identified by your community, demonstrating that your project is both relevant and needed.
   - *Be Specific About Impact***:** Clearly outline what you hope to achieve both during the grant period and in the long term. Show how your activities will lead to lasting change in your community.

3. **Considerations:**
   - *Impact on Health:* Identify which aspects of mental health your project will help improve. Use the 8 Domains of Mental Health model to guide your response. This will show that your project is designed to help the community as a whole.

   - *Building on Strengths:* Highlight how your project will build on the existing strengths, resources, and assets already present in the community. This could include local groups, existing programs, or community members' skills and knowledge.

4. **Helpful Resources:**
   - *[Module 2, Section 1](#)* of the Animator Training for more details on community resources.
   - *[8 Domains of Mental Health Overview](#)* to help identify which areas your project will improve
   - [Community Action Planning Using the Domains of Mental Health Worksheet](#)

<u>**Question (OPTIONAL):**</u> **Take the opportunity to share if this grant builds on a previous RMH Project.**

1. **The Why**

This question allows you to show how your current project builds on past work and continues the momentum of previous efforts. If your project expands or improves upon a past initiative, it demonstrates that there is continuity and sustainability in your approach. This can help adjudicators understand that your project has a solid foundation and is part of a larger, ongoing effort to improve community wellbeing, making it more likely to have lasting impact. If this is your first project or you are starting something new, you can leave this section out.

2. **Tips for Success:**
   - *Connection to Previous Work:* Explain how this new project connects to, or builds on, the results of the previous RMH project.
   - *Improvement or Expansion***:** Describe any new ideas, goals, or approaches you are introducing with this project that were not part of the earlier work. Show how your project is taking the previous work to the next level.

3. **Considerations:**
   - *Lessons Learned:* Think about what worked well in the previous RMH project and how you plan to use those successes. If there were challenges, explain how you will address them in this new project.
   - *Community Impact:* Consider how the community will benefit from this ongoing effort. What impact did the earlier project have, and how will your new project continue or strengthen that impact?

4. **Helpful Resources:**
   - Review any reports or evaluations from the previous RMH project to identify successes and areas for improvement. This can help guide your new project and show continuity.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Question: **Using the table, for each Activity, please provide the:**
   - **Details of the activity**
   - **Timelines**

1. **The Why**

This section allows Adjudicators to assess whether your project is well-organized and achievable within the grant period. Providing clear activity details and timelines also shows that you've thought through the steps necessary to reach your goals and can manage the project effectively.

2. **Tips for Success:**
   - *Activity and Budget Alignment:* Ensure that your activities and budget match. The costs associated with each activity should be clearly linked to what you plan to do.
   - *Milestones and Flexibility:* Include key milestones or events that mark important steps in your project. Keep in mind that timelines can change, so allow for some flexibility if needed. Any changes should be explained during the project's reporting process.

3. **Considerations:**
   - *Connection to Goals*: Consider how each activity aligns with the goals you outlined in the previous section. Each activity should directly support and contribute to achieving your project's objectives.
   - *Community Involvement:* Consider how each activity involves the community. Highlight any opportunities for community members to participate or contribute, as this shows engagement and support for the project.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Question 5: **Using the table below, provide a brief breakdown of how the grant funds will be used to complete the project.**

1. **The Why**

This section helps adjudicators understand how financial resources will be allocated to support the project's activities. It ensures that the budget is realistic, well-planned, and aligned with the project's activities. By providing a detailed breakdown, you demonstrate that you've carefully thought about the costs associated with each aspect of the project, and how the funds will be spent.

2. **Tips for Success:**
   - *Clarity and Transparency:* Clearly show how each item in your budget will help accomplish your project goals. This section should show how the funds are directly tied to your project's activities and milestones.

   - *In-kind Contributions:* Be sure to include any in-kind donations, contributions from partners, and other funding sources to support the project. This demonstrates partner buy-in and community support, which will strengthen the application.
     - TIP: Before sourcing a contractor, consider people and the opportunity to get community members involved who hold that skill or passion (e.g. artists, retired professionals/trades)

   - *Budget Flexibility:* While it's important to be as precise as possible, understand that small changes in the budget may occur. Make sure you allow for some flexibility in case adjustments are needed and note that any significant changes will need to be explained during the reporting process.

3. **Helpful Resources:**
   - Eligible & Ineligible expenses (Application Guide & Walkthrough pg.5)

PROJECT COLLABORATORS

Question: **Tell us how you plan to include diverse voices in your project?**

1. **The Why**

This question shows that your project is inclusive and reflects the needs and perspectives of a wide range of people in the community, including different cultural, socioeconomic, age, or ability groups, as well as individuals who may have different mental health experiences. By including diverse voices, you ensure that your project is not only relevant to everyone, but also more likely to succeed, as it incorporates different viewpoints and ideas. This helps create a more equitable approach, fosters community ownership, and ensures that the project benefits a broad spectrum of individuals, leading to a greater and more lasting impact.

2. **Tips for Success:**
    - *Representation:* Clarify how your project will ensure that people from diverse groups are not only invited to participate but actively engaged in meaningful ways. This could include planning specific activities, creating spaces for dialogue, or involving diverse community leaders.
    - *Go Beyond Attendance:* Simply attending events does not count as being a collaborator.
    - *Focus on Community Empowerment:* Animators should be facilitators who bring the community together, amplifying everyone's voice and efforts, rather than simply managing or directing the project.

3. **Considerations:**
    - *Community Engagement:* Think about how you will reach out to and engage individuals from various community groups. How will you make sure their input is considered, especially for those who may not traditionally be involved (unusual suspects) in mental health conversations?
    - *Barriers to Participation:* Consider any barriers that might prevent diverse groups from participating (e.g., language, transportation, accessibility) and explain how you plan to overcome these challenges.

    - *Create Long-Lasting Impact:* Reflect on how you will ensure that the inclusion of diverse voices continues throughout the project and even after the project ends. Emphasize how your project will help build confidence, create connections, develop skills, and sustain wellness efforts in the future.

4. **Helpful Resources:**
    - [5D Worksheet](#)
    - [Usual Suspects Worksheet](#)
    - [Who Do We Want to Engage](#)
    - [Inclusivity Checklist](#)
    - [Liberating Structures](#)
    - [Measuring Community Engagement](#)
    - To/For/With/By model covered in Module 4.

Question (For Multi-Community Grants): How do you (the Animators and Community Action Teams) plan to collaborate with each other?

1. **The Why**

This question highlights the teamwork and cooperation necessary for the success of the project. Effective collaboration between Animators and Community Action Teams ensures that the project is community-driven and that all voices and ideas are considered. It also shows how the team will coordinate efforts, share responsibilities, and leverage each other's strengths to achieve the project's goals. A clear plan for collaboration helps build a solid foundation for the project, ensuring that everyone is aligned and working together towards a common vision.

2. **Tips for Success**
    - *Leverage Unique Strengths:* Explain how the different perspectives and experiences of each community strengthens the project and creates a more inclusive, well-rounded approach.

- *Shared Decision-Making:* Show how decisions will be made together, ensuring everyone's input is valued and the project is community-driven.
- *Ensure Inclusive Planning:* Show how all communities were actively involved in every stage of planning—joint meetings, shared brainstorming, and co-developing goals and activities.

3. **Considerations:**
   - *Clear Roles and Responsibilities:* Describe the specific roles of Animators and team members, making sure everyone knows their tasks and how they contribute to the project.
   - *Regular Communication*: Explain how the Animators and team will stay in touch and share updates, whether through meetings, emails, or other communication tools.
   - *Conflict Resolution:* Include a plan for handling disagreements or challenges in a respectful and productive way.
   - *Team Building:* Describe how the team will build trust and work well together, ensuring collaboration remains strong throughout the project.

REFLECTION & EVALUATION

Question 7: How might you capture and share the story of this Project and its impact on your community?

1. **The Why**

This section helps adjudicators understand how you plan to track and communicate the project's progress and outcomes. Sharing the story of your project not only highlights its successes but also helps build community engagement and support. By documenting and sharing the impact, you demonstrate your commitment to accountability, show the long-term value of the project, and provide an opportunity to inspire other communities or organizations to take similar actions.

We understand that evaluation and reporting can feel overwhelming for many communities. The RMHP Team uses this section to get an overview of your plan, so we can better understand how to support your community in meeting our funding requirements. Our goal is to make the reporting process as simple and straightforward as possible for you.

2. **Tips for Success:**
   - *Methods of Capturing:* Highlight the different methods you plan to use to capture your project's impact, such as surveys, participant feedback, photos or videos, attendance tracking, and testimonials. Regular data collection throughout the project is essential, including both quantitative (e.g., number of participants) and qualitative (e.g., personal stories, community feedback) information.
   - *Methods of Sharing:* Consider the different ways you can capture and share your story. Will you use photos, videos, written reports, or social media updates? Think about what will resonate best with your community.
   - *Sustainability:* Plan for how you will continue sharing the story after the project ends. Will there be follow-up reports or ongoing updates to keep the momentum going?

3. **Considerations:**
    - *Show Impact:* Think about why it's important to capture and share your project's story. Sharing the results helps build community pride, inspire others, and ensure transparency. It also helps spread the word about what works and what could be improved.
    - *Engage Partners:* Consider how sharing the story can engage community members, partners, and other stakeholders. By telling the story, you can reinforce the importance of community involvement and celebrate the efforts of everyone who contributed.
    - *Inclusive Approach:* Make sure the story includes voices from diverse participants. Highlight the contributions of different community members and sectors to show the full scope of the project's impact.

4. **Helpful Resources:**
    - [Measurement and Evaluation, 4.2 Data Collection – Guidance : Sport England](#)
    - [Collecting and Analyzing Quantitative and Qualitative Data - RHIhub Community Health Toolkit (ruralhealthinfo.org)](#)

ADJUDICATION PROCESS

Applications will be reviewed by the Adjudication Team.

The Adjudication Team will include people with diverse perspectives, experiences, and knowledge, including:

- People involved in mental health and wellness promotion, community development, education, and non-profits, among others;
- Animators and residents of rural communities;
- People with lived experiences; and
- People from all regions of the province.

If any members of the Adjudication Team are affiliated with an application, they will recuse themselves from the adjudication and discussion regarding that particular application.

All applications will be evaluated by the same criteria, as outlined in the Rural Mental Health Project Community Grants Application Rubric.

The Application Rubrics can be found on Mighty Networks here.