



Generously supported by Vancouver Foundation
Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund (CYSN)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Children & Youth with Special Needs Fund?

The Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund was established with the support of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. It assists families living with children and youth with **special needs from birth to nineteen years of age** through capital grants. These children need specialized supports to enhance or improve their health, development or participation in daily activities at home, in school and in their communities.

The Fund is administered by the **Giving in Action Society** which is supported by the Vancouver Foundation.

Who can apply to the CYSN Fund?

Families throughout B.C. who live with children under the age of 19 who have significant impairments in one or more of the following areas: health, cognition, communication, sensory motor, social/emotional/behavioural or self help (adaptive).

Families throughout B.C. whose children are eligible for support from the Children and Youth with Special Needs branch of the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Families receiving support from other government-funded programs will need to demonstrate that the grant from CYSN will complement versus duplicate that support. The CYSN Fund helps meet the needs of families that are not currently met through government-funded programs. For example, if you are eligible for mobility equipment funding through the At Home Program, but additional supports not covered by that program will enhance your child's life, then an application to the Fund may be considered.

Who is not eligible for funding from the CYSN Fund?

Caregivers and foster parents are not eligible to apply to the CYSN Fund as the intent is to provide support for families who are caring for family members in family homes. Although foster parents provide a "family" environment, the government is ultimately responsible for children in care.

What will the CYSN Fund support?

The Fund will assist families by supporting expenses related to the purchase/conversion of wheelchair-accessible vehicles and/or home renovations. The grants will increase a

family's ability to provide access for their child and enable them to participate in home and community life.

Examples of eligible CYSN expenditures:

- Door widening to provide wheelchair access
- Flooring
- Ramps
- Lifts, elevators
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles and/or conversions (the applicant must have a valid driver's license and be the primary operator of the vehicle)
- Bathroom renovations to accommodate individuals

Examples of ineligible expenditures:

- Home purchases or home construction
- Renovations outside of the house footprint - exception: addition for individuals over 16 to facilitate independent living
- Upgrades and renovations that exceed basic accessibility requirements i.e. pools, hot tubs, use of high-end materials
- Expenses related to completed projects or projects in progress prior to the approval of the CYSN grant

How much can families receive from the CYSN Fund?

For renovations and vehicle expenses the grants are normally:

- Not more than \$50,000 for renovations
- Not more than \$25,000 for a wheelchair-accessible vehicle

How many times can families apply to CYSN?

Normally a family's application should include requests for any eligible items funded by CYSN (i.e. a renovation and wheelchair accessible vehicle). However, we recognize this is not always possible due to delays in quotes or permits. In these situations, families may apply to CYSN in two stages: one time for a vehicle and one time for a home renovation.

Will the CYSN cover the full cost of projects or purchases?

Grants from the Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund are not intended to cover the full cost of the project or purchase. Grants will normally represent a contribution to the project and families are expected to secure additional funding for the total cost.

If invited to submit a full application, families are asked to confirm whether they are able to contribute financially to the project. Applicants are also required to list the project's sources of funding, including the dates applications were submitted to other funders. Giving in Action staff may contact other funders to confirm these funding requests.

Can families apply for more than one thing at one time - i.e. costs associated with a renovation and a wheelchair-accessible vehicle?

Yes - Families can apply for renovations and expenses related to wheelchair-accessible vehicles. If approved, the grants will not normally exceed the maximum amounts (as noted above) and there is no guarantee that both requests will be funded.

Can we apply to both the CYSN Fund and the Family Independence Fund?

No - grants are available to families of children and youth with special needs who are NOT eligible for the Family Independence Fund. Eligibility for the Family Independence Fund is based on the individual having a **developmental disability** as follows:

- Low IQ
- Manifests before the age of 18
- Concurrent with impaired adaptive functioning

If your child with special needs also has a developmental disability as described above, you should apply for the Family Independence Fund as it is available to both adults and children.

How Do I apply?

The Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund (CYSN) has a **two-stage** application process.

First stage: Letter of Inquiry (LOI) consists of a very simple, two-page proposal to determine if the request will meet the general guidelines. A Letter of Support Form, to be completed by an appropriate professional (i.e., therapist, doctor or social worker), is also required at this stage.

The LOI and Letter of Support Form can be found at:

<http://www.givinginaction.ca/applicationprocess/letterofinquiry.htm>

Print the Letter of Inquiry, complete, and submit with the Letter of Support Form by **mail or fax:**

Giving in Action Society
Suite 1200-555 West Hastings Street
Box 12132 Harbour Centre
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 4N6
Fax: 604-683-3134

Staff review the Letter of Intent and, if your request is not eligible for funding, you will be notified by letter indicating the reasons for decline.

Second stage: Full application

Once your Letter of Inquiry is reviewed (2-3 week turnaround) and it is determined that it fits within the CYSN guidelines, you will be e-mailed a letter and an application form (or mailed hardcopies if preferred) with additional instructions and important information you will need for completion.

The completed application and supporting documentation is sent to the Giving in Action Society. The Advisory Committee (comprised of experts in the areas of disabilities) will review applications on a monthly basis and the Program staff will advise you of the Committee's decision.

How will I know my LOI has been received?

You will receive a letter 2-3 weeks after submitting the LOI, notifying you whether or not a full application is requested. If your LOI is incomplete or missing required information, your request will not be processed.

Can I send my application via email?

No - For privacy and verification purposes, the application requires several original documents; therefore, emailed applications will not be accepted.

How long will the whole application process take?

From the Letter of Inquiry stage through to final decision, the CYSN Fund application process is expected to take between 10-14 weeks, provided all the requested information is submitted and complete.

Please note: We request that applicants do not contact Giving in Action to check on the status of your application.

| Stages | Time line |
|---|---|
| Stage 1: Applicant submits Letter of Inquiry. | Proposals are reviewed on a continual basis and, if eligible, we will invite you to submit an application to the next available deadline. Notification of LOI status will be approximately 2-3 weeks. |
| Stage 2: Applicant submits completed grant application form. Program staff assesses the application and may discuss project with applicant. | Upon receipt of application, submit within 6 months for renovation requests and 3 months for vehicle requests. (Submit within 6 months if your request is for a vehicle <u>and</u> renovation.) You may be contacted if information is missing or needed. Depending on the number of applications being reviewed at the monthly Committee meeting, applications may take approximately 7 weeks for assessment. |
| Applicant receives final decision by phone and letter. | Approximately 10-14 weeks after submitting the LOI |

Who makes the decision about the grant?

An Advisory Committee, which is comprised of dedicated volunteers who have extensive experience (personal and professional) in the area of supporting individuals with disabilities, reviews all applications to the Children and Youth with Special Needs Fund. These individuals come from regions throughout the province of B.C. Their career experience includes work with community organizations, rehabilitation facilities, social services, research and development focused on accessibility supports, and support for ethnic groups.

If my application is declined, can I reapply?

- **No** - you cannot apply using the same grant request UNLESS you have changed the request and addressed the concerns detailed by Giving in Action
- **Yes** - if the application is different from the original request and it fits within the Fund guidelines

If I have more than one child with a disability, do I need to complete more than one LOI?

No - Because your request will likely benefit both children's needs, please submit one LOI indicating that the application is to support more than one child, with details for each.