



2025 HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES & CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION

The City of Victoria is committed to preservation of its heritage and encourages the owners of residential properties to maintain them through a grants program. Victoria Heritage Foundation (VHF) administers this program on the City's behalf. The Victoria Heritage Foundation House Grants Program promotes the conservation of residential heritage-designated buildings by assisting owners with grants for a portion of the costs incurred in appropriate restoration and rehabilitation work.

HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM

The House Grants Programs supports projects that maintain, repair, rehabilitate or restore the character-defining elements of the house. Projects must follow the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, a manual for heritage conservation best practices, and the Victoria Heritage Foundation's *Rehabilitation Requirements*.

ELIGIBILITY

As a homeowner in the City of Victoria, you may be eligible for a grant towards the cost of your building's rehabilitation if:

- The house is Heritage-Designated or Covenant or in the process of being designated
- The house was originally single-family or duplex
- The house is owned by:
 - private individual(s)
 - private business
 - strata-corporation
 - registered non-profit or charity
- City of Victoria taxes are fully paid (except Province of BC Property Tax Deferment Program)
- The house is not involved in any zoning or bylaw disputes with the City of Victoria
- The house is covered by current comprehensive home insurance
- Homeowners are advised to inquire with the City prior to application, as to whether their property is involved in any zoning or bylaw disputes, and that all City of Victoria taxes are fully paid. In some cases, disputes will exist, unknown to the homeowner.
- As a homeowner, it is your responsibility to inquire with the City of Victoria about the above-mentioned eligibility guidelines prior to application.

GRANTS

These are some general policies:

- Regular maintenance will minimize the need for extensive repairs.
- Repairs to the basic structure, foundations and roofs should be done first.
- Repair of original materials is preferable to replacement with new work.
- New work should accurately match the original forms, materials, and detailing, based on sufficient physical or documentary evidence.

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Adherence to the *Rehabilitation Requirements* is mandatory. These are available on our website or by contacting our office. It is the homeowner's responsibility to ensure that work is done per the requirements. Failure to comply with these requirements will likely affect payment of your grant in full or part. **To ensure full compliance please provide prospective contractors with a copy of the applicable requirements for the project before obtaining quotes and ask them to specify and abide to these requirements in their quotes. The contractor's on-site representative should also be provided with a copy before work commences.** Use skilled contractors who have experience working on heritage houses and with positive references you can personally verify. Although owner's labour is not eligible for a grant, materials may be eligible.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects may include but are not limited to:

- Seismic retrofits designed by a Professional Structural Engineer (*see details under Seismic Retrofit Grants*)
- Structural work, such as foundation repair
- Repair of deteriorated original significant features including windows, doors, masonry
- Reroofing (once per 30 years)
- Exterior painting (once per 10 years) in approved historic colours or professionally documented original colours
- Rebuilding of wood windows where they have previously been lost
- Wood storm windows
- Reinstating missing character-defining elements, as indicated by documented or photographic evidence. Examples include decorative brackets; ridge cresting; finials; bay window, verandah details.
- Professional fees (*see details under Professional Fee Grants*) including:
 - MPDA Quality Assurance inspector's fees (*see Painting Requirements on VHF website*)
 - Professional heritage consultant for Building Conservation Plans
 - Heritage colour consultant
 - Professional paint analysis of original paint colours

Ineligible Projects

Projects NOT eligible may include but are not limited to:

- Work on existing features that are not regarded as having heritage value
- Work of a non-historic nature such as the introduction of new features (double-glazing, skylights, insulation)
- Work deemed routine maintenance such as gutter cleaning, moss removal, repair of broken steps, touch-up painting
- Work that was commenced prior to approval
- Work that does not comply with the specific work approved
- Work that is not of a standard or authenticity acceptable to VHF

GRANT FUNDING

- Grants will not be given for work undertaken prior to an approved grant application
- Grants cover up to 50% of the cost of eligible heritage work, up to a maximum project cost of \$25,000 per year

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- Grants for any one house will normally be limited to a total of \$30,000 per 10-year period
- The minimum project cost eligible for a grant is \$1,000
- The percentage and the maximum amount are subject to change depending on the number of applications received and the program budget

SEISMIC RETROFIT GRANTS

- Seismic retrofits designed by a Professional Structural Engineer may qualify for additional funding
- Grants may cover the cost of seismic retrofit work, including engineer's professional fees, up to a maximum of \$15,000 (50% of \$30,000 project cost)
- The one-time seismic retrofit grant will be in addition to the \$30,000 per 10-year maximum (e.g. if seismic project is included in the 10-year period, the maximum in grants could be up to \$45,000)

PROFESSIONAL FEE GRANTS

- If required, the VHF will consider funding an engineering report prior to obtaining quotes from contractors.
- Reports must be done by professionals who are qualified for the specified work.
- One quote is required and can be submitted at an appropriate length of time before the rest of the application is submitted.
- Professional engineer's fees are funded separately under Seismic Retrofit Grants

APPLICATION PROCESS

When to Apply

- Applicants must contact VHF prior (minimum of one week) to the application deadline to verify eligibility of their project.
- The deadline for applications is **March 31st 2025**. Completed applications and all supporting documents must be received by this date.
- There may be a **second intake** of applications on **September 12th 2025**, if additional funds become available through cancellations. Contact VHF for details including completion deadlines for this option.
- Work on eligible projects shall not commence prior to the awarding of the grant.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to understand and comply with all aspects of the House Grants Program policies. Failure to understand and comply with the policies may result in the denial of a grant.
- Owners of recently designated houses or new owners of a designated house may apply for a grant during the first year. Such grants may be approved, subject to available funds.

How to Apply

Submit to the Victoria Heritage Foundation the following:

- Completed and signed *Application Form*.
- At least **two** contractors detailed and valid quotes for each of the trades involved in your project.
- Quotes should indicate conformance and agreement to abide to the applicable VHF Rehabilitation Guidelines. Quotes should be inclusive of the labour and materials for all work to be performed. The grant, if conditionally approved, will be based on these quotes. Please be aware that additional funding for cost overruns may not be possible
- Additional, unforeseen work that leads to a cost increase during construction must receive conditional approval before commencement of work. However, there is no guarantee that it will receive VHF approval.
- The VHF volunteer inspector and Executive Director must be notified immediately, and the homeowner must apply for the unforeseen work with a completed application form, photos, and at least one quote.

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- Photographs (*see Appendix-Photographs*) of existing building elevations and areas where work is to occur.
- Archival photographs and historical documentation, if available.
- Detailed drawings for replacement elements.
- Colour schemes with paint chips for paint schemes (*see Appendix-Paint Colour Schemes*).
- Should ensure that respective contractors have a valid business license. Business licenses can be requested through the City of Victoria's Business Licensing Liaison at businesslicence@victoria.ca.
- Should ensure that respective contractors are in good standing with Work Safe BC by requesting a clearance letter from the Work Safe BC website, <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/insurance/why-clearance-letter/get-clearance-letter>.

Application Review

- All applications will receive careful consideration but will not necessarily be funded.
- All applications and accompanying documentation are reviewed by the House Grants Committee.
- The VHF House Grants Committee assigns volunteer inspectors to review and inspect proposed projects.
- Owners are encouraged to contact VHF with any questions regarding the status of their application.
- Applicants will be advised in writing of the decision after VHF receives confirmation of its funding from the City of Victoria, usually late April.
- Once projects are conditionally approved, unauthorized changes are neither accepted nor funded.
- No application shall be considered to form contractual or other obligations on the part of VHF.
- MPDA involvement is a contractual relationship between the homeowner and the MPDA. VHF will not act as a mediator between the homeowner and contractor and encourages open communication between the two. No funds can be advanced until all MPDA fees are paid, and confirmation that those fees have been paid are submitted. If you plan to apply for a VHF grant for painting, you must ensure the painters are familiar with the "[MPDA Specifications](#)" and appropriate bidding/request documents when obtaining quotes. Please refer to the "[MPDA Specifications](#)" document and/or MPDA for questions about the work, payout process, or other relevant inquiries.

[MPDA Request for Consultation 2024](#)

[MPDA - SSI009 - Request for Specification\[28047\] 11.2](#)

[MPDA Strata Request for Inspection - Dec 1 2024](#)

[MPDA Submittal Pages for MPDA Specification Paint](#)

Evaluation Criteria

The awarding of grants is subject to the demand for and availability of funding. Evaluation criteria include but are not limited to:

- Meeting the *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* and the VHF *Rehabilitation Requirements*
- Projects that demonstrate the highest standards of heritage conservation
- Projects that include the maximum retention of the historic fabric
- Projects that are likely to proceed and be completed by the deadline
- Vulnerable projects in urgent need of conservation

When to Commence Work

- No work shall commence before being notified in writing that your grant has been conditionally approved.
- Work shall commence as soon as possible following grant approval, but no later than **September 15th**.

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- Contact VHF to pick up a VHF sign when work is about to commence. The VHF sign acknowledging the grant must be prominently displayed while work is underway or for 10 days, whichever is greater.
- Notify the volunteer VHF House Grants inspector assigned to your project when work is about to commence and keep them informed of the progress.
- Prep work and repairs must be reviewed and inspected by the assigned a volunteer VHF House Grants inspector prior to further work that might conceal the repairs.

When Work is Completed

Work on approved projects should be completed no later than **February 28, 2026**. Grants for projects not completed by this date may be **forfeited except in exceptional circumstances**, as determined by the VHF Board. Upon completion, VHF must receive the following before the grant funds can be released:

- The volunteer VHF House Grant Inspector's report indicating work is completed per VHF standards. **Note: It is advisable to contact the volunteer VHF Inspector to inspect the work before paying the contractor. VHF will not become involved in any dispute between homeowners and trades people they have hired.**
- Photographs taken in progress **and** upon completion of the project (*see Appendix-Photographs*). At least one photograph of the VHF sign on the property must be included.
- Evidence of full payment to contractor. **We require receipts or paid invoices signed by the contractor.** Cancelled cheques and credit card receipts are **not** accepted.
- A list totaling the receipts (*if applicable*).
- Return the VHF sign (\$25 charge if not returned).

Grant Payment

Documentation received by the middle of the month will be considered at the monthly VHF meeting, during which VHF will:

- Review the report from the assigned volunteer VHF House Grants Inspector
- Review the documentation and photographs submitted by the owner
- Approve the grant payment. **Note: The grant payout is discretionary and may not be paid if the work is not of a standard or authenticity acceptable to VHF**
- VHF has a zero tolerance for bullying and harassment of any VHF employee or volunteer. Grant payout can be revoked if these guidelines are not followed
- Thereafter a letter and cheque will be sent to the homeowner
- Grant payments can be made after VHF has received its annual funds from the City, usually by July
- Grant payments are made monthly July-November and January-March

APPENDIX

PERMITS

- Grant recipients are responsible for obtaining all necessary authorizations and permits from the City of Victoria before the work commences. Permit fees are not an eligible expense.
- The City of Victoria Building Bylaws require a **Building Permit** for most construction, alteration, addition, reconstruction or demolition. For more information on Building Permits, please contact the Permits and Inspections Department of the City of Victoria.
- Alterations or additions needing a Building Permit and affecting the designated portions of the building cannot be made, without approval by the City of Victoria. They may require a Delegated **Heritage Alteration Permit**. Please contact the City of Victoria's Heritage Planners for further information.

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- **Heritage Alteration Permits** are approved by the City of Victoria and are separate from the VHF. Note that although your project may receive approval from the City, it may not be eligible for a VHF House Grant. Please see VHF *Application Guidelines* and *Rehabilitation Requirements*
- If required, you will be inspected by a **City of Victoria Building Inspector**. Volunteer VHF House Grants Inspectors are not to be confused with City of Victoria Building Inspectors.
- If a permit is required, the entire permit package must be submitted to the VHF prior to any work beginning.
- Not all projects approved by City of Victoria are approvable by the VHF. Please refer to specific VHF Rehabilitation Requirements for eligible projects.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs of your house are used to qualify your grant application before work commences, and to approve payment after the work is completed. In addition, they are invaluable for VHF's archives and may be used for educational and publicity purposes.

High quality colour photographs (digital images preferred) to be taken before, during and after of the specific details of the construction projects. Small images or poor-quality prints will not be acceptable.

- Photos should be taken of prep work before it is concealed by subsequent work (e.g. exposed sheathing or plywood in the case of re-roofing, prep work before painting).
- A minimum of five high resolution digital photos are required with the application and upon completion.
- A photograph of the VHF sign on the property must be included.

PAINT COLOUR SCHEMES

Changes to colour schemes may require approval through a Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit (DHAP) from the City of Victoria. This is an expedited process and there is no fee.

Grant payment is contingent upon the owner following the approved colour scheme. Exterior colours should be chosen that are appropriate to the design, age, style and locale of the building. Colours and their placement must be historically correct. Refer to *Your Old House, True Colours* (see VHF website) for information on house styles and appropriate colour placement.

Historically-Appropriate Colour Schemes

A historically-appropriate colour scheme approved for funding by VHF must be one of the following:

1. Professionally-documented original colours.
2. A colour scheme that matches the *Historical True Colours for Western Canada* paint palette. (This brochure is out of print, but copies can be borrowed from VHF.) Paint must accurately match these colours.

Colour Scheme Requirements

Submit the following with your application:

- Copy of DHAP submitted to City for colour changes
- Painters' quotes that specify MPDA inspection
- Colour manufacturer, number, formula or paint chip.
- Sketch or coloured-in greyscale photocopy of house illustrating colours and their placement on the architectural elements.