



HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES & CONDITIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Victoria is committed to preserving our heritage. Through the Victoria Heritage Foundation (VHF), eligible owners of heritage-designated residential properties can receive financial help to restore and rehabilitate their houses. This document explains who can apply, what projects are covered, and how the application and payment process works.

2. HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM

The House Grants Program 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*.

3. 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:

- 3.1 The house is Heritage-Designated, subject to a Covenant, or in the process of being designated
- 3.2 The house was originally single-family or duplex
- 3.3 The house is owned by:
 - (a) private individual(s)
 - (b) private business
 - (c) strata-corporation
 - (d) registered non-profit or charity
- 3.4 City of Victoria taxes are fully paid (except Province of BC Property Tax Deferment Program)
- 3.5 The house is not involved in any zoning or bylaw disputes with the City of Victoria
- 3.6 The house is covered by current comprehensive home insurance

Homeowners are advised to check with the City of Victoria to ensure their property is not involved in any zoning or bylaw disputes. In some cases, disputes may exist without the homeowner's knowledge before submitting an application.

4. GRANTS

These are some general policies:

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

HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES & CONDITIONS

Adherence to the *Rehabilitation Requirements* is mandatory. These are available on our website. It is the homeowner's responsibility to ensure that the 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 by 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 the owner's labour is not eligible for a grant, materials may be eligible.

5. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- 5.1 Eligible projects may include but are not limited to: Seismic retrofits designed by a Professional Structural Engineer (*see details under Seismic Retrofit Grants*)
- 5.2 Structural work, such as foundation repair
- 5.3 Repair of deteriorated original significant features including windows, doors, masonry
- 5.4 Reroofing (once per 25 years)
- 5.5 Exterior painting (once per 10 years) in approved historic colours or professionally documented original colours. For painting projects, the involvement of an MPDA Quality Assurance inspector is required (*see the Painting Requirements on the VHF website*). The inspector's fees must be included in the paint quotations.
- 5.6 Rebuilding of wood windows where they have previously been lost
- 5.7 Wood storm windows and storm doors, provided they do not obscure the front door or detract from its appearance.
- 5.8 Reinstating missing character-defining elements, as indicated by documented or photographic evidence. Examples include decorative brackets; ridge cresting; finials; bay windows, and verandah details.

6. INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects NOT eligible may include but are not limited to:

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

HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES & CONDITIONS

7. GRANT FUNDING

- 7.1 Grants will not be given for work undertaken prior to an approved grant application
- 7.2 Grants cover up to 50% of the cost of eligible heritage work, with a maximum grant of \$12,500 per year.
- 7.3 Grants for any one house are limited to a maximum total of \$30,000 over a 10-year period.
- 7.4 The minimum project cost eligible for a grant is \$1,000
- 7.5 The percentage and the maximum amount are subject to change depending on the number of applications received and the program budget

8. SEISMIC RETROFIT GRANTS

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

9. SPECIAL GRANTS

Special grants are considered on a case-by-case basis and are subject to available funding. Any grants awarded under this category will count toward the \$30,000 maximum allowance over a 10-year period.

9.1 Professional Fees

Grants can cover up to 50% of eligible professional fees, with a maximum grant of \$1,500. One quote is required and can be submitted before the rest of the application. Eligible expenses include:

- (a) Structural Engineer's fees in relation to structural repairs.
- (b) Fees for historic colour consultants or paint analysis to identify original exterior house colours.

Please note that grants are not available for project management, preparation of architectural drawings, or specification writing costs.

9.2 Reconstruction of Missing Features

Grants may be available for the reconstruction of significant architectural elements that have been lost, based on documented or photographic evidence. While the grant will not exceed 50% of project costs, it may be higher than the standard grant amount available that year for other designated heritage houses. Examples of eligible features include:

- (a) Decorative brackets, ridge cresting, or finials
- (b) Bay window features
- (c) Verandah details

HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES & CONDITIONS

10. APPLICATION PROCESS

10.1 When to Apply:

- (a) Applicants must contact VHF prior (minimum of one week) to the application deadline to verify eligibility of their project.
- (b) The deadline for applications is March 31st. Completed applications and all supporting documents must be received by this date.
- (c) There may be a second intake of applications on September 12th, if additional funds become available through cancellations. Contact VHF for details including completion deadlines for this option.
- (d) Work on eligible projects shall not commence prior to the awarding of the grant.
- (e) 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.
- (f) 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.

10.2 How to Apply

Submit to the Victoria Heritage Foundation the following:

- (a) A completed and signed *Application Form*.
- (b) At least two detailed and legitimate contractor quotes for each trade involved in their project(s). Applicants may not have any personal or business affiliation with the companies providing the quotes.

Homeowners are permitted to carry out the work themselves; however, they will only be eligible for funding towards materials, not their own labour.

If the project is a continuation of previously approved work (within 2 years), applicants may continue using the same contractor, provided they submit a new quote for the continuing work that reflects the same scope and the same rates. Additional quotes are not required in this case.

For seismic upgrade projects, only one contractor quote is required.
- (c) Quotes should indicate conformance and agreement to abide by 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 is not possible..
- (d) Photographs (*see Appendix-Photographs*) of existing building elevations and areas where work is to occur.
- (e) Archival photographs and historical documentation, if available.
- (f) Detailed drawings for replacement elements.
- (g) Colour schemes with paint chips for paint schemes (*see Appendix-Paint Colour Schemes*).
- (h) Applicants should ensure that respective contractors have a valid business license. Business licenses can be verified through the City of Victoria's Business Licensing Liaison email: businesslicence@victoria.ca
- (i) 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>.

HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES & CONDITIONS

10.3 Application Review

- (a) All applications will receive careful consideration but will not necessarily be funded.
- (b) All applications and accompanying documentation are reviewed by the House Grants Committee.
- (c) The VHF House Grants Committee assigns volunteer inspectors to review and inspect proposed projects.
- (d) Owners are encouraged to contact VHF with any questions regarding the status of their application.
- (e) Applicants will be advised in writing of the decision after VHF receives confirmation of its funding from the City of Victoria, usually in late April.
- (f) Once projects are conditionally approved, unauthorized changes are neither accepted nor funded.
- (g) If unforeseen work arises during the project, no additional funding is available.
- (h) No application shall be considered to form contractual or other obligations on the part of VHF.
- (i) 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. Evaluation Criteria

[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](#)

10.4 Evaluation Criteria

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

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

HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES & CONDITIONS

11. WHEN TO COMMENCE WORK

- 11.1 No work shall commence before being notified in writing that your grant has been conditionally approved.
- 11.2 Work shall commence as soon as possible following grant approval, but no later than September 15th. Projects that are not significantly underway by September 15th may have the grant cancelled
- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 Notify the volunteer VHF House Grants inspector assigned to your project when work is about to commence and keep them informed of the progress.
- 11.5 Prep work and repairs must be reviewed and inspected by the assigned volunteer VHF House Grants inspector prior to further work that might conceal the repairs.

12. WHEN WORK IS COMPLETED

- 12.1 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:
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 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.
- 12.4 Evidence of full payment to the contractor. *We require receipts or paid invoices signed by the contractor.* Cancelled cheques and credit card receipts are not accepted.
- 12.5 A list totaling the receipts (*if applicable*).
- 12.6 Return the VHF sign (\$25 charge if not returned).

13. GRANT PAYMENT

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

- 13.1 Review the report from the assigned volunteer VHF House Grants Inspector
- 13.2 Review the documentation and photographs submitted by the owner
- 13.3 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
- 13.4 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
- 13.5 Thereafter a letter and payment will be sent to the homeowner
- 13.6 Grant payments can be made after VHF has received its annual funds from the City, usually by July
- 13.7 Grant payments are made monthly July-November and January-March

APPENDIX

14. PERMITS

- 14.1 Grant recipients must obtain all necessary permits and authorizations from the City of Victoria before beginning any work. Permit fees are not eligible expenses. A Building Permit is required for most construction, alterations, additions, reconstructions, or demolitions under the City of Victoria's Building Bylaws. VHF does not require copies of these permits, nor are they part of the grant application process. For more information, contact the City of Victoria's Permits and Inspections Department.
- 14.2 If a feature on a designated portion of the building is being re-created, reinstated, or altered, approval through a **Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit (DHAP)** from the City of Victoria is required. **A copy of the approved permit must be provided during the application process.**
- 14.3 The approval of a DHAP from the City does not guarantee eligibility for a VHF House Grant. Please refer to the *VHF Application Guidelines and Rehabilitation Requirements* for more details.
- 14.4 Volunteer VHF House Grants Inspectors are not to be confused with City of Victoria Building Inspectors.

15. 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 the specific details of the construction projects. Small images or poor-quality prints will not be acceptable.

- 15.1 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).
- 15.2 A minimum of five high-resolution digital photos are required with the application and upon completion.
- 15.3 A photograph of the VHF sign on the property must be included.

16. 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.

HOUSE GRANTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES & CONDITIONS

16.1 Historically Appropriate Colour Schemes

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

- (a) Professionally documented original colours.
- (b) A colour scheme that matches the True Colours Historical Paint Colours for Western Canada By Sherwin Williams (copies can be obtained from VHF).

Alternatively from the VHF website: https://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/VHF001_Brochure_v9_Final.pdf

16.2 Colour Scheme Requirements

Submit the following with your application:

- (a) Copy of the Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit submitted to City for any colour changes
- (b) Painters' quotes that include the MPDA inspections
- (c) Colour manufacturer, number, formula or paint chip (swatch).
- (d) Sketch or coloured-in greyscale photocopy of house illustrating colours and their placement on the architectural elements.