



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 may receive financial assistance to help maintain, repair, rehabilitate, and restore the character-defining exterior elements of their houses. This document explains who can apply, what types of projects are covered, and how the application, review, and payment processes work.

Each year, VHF receives funding from the City of Victoria and allocates these funds to eligible homeowner applicants. Each property is eligible for one grant per year. A grant may include up to two projects, but each project requires its own separate online application. Grants cover a portion of eligible project costs, subject to VHF priorities and the availability of funds. If a grant is approved, the work should be completed before February 28th of the following year.

2. ELIGIBILITY

As a homeowner in the City of Victoria, you may be eligible for a grant toward the cost of your building's rehabilitation if the following conditions are met:

- 2.1 The house is Heritage-Designated, subject to a Heritage Covenant, or in the process of being designated
- 2.2 The house was originally constructed as a single-family dwelling or duplex
- 2.3 The house is located within the City of Victoria (properties in Esquimalt, Oak Bay, or Saanich are not eligible)
- 2.4 The house is owned by:
 - (a) private individual(s)
 - (b) private business
 - (c) strata corporation
 - (d) registered non-profit or charity
- 2.5 City of Victoria property taxes are fully paid (excluding the Provincial Property Tax Deferment Program)
- 2.6 The house is not involved in any zoning or bylaw disputes with the City of Victoria
- 2.7 The house is covered by current comprehensive home insurance

Homeowners are advised to confirm 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.

3. GRANTS

These are some general policies:

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

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Adherence to VHF's [Rehabilitation Requirements](#) is mandatory. Homeowners are responsible for ensuring that all work meets these standards; failure to comply may affect grant payment, in whole or in part.

Prospective contractors should be given the relevant requirements before quotes are obtained and asked to confirm their adherence in writing as part of their quotations. On-site representatives should also receive a copy prior to the commencement of work. Contractors engaged should be experienced in heritage work and able to provide verifiable, positive references.

4. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- 4.1 Seismic upgrades designed by a Professional Structural Engineer
- 4.2 Structural work, including foundation repairs
- 4.3 Repair of deteriorated original features, including windows, doors, and masonry
- 4.4 Re-roofing (once every 25 years)
- 4.5 Exterior painting (once every 10 years) in approved historic colours (see [VHF True Colours Historical Paint Colours for Western Canada Brochure](#)) or professionally documented original colours. For painting projects, the involvement of Glendonnan Technical Services Ltd. (GTS) is required. GTS provides specifications and conducts inspections. The cost of GTS inspections must be included in painting quotations.
- 4.6 Rebuilding original wood windows where they were previously removed
- 4.7 Wood storm windows and storm doors, provided they do not obscure the front door or detract from the building's appearance
- 4.8 Reinstatement of missing character-defining elements supported by documentary or photographic evidence

Please note: where a homeowner undertakes the work themselves, their labour is not eligible for grant funding—only the cost of materials may be considered.

5. INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Projects **NOT** eligible may include, but are not limited to:

- 5.1 Work on existing features that are not regarded as having heritage value
- 5.2 Introduction of non-historic features (e.g., skylights, double glazing)
- 5.3 Routine maintenance such as gutter cleaning, moss removal, and touch-up painting
- 5.4 Work commenced prior to grant approval
- 5.5 Work that does not comply with the approved scope or VHF's [Rehabilitation Requirements](#),
- 5.6 Repair or painting of non-original features such as rear decks
- 5.7 Concealed external elements, e.g., replacing perimeter drainage tiles, removal of buried oil tanks etc.
- 5.8 Internal works (except for seismic upgrades)

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6. GRANT FUNDING

- 6.1 Funding levels vary each year and depend on the number of applications received and the total funding provided by the City of Victoria.
- 6.2 All applications are assessed together to ensure funding is distributed fairly. Successful applicants receive the same grant percentage based on the eligible project costs.
- 6.3 The minimum eligible project cost is \$1,000; projects costing less than this are too small to qualify for a grant.
- 6.4 Whether an applicant applies for one or two projects, the total grant amount does not increase. Grants cover up to 50% of combined eligible project costs, to a maximum of \$15,000 per year. Most applicants apply for one project per year.
- 6.5 Grants will not be awarded for work that has already started.
- 6.6 A funding cap of \$40,000 per property applies over a 10-year period, regardless of the number of applications submitted during that time.
- 6.7 Grants are allocated per property, not per owner. If a property is sold, any funding previously received remains attached to the property and does not reset for new owners.
- 6.8 Where a property is subdivided into multiple units or has multiple owners, grant eligibility does not increase. The funding cap applies to the building as a whole, not to individual units or owners.

7. SEISMIC RETROFIT GRANTS

- 7.1 Seismic retrofits designed by a Professional Structural Engineer may qualify for additional funding.
- 7.2 Grants may cover up to 50% of seismic retrofit costs, including engineering fees, to a maximum of \$15,000.
- 7.3 The one-time seismic retrofit grant is in addition to the \$40,000 ten-year cap, allowing for a potential maximum of \$55,000 per property.

8. SPECIAL GRANTS – PROFESSIONAL FEES

Any grants awarded under this category will count toward the \$15,000 maximum annual allowance.

- 8.1 Grants may cover up to 50% of eligible professional fees, to a maximum of \$1,500. One quotation is required. Eligible expenses may include:
 - (a) Structural engineering fees related to structural repairs or seismic design work
 - (b) Architectural Technologist or Architect fees for work such as porch designs required for Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit (DHAP) approvals and similar projects.
 - (c) Fees for historic colour consultants or paint analysis
- 8.2 Project management fees are not eligible.

9. APPLICATION PROCESS

9.1 When to Apply

- (a) Applications are accepted beginning February 1st
- (b) The application deadline is March 31st. All completed applications and supporting documents must be submitted online by this date.
- (c) Applications are reviewed collectively in April, once funding levels from the City of Victoria are confirmed.
- (d) A VHF House Grants Inspector will be assigned to inspect each proposed project.
- (e) Work on eligible projects must not begin before the grant is awarded.
- (f) Applicants are responsible for understanding and complying with all House Grants Program policies. Failure to do so may result in the denial of a grant.
- (g) Owners of houses undergoing heritage designation may apply; proof of application is required. Grant funds will only be released once the designation is formally approved.
- (h) If approved projects are cancelled, additional funding may become available, and a second intake may occur in September, subject to availability.

9.2 How to Apply

Complete the online Application Form and submit:

- (a) At least two detailed contractor quotations for each trade involved in the project. While applicants are not required to select the lowest quote, providing two quotes demonstrates due diligence and ensures costs are reasonable. Applicants must not have any personal or business affiliation with quoting contractors.
- (b) One quotation is acceptable when:
 - i. the project is seismic work
 - ii. the project is a continuation of VHF-funded work within the last two years (a new quote is still required)
 - iii. the quote is for eligible professional fees
- (c) Homeowners may carry out work themselves; however, only materials are eligible for funding, not labour.
- (d) Quotes should indicate conformance and agreement to abide by the applicable VHF *Rehabilitation Guidelines*.
- (e) Quotes must include both labour and materials for all work. Conditional grant approval will be based on these quotes.
- (f) Photographs of existing conditions and areas where work is proposed.
- (g) Archival photographs and historical documentation, if available.
- (h) Detailed drawings for replacement elements.
- (i) Colour schemes with paint chips for paint schemes (unless the colours are unchanged)
- (j) A copy of the Delegated Heritage Alteration permit (if required, e.g., if you are changing something on the exterior)

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You should ensure that your contractors hold a valid City of Victoria business licence and are in good standing with WorkSafeBC – however, we do not require proof of this.

9.3 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) Applicants will be advised in writing of the decision after VHF receives confirmation of its funding from the City of Victoria, usually the 1st week in May.
- (e) Once projects are conditionally approved, unauthorised changes are neither accepted nor funded.
- (f) If unforeseen work arises during the project, no additional funding is available.
- (g) No application shall be considered to form contractual or other obligations on the part of VHF.
- (h) An independent paint inspection company is required for all painting projects. Glendonnans Technical Services Ltd. (G.T.S.) is engaged through a contractual relationship directly with the homeowner. The Victoria Heritage Foundation (VHF) does not act as a mediator between the homeowner and G.T.S. and encourages open communication between both parties.

Fees charged by G.T.S. are eligible grant expenses and will count toward the \$15,000 maximum annual grant allowance. No grant funds can be advanced until all G.T.S. fees have been paid and confirmation of payment has been submitted.

If you plan to apply for a VHF grant for painting, painters must be familiar with, and comply with, G.T.S. specifications and procedures. **All painting quotations must clearly include the associated G.T.S. inspection fees** as part of the overall project cost. Refer to the links below for more information:

- i. [Engaging The Services Of GTS \(to be completed by the painting contractor\)](#)
- ii. [VHF Exterior Painting Specifications \(to be adhered to by the painting contractor\)](#)
- iii. [Download or Print Paint Requirements](#)

9.4 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 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

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10. WHEN TO COMMENCE WORK

- 10.1 No work shall commence before being notified that your grant has been conditionally approved.
- 10.2 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
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 Notify the volunteer VHF House Grants inspector assigned to your project when work is about to commence and keep them informed of the progress.
- 10.5 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.

11. WHEN WORK IS COMPLETED

- 11.1 Work on approved projects should be completed no later than February 28th of the following year. 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:
 - (a) 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 contractors they have hired.
 - (b) Photographs showing the completed project (*see Appendix-Photographs*). At least one photograph of the VHF sign on the property must be included.
 - (c) Evidence of full payment to the contractor. *We require receipts or paid invoices*. Credit card receipts are not accepted.
 - (d) Return of the VHF sign

12. GRANT PAYMENT

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

- 12.1 Review the report from the assigned volunteer VHF House Grants Inspector
- 12.2 Review the documentation and photographs submitted by the owner
- 12.3 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
- 12.4 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
- 12.5 Thereafter payment will be sent to the homeowner
- 12.6 Grant payments can be made after VHF has received its annual funds from the City, usually by July
- 12.7 Grant payments are made monthly July-November and January-March

APPENDIX

13. PERMITS

- 13.1 Grant recipients must obtain all necessary permits and authorisations 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.
- 13.2 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.**
- 13.3 The approval of a DHAP from the City does not guarantee eligibility for a VHF House Grant.
- 13.4 Volunteer VHF House Grants Inspectors are not to be confused with City of Victoria Building Inspectors.

14. PHOTOGRAPHS

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 **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.
- 14.3 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).
- 14.4 A minimum of five high-resolution digital photos are required with the application and upon completion.
- 14.5 A photograph of the VHF sign on the property must be included.

15. PAINT COLOUR SCHEMES

- 15.1 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.
- 15.2 Historically Appropriate Colour Schemes

Exterior colours must be appropriate to the building's design, age, style. Colour selection and placement must be historically accurate and supported by one of the following:

- (a) Professionally documented original colours; or
- (b) A colour scheme, including colour placement, that aligns with the *VHF True Colours Historical Paint Colours for Western Canada Brochure*

15.3 Colour Scheme Requirements

Submit the following with your application:

- (a) Copy of the Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit from the City of Victoria for any colour changes
- (b) Painters' quotes that include Glendonnan Technical Services Ltd. – clearly showing their fee + GST separately
- (c) Colour manufacturer, number, formula or paint chips (swatch) references
- (d) Sketch or coloured-in greyscale photocopy of house illustrating colours and their placement on the architectural elements.