



Catherine Donnelly Foundation Fall 2025 Civic Engagement for Social Change, Environment and Housing Grants

January 2026



Righting Relations is a movement of adult educators and community organizers who are working towards decolonization and social change across Turtle Island.

Civic Engagement for Social Change: One-year grants totaling \$268,420

Black Opportunity Fund • Catalyzing Community-Led Solutions to Advance Socio-Economic Opportunities for Black Communities Across Canada • Toronto, ON • \$45,000

This project will provide support to the Black Opportunity Fund's Health, Justice, and Education Working Groups to facilitate the implementation and expansion of their community-led priorities, which include the creation of a National Black Health Strategy, implementation of a National Black Justice Strategy, and engaging with educators to support the rollout of a mandatory Black History Curriculum across Ontario. <https://blackopportunityfund.ca/>

Forum Jeunesse Afro-Québécois (FJAQ) • Voix Jeunes: Engagement et Leadership • Québec City, QC • \$45,000

Voix Jeunes will equip Black and racialized youth with leadership tools to address systemic barriers in housing, climate justice, and democratic participation. During a 36-month participatory program, FJAQ will train youth in leadership, advocacy, and community organizing, raise awareness on climate justice, foster democratic participation and support youth-led initiatives focused on housing equity, environmental justice, and inclusive governance. The program empowers participants as researchers and changemakers and includes participatory action research in climate justice and housing equity.

<https://fjaq.ca/>

John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights • Empowering Educators: Advancing Migrant Justice Through Community-Led Education • Edmonton, AB • \$15,000

Empowering Educators is focused on a three-day intensive training session for 12 to 15 adult educators from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia. These educators will be equipped with the tools to deliver participatory workshops that spotlight systemic injustices faced by migrant workers with participants tasked to create relevant and appropriate workshop materials that respond to each region's challenges and community dynamics. This local responsiveness fosters meaningful civic engagement that inspires collective action for migrant justice, particularly for those working in agriculture, caregiving, and frontline service sectors. www.jhcentre.org/

Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities • Building Accessibility Justice Together • Winnipeg, MB • \$32,420

MLPD will organize six community workshops to build disability activism and strengthen disability leadership capacity in Manitoba. These in-person workshops will focus on building skills in areas such as working with elected officials, letter writing, campaign building, and organizing community demonstrations as well as providing a history of disability activism and exploring what ableism is. Workshops will later be available for viewing on MLPD's YouTube channel. <https://mlpd.mb.ca/>

National Council of Youth in Care Advocates • The Equitable Standards for Transitions to Adulthood for Youth in Care in Canada: An Accountability Framework for Policy and Service Delivery • Montréal, QC • \$45,000

Youth 'aging out' of the child protection system in Canada are at a much higher risk of facing multiple challenges, including mental health issues, chronic poverty and homelessness. This lived experience-led project seeks to improve the life outcomes of young people in child protection systems across Canada by ensuring they are not forced to transition to adulthood before they have the necessary supports, services, and connections to their culture and communities. This project aims to survey the experiences of people with lived experience and strengthen a national movement of youth in care advocates to secure political support to improve policies, practices and support for young people in care transitioning to adulthood. www.ncyica.ca/

Social Innovation Canada • Wasan Island Land Back • Toronto, ON • \$40,000

The *Wasan Island Land Back* Initiative is a community-driven effort, including grassroots organizers, Elders, youth advocates, and local stewards, to return Wasan Island (Wasanay mnisng) to Indigenous stewardship. Located on Lake Rosseau in Anishinaabe territory, the island holds deep spiritual, cultural, and historical significance for Wasauksing First Nation and other Anishinaabek communities. This phase will focus on formalizing governance, advancing operational feasibility, and deepening civic engagement and public education efforts. The goal is to lay the foundation for the island's return to Indigenous stewardship and create a replicable model of Land Back grounded in civic learning, collective leadership, and systems change. <https://sicanada.org/>

Sudbury Workers and Education and Advocacy Centre • Worker Rights Awareness and Advocacy Project • Greater Sudbury, ON • \$46,000

The *Worker Rights Awareness and Advocacy Project* will educate, empower, and mobilize workers in the Greater Sudbury district—particularly newcomers, BIPOC communities, women, and individuals in precarious employment—to know their rights, organize collectively, and engage in civic advocacy for systemic change. Rooted in participatory learning, peer support, and community engagement, the project will conduct interactive workshops, identify and train worker leaders, convene policy roundtables and generate advocacy materials and an awareness campaign. <https://sudburyworkerscentre.ca/>

Civic Engagement for Social Change: Two-year grants totaling \$330,500

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services • Aging with Dignity and Defiance • Toronto, ON • \$20,000 (Year 1), \$20,500 (Year 2)

Aging with Dignity and Defiance bridges the civic engagement gap among racialized immigrant seniors by embedding civic education into existing seniors' recreational programs, which are culturally and linguistically tailored. This includes inclusive, low-pressure, and engaging activities; concrete support to turn challenges into collective action; and leadership development and knowledge mobilization through training, resources and support. The program also builds leadership and capacity by piloting a civic engagement toolkit for senior-serving organizations and addresses the need for culturally and linguistically tailored civic education delivered through trusted, community-based settings with a need to expand services. <https://accessalliance.ca/>

Anishinabe Spiritual Centre • Walking Together: A Path of Indigenous Faith and Reconciliation • Espanola, ON • \$40,000 per year

The Anishinabe Spiritual Centre proposes to expand and deepen its Indigenous Catholic Education Program, a unique initiative that brings together Anishinabe cultural traditions and Catholic spiritual formation in a way that fosters community healing, leadership development, and reconciliation. The program offers structured formation opportunities—including retreats, workshops, leadership training, and reconciliation-focused sessions—designed for Indigenous and non-Indigenous adult learners.

Rooted in Anishinabe spiritual worldview and Catholic teaching, participants are invited to explore how both traditions can inform ethical leadership, community involvement, and pathways to healing.

www.anishinabespiritualcentre.ca/

Arts Council Wood Buffalo • Indigenous & Multicultural Creative Connections • Fort McMurray, AB • \$25,000 per year

Indigenous & Multicultural Creative Connections is a two-year initiative that engages Indigenous, newcomer, and racialized residents of Alberta's Wood Buffalo region in cultural exchange and community-led civic action. Led by Arts Council Wood Buffalo, with core partners McMurray Métis Local 1935 and the Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo, *Creative Connections* directly addresses barriers to civic participation and cultural inclusion. Through facilitated group sessions, participants explore cultural identity, reflect on shared experiences, and collaborate on creative and civic initiatives that promote inclusion and systemic change. <https://artscouncilwb.ca/>

Food First NL • Sustaining lived-experience engagement with systems change in Newfoundland and Labrador • St. John's, NL • \$40,000 per year

Food First NL's Lived and Living Experience Advisory Group (LLEAG) was initiated in 2021 to convene a conversation on the future of the emergency food system and later to update a living wage calculation for Newfoundland and Labrador. LLEAG has amplified the voices of those with lived experiences of food insecurity and those who volunteer with or work for food-related programs in their advocacy efforts with government workers, policy makers and politicians. This latest stage will support the group with training, facilitation, honoraria, and the organization of an in-person gathering to position them to take a leadership role in an emerging pan-provincial policy collaborative targeting food insecurity and poverty. www.foodfirstnl.ca/

National Learning Community • National Learning Community • Toronto, ON • \$40,000 per year

In previous years, the 4Rs youth movement offered a year-long community of practice and leadership and granting program called the National Learning Community. The NLC worked to create opportunities for Indigenous youth to envision self-determined community initiatives while focusing on their mental and spiritual wellbeing. NLC will pause that program to work toward transitioning into an autonomous, self-governed Indigenous youth-led community of practice and philanthropic organization. Among the crucial elements of that work is to develop a five-year strategic plan with the support of NLC alumni and BIPOC organizers in their networks. <https://4rsyouth.ca/nlc/>

Civic Engagement for Social Change: Three-year grant totaling \$375,000

Righting Relations Canada • National • \$125,000 per year

Righting Relations is a partnership to advance broader social change strategies, participation, and organization through a women-led adult education process with Indigenous, newcomers/refugees, and

low-income Canadian populations. Righting Relations envisions a connected and collaborative society built on people's engagement in upholding values of respect, freedom, dignity, inclusion, equity and justice for all life. Funding supports Righting Relations' operations. <https://rightingrelations.org/>

Environment: One-year grants totaling \$320,000

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society – Southern Alberta Chapter • *Mobilizing a Diverse and Inclusive Coalition for a Coal-Free Alberta* • Calgary, AB • \$20,000

In January 2025, Alberta's Minister of Energy and Minerals lifted the moratorium on coal exploration and development. The CPWS – Southern Alberta Chapter is hoping to revitalize a diverse and inclusive coalition to advocate for a coal-free Alberta. They plan to mobilize the 70% of Albertans who oppose new coal development to take meaningful action, demand decision-makers develop a coal policy guided by science, Indigenous consultation, and public input, and advance a sustainable vision for Alberta's landscapes and communities that prioritizes clean water and biodiversity. <https://cpaws-southernalberta.org/>

Carolinian Canada Coalition • *Indigenous Environmental Network* • London, ON • \$40,000

Carolinian Canada Coalition is a network of leaders growing healthy landscapes and connecting science, community and business for healthy ecosystems and climate-smart neighbourhoods in Southern Ontario. The Coalition pledges to save local wildlife, water and our way of life and support 14 UN Sustainable Development Goals. Starting in 2021, CCC has been centering Indigenous leadership across all aspects of the organization and now seeks to create an Indigenous Environmental Network to unite the ten First Nations within the Carolinian Zone around climate-resilient land stewardship. The *Indigenous Environmental Network* will foster Indigenous partnerships, connect communities, and create opportunities for training, capacity building, and funding. CCC is working to support the co-development of the network's governance structure and operational framework, a process intentionally designed to prioritize equity, reciprocity, and Indigenous self-determination. <https://caroliniancanada.ca/>

Équiterre • *Mobilizing youth on climate action and democracy in polarized and less privileged communities* • Montréal, QC • \$35,000

Équiterre has played a central role in ensuring environment and climate are at the heart of election campaigns in Québec and is beginning to prepare for a provincial election that will happen no later than October 2026. This program will focus on youth living in regions where more polarized values are present. Équiterre will organize a mobilization and communication campaign addressing youth climate concerns that will be amplified in educational institutions and selected communities. Local youth leaders will be trained to deliver messages and activities to engage their peers. www.equiterre.org/

MiningWatch Canada • *Building Community Power in the Climate Justice Movement: Challenging Critical Mineral Mining in Canada* • Ottawa, ON • \$30,000

Increased Canadian mining activity related to critical minerals, such as cobalt and nickel which are essential for digital technologies, clean energy, and other high-tech industries, needs a re-think says MiningWatch Canada. This project aims to explore existing impacts, strengthen the framework for mineral extraction, limit the extraction level, and propose alternative solutions. *Building Community Power* is focused on moving towards a post-carbon society rooted in transformative systems change that respects human rights and environmental integrity. <https://miningwatch.ca/>

National Farmers Union • Climate Justice Brigades: Building Collective Power Toward Food Sovereignty • Saskatoon, SK • \$40,000

This project seeks to build collective power, leadership and solidarity among farmers, farm workers and Indigenous peoples, including women, youth and farmers in the Global South, through two land-based collaborative learning and climate justice knowledge mobilization trainings taking place on farms in Ontario and Nova Scotia. Sessions are in partnership with Puerto Rico's Organización Boricúa. These brigade trainings are opportunities for farmers to learn both practical and political skills, and develop the knowledge to prepare for, and organize in response to climate change and how agroecology and Indigenous land and food relations are alternatives to colonial-industrial agriculture. www.nfu.ca/

Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council • Naut'sa mawt (together as one): A Living Web of Indigenous Land Guardianship • Mill Bay, BC • \$47,500

Naut'sa mawt aims to strengthen and deepen relationships with and among Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council (NmTC), Indigenous Land Guardians and staff working in land, water, and food systems. Deep listening, relationship-building, network cultivation and collaborative action are focused on delivering a NmTC Indigenous Land Guardian network. Among potential program outcomes are improved climate resilience, cultural regeneration and strengthened Indigenous governance, laws, practices, and decision-making over land, water, and food systems. www.nautsamawt.org/

Neighbours United • Scaling out deep engagement for a just transition • Castlegar, BC • \$25,000

This program will use grassroots organizing to increase public support for climate justice and partner with other climate organizations to mobilize community support around positive solutions rooted in climate justice and empowering volunteer leaders. The three program areas are: engaging British Columbians in traditional mill towns in discussion around resource extraction and healthy ecosystems and biodiversity; building support in suburban communities in B.C.'s Lower Mainland for the highest level of the Zero Carbon Building Code; and canvassing residents in suburban St. John's, Newfoundland to build support for ending offshore oil and gas exploration. <https://neighboursunited.org/>

Temiskaming Native Women's Support Group • Returning to the Home Fires • Timmins, ON • \$47,500

Returning to the Home Fires is a land-based, matriarch-led initiative that empowers Indigenous women, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse peoples to revitalize Traditional Ecological Knowledge and restore sustainable climate governance. Grounded in ancestral laws, kinship responsibilities, and cultural resurgence, this project focuses on the ecological, cultural, and governance roles of natural building

materials to reclaim Indigenous knowledge systems that offer climate solutions rooted in intergenerational stewardship, ceremony, and collective accountability. www.keepersofthecircle.com/

The Narwhal News Society • *Environmental journalism on the impacts of the critical mineral rush on remote Indigenous communities* • Victoria, BC • \$35,000

The Narwhal will undertake on-the-ground reporting in remote First Nations communities at the forefront of nationally important energy conversations. As Canada encourages critical minerals extraction to drive the energy transition, The Narwhal wants to explore whether development must come at the expense of the environment and the people who rely on it. Stories will focus on uranium mining in northern Saskatchewan and Ontario's Ring of Fire. Content will demonstrate the complex relationship between environmental, social and economic impacts and allow community members to share what a successful project might look like. <https://thenarwhal.ca/>

Environment: Two-year grants totaling \$450,000

East Coast Environmental Law Association • *Revitalizing Peskotomuhkati Ecological Laws for Environmental Stewardship* • Halifax, NS • \$27,500 per year

East Coast Environmental Law will work in partnership with the Passamaquoddy Recognition Group Inc. to revitalize Peskotomuhkati ecological laws that support environmental stewardship in Peskotomuhkatikuk, which spans southwest New Brunswick and southeast Maine. Using Indigenous legal research methodologies, the project will involve the rediscovery and documentation of Indigenous ecological laws and legal orders that guide human relationships with the lands and waters and support the Peskotomuhkati Nation in the stewardship of its expanding Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area network. <https://www.ecelaw.ca/>

Keepers of the Water Society • *Water is Sacred: Defending Land, Life, and Culture in Canada's Fossil Fuel Corridors* • Faust, AB • \$47,500 per year

Keepers of the Water (KOW) oversee vast, interconnected systems that contain over 60% of Canada's freshwater. Today, the waters and their stewards contend with threats from extractive activities that compromise both water quality and quantity, while also making significant contributions to climate change. To address these challenges, KOW works to empower Indigenous Nations to monitor, document, and defend their traditional territories using both Indigenous knowledge and scientific tools. Their education and public awareness campaigns amplify Indigenous voices and highlight environmental impacts, while POW gatherings and land-based camps foster healing, intergenerational learning, and long-term planning. Funding is directed toward general operating support. www.keepersofthewater.ca/

ENRICH Project (MakeWay Charitable Society) • *Environmental Noxiousness, Racial Inequities and Community Health Project* • Vancouver, BC • \$47,500 per year

The ENRICH Project promotes and advances climate and environmental justice by examining and addressing the social, environmental, political, and health effects of environmental racism and climate

change in Indigenous, Black, and other racialized, marginalized and equity-deserving communities across Canada. ENRICH will continue to grow their community-driven programming and advocacy efforts, including deepening commitment to community-based research and workshops grounded in mutual respect and co-learning, as well as building capacity for systemic change. Funding is directed toward general operating support. www.enrichproject.org

Northern Youth Leadership (MakeWay Charitable Society) • Youth "Connecting on the Land in Denendeh" (COLD) Forum • Yellowknife, NWT • \$47,500 per year

The Youth COLD Forum is a week-long, land-based climate justice gathering for Indigenous youth from Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut. Through cultural teachings, mentorship, storytelling, and skill-building workshops, youth will explore the mental health impacts of climate change and develop tools to lead environmental action in their communities. Participants will be supported by Elders, Indigenous Knowledge Holders, and peer mentors. The Forum will also offer trauma-informed support and cultural practices such as ceremony, beading, and traditional games. www.northernyouth.ca/

Nature Québec • Mobilizing for a Just and Climate-Resilient Forest Future in Québec • Québec City, QC • \$20,000 (Year 1), \$30,000 (Year 2)

The Québec government has introduced a bill to reform the provincial forest regime that threatens to accelerate forest degradation, undermine climate resilience, violate Indigenous rights, and destabilize local economies. *Mobilizing for a Just and Climate-Resilient Forest Future in Québec* addresses that threat by supporting collaborative, community-led efforts to reimagine forest management in Québec. The campaign will unfold over two years and rest on four interlinked strategies: engaging directly with communities and organizations that have been marginalized from the forest reform process; connecting regional users and economic actors; organizing public events, workshops, and creative communications to raise awareness about the implications of the reform; elevating community-led solutions; and building alliances for systemic change. naturequebec.org

Environmental Justice Research Alliance (Small Change Fund) • Environmental Justice Research Alliance • Toronto, ON • \$30,000

The Environmental Justice Research Alliance (EJRA) supports communities on the front lines of climate change and environmental discrimination as they build knowledge and capacity to mitigate environmental impacts and address root causes. They provide opportunities for students and researchers to work with communities to directly contribute to climate and environmental justice. Funding is directed toward general operating support. smallchangefund.ca/project/the-environmental-justice-research-alliance-ejra/

Housing: One-year grants totaling \$85,000

Catholic Crosscultural Services • The Housing Consortium • Toronto, ON • \$25,000

The Housing Consortium is a group of non-profit organizations with expertise in the development and delivery of affordable and supportive housing and social support programs for underserved communities struggling to secure appropriate housing. The Consortium will leverage service providers' collective expertise, resources, and efforts from diverse sectors, including settlement, housing, employment, legal, and health, to improve service coordination and delivery. Together, they plan to build affordable and supportive housing and funding will support the development of a governance structure and the infrastructure necessary to add hundreds of units to the affordable housing inventory. <https://ccscan.ca/>

Downtown Eastside SRO Collaborative Society • SRO Degree Program • Vancouver, BC • \$20,000

The SRO Degree Program is a tenant-led education initiative that supports residents of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and Chinatown to build knowledge, leadership skills, and the collective capacity to improve housing conditions and advocate for systemic change. Through a participatory, peer-facilitated curriculum, the program fosters mutual aid, solidarity, and collective action among tenants, equipping participants to identify shared challenges, organize together, and build community-based solutions. In 2025, the SRO Degree is undergoing a comprehensive redesign to ensure the program remains responsive, relevant, and grounded in tenant realities. <https://srocollaborative.org/>

National Right to Housing Network • Centering Community Leadership for the Human Right to Housing Review of Canada's Lack of Accessible Housing • Calgary, AB • \$20,000

In June 2025, the Federal Housing Advocate called for a review panel to study the widespread lack of accessible housing in Canada. Seniors and people with disabilities—including those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, visually impaired, physically disabled, neurodivergent, or living with environmental sensitivities, mental health or cognitive disabilities—face longstanding and well-documented barriers in Canada's housing systems. The National Right to Housing Network will support organizations advocating for those groups to prepare submissions for the review panel as well as strengthen shared messaging and knowledge mobilization. <https://housingrights.ca/>

Weymouth Falls Community Land Trust • Perpetual Reactivation: Bridging Climate Resiliency and Heritage Preservation • Cherry Brook, NS • \$20,000

The Weymouth Falls Community Land Trust is a Black-led non-profit organization that aims to preserve, protect and steward ancestral lands in Weymouth Falls, Nova Scotia. Weymouth Falls CLT holds land for community use and benefit, and their acquisition of the Mount Beulah Baptist Church is the first acquisition by any Black-led Community Land Trust in Canada. This project aims to support GHG reductions and address challenges to climate resiliency in a socio-geographical context distinct to rural and African Nova Scotian communities. The re-activation of this historic site is designed to be replicable. www.weymouthfalls.ca/

Housing: Two-year grants totaling \$190,000

Canadian Housing and Renewal Association • *Housing Professionals Mentorship Program* • Ottawa, ON • \$45,000 per year

Focused on the urgent need to train and mentor the next generation of non-profit/social housing professionals, the Housing Professionals Mentorship Program has received funding from the Foundation since 2017. One-on-one mentorship pairings, members' websites with webinars and learning support, as well as in-person leadership and networking events are used to educate and nurture participants.

chra-achru.ca/

Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts • *Building Resilient and Scalable Technical Assistance for Community Land Trusts* • Toronto, ON • \$50,000 per year

The Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts (CNCLT) is the national voice and organizational backbone for community land trusts (CLTs) across Canada. Their technical assistance program provides essential tools and direct support to CLTs, from legal guides and advocacy manuals to webinars, templates, and one-on-one technical assistance. Staff also provide ad-hoc support: advising new groups, connecting them to professionals, researching specific challenges, and facilitating member discussions. Funding is directed toward general operating support. <https://www.communityland.ca/>