

City of New Westminster Engagement Honoraria Policy

Draft: February 2022

Purpose

The City of New Westminster's Engagement Honoraria Policy aims to build equitable participation and representation from diverse groups into City engagement processes, by working to:

- a) Reduce potential financial barriers to participation;
- b) Respect the expertise community members bring with their diverse perspectives and lived experience.

The City acknowledges that many demographic groups, perspectives and voices are currently missing and/or underrepresented in our current public engagement activities. We know that community members face a variety of barriers to participation, which we are working to address. Equitable public engagement means different individuals will need different accommodations to participate fully¹. The Engagement Honoraria Policy aims to address potential financial barriers to participation.

A policy is required to establish a consistent, organization-wide approach to addressing financial barriers to participation. The policy provides direction to staff on who, when and how the City can support participation and gathering of input from members of [equity-seeking groups](#) through the provision of honoraria. The policy aims to increase staff recognition and value for lived experience, by raising awareness of the financial and social barriers many community members face.

The policy also aims to advance the City's commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism, as a way to acknowledge and equitably address the impacts of past and present-day colonialism². Providing honoraria for community members' participation, input, experience and time seeks to help address systemic inequities / power imbalances and decolonize³ the City's engagement processes.

¹Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. (2020). [Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement](#).

²Colonialism is the act of one group (nation) of people occupying and taking control of the land, people and resources of another. In the case of British Columbia, the intention of European settlers was not to simply exploit the land and its resources for the benefit Britain. The intention was to permanently settle and control the land through the displacement or assimilation of the Indigenous nations that had lived here since time immemorial. This form of colonialism is often called settler-colonialism. As these lands have never been ceded and remain occupied by settlers, this act of colonialism remains on them today.

³ "Decolonization requires non-Indigenous individuals, governments, institutions and organizations to create the space and support for Indigenous Peoples to reclaim all that was taken from them." Bob Joseph's "[A brief definition of decolonization and indigenization](#)" (2017)

Scope and Eligibility

Honoraria are available to members of equity-seeking groups in New Westminster who willingly choose or are invited to participate in City-delivered engagement activities, whereby their lived or living experience is specifically sought to increase diversity of perspectives, provide input on a pending decision/program/policy that directly impacts their specific population group, or inform a direction.

The policy is primarily intended to enable honoraria to be offered to members of equity-seeking groups for participation in one-time engagement events, such as a workshop, focus group, discussion circle, interview, etc. However, City staff should also consider offering honoraria to members of equity-seeking groups who may support implementation of an engagement, such as by conducting outreach activities, convening a small-group discussion, conducting surveys with their contacts, etc.

If you're not sure whether the policy applies, contact the Public Engagement team for support.

Members of equity-seeking groups who are being paid by an employer for their time to participate in a City-led session are not eligible for an honorarium.

Note: Non-City engagements, delegations to Council, public hearings, open houses, information sessions and pop-ups are excluded from this policy. Participation in online engagement activities on Be Heard New West are also excluded. This policy is not intended to cover ongoing engagements and participation in civic process (i.e. advisory committees, task forces, etc.). This policy is also not intended to cover honoraria to acknowledge the cultural contributions of Indigenous elders and First Nations representatives in providing official welcomes and other cultural ceremonies at City events; such honoraria should be addressed in a separate policy.

Equity-seeking groups:

Equity-seeking groups are communities that face significant collective challenges in participating in society. This marginalization could be created by attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. Equity-seeking groups are those that **identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination and actively seek social justice and reparation⁴**.

To foster inclusion, the City actively encourages participation from members of groups with historical and/or current barriers to equity, including, but not limited to:

- First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, and all other Indigenous peoples;

⁴ UBC Equity and Inclusion Office, via Canada Council for the Arts <https://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/equity-seeking-groups>

- Members of groups that commonly experience discrimination due to race, ancestry, colour, religion and/or spiritual beliefs, or place of origin;
- People experiencing homelessness or poverty, and/or those with low incomes or receiving assistance programs;
- Persons with visible and/or invisible (physical and/or mental) illness and/or disabilities; and
- Persons of marginalized sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

Avoiding Tokenism:

While the Engagement Honoraria Policy is primarily focused on engagement targeted to specific demographic groups and/or lived experiences, City project teams should make efforts to include a diversity of perspectives and underrepresented voices in all engagement processes.

It is also important to continually make efforts to reach and include new and additional voices when conducting both broad and targeted engagement. City staff teams should not rely on a few already-engaged community members to continually provide a certain perspective, or speak on behalf of a wider group, as this could be experienced as tokenistic, superficial and/or inequitable.

Taking an intersectional approach⁵, that actively recognizes how race, class, gender and other individual characteristics “intersect” with one another and overlap to create individuals’ identities, is a critical step in avoiding tokenism.

Overall, project teams should strive to centre participants in all engagement processes, and ensure engagement is meaningful and authentic.

Honoraria Amounts

The recommended honorarium for participation in a typical engagement session (workshop, focus group, interview, etc.) of two hours or less is \$50 per eligible participant. A higher amount should be offered for sessions that are longer than two hours.

City staff are encouraged to consider offering more than the recommended amount through reflection on the scope of the project and any factors that may indicate a greater need or contribution. If you are unsure, or would like advice on an appropriate amount for your session, please contact the Public Engagement team for advice.

Note: City staff should be aware of the potential implications of providing honoraria on an ongoing basis to any individual community member. The annual limit of all honoraria received by any one individual is \$500, and this includes all payment methods (cash, gift

⁵ Ontario Human Rights Commission, [An Introduction to the intersectional approach](#)

cards, cheques, etc.). If any person exceeds \$500 in a calendar year they would be required to provide a Social Insurance Number and address, and the City must issue a T4A for tax purposes.

According to the CRA, "An honorarium is a voluntary payment made to a person for services for which fees are not legally or traditionally required." Staff should be conscious of the scenarios in which they are offering honoraria, and be careful not to compensate with an honorarium for work that should be taxable.

Reimbursement for direct expenses:

In addition to providing honoraria in recognition of participants' time, expertise and experience, the City should also provide reimbursement for costs incurred by participants.

Reimbursement of expenses should be considered separately from the honoraria provided for time and expertise.

Examples of direct costs eligible for reimbursement include:

- Travel costs (\$/km, parking, transit passes, etc.)
- Childcare costs (as a general practice, the City should offer childcare at all in-person engagement events)
- Meals (provide meals for longer sessions / those that are scheduled over a typical meal period, or offer a per diem, gift card, etc.)

Offering incentives for participation in public engagement:

Generally, the benefit to members of the public to participating in engagement processes is the opportunity to have a say on decisions that impact their lives, and to contribute to the decision-making process in their community. City project teams must continually work to clearly communicate how a pending decision may impact community members, and offer convenient and easy ways for members of the public to share their input. Diversity of perspectives should be sought in all engagement processes.

However, we also recognize there are many competing demands for attention, and project teams may also want to consider offering small incentives, such as a prize draw or giveaway, to encourage participation in their public engagement activities.

Incentives should also be considered separately from the honoraria provided to recognize the contributions and expertise of equity-seeking groups.

Any incentives such as a prize draw should be available to all participants in the specific engagement process, and draw winners selected at random. In particular, incentives are recommended for targeted youth engagement, and can include food-related items such

as promoting a pizza party as part of the engagement session. Whenever possible, incentives should be purchased locally and be New Westminster-based.

Process for Offering Honoraria

The following steps are outlined in an effort to provide clear direction for City staff as they consider and offer honoraria for their engagement projects. Please contact the Public Engagement team if you have questions or need guidance on the process, whether the Engagement Honoraria Policy applies to your project, etc.

- 1. Identify whether your workshop / focus group / interview / other session is eligible.**
 - a. Who are your target participants?
 - b. Is there a need for specific perspectives / lived experience?
 - c. Does your project / policy apply to specific population / demographic groups?
 - d. Once you have determined honoraria should be offered for your session / project, ensure there is sufficient project budget to cover the honoraria and secure approval from your supervisor.
 - e. If you determine honoraria are not required, based on the policy guidelines, you should still consider how you are including a diversity of perspectives and lived experience in your engagement. Review and work to address the additional barriers included on Page 6-7 below.
- 2. Consider and determine the honorarium amount that will be offered, based on the policy guidelines.**
- 3. Offer the honorarium to eligible participants in advance as part of recruitment / promotion of your session.**
 - a. Participants should self-identify their eligibility (staff should not guess, assume, or otherwise identify eligible participants).
 - b. Participants must not be asked to demonstrate need (i.e. do not request proof of income or other documentation).
 - c. Offer should either be extended to all participants (i.e. dedicated session for people experiencing homelessness) or be offered to “those in need, no questions asked”.
 - d. Communicate with participants in advance to outline the purpose of the honorarium (acknowledge their active participation and unique input to support City decision-making), the amount and method of payment, and that the honorarium should not influence their input / feedback to the City. Outline any considerations for participants in accepting the honorarium, such as potential tax implications or impacts to any financial assistance they may receive.

4. Determine how the honoraria will be distributed, and prepare in advance of your session.

- a. In general, cash is the preferred method of distributing one-time honoraria, as this avoids additional barriers (i.e. participants do not have to take the extra step of depositing a cheque). If cash cannot be offered, please contact the Public Engagement team to discuss accessible alternatives.
- b. Whenever possible, staff are encouraged to facilitate distribution of cash honoraria through a project consultant, or a non-profit organization that is supporting the engagement (for example, by recruiting participants). The project consultant or non-profit organization provides the honoraria via cash and keeps a record of the individuals receiving the honoraria and the total amount. The consultant or non-profit then invoices the City for the total provided in honoraria.
- c. When it is not possible to distribute the honoraria through a consultant or non-profit, contact your supervisor and/or the Public Engagement team to discuss options.
- d. A record must be kept of the individuals first and last names and contact information (phone number and/or email address, when possible) who receive an honorarium. Participants must also sign a record form indicating they received the honorarium, with the name, date and time of the engagement session clearly identified. If honoraria is distributed through a consultant or non-profit, work with them to ensure this documentation is completed.
- e. Plan to distribute honoraria in a confidential and respectful manner that does not put any participants on the spot. For example, let eligible participants know in advance to visit the registration table at the end of the session to collect their honorarium. Staff would then discreetly provide a small envelope to the participant and ask them to sign the record form.

Addressing other barriers to participation

Barriers to participating in public engagement often go beyond financial need. An individual's intersecting factors may magnify experiences of discrimination and disadvantage, and create unique circumstances that impact accessibility, safety, inclusion, and equity in public engagement processes.

This Engagement Honoraria Policy serves as a guide to help staff in addressing financial barriers to support equity and inclusion in public engagement. Consideration should also be given to, and efforts taken to address, other dimensions of inclusion and equity, such as⁶:

⁶ Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. (2020). [Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement](#).

- Physical accessibility of the engagement venue
- Technical accessibility (for digital engagement)
- Geographical accessibility (i.e. distance of venue from a participant's home, and availability of transportation options)
- Language and communication (plain language, translation, supports for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, etc.)
- Cultural diversity, inclusion and norms
- Gender inclusivity (language, safe spaces, facilitator introducing their pronouns, etc.)
- Awareness of the potential impacts and opportunity to participate
- Sense of belonging, capacity and confidence (Have we made participants feel welcome and valued? Have we clearly communicated the purpose / context, provided background information, etc.?)
- Physical and mental health and wellness
- Confidentiality
- Safety and security
- Consultation fatigue / over-engagement