

# Business Association

## Seed Program

### About This Program

This program is designed to support merchants in under-represented areas to organize and collaborate with others in their commercial district to develop strategic plans and goals that strengthen their business area. It provides support from the City such as facilitation, and also grant funding so that the newly-formed business association can take care of the needs that arise throughout the process of launching such as corporate registration and branded assets.

**The goal for this program is to strengthen the commercial areas across the city, and to help provide streamlined advocacy channels for businesses so that the business community and the City can better collaborate.**

Merchants interested in taking part in this program can apply to the City for a one-time grant that includes up to \$5,000 as well as staff resources for facilitation and to support the process. To apply, an application form and proposed budget should be submitted. Once approved, merchants will be provided with a staff liaison to support the process. As expenses are accrued, they may be submitted to the City for reimbursement on a monthly basis as receipts are provided.

### Who Can Apply?

Only one grant is available for each of the following geographic areas for the 2022 program:

- **12th Street / West End**
- **Queensborough**
- **Sapperton**

Additionally, this program is available to a sector-based group in 2022: **home-based businesses**.

In New Westminster, there are a high number of licenced home-based businesses (19% of total licences in 2020) and it has been identified that an association may be helpful to people who be able to connect to other home-based business owners.

### What's Happening

New Westminster is served by a number of business associations: two officially structured Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in the Downtown and Uptown neighbourhoods, and merchant associations in other areas. The less formal merchant associations may be a provincially registered society or an unregistered and informal committee. As well, the New Westminster Chamber of Commerce provides resources to businesses across the City who have paid a membership fee.

### Why Do We Need Business Associations?

Although there is no requirement for merchants to form business associations, many business owners report that they have topics in common with other business owners and that there is power in forming as a collective. This is useful for purposes of advocacy to all levels of government, to market and promote a specific area or sector, or to simply work together as business owners to improve livelihoods.

### Business Association or Business Improvement Association?

Merchants who are applying to the Seed Program may opt to form as a Business or Merchant Association or as a Business Improvement Association. There are benefits and drawbacks to both.

A Business Improvement Association is a legal structure with an official Bylaw with the City. In this structure, a portion of the property taxes from commercial properties in a designated area (the "Business Improvement Area") is distributed to an association for the purposes of improvement activities. A majority of the property owners in the area must be in favour of this structure when it is proposed. Although this structure provides a predictable funding source, it also comes with additional expenses in terms of administrative, legal or filing fees, and requires the organization to develop and stick to a formal strategic plan. BIAs can also apply to the City for grant funding for specific projects.

A business or merchant association is generally simpler, operating primarily as a volunteer-run, BC-registered society. Although the members will share common goals, a business or merchant association may not have as robust of a strategic plan as is required for a BIA and it is generally less expensive to operate this format. Business Associations can usually apply for grant funding for specific projects provided they are an official organization.

Many business associations will choose to become a business or merchant association first, and once they have an active and engaged board and some collective ideas about what goals the area might have, consider becoming a Business Improvement Association. The process to become a BIA can take a number of months.



# Application Form

## Business Association Seed Program

Area Applying For:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- 12th Street / West End
- Queensborough
- Sapperton
- Home-based business

### Contact Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Co-Applicant: (If applicable)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Deliverables:

In order for your application to be approved, you will be required to deliver a number of items to support the organization in development. You may not know what those items are at the time of applying, however, the City of New Westminster has required items that must be developed, and then a number of items for consideration based on the unique needs of the area.

#### Required:

- Recruitment / communications strategy including a plan for reaching out to business owners who prefer to communicate in other languages
- Website
- Bylaws and Constitution and other corporate registry documents
- Strategic Plan – *note, if the business association intends to eventually become a BIA that collects a levy, a fulsome and formal strategic plan is required for that. However, a simplified or informal strategic plan is acceptable for the purposes of this seed program.*

#### Optional:

- Social media channel(s) set up or outreach or marketing plan
- Logo or other branding items
- Plan for translated promotional materials
- Kick off event
- Other items or expenses that you think you will need

### Budget:

Please attach a preliminary budget of how you will allocate the funds, up to a maximum of \$5000. The budget will be finalized after your application is approved and when a staff resource is assigned to you. If you need help with this for the purposes of the application, please connect with our Economic Development Office at [info@investnewwest.ca](mailto:info@investnewwest.ca) and we would be happy to help.

**For the following questions, please attach another sheet if you need additional space.**

1.) Have you spoken to other business owners in your area about this?  Yes  No

Please elaborate:

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2.) Describe how your proposal will impact the area and other businesses.

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3.) What City services do you anticipate you will need support with? facilitation? Navigating registration? Strategic planning? Asset development? How can the City support your application best?

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A follow up report will be required. Please indicate you acknowledge and agree to that.  Yes  No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

