

BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

LAUNCH PROGRAM



ABOUT THIS PROGRAM

The Business Association Launch Program will strengthen existing commercial areas and support business operators to connect with each other and work together.

The program provides both financial and non-financial support from the City so that the newly-formed business association can cover expenses and other requirements for launch.

The goal for this program is to strengthen commercial areas across New Westminster by providing ways for businesses to organize, advocate, and collaborate.

Business owners interested in taking part in this program can apply to the City for a one-time grant of up to \$5,000 as well as staff resources to support the process.

To apply, fill out the application form on the next page, and attached a proposed budget. Once approved, a staff person will contact the business owners to support the process. Receipts for expenses may be submitted monthly to the City for reimbursement.

WHO CAN APPLY?

In 2022, one grant is available for each of the following geographic areas: West End, Queensborough, and Sapperton.

Additionally, this program is available to two groups that have been identified as having a possible need for an association: **home-based businesses** and **Indigenous-owned businesses**.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

New Westminster is served by a number of business associations, both legally structured Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and less formal business associations. The New Westminster Chamber of Commerce also provides resources to businesses across the city that have paid a membership fee.

Although there is no requirement for owners to form or join business associations, many business owners report they have topics, needs, and interests in common with other business owners. Forming an association helps them to advocate to all levels of government, market and promote a specific area or sector, and work together as business owners with common goals.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION?

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

A Business Improvement Association (BIA) is a legal structure governed by a City Bylaw where a portion of the commercial property taxes in a designated area is distributed to an association for improvement activities. To be approved, 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. It also requires the organization to develop a formal strategic plan. The process to become a BIA can take several months and requires permission from the City.

A business or merchant association is usually operated as a volunteer-run, BC-registered society. Members sometimes pay a fee to join but not always. The members will share common goals, but a business or merchant association does not need a formal strategic plan as is required for a BIA. It is generally less expensive to operate and it is straightforward to get up and running. It does not require permission from the City to set up.

Many business associations will choose to become a business or merchant association first, and when they have an active and engaged board, consider becoming a BIA.

APPLICATION FORM

BUSINESS ASSOCIATION LAUNCH PROGRAM

To submit this form, send it, along with any other attachments, to info@investnewwest.ca. Questions? Need help with the application? Feel free to get in touch!

AREA APPLYING FOR

12th Street / West End Queensborough Sapperton Home-based businesses Indigenous-owned businesses

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

CO-APPLICANT (If applicable)

Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

DELIVERABLES

Your group will be required to create items that support the organization. You may not know what those items are right now, however, the City has determined there are items that are required and items that are optional based on the unique needs of the area.

Required:

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

Optional:

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

BUDGET

Please attach a preliminary budget of how you will allocate the funds, up to a maximum of \$5,000. The budget will be finalized after your application is approved and when a staff contact is assigned to you.

For the following questions, please attach another sheet if you need more space, or provide in the body of an email.

Have you talked to other business owners in your area about this?

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

What supports do you think you will need from the City? Such as help to run a strategic planning session, registering as a non-profit, recruitment, or website set up? How can the City best support your application?

A follow up report will be required and you will be provided with a template. Please indicate you acknowledge and agree to complete the follow-up report in the future.

Yes

No

Signature: _____