



Weston Family Foundation Fondation de la famille Weston

Northern Science & Research Northern Conservation Program – Program Details

Important Dates:

Information Webinars	October 16 and October 23 2024 at 2:30pm ET
Letter of Intent (“LOI” or “LOIs”) Deadline	November 26, 2024 at 3:00pm ET
Full Proposal Deadline	February 18, 2025 at 3:00pm ET
Anticipated Award Notice	May 1, 2025

** Dates subject to change*

Background:

At the Weston Family Foundation, more than 60 years of philanthropy has taught us that there’s a relationship between healthy landscapes and healthy people. That’s why we champion world-class health research and innovation with the same passion that we support initiatives to protect and restore biodiversity on our unique landscapes. We take a collaborative approach to philanthropy, working alongside forward-thinking partners to advance Canada and create lasting impacts. We aspire to do more than provide funding, but to enable others to find transformational ways to improve the well-being of people in Canada.

The Weston Family Foundation’s work in Northern Science and Research supports programs that are designed to achieve the goal of **protecting and restoring biodiversity through protecting ecosystems**. Land and ocean planning and stewardship are important avenues for achieving the protection of ecosystems.

Program Overview

The Weston Family Foundation is pleased to announce new programming in support of applied conservation action in northern Canada. The **Northern Conservation Program** is focused on:

- a) the establishment of land and ocean protected and conserved areas; and
- b) stewardship measures that support the conservation of northern biodiversity.

The program aims to leverage the commitment made by the Government of Canada under the UN’s Convention on Biological Diversity to the targets set out in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which include Target 1 (Plan and Manage all Areas to Reduce Biodiversity Loss), Target 3 (Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seas), and Target 8 (Minimize the Impacts of Climate Change on Biodiversity and Build Resilience). The Program is time-limited and competitive, with an open call for applications anticipated in the fall of 2024.



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The Program aims to support projects that will deliver tangible, realistic results for biodiversity conservation, and demonstrate how ongoing stewardship of conserved lands will be accomplished. Indigenous communities are critical planners and stewards of northern ecosystems, and the Foundation welcomes projects that are Indigenous-led or Indigenous-partnered.

The intended outcomes of the Program are:

- 1. Protect/Conserve:** An increase in conserved northern land and ocean areas that are of high value for biodiversity or for resisting or adapting to climate change; and
- 2. Manage/Steward:** An increase in northern land and ocean areas that are governed and stewarded with ecologically and culturally sustainable policies and practices that support nature conservation and the protection of biodiversity.

The program will provide funding for conservation projects spanning up to three (3) years in length, seeking a **minimum of \$450,000** to a **maximum of \$1,500,000 CAD per project**. We are aiming for average grant sizes of \$750,000.

Important things to know:

- For protect/conservé projects, recognizing that full establishment of a protected area may not be possible within this time frame, projects must demonstrate realistic, tangible milestones, steps, or targets they will achieve on the path to conserved or protected status.
- For manage/steward projects, applicants will be required to show that a financial sustainability plan for ongoing stewardship efforts will be completed prior to project completion.
- Our application process is interactive. Applicants are encouraged to connect with the Foundation to discuss their prospective applications for eligibility and fit. During the review process you may receive additional questions from the review committee that need to be addressed prior to final decisions being made.
- Funds are provided in tranches and contingent on meeting project milestones.
- Funds may be used for general operational overhead to a maximum of 10% of funds from the Weston Family Foundation.
- Only CRA-registered qualified [donees](#) are eligible to receive funding.

Application Process

There are two stages to the application process: letters of intent (LOIs) and proposals.

Federated organizations with multiple chapters or geographies: Organizations may submit one (1) LOI in each program stream (i.e. protect/conservé and manage/steward). Where an organization has multiple chapters (i.e. in different geographical locations), each chapter may submit one (1) application.



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Multiple organizations: Where multiple different organizations are collaborating in the same project/geographic area, only one application should be submitted. In the event of collaboration between multiple organizations or institutions, it is the responsibility of the qualified donee applicant to distribute/manage funds appropriately.

Applicants are invited to submit an LOI [using the template provided on our website \(see LOI template bullet\)](#). All LOIs must adhere to the indicated restrictions. Applicants must submit a LOI to be considered for invitation of a full proposal. LOIs will be reviewed internally for eligibility and fit and by an arms-length expert advisory committee for technical merit.

Completed LOIs should be submitted in PDF format by 3:00pm ET on November 26, 2024, to northern@westonfoundation.ca with the subject line “Northern Conservation Program Application.”

The LOI stage of the application process is open to all interested applicants. Only applicants with the highest scoring LOIs will be invited to submit full proposals. Those invited to submit full proposals will receive further instruction and reviewer feedback at the time of invitation.

Invited proposals will be peer-reviewed by arms-length subject-matter experts. Unsuccessful proposals will receive written feedback; however, no appeal process will be available. Contracting must be completed **within four weeks** of receiving notification by the Foundation that a project is successful. If contracting is not completed at this point, the Weston Family Foundation reserves the right to cancel the grant. The Foundation will not modify or alter its agreements unless an organization can demonstrate a legal or statutory necessity.

The Foundation, at its sole discretion, may adjust the timeline of the application process and will communicate any such changes to all applicants promptly.

Questions may be directed to northern@westonfoundation.ca.

Program Eligibility and Project Scope

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, projects must:

- ✓ Be led by:
 - An Indigenous governmental institution or agency mandated to have an interest in terrestrial and/or ocean conservation by existing legislation (e.g., the Indian Act, other legislation, modern-day Treaties), or by an Indigenous community organization mandated by the community to pursue the conservation or stewardship project; or
 - An organization (which may include, but is not limited to, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), industry, academic institutions, etc.) that can demonstrate that all necessary inputs to and participation in the project by relevant Indigenous communities and institutions are in place and supported by a mutually agreed upon partnership arrangement between the Indigenous community and the organization (i.e. organizations should be prepared to provide letters of support from Indigenous community leadership).



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- ✓ Include a Principal Applicant that is a qualified donee in accordance with the Canada Revenue Agency and Income Tax Act. Non-qualified donees may be listed as collaborators on the project. If the Principal Applicant is an organization in partnership with an Indigenous community, a letter will be required from the Indigenous community explaining its relationship to and support of the project.
- ✓ Fit within the program's project and geographic criteria.
- ✓ Demonstrate a realistic potential of achieving the milestones, steps, or targets required to establish protected or conserved areas or for stewarding bio-culturally important areas that improves conservation outcomes for wildlife (flora and fauna) and ecosystem biodiversity.
- ✓ Demonstrate that its location, proposed activities, and outcomes are based on the best available combination of Indigenous and scientific knowledge.

The Foundation is only able to accept LOIs and proposals from organizations that are Canada Revenue Agency-qualified donees in Canada. Applicants who have previously applied to or received funding from the Weston Family Foundation are encouraged to join this competition. Non-qualified donees may be collaborators.

Geographic Criteria:

See Figure 1 for a visual illustration of the following:

Projects must take place in northern Canada. The terrestrial geographic scope of Canada's North for this program is anything north of the southernmost Boreal line as defined by Brandt (2009).

The marine geographic scope of Canada's North for this program includes the following marine bioregions:

- Arctic Basin
- Western Arctic
- Arctic Archipelago
- Eastern Arctic
- Hudson Bay Complex
- Newfoundland-Labrador Shelves



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Figure 1. The geographic scope of the Northern Conservation Program

Project Criteria:

The program's funding priorities support the Foundation's goal to protect and restore biodiversity through ecosystem protection. The specific criteria for assessing projects are as follows:

1. **Projects must be based on existing land and ocean plans, feasibility studies, or another demonstrable initial step in the conservation or stewardship process.** The Program is aiming to support projects with a demonstrated potential to move forward; therefore, applicants will be required to show that initial steps have already been taken on their project – a plan is in place, a feasibility study has been undertaken, an MOU has been signed between parties, etc. – to demonstrate or indicate that the project has community support and has already been assessed for viability.
2. **Projects must overlap with one or both of the “Areas of High Value for Biodiversity,” namely:**
 - a. Areas of significantly high value for northern biodiversity (flora, fauna, and ecosystems). For example:
 - i. Areas of bio-cultural importance;
 - ii. Habitat for endemic species;
 - iii. Key Biodiversity Areas or Important Bird Areas;
 - iv. Important productivity sites;
 - v. Species migration routes, stop-over areas, etc.;
 - vi. Intact and connected land and seascapes; and
 - vii. Ecological corridors.



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or

- b. Areas that are of high value for resisting or mitigating the impacts of climate change, and/or providing options for wildlife and ecosystems to adapt to climate change. For example:
 - i. Carbon-rich landscapes such as peatlands; and
 - ii. Climate refuges for northern species.

3. Projects must be focused on protection/conservation and/or stewardship, namely:

- a. Projects that lead to the establishment of a protected area and/or conserved area (“**Protect/Conserve Projects**”); or
- b. Projects that steward or manage of an “Area of High Value for Biodiversity” (“**Manage/Steward Projects**”) and can demonstrate:
 - i. that their area has achieved protected or conserved status or that steps have been taken to designate their area as protected or conserved in the future; and
 - ii. that nature conservation and the protection or restoration of biodiversity (including managing for climate impacts) is the management priority for that area.

Applicants are encouraged to consult with the Foundation should they have any questions regarding the eligibility of their proposed project.

Funding Specifications

The Foundation will commit up to a maximum of \$8M CAD to projects selected through this program. The number of awarded grants is contingent on the receipt of a sufficient number of high-quality applications. The Foundation reserves the right to adjust the funding envelope in its sole discretion.

- Grants will provide between \$450,000 and \$1,500,000 CAD in funding for conservation projects. We are aiming for average grant sizes of \$750,000.
- Project activities must be completed and funds used over up to three (3) years.
- Funds will be granted only for direct costs that are justifiable for the work proposed.
- Items and cost must be estimated in the LOI and clearly described in the budget of the proposal.
- The granted funds may deviate from the full amount requested.
- Budgets must be developed to account for rising costs during the tenure of the project.



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Any grant provided by the Foundation pursuant to this program shall be directed to the qualified donee organization and not to the individual affiliated with and applying through the organization. Responsibility for the planning, direction, and execution of the proposed project will rest solely with the applicants.

Full or partial support of projects: The Foundation can support a full project or a portion of any project. In the case of the latter, Applicants should provide proof of the necessary resources to complete the full project.

Conditional funding and milestones: Grants are conditional on grantees meeting pre-determined milestones and providing deliverables, including submission of progress reports and/or participation in Foundation sponsored assessment meetings. Continued support is contingent upon the progress reports being favourably reviewed by the Foundation.

Supplemental funding: The Foundation encourages grantees to seek additional funds outside the Weston Family Foundation to further their work once the term of the initial grant has expired. The Foundation has no guaranteed policy for renewal or continuation of grants. The Foundation may, at its discretion, seek to further support clearly successful projects. Grantees are also eligible to apply for funding through other Foundation programs.

Information Webinars

The Foundation will host Information Webinars on October 16 and October 23, 2024, at 2:30 PM ET. Details will be forwarded to interested Applicants in advance of the meeting and can be found on the Foundation website. Applicants are asked to register for either the October 16 webinar (register [here](#)) or the October 23 webinar (register [here](#)).

Important Dates

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Anticipated Award Notice	Spring 2025

Review Criteria

The following criteria will be considered in reviewing LOIs and proposals. At the LOI stage, the primary focus will be on eligibility, the proposed project and whether there is a clear link between the project and the program criteria. At the proposal stage, reviewers will place increased consideration on the strength of the project’s proposed milestones, alignment with program aim and priority areas, appropriateness of the budget, the suitability of the project team, and the potential for improved biodiversity outcomes.



LOI Stage

Project Details: Is the applicant Indigenous or partnered with an Indigenous community or institution? Is the applicant a qualified donee? Does the project fall into one of the two funding priorities of the program? Has the applicant provided an adequate summary of the project, including both concrete milestones or steps the applicant hopes to achieve as well as outlining the significance of the project to biodiversity? Is the budget reasonable?

Additional Criteria Considered at the Proposal Stage

Vision and Criteria: Does the project clearly align with the program aim? Does the project address the funding priorities and satisfy the criteria?

Milestones and Timeline: Are the milestones and timeline realistic for the proposed project? Are there clear and appropriate endpoints for each tranche of funding? Has the applicant considered the political, technical, ethical and regulatory requirements that are necessary to conduct the work?

For Protect/Conserve projects: Has the applicant clearly identified milestones on the way to achieving protection or conservation?

For Manage/Steward projects: Has the applicant clearly outlined their plan for financial sustainability, how they will develop a plan for financial sustainability, and included development of a plan in their project budget?

Budgeting: Are the proposed budget, milestones, and length realistic yet aggressive for the proposed project?

Project Team: Does the project team have the capability and capacity to execute the proposed project? Is the Project Team well placed to influence conservation decisions that may impact their project? Have strategic partners been identified to facilitate the forward momentum of the project?

Reports and Assessments

Grantees are responsible for the following if a grant is awarded:

- **Milestones.** Proposed projects must include clear milestones that guide the continuation of the project. Predetermined milestones, as agreed upon by the grantees and the Foundation, will be used to determine reporting dates and the distribution of payment tranches. A brief milestone report will be required in advance of payment along with latest estimates on the budget.
- **Progress and Budget Reports.** Interim reports on milestone achievement and financial reconciliation are due according to the milestone timelines. An annual progress report including a brief written report with a detailed budget reconciliation is due at minimum



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every 12 months unless otherwise notified by the Foundation. Submission dates and reporting frequency will be linked to project milestones and the nature of the research, as agreed upon by the Applicants and Foundation. Failure to submit reports on time may result in termination of the project.

- **Foundation Visits.** With prior consent of grantees, Foundation representatives may wish to visit Grantees to observe the funded project work underway.
- **Financial Accountability.** Grantees are expected to account for the money expended under any Foundation grant; any money spent either not in accordance with the approved project or prior to pre-approval of any material change in the project are both (i) recoverable by, and subject to restitution by the grantees, to the Foundation and (ii) may be cause for immediate termination of funding by the Foundation.
- **Post-grant Impact Monitoring Reports.** Grantees are expected to report impacts related to the funded work, including, but not limited to, community-, or conservation-related partnerships, conservation decisions, and follow-on funding. As a number of these items may occur after the grant completes, the Foundation would expect the grantee to report on these annually for up to three (3) years after grant completion.

Other

Confidentiality

The Foundation treats all LOIs, proposals, projects, and associated information (collectively, the “**Confidential Information**”) in confidence using reasonable care in protecting such Confidential Information from disclosure to third parties who do not participate in the grant review process and Foundation assessments. All Confidential Information will be used by the Foundation and its review committee for the purposes of reviews and assessments and will be shared only in accordance with the sharing policy as set out herein. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Confidential Information shall not include any information that:

- a. was generally known to the public prior to the effective date of this Program announcement;
- b. becomes generally known to the public through no unlawful or unauthorized act by any recipient of Confidential Information; or
- c. was independently developed by the Foundation or its review committee without reference to the Confidential Information.



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If the Foundation or any of its review committee members is requested to disclose Confidential Information pursuant to a legal or governmental proceeding, the Foundation shall give the Applicant or other owner(s) of such Confidential Information notice of such disclosure request as soon as is reasonably practicable. Participating reviewers will be subject to the Foundation's standard disclosure agreements for such engagements.

Liability and Indemnity

Each applicant pursuant to this program acknowledges and agrees in responding to the program announcement that the applicant shall have no claim against the Foundation, and its respective representatives or affiliates, should such Program response be unsuccessful for any reason. Each applicant hereby releases the Foundation, its representatives, and affiliates, from any cause of action, complaint, or claim in connection with the application process and its outcome.

The Foundation's role in grants awarded pursuant to this program is that of a funder. It is not the sponsor of funded projects. The Foundation will not assume any liability associated with funded projects and each Applicant who is ultimately awarded a grant pursuant to this Program releases the Foundation from any and all liability with respect thereto and further indemnifies the Foundation, and its respective representatives and affiliates, from any claim or loss whatsoever associated with the applicable grant.

Intellectual Property Policy and Intellectual Property Agreements among Collaborators

The Foundation acknowledges that any intellectual property ("IP") that arises from research funded through this program is not the property of the Foundation. The Foundation does require that applicants and collaborators agree on any material IP issues prior to submission of a proposal.

Applicant Commitment

Organizations and individuals affiliated with and applying through or on behalf of organizations should carefully discuss the program announcement and the terms of this document with their organization before submitting an application. The submission of an LOI or a proposal does not bind either the Foundation or the applicants to any commitment to provide or receive funding, respectively.

Successful applicants will be required to agree to terms substantially similar to those contained in this document and the Foundation reserves the right to alter, delete or add additional terms in the Grant Agreement between the successful applicants and the Foundation. The Foundation will not negotiate the terms of the specific Grant Agreement with applicants outside of those that are statutory in nature. The Foundation, at its sole discretion, may change the timeline of the application process and will communicate any such changes.