

The Civic Impact Challenge:

\$500–\$1,000 Micro-grants for Canadian Youth

2026-2027 GLOCAL CANConnect Micro-grant Program

The **CANConnect Micro-grant Program**, funded by **Canada Service Corps (CSC)** and administered by **GLOCAL Foundation of Canada**, supports Canadian youth aged **15 to 30** to design and implement innovative civic engagement projects across Canada. Selected project leads can receive funding to test an idea, build something useful for the community, raise awareness, mobilize others, or contribute to a stronger civic culture.

For the **2026–2027 round**, GLOCAL is launching the **Civic Impact Challenge** — a micro-grant opportunity of **\$500** or **\$1,000** for youth who want to show how a modest amount of funding, used thoughtfully, can create meaningful public value.

Whether you are a high school student, a university or college student, or a young professional early in your career, this challenge is designed to support practical, creative, and community-minded ideas.

TIMELINE

Applications open: Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Project completion deadline: March 31, 2027

Application deadline:

- ☐ **Regular Round (Updated Deadline): August 15, 2026 (11:59 PM Pacific Time)**
- ☐ **Applications Remain Open:** We are still accepting applications on a **rolling basis**. Applications submitted after July 15, 2026 will continue to be reviewed **while funding remains available**. We encourage interested applicants to apply as soon as possible, as funding is limited and applications may close once all available funding has been allocated.

Review Timeline:

- **Early Action Round:** Decisions will typically be issued in two weeks of receiving a complete application with all required information.
- **Regular Round:** Decisions will typically be issued within two to four weeks of receiving a complete application with all required information.

ELIGIBILITY

To apply as a **Project Lead**, you must:

- Be **15 to 30 years old at the time of application**
- Be a **Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or have refugee/protected status in Canada**

Project Leads may apply:

- **As an individual**, or
- **As part of a team**

Teams may include additional members who contribute to the project. However, the **Project Lead must meet the eligibility requirements listed above** and will be responsible for submitting the application and coordinating the project.

1. What kind of projects are we looking for?

We are looking for projects that help strengthen awareness of civic issues, improve democratic literacy, or encourage participation in civic life from any discipline or community perspective.

Projects may include, for example:

- Research and data visualization
- Digital civic tools or websites
- Podcasts, documentaries, or storytelling projects
- Public education campaigns
- Community outreach initiatives
- Youth-led workshops or engagement activities
- Policy awareness or knowledge mobilization projects

The previous round explicitly encouraged projects involving research and data analysis, community engagement, social media outreach, digitization efforts, policy analysis, and interviews or documentary work.

2. Why this challenge?

Big impact does not always require a big budget.
This challenge is built around a simple question:

3. What civic impact can you create with \$500 or \$1,000?

GLOCAL's program has long emphasized **practicality, cost efficiency, and effectiveness in social innovation and community services**, and gives priority to projects that demonstrate cost-efficiency and financial sustainability.

We want to support youth who can think creatively, act responsibly, and turn a strong idea into something that informs, includes, mobilizes, or benefits others.

4. 2026–2027 applicant tracks

To make the challenge more accessible and fair across different stages of experience, applications may be considered under three tracks:

- ☐ **High School Track**
For youth currently in secondary school.
- ☐ **University / College Track**
For students in post-secondary education, including capstone, community-engaged learning, or applied project contexts.
- ☐ **Young Professional Track**
For early-career young professionals.

This structure helps ensure applicants are reviewed in context, while preserving the same core civic and service-oriented program goals.

5. What will applicants need to submit?

Applicants should be prepared to submit:

- A project description
- A simple budget
- A timeline
- An explanation of the target audience or community
- The anticipated civic impact and final deliverables of the project

The prior guidelines required a project description, target audience, impact explanation, budget plan, timeline, and alignment with program goals.

Depending on the project, applicants may also include a short video, digital prototype, or sample concept.

6. How are projects assessed?

Applications are evaluated using three core criteria: **Innovation, Impact & Implementation.**

Innovation

Does the project present a thoughtful, creative, or new approach to a civic issue, community need, or public challenge?

Impact

Will the project contribute to greater public understanding, civic participation, or community engagement?

Does it create meaningful value for a community, group, or public conversation?

Implementation and Cost Efficiency

Is there a clear and realistic plan to carry out the project within the proposed timeline?

Does the proposal demonstrate effective and efficient use of the micro-grant funding?

Strong proposals typically combine **innovative ideas, meaningful civic impact, and a practical, cost-efficient plan for delivery.**

7. What kinds of activities fit funding priorities?

Projects supported by the program can take many forms. Strong proposals typically contribute to youth civic engagement, community participation, and public understanding in creative and practical ways.

Successful projects often do one or more of the following:

- Increase public understanding of civic issues, policies, or community challenges through **research, storytelling, education, or public dialogue.**
- Mobilize civic knowledge by making information, tools, services, or resources more **accessible to the public.**

- **Apply academic and technical knowledge in civic contexts**, enabling students—particularly those in **STEM, data science, engineering, and other applied disciplines**—to connect their academic training and career interests with real-world civic challenges.
- **Develop or test innovative approaches**, such as digital tools, data visualization, research outputs, documentaries, podcasts, or community-based initiatives that others can learn from or build upon.
- Create **opportunities for youth participation and community engagement**, including volunteer initiatives, public events, or collaborative projects.
- **Highlight diverse perspectives and lived experiences**, particularly from communities that are underrepresented or underserved.

Projects may be analytical, creative, educational, digital, or community-based, as long as they contribute to strengthening civic awareness, participation, and knowledge in Canada.

8. For educators, professors, and university administrators

The **\$500-\$1,000 Civic Impact Challenge** can be a strong fit for:

- Capstone projects
- Community-engaged learning
- Experiential learning
- Student leadership programs
- Civic innovation labs
- Interdisciplinary projects
- Youth-led research and knowledge mobilization

The previous CANConnect framework already supported research, policy analysis, digitization, outreach, storytelling, and civic knowledge mobilization, which makes it especially suitable for applied academic settings.

This opportunity may be especially useful for faculty or administrators seeking low-barrier, real-world project opportunities that allow students to:

- Apply research and communication skills
- Produce public-facing outputs
- Test community-responsive ideas
- Build project management and civic leadership experience
- Connect academic learning to public impact

Because the grant size is modest, the program also encourages disciplined planning, entrepreneurial thinking, and careful budgeting — qualities that are valuable in both academic and professional settings.

Important program rules

Projects must **not**:

- Support or advertise a political candidate, figure, or party
- Operate outside Canada
- Use grant funds for purposes unrelated to the project
- Generate profit from the project
- Provide salaries
- Violate the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* or provincial and territorial human rights legislation

Ineligible Expenses

Micro-grant funds **cannot be used for the following expenses**:

- **Personal compensation**
Wages, salaries, stipends, or honoraria for the Project Lead or project team members
- **Personal purchases or equipment for long-term personal use**
Personal laptops, phones, tablets, or other personal electronics
- **Ongoing organizational operating costs**
Rent, utilities, insurance, or general administrative costs unrelated to the project
- **Political or partisan activities**
Supporting or opposing a political party, candidate, or election campaign
- **Fundraising for other organizations or charities**
- **Expenses incurred before approval**
Costs that occur before the micro-grant is formally approved
- **Alcohol, gifts, or prizes**
- **Major capital purchases**
Vehicles, large equipment, or infrastructure

Important Note

Micro-grants are intended to support **small, cost-efficient civic initiatives** that create public benefit. Applicants are encouraged to design projects that make **responsible and practical use of the funding**.

If you are unsure whether an expense is eligible, please contact the program team at microgrants@glocalfoundation.ca before including it in your budget.

Support from GLOCAL

Applicants may receive guidance on:

- Project planning
- Budgeting
- Research approach
- Networking & fundraising
- General project development

Past projects

Previous CANConnect-supported projects included documentaries, podcasts, apps, community research, youth entrepreneurship initiatives, housing and affordability research, refugee storytelling, civic education games, and policy-focused public awareness tools.

This range matters. It shows that the program welcomes different methods, disciplines, and styles of civic contribution — as long as the work is thoughtful, relevant, and publicly meaningful.

Ready to apply?

If you have an idea that could inform, engage, support, or mobilize others, we encourage you to apply.

The **Civic Impact Challenge** is for youth who want to build/test an idea, build something useful, and contribute to civic life in a practical way.

Have questions?

- Email us: microgrants@globalfoundation.ca
- Call us: 613-317-5169 ext. 800
- Book an info session (select “Micro-grant Mentorship Meeting”):
<https://globalfoundation.ca/get-involved>