Communities Focus Area Webinar

November 26
12 pm EST/9 am PST

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Welcome

Some technical tips

For auto-captions:
Click on the "CC Show Captions" button at the bottom of the screen.

For ASL Interpretation:
- Click on the Interpretation button at the bottom of your screen
- Click "ASL Interpretation" and the window for the interpreter will pop up. You can move the video around on your screen.

To ask a question during the presentation, or the Q&A period of the webinar:
- Type in the Q&A box - Upvote questions that are similar to yours
- If you cannot find the Q&A, message the hosts in chat and we can add the question to the Q&A
- All questions will be answered live – including those replied to in writing
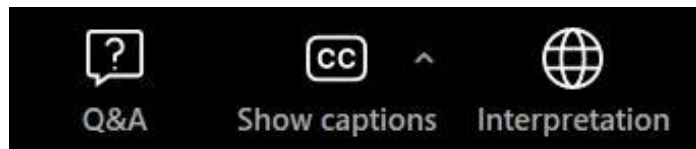
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Land Acknowledgement | Reconnaissance territoriale
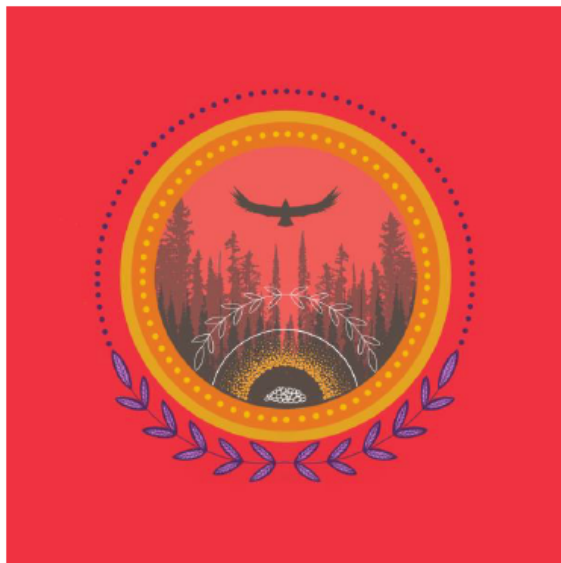
Eruoma Awashish

The McConnell Foundation office sits on ancestral and unceded Indigenous territory, a place known as Tiohtiá:ke in Kanien'kéha and Mooniyang in Anishinaabemowin. We recognize that the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation are stewards of the lands and waters of this territory, which has long been a place where meetings and exchanges among nations have occurred.

Les bureaux de la Fondation McConnell sont situés en territoire ancestral autochtone non-cédé, un lieu connu sous le nom de Tiohtiá:ke en Kanien'kéha et Mooniyang en Anishinaabemowin. Nous reconnaissons la Nation Kanien'kehá:ka comme gardienne des terres et des eaux de ce territoire, qui a longtemps été un lieu d'échanges et de rencontres entre diverses nations.

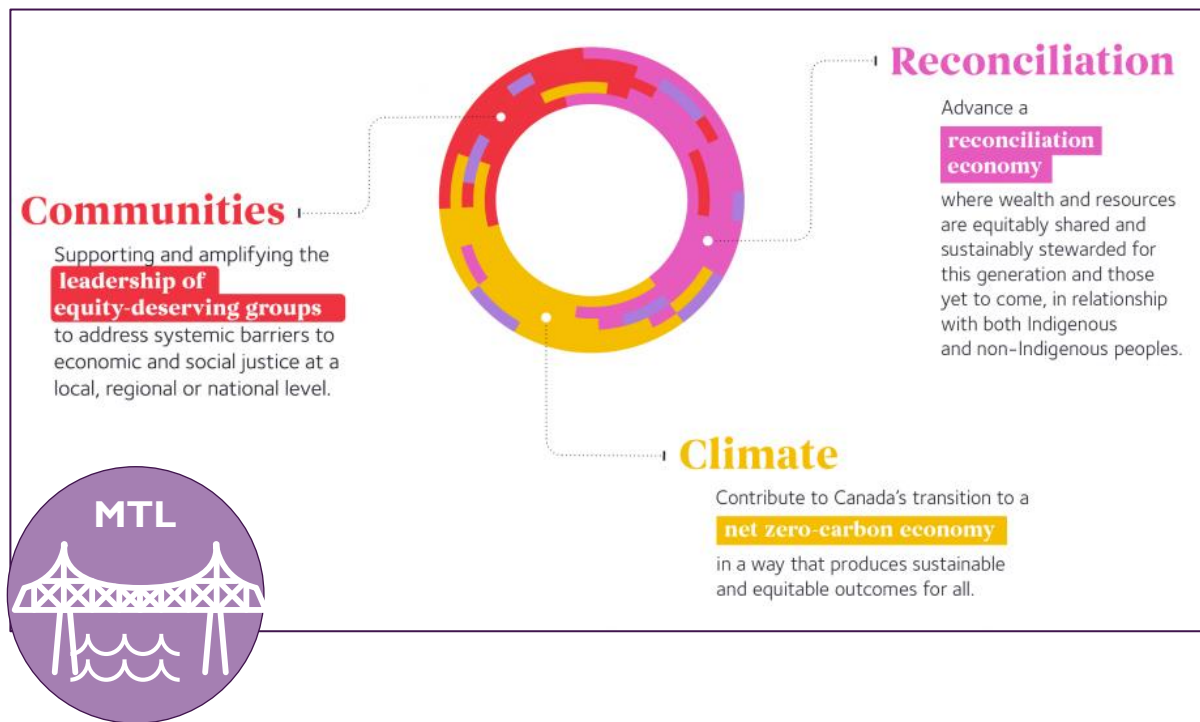McConnell

About The McConnell Foundation

Mission:

- We strive for a resilient, inclusive and sustainable society that can successfully address its complex challenges.
- Contributes to diverse and innovative approaches to address community resilience, reconciliation, and climate change.
- We do so through funding and investment partnerships, strengthening capabilities, convening, and collaborating with the public, private and non-profit sectors.

History and Context:

- Founded in1937 by J.W. McConnell
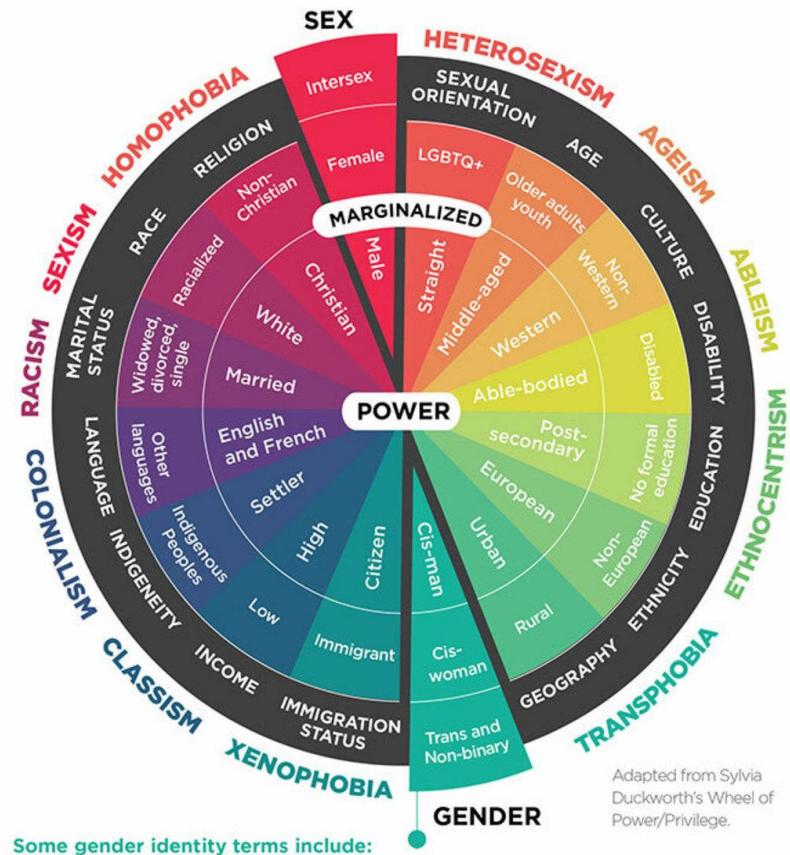- Private Canadian family foundation

Our Focus Areas

Communities

Supporting and amplifying the **leadership of equity-deserving groups** to address systemic barriers to economic and social justice at a local, regional or national level.

Reconciliation

Advance a **reconciliation economy** where wealth and resources are equitably shared and sustainably stewarded for this generation and those yet to come, in relationship with both Indigenous and non–Indigenous peoples.

Climate

Contribute to Canada's transition to a **net zero-carbon economy** in a way that produces sustainable and equitable outcomes for all.

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What is happening in Communities?

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What does a focus on racialized communities and intersectionality mean?

SEX

HETEROSEXISM

HOMOPHOBIA

AGEISM

RELIGION

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

AGE

CULTURE

ABLEISM

RACE

Intersex

Female

LGBTQ+

Older adults youth

DISABILITY

SEXISM

Non-Christian

Racialized

Christian

White

MARGINALIZED

Straight

Middle-aged

Non-Western

Disabled

ETHNOCENTRISM

RACISM

MARITAL STATUS

Widowed, divorced, single

Married

POWER

Western

Able-bodied

No formal education

EDUCATION

Post-secondary

Non-European

COLONIALISM

LANGUAGE

Other languages

English and French

Settler

European

ETHNICITY

GEOGRAPHY

INDIGENEITY

Indigenous Peoples

High

Citizen

Cis-man

Urban

TRANSPHOBIA

CLASSISM

INCOME

Low

Immigrant

Cis-woman

Rural

TRANSPHOBIA

IMMIGRATION STATUS

Trans and Non-binary

XENOPHOBIA

GENDER

Adapted from Sylvia Duckworth's Wheel of Power/Privilege.

Some gender identity terms include:

Agender Bigender	Genderfluid Genderqueer	Gender neutral Non-binary	Transgender man Transgender woman

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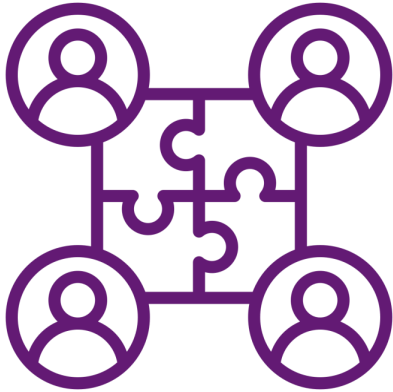
Continuing Communities Focus Area Strategies
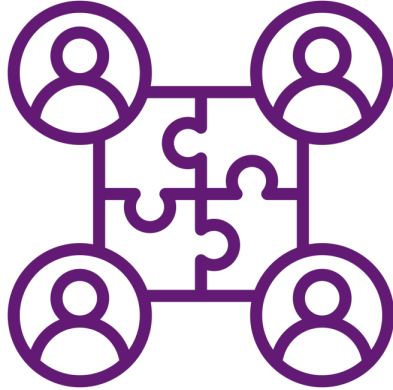
Collaboration & Collective Action

Policy Change

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Refined Communities Focus Area Strategies

Collaboration & Collective Action

Policy Change

Regeneration

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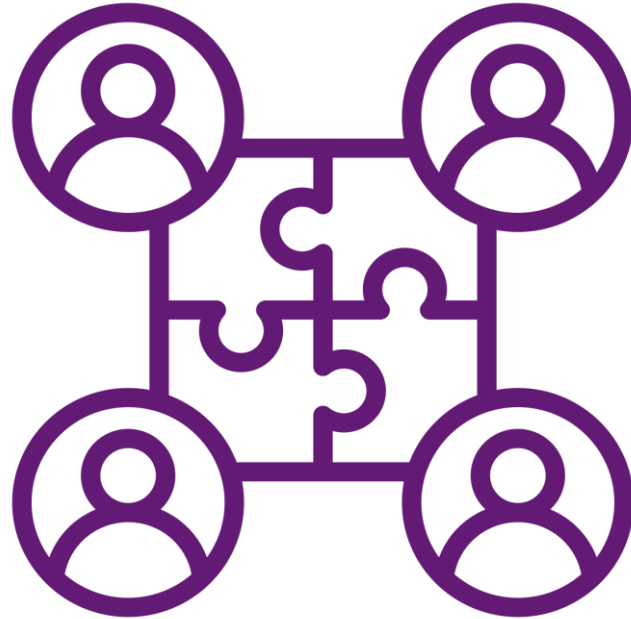
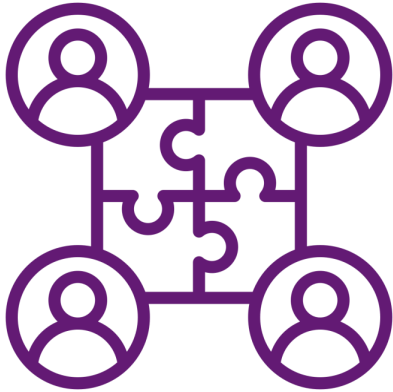# Strategy 1: We cannot afford to work in isolated ways: Our focus on collective action

Strategy 2. We support policy engagement that benefits equity denied communities

Strategy 3. Regeneration: We need to address historical harm and reinvent ourselves

Refined Communities Focus Area Strategies

Collaboration & Collective Action

Policy Change

Regeneration

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Regeneration

Summary: What is new with this strategy refinement?

- We continue to support collective action and policy engagement

- Regeneration is a new dimension of this work

- Prioritization of equity-denied and intersectional groups in our community

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What we do not fund - Communities

We do not consider requests:

- that are part of a general fundraising campaign
- to reduce deficits
- for university or hospital endowments
- **for annual operating funds or other recurring costs**, *unless directly linked to one of our focus areas and the success of the proposed project*
- involving partisan political activities
- involving strictly religious purposes or activities
- for purely academic research or basic research
- for organizations or projects outside of Canada
- for international development initiatives
- for projects advancing nature-based solutions such as: reforestation and tree planting, nature conservation or biodiversity preservation
- for organizational emergency needs
- from for-profit organizations (except in rare & specific situations)
- for private schools
- **for ongoing delivery of front-line services (e.g. foodbanks, shelters, etc.)**

Generally, we do not consider requests in which the primary activity is:

- the production of a podcast, video, or publication
- a conference, workshop, or seminar
- training, scholarships, or subsidies

Although any of the above could be part of a larger scale project or program

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Key considerations for making funding decisions in addition to the 3 strategies

1. Nothing About Us Without Us

2. Projects that Challenge the Status Quo

3. Allocating Resources to "Underfunded" Groups

4. Projects that are clear and specific

5. Additionality – A portfolio approach

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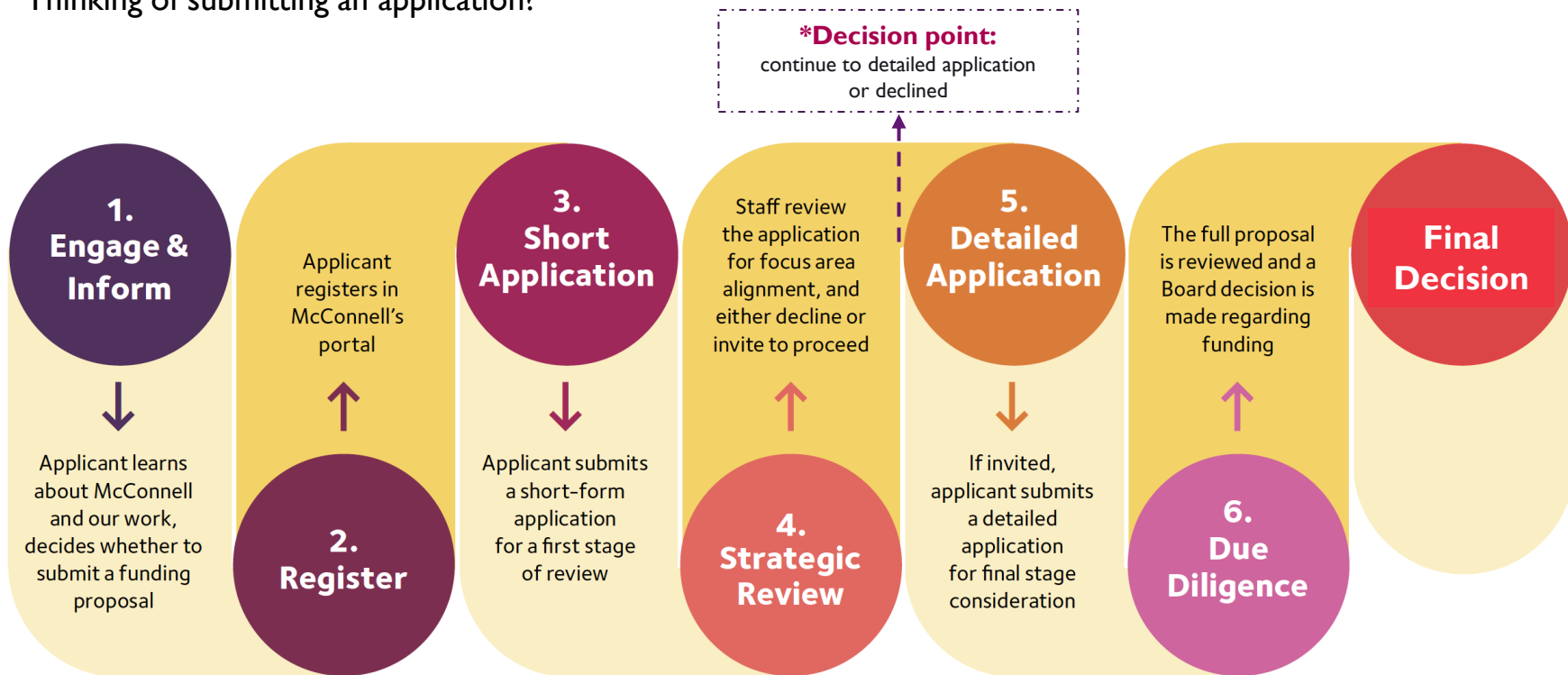# Are we walking the talk with our portfolio? We are on a journey!
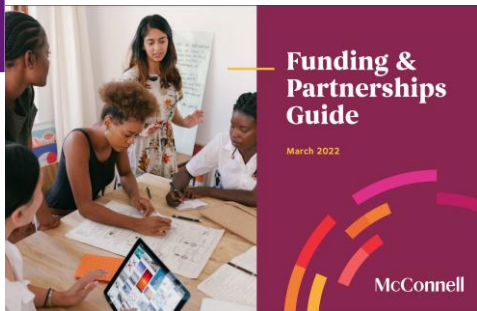
Are you interested in a partnership with us?

How to apply

Thinking of submitting an application?

*Decision point: continue to detailed application or declined

1. Engage & Inform

Applicant learns about McConnell and our work, decides whether to submit a funding proposal

2. Register

Applicant registers in McConnell's portal

3. Short Application

Applicant submits a short-form application for a first stage of review

Staff review the application for focus area alignment, and either decline or invite to proceed

4. Strategic Review

5. Detailed Application

If invited, applicant submits a detailed application for final stage consideration

6. Due Diligence

The full proposal is reviewed and a Board decision is made regarding funding

Final Decision

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Application Resources

1

Funding & Partnerships Guide:

This guide provides information on types of funding partnerships, and what guidelines and assessment criteria we apply in reviewing proposals.

2

Sample Application:

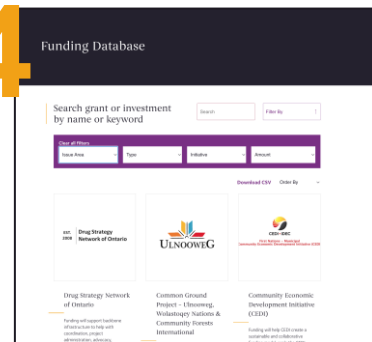Preview the instructions and all of the questions for both stages of the application process.

3

Virtual Office Hours:

15-minute office hours are an opportunity to check the eligibility of your project or idea and to explore how it may be a fit with McConnell's Focus Areas. *Note: we do not review or provide feedback on draft applications during these meetings.*

4

Funding database:

The funding database is a repository of McConnell funded projects. It provides information on the organizations and projects supported, amounts funded, and project length.

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Q&A

Note: For questions regarding the eligibility of your organization's project and its alignment with the Communities funding strategy, we encourage you read our Funding and Partnerships Guide and to book an Office Hours appointment.

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Q&A – General Questions About the Communities FA

Question	Answer
What does "community-led" mean, especially for impacted communities?	"Community-led" means the community directly drives the design of solutions, not just participating in the process. The leadership comes from the affected communities.
Can you explain the concept of Nothing About Us Without Us and whether there is a specific criterion?	Nothing About Us Without Us emphasizes supporting leadership from impacted communities that have the most urgent needs and best understand their challenges. The goal is to avoid funding organizations led by people who are not part of these communities. McConnell is still working on refining how this strategy is implemented but aims to stay closely aligned with community-led solutions.
What is McConnell's strategy to support organizations that challenge the status quo, especially in relation to government funders?	McConnell aims to be a supportive partner for organizations challenging the status quo. We recognize that such organizations may face risks, like falling out of favor with government funders. McConnell is committed to helping build resilience for these groups. The foundation's strategy includes supporting organizations that are willing to address issues like colonization and land theft, even when it may put them at odds with traditional funding sources.
How do future generations fit within the definition of equity-denied communities?	Future generations can be considered an equity-denied community. The proposal just needs to clearly target and specify the community and the focus should be on clarity and potential impact.

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Q&A – General Questions About the Communities Focus Area

Question	Answer
What is McConnell's position on supporting international development projects, such as those focused on women's leadership, rights, or climate change adaptation in underdeveloped countries?	McConnell acknowledges the importance of these global projects but its mandate focuses on funding local projects within Canada. Therefore, we are unable to support international work.
How does climate action fit into your priorities?	McConnell has specific focus areas for reconciliation with Indigenous communities and for Climate Action. However, we fund projects that address social justice and equity issues, even if they intersect with climate action. Projects that combine these themes may be funded under the communities focus area, in partnership with the Climate focus area.

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Q&A – Questions About the Collaborative Action Funding Stream

Question	Answer
Can organizations collaborate with others to submit multiple proposals, aiming for a diverse and interconnected project portfolio?	Yes, McConnell encourages collective action and collaboration. However, submitting multiple proposals may not lead to more than one grant, so it's important to consider this before applying. McConnell offers office hours to discuss and receive advice on project ideas.

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Q&A – Questions about the Regeneration Funding Stream

Question	Answer
What is the icon you chose to represent the Regeneration pillar and why?	The icon is the Sankofa bird, an ancient Adinkra symbol representing learning from the past to move forward. It aligns with the values and philosophy behind the regeneration pillar.
Is the regeneration focus primarily on Indigenous rights and history?	No, regeneration is not exclusively focused on Indigenous issues. It supports any community impacted by colonialism and historical harms.

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Q&A – Questions About Eligibility and Funding Processes

Question	Answer
How do you feel about supporting arts activities that engage intersectionality and drive community action, but avoid direct political actions like lobbying?	Arts for social change is valued. If arts projects aim for systems change, they can be considered, but there may be challenges in applying arts directly for such change. The foundation is open to learning and seeing relevant applications.
Does McConnell still fund university-based projects for specific initiatives?	McConnell funds projects led by communities where universities are key partners but does not fund universities directly.
Is supporting capacity-strengthening initiatives for the charitable and nonprofit sector still a priority?	Yes, capacity strengthening remains a priority but is part of a separate program outside this focus area. For more information, interested parties can contact the relevant program team.
Is travel within Canada eligible to bring equity-denied people together for in-person meetings?	Travel may be eligible if it contributes to systems change, but it should be part of a larger project. Travel alone would not be sufficient for funding.

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Q&A – Questions About Eligibility and Funding Processes

Question	Answer
Can funding be used for workshops as part of a larger project?	Yes, workshops can be part of the project and eligible for funding if they contribute to community engagement, which is often part of the initiatives McConnell supports.
What is the timeline for the application process?	McConnell follows a two-stage process. After submitting the expression of interest, applicants can expect feedback within about three weeks, depending on demand. After receiving the stage-two invitation, applicants will prepare their proposals. The due diligence process can take a few weeks, meaning the entire process may take two to three months.
If we've submitted a first-stage application before the new priorities were released, can we tailor the second-stage application to the new priorities?	Yes, applicants can tailor their second-stage application to the newly released priorities, especially if they believe the refined strategy offers new opportunities.
Can organizations that may lack capacity to write proposals, be partners instead of leads?	Yes, organizations in this situation can be partners. McConnell is currently working on adapting its practices to better accommodate underfunded and equity-denied communities, recognizing the need for more support in the philanthropic process.

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Q&A – Questions About Eligibility and Funding Processes

Question	Answer
Can an existing partner apply for funding for a new project before the first one is completed?	It depends on the situation, particularly if the organization is already receiving funding. The question should be addressed during office hours for a more tailored response.
Is multi-year funding preferred over single-year funding?	Multi-year funding is generally preferred, but single-year funding is also available through specific grants like program development grants. The project's nature will determine the funding type.
How are project outcomes judged, and is a policy paper acceptable as a final outcome?	Outcomes are judged based on the proposal and alignment with the strategy. A final policy paper is fine as long as it fits within the systems-change framework.
Can an organization be too small or underfunded to receive support?	The size of an organization isn't a disqualifier, but its capacity to tackle the proposed challenge is crucial. Small organizations may need to collaborate with others to demonstrate greater impact and capacity.

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Thank you!

We will send you the slides and written responses to the Q&A shortly