



FEBRUARY 21, 2025



EMPOWERING DREAMS, UNITING COMMUNITIES

VALID DREAMS FOUNDATION

**GRANT PROPOSAL
PREPARED FOR SALLY MARTIN**

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Cover Letter

February 21, 2025

Dear **Grant Committee**

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

On behalf of the Valid Dreams Foundation, I am pleased to submit our proposal for the grant application for \$500,000. Our project, "Empowering Dreams, Uniting Communities," addresses the critical needs of newcomers and racialized communities in Kamloops, Kelowna, Vernon, and Salmon Arm, British Columbia.

Founded in 2022, Valid Dreams Foundation is dedicated to creating a sense of belonging and inclusivity where individuals are inspired to pursue their dreams. Our mission is to provide a space where people can nurture their aspirations and thrive in their communities. We offer culturally sensitive mental health services, anti-racism initiatives, newcomer integration support, and cultural preservation programs.

The requested funding will enable us to:

1. Expand our culturally sensitive mental health services
2. Implement comprehensive anti-racism training for local organizations
3. Enhance our newcomer integration support programs
4. Organize large-scale cultural events to foster community understanding

Our project aligns closely with your organization commitment to promoting diversity, community development, mental health support. We believe that addressing these interconnected needs can create a more inclusive and vibrant community that benefits all residents. careful resource stewardship and have robust systems in place for monitoring, evaluation, and continuous



improvement.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss our proposal further and provide any additional information you may need. I appreciate your consideration, and we look forward to the possibility of partnering with your organization in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Sally Martin

Executive Director

Valid Dreams Foundation

43 - 1195 14th Street

Kamloops, BC V2B 8L1

Canada

Phone: 587-974-7752



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Executive Summary

Valid Dreams Foundation, established on February 10, 2022, is a non-profit organization based in Kamloops, British Columbia. We are dedicated to supporting newcomers, racialized communities, and minority groups through culturally sensitive mental health services, anti-racism initiatives, and cultural preservation programs. Our mission is to provide a space where individuals can nurture their dreams and thrive in their communities, bridging multi-ethnic groups through events, workshops, and targeted support services.

Newcomers and racialized communities in Kamloops, Kelowna, Vernon, and Salmon Arm face significant challenges integrating into their new environment. These include language barriers, cultural differences, limited access to culturally sensitive mental health services, discrimination, and difficulties in finding employment. Valid Dreams Foundation addresses these issues by offering comprehensive support services, mental health programs tailored to diverse cultural backgrounds, anti-racism workshops, and cultural events that foster understanding and inclusion within the broader community.

We request funding from \$100,000 to \$500,000 to expand our impact and enhance our services. This grant will support office space acquisition, program development, staff expansion, and operational costs. Specifically, it will allow us to launch our "Empowering Dreams, Uniting Communities" project, which includes expanding our culturally sensitive mental health services, implementing anti-racism training for local organizations, enhancing newcomer integration support, and organizing large-scale cultural events.

The benefits of this project will be far-reaching. We anticipate improved for newcomers and racialized communities, reduced instances of racism and discrimination and enhanced integration



success for newcomers. Long-term impacts include a more inclusive community, reduced health disparities, increased civic participation from previously marginalized groups, and economic benefits from successfully integrating newcomers into the local workforce. This project could create a model for culturally sensitive community development that can be replicated in other regions.

Organizational Overview

Valid Dreams Foundation, formerly Kamloops African Association, was founded on February 10, 2022. Our organization is led by Sally Martin, a Black/Racialized woman born on June 1, 1990, who serves as our Executive Director. We are based at 43 - 1195 14th. Kamloops, BC, V2B 8L1, Canada.

Our foundation emerged from a deep understanding of the challenges faced by newcomers, including racism, discrimination, and the difficulties of adapting to new environments. We established Valid Dreams to create a sense of belonging, unite communities, promote culture, combat racism, and foster inclusion. We aim to ensure that no one is left behind and that newcomers successfully integrate into the community.

We offer a range of services including:

1. Support for newcomers' integration
2. Promotion of culturally sensitive mental health services
3. Anti-racism initiatives
4. Cultural preservation and promotion

Our team comprises dedicated professionals from diverse backgrounds, each bringing unique skills



and perspectives to our work.

Mission

To provide a space where individuals can nurture their dreams and thrive in their communities.

Vision

To grow, inspire, empower, educate, and connect communities.

Core Values

1. **Curiosity:** We encourage continuous learning and exploration.
2. **Forgiveness:** We promote understanding and second chances.
3. **Integrity:** We uphold honesty and ethical behaviour in all our actions.
4. **Inclusion:** We embrace diversity and ensure everyone feels welcome.
5. **Collaboration:** We believe in the power of working together towards common goals.

Guidelines

The funding source suggested in this proposal is the **Canada Retraining and Opportunities Initiative –funding program**. Employment and Social Development Canada provides grant funding through this initiative for non-profit organizations like Valid Dreams Foundation to enhance community-based projects. This aligns with Valid Dreams' goals and visions, which promote diversity, community development, and mental health support. The requirements and guidelines associated with this funding source include being a non-profit organization and being non-commercial, as well as supporting program priorities and objectives. Eligible organizations will be invited to apply for funding once eligibility has been established; then they must submit a complete application within 20 business days to be considered for funding. Canada Retraining and Opportunities Initiative – funding program will assess other criteria at the application phase.



Key Details for Non-Profit Organizations:

- Application Period: October 16, 2024 – March 31, 2025 (*may close earlier if funds are fully allocated*)
- Total Funding Available: \$30 million

Eligibility Criteria:

To qualify for funding, the following conditions must be met:

- A mass layoff must have occurred on or after April 1, 2024.
- At least 50 individuals must have been laid off from one establishment within four weeks.
- The layoff must be permanent and have a significant economic impact on the local community.

Funding is intended for community-based workforce development projects that equip laid-off workers with skills and training to transition into new employment opportunities.

Statement of Need

In Kamloops and the surrounding areas of Kelowna, Vernon, and Salmon Arm, newcomers and racialized communities face significant challenges that hinder their successful integration and overall well-being. At Valid Dreams Foundation, we have identified several critical needs that our project aims to address:

1. **Cultural Isolation and Lack of Belonging:** Many newcomers struggle to find community in their new home. This isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety. Initiatives that foster connections between newcomers and long-time residents are urgently needed to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment.
 2. **Limited Access to Culturally Sensitive Mental Health Services:** Mental health support
-



crucial for individuals navigating the challenges of settling in a new country. However, traditional mental health services often lack the cultural competency needed to serve diverse populations effectively. There is a significant gap in mental health services that understand and respect the cultural and spiritual backgrounds of newcomers and racialized communities.

3. **Persistent Racism and Discrimination:** Despite Canada's reputation for multiculturalism, racism and discrimination remain significant barriers for many newcomers and racialized individuals. These experiences can occur in various settings, including workplaces, schools, and public spaces. There is a critical need for comprehensive anti-racism initiatives that educate the broader community and provide support to those affected by discrimination.
 4. **Employment Challenges:** Newcomers often face difficulties finding employment that matches their skills and qualifications. This can be due to a lack of recognition of foreign credentials, language barriers, or discriminatory hiring practices. Programs that bridge the gap between newcomers' skills and local employment opportunities are needed.
 5. **Language and Cultural Barriers:** Many newcomers struggle with language barriers that impede their ability to access services, find employment, and integrate into the community. Additionally, unfamiliarity with local customs and systems can create challenges in daily life. Comprehensive language support and cultural orientation programs are needed.
 6. **Lack of Cultural Preservation Opportunities:** As newcomers adapt to their new environment, they risk losing connection with their cultural heritage. This loss can negatively impact identity and self-esteem, particularly for younger generations. Initiatives that celebrate and preserve diverse cultural traditions while promoting intercultural understanding in the broader community are needed.
 7. **Limited Understanding of Local Systems:** Navigating healthcare, education, legal, and other
-



institutional systems can be overwhelming for newcomers. Guidance and support are needed to help newcomers understand and access these essential services effectively.

8. **Intergenerational Conflicts:** Families often experience tensions as younger members adapt more quickly to the new culture while older generations strive to maintain traditional values. Programs that address these intergenerational issues and promote family harmony are needed.
9. **Lack of Representation:** Racialized communities are often underrepresented in local decision-making processes and leadership positions. Initiatives that empower these communities to have a voice in shaping local policies and programs are needed.
10. **Limited Intercultural Understanding in the Broader Community:** Many long-time residents lack exposure to and understanding of different cultures, leading to misunderstandings and perpetuating stereotypes. Programs that promote intercultural dialogue and education for the entire community are needed.

Valid Dreams Foundation is uniquely positioned to address these interconnected needs. Our diverse team, with their personal experiences and professional expertise, understands the complexities of these challenges. By offering culturally sensitive mental health services, anti-racism initiatives, newcomer support programs, and cultural preservation activities, we aim to create a holistic solution to these pressing community needs.

Our "Empowering Dreams, Uniting Communities" project is designed to tackle these issues head-on, fostering a more inclusive, understanding, and vibrant community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. By addressing these needs, we improve the lives of newcomers and racialized communities and enrich the cultural fabric of Kamloops and surrounding areas, creating a model for inclusive community development that can inspire change across Canada. To meet our Foundation's funding requirements, the Valid Dreams Foundation is seeking grants



from **The Canada Retraining and Opportunities Initiative – Funding Program**, consistent with our organization's objectives for 2025. This funding is crucial for reaching the following goals and objectives:

Goal 1: Improve mental health outcomes for newcomers and racialized communities. Objectives:

- Provide culturally sensitive mental health services to at least 200 individuals in the first year
- Conduct ten mental health awareness workshops reaching 500 community members

Goal 2: Reduce instances of racism and discrimination in our target communities. Objectives:

- Deliver anti-racism training to 50 local organizations
- Organize five community-wide events promoting intercultural understanding, each attracting at least 200 attendees

Goal 3: Enhance integration success for newcomers. Objectives:

- Provide comprehensive integration support to 300 newcomers in the first year
- Achieve an 80% satisfaction rate among program participants

Goal 4: Promote and preserve diverse cultural heritage. Objectives:

- Organize 12 cultural events showcasing different ethnicities and traditions
- Engage 1000 community members in cultural preservation activities

We are seeking funding to enhance these initiatives and target areas that require improvement to cultivate a more inclusive, understanding, and vibrant community in Kamloops and its neighbouring regions. Our objective is to create a model of inclusive community development that motivates change across Canada. With 10,000 newcomers in Kamloops this year, the Valid Dreams Foundation's "Empowering Dreams, Uniting Communities" project will assist these individuals in settling into a new country as immigrants.



Project Description

Our project, "Empowering Dreams, Uniting Communities," aims to expand our current services and introduce new initiatives to meet the growing needs of our target population. The project consists of four main components:

Culturally Sensitive Mental Health Program: We will expand our mental health services, led by Shirvington Hannays, our Culturally Sensitive Mental Health Therapist. This program will offer individual and group therapy sessions that consider our clients' cultural and spiritual backgrounds.

1. **Anti-Racism and Cultural Education Workshops:** We will develop and implement a series of workshops for both newcomers and long-time residents. These workshops will promote intercultural understanding, address systemic racism, and celebrate cultural diversity.
2. **Newcomer Integration Support:** We will enhance our existing support services for newcomers, including language assistance, job search support, and guidance on navigating local systems and services.
3. **Cultural Preservation and Promotion Events:** We will organize regular events that showcase the rich cultural heritage of our diverse community members, fostering a sense of pride and belonging while educating the broader community.

Target Market

Our primary target markets encompass various individuals and organizations in Kamloops, Kelowna, Vernon, and Salmon Arm. We focus on serving newcomers to Canada, including recent immigrants and refugees who are navigating the challenges of settling in a new country. Our



services also extend to racialized communities and minority groups who may face ongoing issues of discrimination and cultural isolation, regardless of how long they've been in Canada. Additionally, we target organizations, businesses, and institutions seeking diversity and inclusion training to create more welcoming environments. Lastly, we engage the broader community, including long-time residents interested in cultural exchange and those who want to contribute to building a more inclusive society. By addressing the needs of these interconnected groups, we aim to foster a community where diversity is celebrated and everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Goals and Objectives of The Project

Goal 1: Improve mental health outcomes for newcomers and racialized communities. Objectives:

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Methodology

The research will utilize a qualitative approach to gather insights from key stakeholders, including relevant websites, social media platforms, industry experts, and organizations that support entities like the Valid Dreams Foundation. The data collection methods will include online research, focus groups, and data analysis. Sample selection will concentrate on sources that offer valuable information related to diversity, community development, and mental health support within the community. For the data analysis, thematic coding and pattern recognition will help identify funding sources and support that enhance our “Empowering Dreams, Uniting Communities” project, effectively addressing the needs of our organization.

Data sources will consist of websites, social media updates, pertinent reports, and online research. The data collection process will implement structured research techniques and data analysis tools. To ensure data reliability, we will triangulate sources and conduct online research methods emphasizing detailed descriptions and interpretations. We will use thematic and content analysis techniques to derive meaningful insights.

This research focuses on sourcing funding for our “Empowering Dreams, Uniting Communities” initiative and identifying key needs our project seeks to address. It will showcase effective funding strategies to expand our influence and improve our services for the Kamloops community. The findings will enhance understanding of the Valid Dreams Foundation’s role as a non-profit supporting newcomers, racialized communities, and minority groups, expanding its impact across Canada and beyond.



Key Personnel

1. Sally Martin - Executive Director

Sally founded Valid Dreams Foundation out of her passion for social justice, sustainable development, empowerment, and gender equality. With experience working with marginalized communities and institutions, she brings valuable insights and leadership to our organization. Sally has previously worked with Connective Support Society, the Mustard Seed in Kamloops and Edmonton, and Axis Family Resources Kamloops. Her international experience includes roles with UN Women and sustainable economic development organizations in Kenya.

2. Shirvington Hannays—Culturally Sensitive Mental Health Therapist

Shirvington is a Guyanese-Canadian Mental Health Therapist and Addiction Counselor with over 15 years of experience. His culturally sensitive approach considers clients' cultural and spiritual backgrounds. Shirvington has held roles such as Lead Addiction Therapist at the Addiction Recovery Network and Clinical Director at the Salvation Army's Calgary Centre of Hope.

1. Nyamal Lol—Human Resources Coordinator

Nyamal brings extensive experience in the non-profit and people relations fields, contributing significantly to our organization's diversity and culture initiatives.

2. Isabel Sarmiento—Web Administrator

Originally from Spain, Isabel manages the Valid Dreams Foundation website, ensuring our online presence effectively communicates our mission and services.



3. Reign - Social Media Coordinator

A Filipino-Canadian university student, Reign is passionate about storytelling and community building. She manages our social media presence, helping to engage our community and share our impact.

4. Oluwaseyi Gbadamosi - Treasurer

Originally from Nigeria, Seyi ensures our accounting stays in order. His passion for numbers and attention to detail are invaluable to financial management.

Project Timeline, Activities, and Milestones

This table presents a clear, organized view of our project timeline, key activities, and important milestones over the 12-month period. It demonstrates our structured approach to implementing and evaluating our programs, ensuring we stay on track to meet our objectives.

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TIMELINE	ACTIVITIES	MILESTONES
Month 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Set up expanded office space- Recruit additional staff as needed- Develop detailed curriculum for mental health programs and anti-racism workshops	Office fully operational, staff onboarded, and program curricula completed



Month 3-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch enhanced mental health services - Begin anti-racism training for local organizations - Initiate newcomer integration support program 	All core programs operational
Month 5-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize first large-scale cultural event - Conduct midterm evaluation of programs - Adjust services based on initial feedback 	First cultural event completed, midterm evaluation report produced
Month 7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue and expand all programs - Develop partnerships with local businesses and organizations - Plan and execute community-wide anti-racism campaign 	Partnerships established, anti-racism campaign launched
Month 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host end-of-year cultural celebration 	Year-end report completed,
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct comprehensive evaluation of all programs - Develop sustainability plan for the following year 	Sustainability plan drafted



Funding Required

Total requested: \$500,000

Breakdown in Canadian Dollars (CAD)

DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE	AMOUNT
Personal Costs	Salaries for key staff members, benefits, and payroll taxes	\$250,000
Office Space and Equipment	Rent for expanded office space, furniture, office equipment, and technology infrastructure	\$75,000
Program Costs	Materials for workshops and training sessions, costs associated with cultural events, mental program resources	\$100,000
Marketing and Outreach	Website development and maintenance, social media advertising, printed materials, and local advertising	\$25,000
Administrative Costs	Insurance, utilities, office supplies	\$30,000
Travel and Transportation	Local travel for outreach activities, transportation for clients when necessary	\$10,000
Contingency Fund	Reserved for unexpected expenses or opportunities	\$10,000
Total Funding Required \$500,000	TOTAL	\$500,000

Budget Justification

- 1. Personnel Costs:** The largest portion of our budget is allocated to personnel costs, reflecting the importance of our team in delivering high-quality, culturally sensitive services. This includes competitive salaries for our mental health professionals, program coordinators, and administrative staff.
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- 2. Office Space and Equipment:** Expanding our physical space is crucial to accommodate our growing programs and staff. This allocation will allow us to create a welcoming environment for our clients and provide the necessary workspace for our team.
 - 3. Program Costs:** This allocation covers the materials and resources needed to run our mental health programs, anti-racism workshops, and cultural events. It ensures we can provide high-quality, impactful services to our community.
 - 4. Marketing and Outreach:** Effective communication is key to reaching our target population and engaging the broader community. This allocation will fund our digital presence and local outreach efforts.
 - 5. Administrative Costs:** These funds cover the essential operational costs that keep our organization running smoothly, allowing us to focus on our mission.
 - 6. Travel and Transportation:** This allocation ensures we can conduct outreach activities effectively and provide transportation assistance to clients when needed.
 - 7. Contingency Fund:** This small but important allocation allows us to respond to unexpected needs or opportunities during the project period.
-

Project Dissemination and Sustainability Plan

DISSEMINATION

1. Regular updates on our website and social media platforms
2. Quarterly newsletters to stakeholders and community members
3. An annual report highlighting our achievements and impact
4. Presentations at local community events and professional conferences
5. Collaboration with local media outlets to share success stories

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Diversify funding sources:
 - Apply for additional grants from government and private foundations
 - Develop a donor engagement strategy to increase individual donations
 - Explore possibilities for earned income through fee-for-service programs
2. Build partnerships:
 - Collaborate with local businesses for sponsorships and in-kind donations
 - Partner with educational institutions for research and internship opportunities
 - Engage with other non-profits for resource sharing and joint programming
3. Volunteer program:
 - Develop a robust volunteer program to support our activities and reduce costs
 - Offer skill-building opportunities to volunteers, creating a pipeline for future staff
4. Cost-effective programming:
 - Regularly evaluate program effectiveness and adjust as needed
 - Implement efficient systems and technologies to streamline operations
5. Community ownership:



Project Outcome and Impact

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Improved mental health and well-being among newcomers and racialized communities
2. Increased cultural competence and reduced instances of racism in the broader community
3. Enhanced integration success for newcomers, including improved employment rates and social connections
4. Greater appreciation and preservation of diverse cultural heritage
5. Strengthened community bonds across cultural and racial lines

LONG-TERM IMPACT

1. A more inclusive and welcoming community in Kamloops and surrounding areas
2. Reduced health disparities between newcomers/racialized groups and the general population
3. Increased civic participation from previously marginalized communities
4. Economic benefits from the successful integration of newcomers into the local workforce
5. A model for culturally sensitive community development that can be replicated in other regions

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

We will implement a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan to track our progress and measure our impact:

1. Quantitative Data Collection:
 - Number of clients served across all programs
 - Attendance at workshops and cultural events



- Pre- and post-program surveys measuring knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours
 - Employment rates and income levels of program participants
2. Qualitative Data Collection:
- In-depth interviews with program participants
 - Focus groups with community members
 - Case studies highlighting individual success stories
 - Feedback forms from partner organizations
3. Ongoing Monitoring:
- Monthly team meetings to review program progress
 - Quarterly reviews of financial performance against budget
 - Regular check-ins with program participants to ensure satisfaction and address concerns
4. External Evaluation:
- Annual review by an independent evaluator to assess program effectiveness and suggest improvements
5. Participatory Evaluation:
- Involve community members in the evaluation process to ensure culturally relevant assessment

Key Performance Indicators

1. Mental Health Program:
- Number of therapy sessions conducted
 - Improvement in mental health scores (using standardized assessment tools)
 - Client satisfaction rates
2. Anti-Racism Initiatives:
- Number of workshops delivered



- Pre- and post-workshop changes in attitudes towards diversity
 - Reported instances of racism in partner organizations
3. Newcomer Integration:
- Employment rates of program participants
 - Number of newcomers accessing local services independently
 - Reported sense of belonging in the community
4. Cultural Preservation:
- Attendance at cultural events
 - Number of community members involved in cultural preservation activities
 - Reported pride in cultural heritage among participants
5. Overall Organizational Performance:
- Number of partnerships developed
 - Volunteer engagement hours
 - Funds raised for sustainability
 - Media coverage and community recognition

Conclusion

Valid Dreams Foundation stands at a crucial juncture in its mission to create a more inclusive, understanding, and vibrant community in Kamloops and surrounding areas. Our project, "Empowering Dreams, Uniting Communities," represents a comprehensive approach to addressing the complex challenges faced by newcomers and racialized groups while fostering intercultural understanding among all community members.

With our experienced and diverse team, we are uniquely positioned to deliver culturally sensitive services that make a real difference in people's lives. From mental health support



to anti-racism initiatives, from newcomer integration assistance to cultural celebration events, our programs are designed to create lasting positive change.

The requested funding will allow us to expand our reach and deepen our impact significantly. By investing in Valid Dreams Foundation, you are not just supporting an organization – you are investing in the future of our community. You are helping to create a place where everyone, regardless of their background, can feel at home and have the opportunity to thrive.

We are committed to careful stewardship of these resources, with robust systems in place for monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Our sustainability plan ensures that the impact of this investment will continue to grow long after the initial funding period.

We invite you to join us in this vital work. Together, we can build a community where every dream is valid, every culture is celebrated, and every individual has the chance to reach their full potential. I appreciate your consideration, and we look forward to the possibility of partnering with you in this critical endeavour.