

PREFACE

Capital improvement projects often bring lasting benefits to nonprofit organizations and the people they serve. But they are also large investments, and their design and implementation merit thoughtful consideration and preparation. At vBCF we see capital projects as strategic investments that can further our mission and portfolios, and we aim to simplify the process for organizations and break it into phases so they can make informed decisions along the way. Our grant program is designed to ensure the organization can keep the goals of their project clearly in focus, understand the constraints each organization must work within, and support thoughtful and creative design solutions that balance the two. With the capital projects grant application, organizations can seek:

- Phase 1: Planning Support
- Phase 2: Design Support
- Phase 3: Capital Improvements and Land Conservation Support

vBCF has worked with nonprofit architectural firm, MASS Design Group, building upon their Purpose Built series and [Planning for Impact Toolkit](#), to create a [visual map](#) of the development process that may be helpful to organizations as they assess where they stand in terms of project development. Prior to submitting one of the capital project applications above, organizations can also seek out assistance from vBCF for a **capital readiness assessment** (administered by MASS Design) to help the Board and management have a shared understanding of project objectives and organizational readiness. This assessment may be particularly relevant for organizations new to capital projects.

To help potential applicants assess the best fit for where their project currently stands, the application guidelines for planning, design, and capital improvements/land conservation, as well as the capital readiness assessment follow.

CAPITAL PROJECTS APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Phase 1: Request for Planning support

The Foundation supports planning activities that help the organization further refine the purpose and need for the project, engage stakeholders, define the programmatic and financial requirements of the project, and assess feasibility and organizational readiness. Planning activities should help the organization answer critical questions about whether or not to proceed, and how. Deliverables from a planning stage grant can include 1) a case statement clearly articulating need and the goals that define success, 2) a design brief to inform architectural services and site selection, and 3) a project scope (budget, schedule, fundraising plan, project team).

Phase 1 - Application Narrative

A. *Please describe the capital project under consideration.*

- What goals do you have for this project that advance your organization's mission and strategies? What are your early thoughts on success indicators for the project?

B. *Readiness – where does your project currently stand?*

- What type of preliminary needs assessment have you conducted to date (community, stakeholders, users, Boards)? Who have you engaged in this needs assessment? What did you learn from your needs assessment?
- Who constitutes the current leadership for this initiative and what are their roles?
- What are the range of options currently under consideration and what are the critical questions to be answered?

C. *Planning Activities for which grant funds are sought*

- What critical question(s) is your organization seeking to answer during the planning phase?
- Who are the key stakeholder groups that you will be engaging in this work and how?
- Aligned with those critical questions, please describe the planning activities for which you seek support, the timeline, any professional assistance you are hiring to support the planning process.

Phase 1 – Application attachments (in addition to those required as part of the general application)

- 1) Project budget for planning activities with sources and uses
- 2) Existing conditions photos or floor plans, if appropriate
- 3) Qualifications for proposed consultants
- 4) Strategic plan (please highlight the elements of the plan that this project supports)
- 5) Any precedents that are informing your thinking (prior experience, learning from others)

Phase 2: Request for Design Support

The Foundation supports design services that help organizations synthesize programmatic objectives, physical, operational and financial constraints into capital projects that advance the organization's mission and make a positive contribution to the public realm. Successful design projects deliver the foundations for construction (schematic drawings, design development, and construction documents, and project budget).

Phase 2 - Application Narrative

A. Please describe the capital project under consideration.

- What goals do you have for this project that advance your organization's mission and strategies?
- What are your success indicators for the project?
- Describe the project (total square feet, new construction/addition or renovation, interior and exterior factors, open space, accessibility, sustainability, flexibility, health and safety, etc.)

B. Readiness – where does your project currently stand?

- Describe the findings from needs assessments and stakeholder engagements that inform this project.
- During the planning phase of this project, what were the critical questions (and answers) that informed your decision to move forward? Who was involved in making this decision (board, executive leadership, staff)?
- Describe your team that will lead this project – what roles and responsibilities have been assigned (project management, owners rep, communications, fundraising, finance, facilities, approvals, design team, etc.) and who is filling the role?
- What is the status of site control?
- What is the overall capital budget you are working with (design, acquisition, soft and hard costs, furnishings and equipment) and how will it be funded? Are there future maintenance constraints or budgets that must be considered.

C. Design Services for which grant funds are sought

- Please share the scope of services, including design brief, for which you are seeking assistance from design professionals.
- What is the planned process for soliciting and selecting qualified design services? *vBCF prefers that organizations engage at least two design professionals for consideration. If you are not going through a competitive process, please explain why and share the unique qualifications of your selection.*
- What is the design budget and timeline for this project? Include decision making milestones and stakeholder communications.
- What is the public realm context of the project? Describe the site and external considerations (e.g. historic or commercial district, adjacency, community character, eliminating blight conditions, etc)

If vBCF funding is approved, funding will be released upon receiving a copy of the final contract for services and qualifications of selected design professionals.

Phase 2 - Application Attachments (in addition to those required as part of the general application)

- 1) Design Brief¹
- 2) Case statement
- 3) Scope of Services
- 4) Documentation of the existing site (site plan, as-built drawings, images or photographs)
- 5) Project budget with sources and uses
- 6) Qualifications of design professionals, if already selected, with examples of previous work
- 7) Strategic plan (please highlight the elements of the plan that this project supports)

Phase 3: Request for Capital Improvements and Land Conservation Support

The Foundation is supportive of capital improvement and conservation projects that make meaningful improvements to landscapes and built environments in service of our mission and aligned with our portfolio priorities. These improvements can include major maintenance and renovations, adaptive reuse, restoration, and new construction. Qualifying capital projects also include conserving land that contributes to the natural, social and economic vitality of our communities.

Phase 3 - Application Narrative

A. *Please describe the capital project under consideration.*

- What goals do you have for this project that advance your organization's mission and strategies?

B. *Readiness - where does your project currently stand?*

- Please share your design brief and explain how the proposed design meets the objectives of the brief. How has your design been communicated to stakeholders and what has been the response? What compromises were made along the way?
- Does this project have any major contingencies before moving forward (a fundraising threshold, permits, zoning waivers, real estate closing)? If so, please explain the contingency and what the projected timeline is for resolution.
- You will be asked to attach architectural/design development drawings – what stage is the project at in terms of design documentation (construction drawings)?
- Who comprises the current leadership for this initiative and what are their roles (project management, owner's rep, communications, fundraising, finance, facilities, approvals, design team, etc.)?

C. *Capital Improvements or Land Conservation Projects*

- Please share a detailed project budget that includes sources of funds and cost estimates (hard and soft costs) and project timeline.
- Please share your plan to raise the needed funds for the project and a timeline for securing the needed funds. How did you ascertain the feasibility of your fundraising plan?
- If the project includes debt, please explain the terms for the debt and on what basis the organization has determined it can service the debt going forward.
- Please tie the acquisition and/or construction timeline to the fundraising schedule.
- Please confirm site control.
- What impact will the project have on your future operations, financially and in terms of staffing, and what plans have you made to adapt to those changes? Specifically call out your plan for financially supporting major maintenance.

Phase 3 - Application Attachments

- 1) Design Brief
- 2) Case Statement
- 3) Project Budget with Sources and Uses
- 4) Fundraising Plan/Schedule
- 5) Architectural drawings: site plan, schematics including floor plans and elevations (interior and exterior)
- 6) Design documentation: key project imagery or renderings that highlight, materials, textures, and fixtures as appropriate
- 7) Strategic plan (please highlight the elements of the plan that this project supports)
- 8) Maintenance Plans (for renovation projects)

Capital Project Readiness Assessment

Why a Capital Project Readiness Assessment?

Capital projects often bring lasting benefits to nonprofit organizations and the people they serve. Investing wisely in the built environment carries an inherent potential for organizations to amplify their impact and catalyze enduring positive outcomes. New or renovated facilities can enhance how people live and work, while some go even further to transform the social, economic, and environmental fabric of communities.

Capital projects are also large investments, and their design and implementation merit thoughtful consideration and preparation. However, for many organizations this may be the one and only time they will be involved in a capital project and often they have not considered their buildings as a critical part of their strategic planning. This can lead organizations to struggle with the Capital Project process and fall short of the opportunity to leverage a capital investment to advance a nonprofit's mission, or inadvertently create challenges that have a negative effect on the very people and communities they seek to benefit.

To help simplify and untangle the building process in a language that resonates with nonprofits and funders, MASS Design Group (MASS) launched the *Purpose Built Series*, a set of tools and case studies that resulted from a multifaceted study that sought lessons relevant to those considering or conducting capital projects. In 2018, the van Beuren Charitable Foundation partnered with MASS to advance the series with materials that can enhance its accessibility and utility and help organizations overcome barriers in the building process.

To create and test these materials, the team conducted two major workshops and ran a 3-month long pilot with three Newport based nonprofits. The pilot introduced organizations, including their Executive Directors and their Board, to the *Purpose Built Series* and took them through an Assessment, focused on helping organizations identify where they were at in the *Purpose Built* process, where they were well positioned and ready to advance work, and where there were opportunities for calibrating and enhanced alignment to ensure project success. The Capital Project Readiness Assessment is the result of this pilot. The Assessment is designed to help organizations better assess where they are in the Capital Project process, assist in decision making, highlight critical “go/no-go” moments in the process and establish what steps need to be completed in order to be successful.

THE DELIVERABLE

vBCF has selected MASS as the preferred provider for the assessment. A MASS Capital Project Readiness Assessment will assess the current state of your organization's thinking around buildings that support your organizational mission. This process is an opportunity for you and your Board to be introduced to the *Purpose Built Series* and one of the most powerful tools in the series: the [Planning for Impact Toolkit](#), which serves as a guide to help funders and nonprofits looking to invest in or evaluate capital infrastructure strike the right balance between a project's mission, design, and feasibility. Purpose Built was developed following a multi-year, multi-faceted research study aimed at helping funders and their nonprofit partners make the most of Capital Projects.

This work will provide your organization an opportunity to assess where you are at in the process and provide guidance on whether or not to advance a Capital Project to change or enhance your facilities. If the assessment reveals that the project should move forward, it will provide a roadmap of strategic steps the organization can take next.

Specific deliverables include:

- A visual representation of your assessment
- An implementation plan with clear and actionable next steps
- Detailed notes on the assessment evaluation criteria and scoring

HOW IT WILL WORK

We want to hear from organizations who are currently, or may soon be, investing in or evaluating buildings that support their mission. We welcome applications from those at the initial stages of considering a capital project as well as those who may have a clearer idea of how a building could better serve their organization, but are interested in reassessing their process.

→ Application Narrative

- Provide a brief written description of:
 - Your organization's mission
 - How you achieve that mission
 - Why you think you need this assessment and why now
- To help us better understand your potential project, please describe what we will be assessing.
- Where do you think you are in the process? (You can reference the phases in Planning for Impact.)
- Who on your team/board has been involved so far and in what capacities/roles?
- How big is your organization's paid staff?
- What is your board structure? Do you have an active facilities/building and grounds/capital project committee?
- Have there been any changes in the last 2-3 years to your organizations' team/leadership or governance structure?
- Do you currently have physical facilities associated with your organization? If so, please submit a summary of your current capital assets. Include drawings or photos if available.

THE PROCESS

- If selected, the person or team identified in the proposal guiding the assessment internally will schedule directly with MASS for the assessment process.
- MASS will set up an initial virtual consultation to discuss the schedule and road map for this project and how best to involve staff in the process. The road map will include:

	Consultant Activity	Client Role
Background Information Review (Week 1-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Provide a list of existing documents they need from you; this likely will include, but not be limited to: Organizational vision and values, Strategic Plan (organization and facilities, if exists), Drawings of existing facilities, Statement of facility needs and aspirations. → Arrange a site visit to your organization's facilities, if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Deliver documents to a shared digital drive (Google Drive will be provided) within 5 business days. → Provide access to your location if a site visit is needed. → Complete and submit an Impact-Design Methodology Worksheet, which is available for download here.

<p>Dialogue and Discussion (Week 4)</p>	<p>→ Facilitate up to two, 90-minute dialogues with specific members of your organization. This could include your Executive Director, Board members, staff, third-party beneficiaries of your buildings and/or nonprofit programming, etc. as they identify is necessary following their review of your background information.</p>	<p>→ Contact information for requested attendees → Participation in dialogue</p>
<p>Playback of Findings for Validation (Week 5-6)</p>	<p>→ Provide an early draft of their assessment for review with your organization’s Executive Director</p>	<p>→ Feedback within 5 business days on any incorrect information or gaps in their draft</p>
<p>Implementation Planning (Week 7-8)</p>	<p>→ Facilitate one, 90-minute “Plan the Plan” workshop. → Develop an Implementation Plan, with an aligned structure and timeline, that prepares your organization to move forward with your capital project.</p>	<p>→ Participation in workshop</p>
<p>Delivery of a Final Assessment (Week 9)</p>	<p>→ Combine feedback into a final assessment and implementation plan delivered to your organization’s Executive Director</p>	<p>→ No action is required from you in this step beyond utilization of the assessment and implementation plan to advance your capital project</p>

vBCF Application Sample Form – for Capital Improvements/Land Conservation Projects

These are the questions you will fill in on the online application form

Before you begin – please read before starting the application process:

- **Review the Capital Projects Guidelines before you apply.**
- **If this grant request is associated with the use of a Fiscal Sponsor, please contact the Grants Manager before completing this application.**
- **If your organization has an overdue progress or final report related to a previous grant from the Foundation, that report must be filed before this application will be reviewed.**
- **Do not use the back arrow/button on your web browser while completing the application. Doing so may delete your application or exit without saving changes.**

Section 1 - General Information

Organization Information

[] Click box if your request is associated with a fiscal sponsor.

Legal Name:

Federal Tax ID:

Note: Later in the application process, you will be prompted to upload a copy of the Organization's IRS tax determination letter ONLY if you are a new applicant or if there have been changes to a prior submission.

Doing Business As:

If the organization is known by a different name from its legal name, please list here or otherwise re-enter the legal name. If you are using a fiscal sponsor, please list the name of your organization (organization being sponsored)

Address:

Fax:

Telephone:

Website address:

Mission Statement:

This space is limited to 150 words.

Please provide a brief summary of your organization's background:

This space is limited to 300 words.

Which geographical community does the organization primarily serve?

For example, choose RI if the organization mainly serves/benefits residents on a state-wide level, Newport County if county-wide and Aquidneck Island if island-wide.

How many people does the organization serve annually?

Please enter a whole number, not a range. Estimates are fine.

When was the organization established?

Number of Full-time Employees:

Number of Part-time Employees:

Number of Volunteers:

Please list the Board of Directors:

Format - please identify the Board Chair (first and last name) and then a list of the board members (first and last names only & officer title, if applicable)

If the organization has an Advisory Committee in addition to the Board, later in the application, please upload this list as a separate attachment under "Other"

Section 2 - Contact Information

Executive Contact Information

(This should be the Executive Director or Board Chair)

Prefix: **First Name:** **Middle Name:** **Last Name:** **Suffix:**

Title:

Telephone: **Extension:** **Email Address:**

Request Contact Information

(Who should be contacted if additional information on this particular grant request is needed)

If request contact is the same as Executive Contact Info, please check box [] to autofill

Prefix: **First Name:** **Middle Name:** **Last Name:** **Suffix:**

Title:

Address:

(if different from organization)

Telephone: **Extension:** **Email Address:**

Section 3 - Request Information

Grant Request and Purpose Information

Request Title:

Project Budget: **Campaign Goal (if applicable)** **Amount Requested:**

Funding Period: Start Date **Funding Period: End Date**

Please provide a summary of the request:

Please limit your response to 1-2 paragraphs. (150 words)

Which geographical community does your project primarily serve?

For example, choose RI if the organization mainly serves/benefits residents on a state-wide level, Newport County if county-wide and Aquidneck Island if island-wide.

How many people will be directly served by the project?

Please enter a whole number, not a range. Estimates are fine.

What population(s) will be served by the project:

e.g. all, senior citizens, students, students: grade pre-K to 3, women and children

Section 3 - Request Information (continued)

Anticipated Results

The Foundation is interested in understanding what change will be effected as a result of project.

This section is a summary of the detail provided in the Narrative portion of the request. It may be helpful to complete the Narrative before filling in this section.

Successful applicants will be reporting on these Outputs/Deliverables and anticipated Outcomes when completing reporting requirements.

Outputs/Deliverables

Please summarize up to 3 (e.g. # of people served, a plan or summary completed)

Output/Deliverable 1:

Output/Deliverable 2:

Output/Deliverable 3:

Outcomes

Please summarize up to 3 (e.g. measurable benefits for people/community serves)

Outcome 1:

Outcome 2:

Outcome 3:

Section 4 - Financial Information

Financial Information – Budget Related

In which fiscal year is the organization currently operating?

year only

Please enter the organization's current fiscal year's operating expenses:

This is pertaining to current APPROVED ANNUAL BUDGET figures

Note: You will be prompted to upload a copy of the Organization's Current Approved Annual Operating Budget and Actuals through the most recent quarter. Additionally, a copy of the most recently Completed Fiscal Year Budget to Actual (final results) Comparison will be required.

Audited Financial Statements

The van Beuren Charitable Foundation is interested in understanding the organization's financial health such as liquidity, the availability of operating reserves, and reliance on debt.

The following questions can be answered directly from the organization's audited financial statements. If the organization does not have an audit, please refer to the most recently completed IRS Form 990 or answer as best you can with available financial information.

If you have any questions related to completing this section (such as what figures to include in a box), please contact your accounting/finance team directly, and not financial staff.

Period ending date of the Audited Financial Statements being submitted:

Date Audit Completed:

This date can be found on the auditor's opinion letter.

Section 4 - Financial Information (continued)

The following information can be found on the Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) of the audit. Please report the amounts in whole dollars (no decimal).

Cash and Cash Equivalents:

Other Current Assets:

Include all accounts receivable, grants and contributions receivable, prepaid expenses, inventory, and any other assets that could be converted to cash in less than one year.

Total Current Assets:

This question will auto-calculate the total of Cash & Equivalents and Other Current Assets in our system. No response necessary.

Current Liabilities:

Include accounts payable, contract advances, amount owed on a line of credit, the current portion of any long-term debt, and any other payables due within a year

Total Unrestricted Net Assets:

The following information can be found in either the Statement of Activities, Statement of Functional Expenses and/or in the Audit Notes sections of the audit. Please report the amounts in whole dollars (no decimal)

Program Expenses:

Depreciation Expense:

Total Expenses:

Fixed Assets (gross figure, not net of depreciation)

This question will auto-calculate Fixed Assets less Accumulated Depreciation in our system. No response necessary.

Total amount of mortgages, capital leases and other long-term loans secured (collateralized) by property or equipment: *Include both current and non-current portion. The audit notes will identify the breakdown of debt.*

Note: Later in this application, you will be prompted to upload a copy of the Organization's most recent audit (not older than 18 months) including the management letter.

Unrestricted Revenue and Expenses: (for past three years)

	Year	Unrestricted Revenue	Total Expense	Deficit, if any
Year 1 <i>(last completed fiscal year)</i>	20__	\$	\$	Will auto-calculate
Year 2	20__	\$	\$	Will auto-calculate
Year 3	20__	\$	\$	Will auto-calculate

For any of the years reported above where the organization's total expenses exceed unrestricted revenues (deficit), please explain the reason and what the organization did to cover its costs: