

NEWS RELEASE

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Building Vitality in Rural Communities through Vital Signs

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What happens when three British Columbia community foundations decide to partner on their very first [Vital Signs](#) project?

Well, they produce high-quality reports on the vitality of their local communities, for one thing. But in addition to that, they save time and money, learn from each other, and demonstrate the value of a collaborative approach to Vital Signs for smaller and rural community foundations.

Building on that experience of [Phoenix](#), [Central Okanagan](#), and [Sunshine Coast](#) Community Foundations, and in response to the increasing interest in Vital Signs from smaller foundations, [Community Foundations of Canada](#) has launched the Building Vitality in Rural Communities project.

The goal of the project is to make Vital Signs an accessible and affordable community indicators tool for rural communities to better understand their challenges, assets, and opportunities, and to use this information to take action to increase their community vitality. The project will develop, test, publish and disseminate a comprehensive set of guides covering relevant aspects of Vital Signs: publications, research/data, community engagement, collaboration, integration and special reports.

A few weeks ago, the project received a welcome boost from the federal government, which on March 21 announced a [contribution of up to \\$200,000](#) to CFC for Building Vitality in Rural Communities.

Although the guides are intended to assist community foundations as they participate in Vital Signs, the resources developed by the project will also be helpful to rural community foundations in their other work, since they provide information, ideas, examples, and tools to take on leadership activity, engage the community, and create local partnerships.

Work on the project is now well underway, with seven BC community foundations that are undertaking Vital Signs this year field testing the resources developed by CFC, collaborating on research and printing contracts, and serving as a peer learning group to share ideas, and support and mentor each other.

They also serve as a project advisory group, along with other project partners: the Social Planning and Research Council of BC, Vancouver Foundation, Victoria Foundation, and the Columbia Basin Trust.

Several other community foundations are engaged on the sidelines as keen observers, trying to absorb as much as possible in preparation for launching their own Vital Signs programs in 2012.

By that time, we expect we will have had lots of great feedback on the draft guides which will help us complete and launch a comprehensive new web-based Vital Signs resource that will make the Program much more accessible and affordable to smaller and rural community foundations across the country.

Stay tuned!

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