



WildSafeBC Community Program Application Information 2025

WildSafeBC is the provincial leader in reducing conflict with wildlife across British Columbia through education, collaboration, and community solutions. WildSafeBC, formerly Bear Aware, has been managed and delivered by the British Columbia Conservation Foundation since 1998. British Columbia has a great diversity of wildlife and boasts a variety of ecosystems supporting wildlife. However, the proximity of human habitation to prime wildlife habitat, our inclination to participate in recreational activities in outdoor spaces, and the requirement for work to be done in wilderness settings, sets the stage for substantial human-wildlife conflict within the Province. It is vital that residents and visitors have the tools and knowledge they need to reduce this potential for conflict. WildSafeBC staff works to ensure people are exposed to these tools and that they have the necessary information to encourage changes in their behaviors leading to humans coexisting with wildlife in BC.

The WildSafeBC Community Program

For each WildSafeBC Community Program, a part-time community coordinator is hired, trained, and supervised by the British Columbia Conservation Foundation (BCCF) and the WildSafeBC Provincial Team. The Community Coordinator works on a contract-basis with the season typically occurring from mid-April/May to November 30, 2025. Community Coordinators who have been with the program for several seasons and who are qualified and capable of leading can step into a Regional Coordinator role which allows them to support nearby communities and new Community Coordinators. The Provincial WildSafeBC team provides program and budgetary support to the community coordinator while the regional coordinators provide area specific knowledge and support to coordinators. Each Community Program ideally includes a minimum of 400 contract hours, provided funding amounts are adequate. Community Coordinators are responsible for delivering the WildSafeBC Community Program by working closely with their community contact(s), local bylaw, and local Conservation Officers. Program activities vary for each community and the type and amount of programming completed each season is based on community needs and goals, local bylaw status, support from local contacts as well as the time and capacity of the Community Coordinator. WildSafeBC strives to hire qualified, committed, and passionate people to work in the communities. Community Coordinators deliver school programs, bear spray workshops, wildlife awareness and safety presentations, newspaper and radio releases, door-to-door canvassing, presentation booths, business pledge program, bare camping training and social media campaigns which aim to help people reduce the potential for conflict

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with wildlife where residents ‘live, play, work, or grow.’ WildSafeBC also works closely with local governments to facilitate the adoption and maintenance of the Provincial Bear Smart Community criteria. An annual report, summarizing the program activities for each community program, is made available each year on the WildSafeBC website.

How the Program is Funded

The BCCF and the WildSafeBC Provincial Team currently applies for funding from the Provincial Government, Columbia Basin Trust, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and additional Grant opportunities in various parts of the Province, in order to provide communities with funds to supplement their contribution. The amount the BCCF receives annually varies and is not guaranteed. Communities that apply for a WildSafeBC Community Program will automatically be considered for additional funding support if available and as needed. Combined with community funds, the total program budget is used to pay for local program delivery including coordinator employment costs, mileage, office expenses, coordinator training and supervision, regional coordinator support, program toolkit materials, and program administration costs.

The WildSafeBC Community Program application process is competitive as the BCCF at times receives more requests than available funds can support. Applicants can strengthen their application in a number of ways:

- Work with funding partners or combine with neighbouring communities and increase contributions so as to not be reliant on the supplemental funding which is uncertain and varies in amount from season to season.
- Provide support to the local coordinator with local in-kind resources such as providing office space, an office or mobile phone, storage area for materials, and/or access to printing services.
- Focusing efforts on completion and/or maintenance of the Bear Smart Community program criteria.
- Hosting Bear and/or Wildlife Working Group meetings, which includes attendance by key community members and partners such as the local government staff (e.g. bylaw, solid waste, environmental departments), Conservation Officer Service, local First Nations, stewardship groups, etc.

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Application Process

Communities are required to submit their application in the month of January/February each year. The application must include a minimum contribution amount in community funds in order to be considered. If the application is successful, and primary funding is secured, the community contribution may be augmented by additional funding.

Communities are still required to apply even if they are fully self-funded and are not relying on any additional funding.

To apply for this Program, and to be eligible to receive supplemental funding from the BCCF, please complete the application form here by February 15, 2025. If you have questions regarding the form, or need guidance on levels of funding required, please contact us at programs@wildsafebc.com to set up a mutually convenient time for discussion.

Key Dates in 2025

January 15	Application intake opens
February 15	Applications are due
February and March	Applicants are notified of acceptance
March 31	Tentative Funds must be confirmed
Mid April	Returning Coordinators begin working
May 1	Invoices must be paid
Mid May	New Coordinators begin training period
End of May	New Coordinators begin working
November 30	Program end date

Thank you for your interest and support of WildSafeBC and our mission to keep wildlife wild and communities safe.

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