

What is the United Way Public Policy Institute?

The Public Policy Institute is a leadership training program for the non-profit sector offered by United Way British Columbia. It is modeled after successful training institutes provided by the Maytree Foundation in Ontario and the Max Bell Foundation in Alberta. It is characterized by innovative, small group training, case studies and ongoing applied learning through the participants' own policy projects. This six-month training program is specifically designed to help non-profit leaders', and their organizations increase their knowledge of the public policy process and their capacity to influence it.

Our lead faculty, Carole James describes the Public Policy Institute as: *"A unique program, designed to support leaders in the non-profit sector to strengthen their skills in developing, designing and advocating for their public policy work. The program provides an inclusive, interactive learning environment where participants explore a range of tools and approaches, share their knowledge and expertise with each other, all while learning from a diverse group of panelists and guest speakers."*

Why is United Way BC offering this program?

United Way BC is committed to investing in policy development and supporting the capacity of the non-profit sector to advance change that leads to healthy, caring, and inclusive communities. The program has been successfully enrolling 25 non-profit changemakers into the program since 2011. The Public Policy Institute remains an important part of our commitment to building stronger communities through non-profit engagement, influence, knowledge, research, training, and collaboration.

Who is involved as faculty?

One of the greatest assets of this training program is the opportunity to learn from and have access to a very dedicated faculty team that brings a wealth of real-life public policy experience to this program. Carole James – a prominent political figure in BC - is our faculty lead. The faculty team also includes Andrea Reimer, Ruth Wittenberg, and Ginger Gosnell-Myers. New to our program this year are Nikki Hill and Mark Sieben. The faculty bring a wealth of real-life public policy experience to the program, complemented by an impressive and diverse array of panelists and guest speakers.

Who should apply?

Non-profit organizations or registered charities that are keen and interested in affecting public policy change. Organizations from all regions of British Columbia are encouraged to apply. *Ideal participants are able to influence the policy work of their organization, are focused on social policy in their work, and are living and working in British Columbia.* A list of participating organizations and policy areas targeted from previous years is posted on the United Way BC Public Policy Institute webpage.

What will the curriculum cover?

The curriculum is divided into monthly sessions from January to June and each session is offered over two days and encompasses:

- 1) an introduction to public policy
- 2) engaging decision makers and other stakeholders
- 3) developing and analyzing policy options
- 4) research, impact and power considerations
- 5) implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- 6) final presentations by participants



In addition to the curriculum, case studies, as well as engagement with faculty, guest presenters and fellow participants enhance these learning opportunities.

How will it work?

When applying, organizations will be asked to outline a public policy project they wish to advance with the help of this program. This policy project outline will need to include a brief description of the desired public policy change and the organization's planned leadership role related to reaching or advancing this desired public policy change. Working on these policy projects throughout the six sessions of the program is a key part of the applied learning approach. Participants will also be expected to devote time to their public policy project outside of the sessions through both structured assignments and the real-time needs emerging from the project itself.

Participants will have multiple opportunities throughout the six months to test their critical thinking, analysis, and strategy recommendations. The program will culminate with each participant doing a final presentation in front of faculty and peers.

We expect participants to learn from each other and discover possible allies for their organization's public policy work. A certificate will be awarded to all participants who complete all six sessions of the program, the corresponding assignments, and the final presentation. Those who complete the program will be added to our PPI alumni list. To graduate participants, must submit in writing and present their final 7-minute pitch for the final session of the program.

When will the Institute be offered next?

The next Public Policy Institute will run from January to June 2025. Monthly two-day sessions will be held on one Thursday and Friday in each month. We will be offering all sessions in-person at the BCIT Downtown Campus located at 555 Seymour Street in Vancouver, BC. In-person sessions are an afternoon offering on a Thursday from 1 – 4 p.m. followed by dinner out as a group, ending with a Friday full day session from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Program dates for 2025: January 23/24 February 20/21, March 20/21, April 24/25, May 22/23, and June 19/20.

Where will the courses be provided?

The in-person gatherings take place in Vancouver, BC at UBC Robson Square. In-person sessions will only take place if the Public Health Officer's orders allow for this. (Note: In-person sessions are not recorded, nor can they be offered as a hybrid offering. In-person attendance is required.)

How much does it cost to attend if accepted?

Each admitted not-for-profit organization or registered charity participant is asked to pay an **\$850 registration fee**. However, if this amount is a barrier for applying, we can discuss this with you further if you are a successful applicant. For accepted applicants traveling from outside the Lower Mainland, travel/accommodation is covered by United Way BC (Food purchases made outside of what is provided during in person sessions or at a group dinner is not covered by United Way BC.)

How can our non-profit organization or registered charity apply? And when is the deadline to apply?

The link to our online application form can be found [HERE](#). The application process for the 2025 program opens on Tuesday, September 15th, 2024, and closes on Tuesday, October 15th, 2024. We have space for 25 participants. We encourage interested applicants to apply as early as possible.