

# Best Buy Teen Tech Centre® Request for Proposals & Application Information for Toronto, Ontario

## Introduction

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**The Best Buy Foundation™ is building brighter futures for teens through technology.**

Across North America, many communities lack support and access to the tools and experiences that can unlock a better future and prepare teens for the challenges ahead. The Best Buy Foundation believes that technology can empower people to dream big and accomplish great things.

At a Best Buy Teen Tech Centre, teens can develop critical skills through hands-on activities exploring their interests through project-based learning. Each location works to bridge the digital divide by giving young people access to tech education and mentor guidance while building the confidence they will need to be successful in school and in their future careers.

The Best Buy Foundation launched the Best Buy Teen Tech Centre program in 2012. Building on the success of the 60+ sites open today, the Foundation has a goal of continually supporting Teen Tech Centres across the United States and Canada. To do so, we are seeking to identify non-profit organizations to be our partners in establishing and running each new Teen Tech Centre. Our ideal partner is one that has an existing afterschool teen program in a dedicated space and a commitment to engaging and supporting youth from areas of concentrated poverty.

**Please note:**

This document outlines general requirements for new Best Buy Teen Tech Centre locations. At any given time, the Best Buy Foundation seeks new Teen Tech Centre host partners only from select cities, as we strategically grow the network across the United States and Canada.

## Program Overview

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Our mission is to provide a fun, interactive learning space where teens explore technology to discover new interests, collaborate with one another, and prepare for the future.

To learn more about Teen Tech Centres (including a video overview of the program), please visit <https://www.bestbuyfoundation.org/teentechcenter>.

At Teen Tech Centres, young people can leverage technology to develop projects based on their own interests such as: creating art, producing music and developing animations; designing their own science simulations and mobile applications; writing and illustrating interactive poetry, stories and films; building kinetic sculptures and robotic constructions; starting their own businesses; and designing their own 3D worlds and games. In the process, youth become excited about new technologies, develop skills and experiences to help them succeed in their careers, contribute to their communities and lead outstanding lives.

The Best Buy Foundation supports teen engagement by partnering with community-based non-profit host organizations with a track record of serving youth from areas of concentrated poverty. Best Buy Teen Tech Centres have a consistent look and feel that are fun, safe and inviting (including teen-centric furniture and an innovative space design) and aim to be inclusive for teens. Local Best Buy employees will also participate in the program as volunteers, provide ongoing mentorship and conduct workshops.

### **The Best Buy Teen Tech Centre Learning Model:**

To bring the Teen Tech Centre vision to life, the Best Buy Foundation has partnered with internationally acclaimed [The Clubhouse Network](#) (TCN), an organization founded in collaboration with the MIT Media Lab. With a solid 30-year record of demonstrated success serving thousands of youth and giving them the confidence and resources to change their lives, TCN has a replicable model for technology learning in community-based organizations around the world. Today, over 130 Clubhouses in more than 20 countries serve youth, primarily from historically marginalized communities. Winner of the 1997 Peter F. Drucker Award for Non-Profit Innovation and the 2019 Presidential Award for Excellence in STEM Mentoring, the Clubhouse provides not only access but culturally relevant and challenging learning content for youth, coupled with support from caring adult mentors who serve as role models.

Current educational research shows that adolescents learn most effectively when they are engaged in designing and creating projects rather than memorizing facts or learning isolated skills out of context. Leveraging The Clubhouse Network's proven learning model, Best Buy Teen Tech Centres foster a learner-centered, informal educational approach that encourages participants to discover their interests and apply their own ideas. Through a combination of self-guided learning and structured training, teens have access to resources, materials and tools to experiment, explore and create based on their own interests, and learn skills that will help them succeed in a wide array of professions in the modern workplace.

The Best Buy Teen Tech Centre learning model is based on The Clubhouse Network program and is guided by four principles:

- **Learn by Design** - Provide a combination of self-directed learning and structured workshops guided by staff and youth peer leaders, focused on hands-on, experiential activities.
- **Follow Your Interests** - Provide opportunities for choice where teens care about what they are working on and are willing to work longer and harder while learning more in the process.
- **Build Community** - Create a community with a culture of peer learning and equal opportunity, where young people work together with support and inspiration from peer leaders, mentors, and staff.
- **Respect & Trust** - Create a stable environment in which participants feel safe to experiment, explore and innovate and are given time and space to play out their own ideas.

## Best Buy Teen Tech Centre® Grant

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### Eligibility Criteria

The Best Buy Foundation invites local non-profit organizations that have a fundamental commitment to youth, ages 13-18, to apply for funding to create a Best Buy Teen Tech Centre in **Toronto, Ontario**.

Minimum eligibility criteria include:

- Location must be within an existing and successful afterschool program that already serves youth, ages 13-18.
- Location must be hosted within a community organization-run facility whose mission supports youth development.
- Location must be within the Greater Toronto Area in Ontario.
- Location must be within 20 kilometers of a Best Buy store to allow for Best Buy employee volunteers. *To find store locations, see the [Best Buy store locator](#).*
- Host organization must have a space for the Teen Tech Centre with a minimum of 1,100 square feet (about half the area of a tennis court).
- The location must comply with accessibility standards outlined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- Host organization must commit to hosting and ensuring financial support for the Best Buy Teen Tech Centre for at least 3 years.

### Grant Program Guidelines and Expectations:



To ensure the success of the Best Buy Teen Tech Centre program, the Best Buy Foundation is seeking non-profit organizations with afterschool programs including a teen program, with a respected record of accomplishment for achieving results through community-based initiatives, financial sustainability, and an ability to embrace innovative technologies as well as sustain the Teen Tech Centre over time (minimum three years).

The community-based host organization is required to designate a Community Based Organization Representative (CBO Rep) to the Teen Tech Centre, who serves as the primary leadership liaison between the Best Buy Teen Tech Centre, Best Buy, The Clubhouse Network and the host organization. The primary role of the CBO Rep is to ensure the learning model, philosophy and vibrant culture of the Teen Tech Centre space is maintained, while establishing connections to other organizations, mentorship and support for the coordinator. The CBO Rep, in addition to their host organization's primary responsibilities, will be deeply involved in ensuring success for the following:

- Hire, support and retain a full-time Best Buy Teen Tech Centre Coordinator (and Career Pathways Facilitator, if applicable), providing the onboarding, professional development training and ongoing leadership support necessary to fulfill the requirements of the role.
- Ensure all Best Buy Foundation grant-funded spending is done in accordance with the grant and reporting requirements provided by Best Buy Foundation.
- Confirm appropriate background screening is completed for staff, adult volunteers or mentors who work with youth in the space following your guidelines.
- Steward the relationship between the Best Buy Teen Tech Centre and any Best Buy Teen Tech Centre Presenting Partners (where applicable).
- Pursue resources to help generate long-term sustainability of the programs and operations of the Teen Tech Centre, including financial support and local partnerships.
- Be an active contributor to initiatives with the Best Buy Foundation and The Clubhouse Network communities at-large, including sharing best practices & lessons learned, providing feedback and participating in the evaluation process, joining recurring scheduled meetings and participating in professional development events hosted by The Clubhouse Network, Best Buy and the Best Buy Foundation.

Other responsibilities of the community-based organization include:

- Demonstrating a commitment to the Best Buy Teen Tech Centre learning model and philosophy.
- Working with schools and other community-based organizations to build awareness of the program to drive teen participation.
- Providing an inviting, attractive and safe physical space for the Teen Tech Centre location.
- Ensuring access to youth from areas of concentrated poverty.
- Enabling participation of Best Buy employees to serve as volunteers at the Teen Tech Centre.
- Having a commitment to participation in The Clubhouse Network (mandatory professional development for staff, sharing best practices, collaborating with other sites, participating in evaluation process, etc.).
- Developing financial and community support to help sustain the Teen Tech Centre beyond the grant funding period.



- Submitting semi-annual reports on program aspects including youth recruitment, college/career activities and challenges and successes, as well as engaging their youth participants in an annual youth impact survey.
- Adhering to Best Buy Teen Tech Centre and The Clubhouse Network brand standards and marketing expectations, including websites, social media platforms, collateral, signage and other materials.
- Adhering to all licensing requirements of The Clubhouse Network and Best Buy.

### **Grant Opportunity**

The Best Buy Foundation will provide a combination of cash and in-kind support for the first year, which will comprise:

- A \$40,000 USD Technology Grant to be used to acquire the hardware, software and necessary accessories for the Teen Tech Centre to be fully operational, including high-quality, professional software tools for creating graphics, 3D animation, images, video and music.
- A \$30,000 USD Furniture Grant to be used to acquire furnishings that reflects the “look and feel” of a teen-centric space and Best Buy Teen Tech Centre design guidelines.
- A \$50,000 USD Construction Grant towards the establishment of the new Best Buy Teen Tech Centre.
- Support from Best Buy and The Clubhouse Network staff for facility design and layout, equipment set-up, software installation and technical assistance.
- A minimum of a \$65,000 USD Program Grant to be used for staffing, staff development and program related expenses. Up to 15% of grant funding can be used for general overhead expenditures.
- Innovative curriculum and programs developed by the Best Buy Foundation grant partners.
- Ongoing support from The Clubhouse Network staff to conduct program evaluation, site visits, programmatic guidance, technology support and general assistance.
- Access to *The Clubhouse Village*, a social network that enables staff and youth everywhere to meet, interact online, collaborate on design activities and share projects.
- Participation in one week of orientation and professional development for new Teen Tech Centre staff at the “Flagship” Clubhouse in Boston (or virtually, if required), as well as written training materials and online documentation to assist in start-up and ongoing operations.
- Best Buy and Geek Squad employee volunteers for community activities, technology assistance and educational workshops.

### **Considerations and Restrictions (PLEASE READ CAREFULLY):**

1. This opportunity is available to community-based non-profit organizations that have existing afterschool programs for teens and a commitment to youth from areas of concentrated poverty. The Best Buy Foundation does not provide funding for organizations that promote or practice discrimination, political organizations and/or religious or fraternal organizations (unless for a

program that is secular). We reserve the right, in our sole discretion, to reject any and all proposals, or to modify or cancel the proposed scope, for any reason.

2. The initial Staffing Grant will be provided to support the program's operation for one year from implementation date. Successful grant recipients will be eligible for additional years of funding based on demonstrated success. Best Buy Teen Tech Centres in good standing shall receive a Program Grant annually thereafter, in addition to a Technology Revitalization Grant of up to \$10,000 USD.
3. The estimated costs of maintaining a Best Buy Teen Tech Centre are based on assumptions about the Teen Tech Centre, the host organization, community location and geographic setting. Operating expenses reflect the annual costs that the Teen Tech Centre incurs in the course of doing business. These costs include personnel expenses, computer support and program materials and supplies. **The annual operating costs are estimated at \$140,000 USD, depending on local costs and pay scale.**
4. **The minimum space requirement of a Best Buy Teen Tech Centre is 1,100 square-feet (including a music studio and an inner-office for staff). The Teen Tech Centre must be located in a dedicated, separate area that can secure and safely house high-end equipment.** Each Teen Tech Centre will be Best Buy Teen Tech Centre-branded. The execution of any construction needed to meet the design requirements of the Teen Tech Centre is the responsibility of the host organization, and timely implementation (i.e., six months or less) of any facility renovations is expected.
5. With support from the Best Buy Foundation and The Clubhouse Network, the Teen Tech Centre will be furnished and decorated to provide a warm, inviting physical space that encourages creativity, self-expression and collaboration. Features include:
  - Computers in clusters and “pods” (not classroom style or lined up against the wall).
  - A table in a central location within the Teen Tech Centre as a gathering place for youth to discuss, design and work together.
  - Ergonomic chairs (on wheels, to encourage collaboration).
  - Carpeting and color specs to create a warm, inviting environment.
  - Exhibit space for youth work (display boards, shelves).
  - Dedicated Wi-Fi network.
6. The Teen Tech Centre will be open a minimum of 20 hours per week (after school and/or on weekends) throughout the year. Teen Tech Centre leadership will be responsible for determining back-up part-time support for full-time Teen Tech Centre staff.
7. All teen participants under age 18 must have signed parent/guardian consent forms.

8. The Best Buy Foundation and The Clubhouse Network will have the right to use any content or creative work, art or technology developed by participants engaging in activities at a Best Buy Teen Tech Centre.
9. Annual execution of a program and funding agreement with the Best Buy Foundation and a license agreement with The Clubhouse Network are required.

## Application Details

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### **Submitting a Proposal:**

Proposals must be submitted through the Submittable portal at the following link:

<https://apply.bestbuyfoundation.org/submit/ed13a207-0982-4837-ad19-fa147a4019a6/best-buy-teen-tech-center-initial-proposal>

### **Registering with Submittable:**

When you are ready to review or submit a grant application, you'll need to register your account in Submittable. Below are some introductory resources provided by Submittable:

- [Registering and Getting Started as a New Submitter](#)
- [Help for Applicants | Common Questions](#)
- [Submittable Help - For Submitters](#)

### **Required Elements of the Proposal:**

Please address each requirement below using the Submittable platform.

- **Mission & Strategic Direction**

Statement of Community-Based Organization's mission and strategic direction:

1. Describe how a Best Buy Teen Tech Centre can help achieve your current and future objectives.
2. Describe how you expect your participation to contribute to the success of the Best Buy Teen Tech Centre program and serve as part of The Clubhouse Network.

- **Support of Teens**

1. Describe how your organization reaches and supports young people. Include number of youth served, related demographic data (e.g., ages served, and % on subsidy), hours of operation and schedule of activities.
2. Specifically, describe successful engagement with populations from areas of concentrated poverty.
3. Describe how a Best Buy Teen Tech Centre would support the development of youth at your organization.

4. Describe leadership opportunities for youth within your organization and their role in planning and implementing programs and activities.

- **Program Information & Commitment to Learning Approach**

1. Describe experience with informal learning environments or willingness to engage your organization in new learning approaches.
2. Describe your experience with using technology as a learning tool.
3. Describe your plan for staffing the Best Buy Teen Tech Centre (may include experience of existing staff or selection criteria for the Coordinator).
4. Give examples of prior experience with program evaluation.

- **Operational Infrastructure**

1. Describe the proposed Best Buy Teen Tech Centre location and space. Explain how you plan to pay for any construction costs or facility renovation required.
2. Give examples of how your organization utilizes technology in your operations including infrastructure and ongoing support.
3. Describe planned or existing security infrastructure for a Best Buy Teen Tech Centre.

- **Community Relations & Sustainability**

1. Describe your organization's leadership and staff.
2. Describe your volunteerism program.
3. Describe your organization's support and reputation in the community and how you plan to maintain positive visibility of the program.
4. Give examples of collaboration with organizations in the community.
5. Describe how you would develop financial and community support to help sustain the Best Buy Teen Tech Centre beyond the initial funding period.

- **Organizational Information:**

1. Letter of support that includes signatures of authorizing officials and the Executive Director.
2. Resumes and/or biographies of current key staff that will be working on this project, including the executive director and proposed Teen Tech Centre Coordinator (if applicable).
3. Photos of the proposed location and layout for the Teen Tech Centre.
4. List of organization's Board of Directors, if applicable.
5. List of major funders and any funding that was received from Best Buy or the Best Buy Foundation previously. The Foundation may reach out to your funders to confirm your collaborative efforts in the community.

- **Budget Information:**

1. Organization operating budget for the past two years.
2. Financial statements from the past two years, audited if available.
3. Documentation of current tax-exempt status.



## Review Process

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Foundation staff will review proposals to determine eligibility and will then evaluate and competitively rank eligible proposals according to program criteria listed in these guidelines. The overall comprehensiveness, quality and clarity of the proposal will be reviewed.

The review committee may also choose to conduct a site visit as part of the selection process.

Reviews will not be open to the public. However, applicants may request feedback once funding decisions have been announced by emailing [info@bestbuyfoundation.org](mailto:info@bestbuyfoundation.org).