

Help shape the next version of the Common Foundations

We are bringing together a small technical committee to guide the development of Version 3.0 of the Common Foundations. If you would like to be part of shaping the next version of the Standard and are able to bring one of the range of perspectives described below, we hope you might consider joining.

The Common Foundations is a minimum standard for how charities, non-profits, social and environmental enterprises, purpose entrepreneurs, and cooperatives (collectively referred to here as social purpose organizations) measure impact. As far as we know, the Common Foundations is the only standard that defines a floor for impact measurement: a point an organization can reach and then say with confidence that its impact measurement is good enough. Establishing this floor matters most to smaller organizations, protecting them from the pull toward “gold standard” methods they have neither the need nor the capacity for.

The challenge: Broadening the foundations

The five essential practices at the heart of the [Common Foundations 2.0](#) were written to describe what many organizations already do. In listening to our community of users, we can now see that they lean toward one way of knowing: broadly, an outcomes-and-evidence approach, in which change is planned in advance, progress is shown through indicators that can be observed or measured within a specific period of time, and the strongest claim is one that could survive a comparison with what would have happened anyway.

That approach has value, and we are not setting it aside. But it is not the only way good, rigorous impact practice happens. This means that an organization practicing rigorous impact measurement using approaches from other paradigms will find that the floor established in Common Foundations Version 2.0 does not quite work for them, because the current essential practices assume a particular way of knowing. For a standard that hopes to be useful across

many cultures and contexts, there is a need for the Common Foundations to evolve to accommodate many more paradigms.

So the question we are exploring for Version 3.0 is whether the floor can be made wider without being lowered—recognizing good-enough practice across many paradigms, while staying concrete enough to still be meaningful. We are not aiming to raise the bar. We are looking to set a solid, widely understood floor (a foundation, if you will!) that meets organizations where they are and ensures their impact measurement is built on solid footing.

This is an open question, not a finished answer we need help decorating. We have early thinking to share, and every part of it is open to challenge. If our current direction does not hold up across different ways of knowing, that is precisely what we hope the committee will help us discover.

What the committee will do

Common Approach will do the heavy lifting of drafting Standard documentation. The committee's work will be to read, react, and refine—to pressure-test our drafts against real and varied practice, tell us where they carry hidden assumptions, and help find the right words for the sections where precise language matters most. It is demanding, thoughtful work, and we want to be honest that it is not a light commitment. But it is not a second job of writing the standard from scratch.

In practice, members will:

- Read and respond to drafts we prepare, bringing the perspective of your own paradigm, context, and experience.
- Help us see where a draft quietly assumes one way of knowing, and make suggestions for how it might be opened up.
- Work with us on refining and honing the wording of the sections that carry the most weight, especially where they define what “good enough” means.
- Share insights to guide us through addressing the most intricate and potentially controversial segments of the standard, helping to establish a collectively acceptable perspective wherever it is achievable.

Applicants are encouraged to review the [full scope of work for the Common Foundations Technical Committee](#) before expressing interest in joining.

What we are asking of you

We are asking for approximately 4 hours per month from October 2026 through the spring of 2027. Our hope is that the work will conclude in March but may need to extend as far as May depending on the decisions the committee has made together. Our goal is to ask for a maximum of 28 hours of your time over this period

This will include virtual meetings with tasks between them. We understand this will need to happen alongside your other work, and we will do our best to work around capacity. Our goal is to establish a process that will allow everyone to contribute in ways that balance what is manageable and what is meaningful.

Members will receive a \$2,000 honorarium in recognition of their time and expertise, on the understanding that you are able to join at least three-quarters of the meetings and contribute revisions relevant to your experience and expertise. This will be paid on completion of the work.

About you

We are gathering a small group of approximately five to six people, chosen to provide the range of perspectives the standard needs to hold. We are less concerned with prominence than with having a mix of paradigms, places, and experiences in the room. The Common Foundations is meant to work across many ways of knowing, and so this next version cannot be written well from inside any single one, including our own.

We would especially value hearing from you if you bring one or more of the following. You do not need all of them:

- Depth in a measurement or evaluation paradigm beyond the dominant outcomes-and-evidence tradition. For example, interpretivist, Indigenous and relational, governance-centred, critical and equity-focused, realist, or systems and developmental approaches.
- Relationships with other practitioners working in these traditions, or deep familiarity with the relevant bodies of work and practice.
- Experience in or with social purpose organizations that are small, community-rooted, or otherwise underserved by existing standards.

- Perspective from outside North America, and from contexts where dominant impact-measurement norms fit poorly.
- Practical experience with self-assessment, validation, or standards work.

How to express interest

We would love to hear from you. Please send a short expression of interest, along with your resume/CV, to info@commonapproach.org with “Common Foundations committee” in the subject line. Your expression of interest doesn’t need to be more than a short note telling us who you are, the perspective or paradigm you would bring, and what draws you to this challenge.

If you would find it helpful to speak with someone before applying, you are welcome to book a 30-minute conversation using [this link](#). This is not a requirement, just an optional support if needed.

Timeline

- Expressions of interest are welcome through **September 7, 2026**.
- We expect to be in touch with those we would like to speak with further in the week of **September 14**.
- We anticipate the first meeting of the technical committee to be in mid/late October.

We will respond to everyone who reaches out to be considered for the committee.