

LIVING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Via's Living Communities program gives people the tools they need to make a difference where it matters most to them – in their neighborhoods and communities. We support efforts that engage residents, strengthen bonds, build trust and increase use of local assets for the good of the community.

Through this program, we support:

- people who are engaging their communities and strengthening ties between residents
- efforts to engage people of differing interests, nationalities, ethnicities, ages, etc. in planning and carrying out community activities
- short-term projects that respond to pressing local issues
- greater sustainability of community engagement initiatives



Living Communities has three components:

Community grants support a broad range of community empowerment efforts that increase engagement, enable diverse people to interact and work together and strengthen relations through shared experiences for the good of the community.

Fast grants provide funding quickly to community groups addressing pressing public interest issues on a local level.

Long-term grants help sustain community efforts we have supported in the past that have potential to make a significant difference in a given community but need an extra push to keep going.

What difference does Living Communities make?

Each year

Through Living Communities, we support up to 70 community projects each year (40 community grants and 30 fast grants) and help sustain two particularly promising community efforts with long-term support.

In 10 years

Our goal is to support at least 700 community-building projects over the next 10 years.

What do we support?

We support a diverse array of community efforts, e.g.:

- community workshops, development of community centers and gardens
- improvement of neglected public spaces and community design/build projects
- restoration of monuments and traditions, mapping of local history and oral histories
- revitalization of streets and town squares, street festivals and neighborhood celebrations
- community discussion meetings, planning and visioning processes
- community revitalization of springs, trails and other landscape elements
- petitions, referendums and other efforts to protect local public interests

Whom do we support?

- Groups leading community initiatives
- Volunteer-based non-profit organizations
- Both emerging initiatives and well-established groups seeking to innovate and develop their community work

How do we help?

We provide combined support – funding, customized learning and networking – because we have found that combining various forms of assistance increases the impact and longevity of these initiatives.



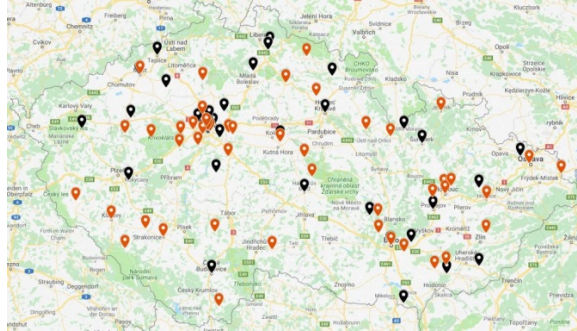
We provide:

- community grants of up to CZK 100,000 (\$4,300)
- fast grants of up to CZK 40,000 (\$1,750)
- two-year support to two selected projects of CZK 100,000 (\$4,300) per year
- workshops through our ViaAcademy on topics such as building a project team, community engagement, local fundraising
- 5 hours of consultations with a professional fundraiser, engagement specialist or other expert depending on the given initiative's needs
- support with online fundraising drives and matching of proceeds up to CZK 20,000 (\$875)
- ongoing support from a Via program manager

The estimated annual budget of the Living Communities program is CZK 6.7 million (\$300,000). The program runs year-round with a rolling application deadline until funds for a given year are depleted.

What happened through Living Communities in 2018?

In 2018 we supported a total of 47 projects through the program, and in 2017 44 projects. This map shows all of the 2018 projects (orange markers) and 2017 projects (black markers):



Vrbice

One of the projects that took place in 2018 focused on saving a village church before it fell apart, restoring it and finding a community re-use for the building. Members of the local civic association Let's Save Vrbice rented the deconsecrated Church of the Ascension of the Holy Cross and began renovating it, gradually transforming it into a place to meet, sit together, share potluck meals and talk about community news. You can read more on our blog [here](#).

