



ACTIVE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE (ACI)

GUIDELINES

May 2024

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1. INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

1.1. Purpose

The Active Communities Initiative (ACI) aims to fund capital projects that generate sport and recreation opportunities for Albertans.

1.2. Approach

The initiative addresses local and provincial sport and recreation infrastructure pressures by supporting eligible organizations to renew, expand, and/or build small to medium sized public-use community sport and recreation facilities.

1.3. Principles

Initiative processes, administration, and decision-making are guided by the following principles:

- Accessibility
- Accountability
- Equity
- Flexibility
- Public benefit
- Simplicity

1.4. At a Glance

Characteristics	Active Communities Initiative
Funding Range:	Stream 1: Minimum: \$100,000 Maximum: \$500,000 Maximum funding from the Government of Alberta cannot exceed 50 per cent of the total project cost
	Stream 2: Minimum: \$500,001 Maximum: \$1.5 million Maximum funding from the Government of Alberta cannot exceed 50 per cent of the total project cost
Call for Applications	Expression of Interest: Opens May 3
	Invitation to Submit Full Application: June 28
Deadlines:	Expression of Interest: June 1
	Full Application Package: September 3, end of business day 4:30pm
Matching Requirement	Maximum award will not exceed 50% of the total project cost
Grant Agreement	Formal grant agreement will be provided upon approval
Project Completion / Financial Reporting	As outlined in Grant Agreement
Website	https://www.alberta.ca/active-communities-initiative

1.5. Contact with the Ministry

Only authorized contact representatives noted in the grant application may request specific information about grant applicants or projects.

1.6. Lobbying

Once an ACI proposal has been submitted to the Government of Alberta, applicants, their team members, advisors, and other parties involved in the project are prohibited from engaging in any form of political or other lobbying in relation to the assessment of their application or attempting to influence the outcome of the review process. Failure to comply with this provision may result in the application being not approved.

1.7. Ministerial Grants Regulation

In addition to the terms set out in these guidelines and associated application forms and grant agreements, the Active Communities Initiative is governed by the terms outlined in the Ministerial Grants Regulation.

2. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

2.1. Eligible Organizations

Non-profit organizations such as agriculture societies, First nations and Metis settlement and non-profit sport academies, operating (or planning to operate) publicly accessible sport and recreation facilities in the province of Alberta, registered and in good standing for at least two years under one of the following Acts:

Provincial Legislation

- *Agriculture Societies Act*
- Part 21 of the *Business Corporations Act* – Extra-Provincial Corporations
- *Companies Act*, Part 9 (Non-profit Companies)
- *Societies Act of Alberta*
- Special Act of the Alberta Legislature

Federal Legislation

- Special Act of the Parliament of Canada and operating in Alberta.
- *Income Tax Act* (Registered Charity, operating in the Province of Alberta)

First Nations and Metis Settlements

2.2. Ineligible Organizations

- Organizations not registered under one of the above-mentioned Acts
- Municipalities
- For-profit organizations
- Non-profit organizations that do not provide services or access to the public or primarily support private sector interests
- Institutions, as defined under Alberta's Post-Secondary Learning Act
- Public or Private Schools (i.e., grades K-12 and post-secondary institutions)
- Organizations that have overdue or incomplete reporting for any Alberta Government grant funding previously received
- Individuals

2.3. Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include new construction and upgrade of permanent or semi-permanent structures with the primary purpose to provide public access to indoor and/or outdoor sport and recreation fields of play, including:

- Indoor facilities like basketball and volleyball courts, pools, rinks and fitness centres;
- Outdoor facilities like cricket pitches, baseball fields, rinks and pickleball courts; and
- Equipment and/or non-fixed assets that are ancillary but integral to the project.

2.4. Ineligible Projects

Ineligible projects include:

- Equipment and/or non-fixed assets that are not integral to the project success;
- Projects not focused on sport, physical activity and recreation;
- Private sector facilities and facilities with restricted or limited public use;
- Purchase of land and/or facilities as a stand-alone project; and
- Parks, trails, and playgrounds.

2.5. Eligible Expenses

All expenses not in the “ineligible expense” list (see 10.2) and that directly contribute to the approved project scope identified in the Funding Agreement between the Alberta Government and the grant recipient.

2.6. Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include:

- Time and labour provided towards preparation of funding applications, planning meetings, fundraising, events, and other activities not related directly to the physical construction of the project.
- Expenses incurred prior to application submission date.
- Feasibility studies, needs assessment, architectural and planning drawings as a stand-alone project.
- Endowments, fundraising campaigns, developing a business case or proposal for funding, donor recognition/walls, gifts (volunteer recognition), promotional material, expenditures for or time and labor provided towards groundbreaking, opening and other ceremonial events.
- Licensed vehicles, audio visual material (film, video, narrative script), films, promotional campaigns, and related items, work of art purchase or commission
- Debt reduction for pre-existing debt, financing charges and interest payments on loans, leasing land/building/equipment/other facilities, real estate fees, or other fees associated with land.
- Moving expenses, administrative costs and fees (e.g.: legal fees, accounting/bookkeeping fees, and insurance fees) not related to the project.
- Volunteer expenses, bank/financing related charges, maintenance or operational expenses, and contingency (unless included in a contractor’s quote) or miscellaneous costs.

3. CRITERIA

Applications submitted for the Active Communities Grant will be assessed based on the following program outcomes and criteria.

3.1. Program Outcomes

This program is targeted at making progress toward the following outcomes.

- Outcome One: Increased activity levels at indoor or outdoor public-use facilities.
- Outcome Two: Improved safety, accessibility, and usability of indoor and/or outdoor public use sport, physical activity, and recreation facilities.
- Outcome Three: Improved operational sustainability of indoor and/or outdoor public use sport, physical activity, and recreation facilities.
- Outcome Four: Increased equitable availability of public-use indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities locally, regionally, and provincially.
- Outcome Five: Economic Impacts including:
- a. Jobs and spending during and after construction.
 - b. Jobs, expenditures, visitation, and occupancy data through sport tourism opportunities generated.
- Outcome Six: Social benefits from improved physical and mental health:
- a. Stronger relationships with family and friends.
 - b. Improved academic performance and workplace productivity.
 - c. Enhanced community engagement and leadership capacities.

3.2. Organizational Capacity

The organization must demonstrate its ability to execute the project by:

- Providing background history (e.g., mission/purpose, organization size/representation, length of time organization has been in operation, prior experience)
- Demonstrating that the organization's sustainability through financial stability, operational history, and community support.
- Demonstrating that the organization has the capacity to complete the project.

3.3. Project Readiness

The application must demonstrate the project's readiness, including the following.

Planning and Design

- Plans and designs are aligned with market analysis, community engagement, business case and other preliminary studies.
- Plans and Designs include schematics, design drawings, cost estimates, construction schedule, risk mitigation, and permits.

Risk Assessment

- Governance, Financial, Scope, Supply Chains, Currency Exchange, Inflation, etc.

Secured Funding

- Funding from other sources has been identified and secured.

Project Urgency

- Project importance to short- and medium-term business operations.

Project Expertise

- Appropriate experience, skills, and resources to manage the project, including governance and project management expertise.

3.4. Project Benefits

The application must demonstrate how the project will:

- improve quantity, frequency and quality of sport, physical activity and recreation programs and services through:
 - o resolving functional deficiencies;
 - o improving accessibility and inclusiveness;
 - o streamlining operations;
 - o increasing flexibility of available facility space; and
 - o extending the lifespan of the facility.
- address community need, including those identified through an analysis of local and regional need;
- addresses health, safety, and accessibility concerns with the facility; and
- promote community resiliency, including through enhancing community capacity for responding to natural disasters.

3.5. Project Viability and Financial Stability

To be considered a viable project, the organization must:

- demonstrate sufficient matching resources for requested grant amount;
- have access to additional funding required to complete the project;
- provide a detailed budget and explanation of costs within the application; and
- demonstrate long-term financial viability and self-sufficiency, including the ability to meet long-term, ongoing operational needs.

3.6. Strategic Alignment

The project will also be assessed on its alignment with Ministry and Government priorities, including but not limited to:

- ministry priorities, including the Tourism and Sport Business Plan;
- priorities articulated in the *Infrastructure Accountability Act* and Alberta's 20 Year Capital Plan
- regional equity; and
- emergent priorities, including disaster related events.

3.7. Economic Impacts and Innovation

The application must demonstrate the economic impacts and innovation advanced by the project, including:

- economic impact and job creation during construction;
- economic impact sustained through operations and programs (including sport events) after project completion;
- improved efficiency and effectiveness of venue operating costs, enabling support to address new market demands and/or that fosters growth in priority value-added sectors;
- utilizing and/or supporting innovative technology; and
- utilizing innovative collaborative partnerships that mitigate risk, consolidate spending, and improve pricing.

4. MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must secure contributions from eligible sources equal to or greater than the provincial funding requested through this program.

Eligible matching contributions include cash or donated labour, equipment or materials – all of which must be specifically related to the project.

4.1. Matching of Donated Labour, Equipment or Materials

Donated labour, equipment or materials will be valued as follows, insofar as the contributions are tracked and validated in the Interim and Final reporting for the project:

- \$20.00 per hour for unskilled labour
- \$40.00 per hour for skilled labour
- \$120.00 per hour for heavy equipment (including operator)
- Donated materials and professional services at verified fair market value.

Charitable gaming proceeds generated from licensed gaming events (e.g., bingos, casinos, raffles, and pull tickets) may be used as contributions, assuming disclosure in application.

Cash contribution commitments must be supported by a signed statement from the donor.

4.2. Ineligible Sources of Matching

Sources that are not eligible as a matching resource include:

- other Government of Alberta funding;
- wages and salaries associated with the regular, ongoing operations of the organization;
- volunteer travel time or mileage for picking up materials and equipment; and
- volunteer time related to fundraising, preparing grant applications, attending meetings, or planning activities related to the project or organization.

5. APPLICATION PROCESS

5.1. Process

Applications will follow this general timeline.

Action	Timeline
Call for Expression of Interest	May 3, 2024
Deadline to Submit Expression of Interest (EOI)	June 1, 2024
Invitation to submit a Full Application (Invitations are based on a review of Expressions of Interest for project eligibility and readiness. Only invited full applications will be considered.)	June 28, 2024
Deadline for Full Application submission	September 3, 2024 end of business day 4:30pm
Notice of decision to all applicants	November 29, 2024

5.2. Expression of Interest

Completing an expression of interest will help organizations determine their current project readiness and what materials and details remain to be completed prior to submission of a full project application.

Expression of Interest requirements are available through the Active Communities Initiative website, and include the following information:

- Organizational profile and capacity
- Facility Profile
- Validation of Organization, Project, and Expense Eligibility
- Estimated project schedule and budget
- Project funding secured to-date
- Board and facility ownership support
- Status of business case materials.

5.3. Applications

Projects that are assessed as eligible and as being sufficiently prepared will be provided with application materials and invited to submit a full application by the August 31, 2024 deadline.

5.4. Review and Approval

Applications and supporting documentation provided are fully reviewed against the program criteria. Organizations may be contacted if further information or clarification is required.

The Minister may exercise discretion in approving applications that fall outside the general intent of the program, based on the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate the project's potential and vital contributions to the community.

Applicants will receive written notification of the decision regarding their application.

All decisions on grant applications are final, and no appeals will be considered.

5.5. Incomplete Materials

If mandatory documents are not received by the Expression of Interest or Application deadline, the application will be deemed incomplete and the application will be declined.

5.6. Unsuccessful Applications

If there are more well-developed project proposals received than the program budget can support, it is possible that strong proposals may not be approved.

Unsuccessful applicants in one year may re-submit their proposal in subsequent years.

6. PROJECT ACCOUNTABILITY

6.1. Grant Agreement

Following the Minister's approval of a project, successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the Ministry of Tourism and Sport.

The resulting grant agreement sets out the approved terms and conditions for the grant funding, including but not limited to start and end dates, project scope, grant payment conditions, reporting requirements, communication considerations, and government recognition protocols.

6.2. Amending the Grant Agreement

If the project scope or period to use grant funds change after project approval, a formal Amendment Request must be made to consider any changes to the existing agreement.

If required, the Amendment Request must be submitted prior to the project completion date and must provide detailed rationale to support consideration of the amendment request.

Project amendments are granted at the discretion of the Minister of Tourism and Sport, based on an assessment of the rationale submitted for the amendment.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In addition to complying with the ACI guidelines and the Ministerial Grant Regulation, an individual affiliated with a grant recipient should not place themselves in an apparent or actual conflict of interest when using the grant funds. A conflict of interest arises when a conflict between an individual's personal interests (what they could gain financially or otherwise) and their duty to administer the grant funds in an accountable and transparent manner are in question.

A conflict of interest may be actual or perceived.

- **Actual** conflict of interest exists where an individual's personal interests could improperly influence the recipient's duty to utilize the grant funds in a responsible and accountable manner. For example, an individual employed by the recipient wants to use the grant funds to rent space from a private company owned by the individual. An actual conflict of interest exists because the individual personally benefits from this decision.

- **Perceived** conflict of interest exists when there is the appearance that an individual has a private interest that could improperly influence the individual's duty to act in the best interests of the grant recipient.

Whether a conflict of interest is categorized as actual or perceived, the individual affiliated with the grant recipient should avoid placing themselves in a situation where their personal interest could interfere with their duty to be transparent and accountable with the use of the grant funds. For example, the individual should ensure that their family members or the businesses they have an interest in, are not involved with the project and in no way personally benefit from the Government of Alberta funding that was provided.

As soon as reasonably possible after becoming aware of a personal interest causing or is likely to cause a conflict of interest in relation to the use of the grant, the grant recipient must give notice of the conflict to the Minister. After giving notice of a conflict, the grant recipient may not commence nor continue the project until instructed to do so by program staff. If, in the opinion of the Minister, a conflict of interest warrants such action, the recipient may be given notice of termination of the agreement and be required to return the grant funds.

8. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

The personal information that is provided on the grant application form will be used for the purpose of administering and advising the applicant of grant program updates and relevant ministry initiatives. It is collected under the authority of section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP Act) and is protected by the privacy provisions of the FOIP Act.

The FOIP Act applies to any information that is provided to Tourism and Sport. This information may be disclosed in response to an access request under the FOIP Act, subject to any applicable exceptions to disclosure under the FOIP Act

Please note once an application has been approved and funding issued to an organization, the community, recipient, project, amount funded, and fiscal year become a matter of public record.