



Infrastructure
Canada

Canada

Rural Transit Solutions Fund

*Application Guide for the Planning
and Design stream*

Revised edition



This publication is available upon request in accessible formats.

Contact: Communications Branch

Infrastructure Canada

180 Kent Street, Suite 1100

Ottawa, Ontario K1P 0B6

National information line on infrastructure: 613-948-1148

Toll free number: 1-877-250-7154

TTY: 1-800-465-7735

Email: info@infc.gc.ca

This publication is available at <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/rural-trans-rural/applicant-guide-demandeur-eng.html>.

Permission to Reproduce

Except as otherwise specifically noted, the information in this publication may be reproduced, in part or in whole and by any means, without charge or further permission from Infrastructure Canada, provided that due diligence is exercised in ensuring the accuracy of the information reproduced; that Infrastructure Canada is identified as the source institution; and that the reproduction is not represented as an official version of the information reproduced, nor as having been made in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of, Infrastructure Canada.

For permission to reproduce the information in this publication for commercial redistribution, please email info@infc.gc.ca.

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, 2023.

Cat. No. T94-28/2023E-PDF

ISBN 978-0-660-67949-5

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre: Guide de demande pour le volet Immobilisations du Fonds pour les solutions de transport en commun en milieu rural.



Table of Contents

- About the Rural Transit Solutions Fund..... 3**
 - Submission of Applications and Deadline..... 3
 - Contact Us..... 3
- Who Can Apply 3**
- Partnerships 4**
- Eligible Activities 5**
- Maximum Funding Amount 5**
 - Contracts 5
- Evaluation of Applications 5**
- Planning and Design Projects Deadlines 6**
- Supporting Documents 6**
- Decisions for Applications 8**
- Agreements and Reporting 8**
- Definitions 8**



About the Rural Transit Solutions Fund

The Rural Transit Solutions Fund supports the development and expansion of locally driven transit solutions. These solutions are intended to help people living in rural, remote, Indigenous and Northern communities do their day-to-day activities like going to work, school, appointments, and visiting loved ones. A minimum of 10% of the total Rural Transit Solution Fund's \$250 million funding envelope will be allocated to projects that benefit Indigenous populations and communities.

For the Fund's planning and design project stream, eligible applicants can apply for a grant up to \$50,000 to support transit planning and design activities related to the development of a transit solution.

The Rural Transit Solutions Fund is part of the Government of Canada's Permanent Public Transit Program. The Permanent Public Transit Program also provides support for major infrastructure projects, zero emissions transit, and active transportation.

Submission of Applications and Deadline

Applications to the Rural Transit Solutions Fund's planning and design projects stream are being accepted via Infrastructure Canada's online applicant portal. Infrastructure Canada will provide notification on its website in advance of the closure of the application intake. Applicants are encouraged to review the information in this guide and follow the *Step-by-Step Guide for Applications to the Planning and Design Projects Stream of the Rural Transit Solutions Fund*.

Contact Us

Interested in learning more about applying to the Rural Transit Solutions Fund? Contact Infrastructure Canada's Rural Transit Solutions Fund team with questions or to discuss projects by e-mail at RTSF-FSTCR@inf.gc.ca or by phone (toll-free) at 1-833-699-2280.

You can request to be added to our mailing list to receive general program updates by emailing RTSF-FSTCR@inf.gc.ca.

Who Can Apply

An applicant must be a legal entity capable of entering into legally binding agreements. To be considered an eligible recipient, applicants must fit within one of the following categories and must be in good standing with the Government of Canada to receive a Rural Transit Solutions Fund grant.

1. Municipalities, local and regional governments established under provincial or territorial statute, including service districts;

2. Public sector bodies that are established by or under provincial or territorial statute, or by regulation, or are wholly-owned by a province, territory, municipal or regional government, including but not limited to:
 - a. Municipally-owned corporations;
 - b. Provincial or territorial organizations that deliver municipal services; and,
 - c. Any **other** form of local governance that exists outside of the municipality description.
3. Indigenous governing bodies, including but not limited to:
 - a. A band council within the meaning of section 2 of the *Indian Act*;
 - b. A First Nation, Inuit or Métis government or authority established pursuant to a Self-Government Agreement or a Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement between His Majesty the King in right of Canada and an Indigenous people of Canada, that has been approved, given effect and declared valid by federal legislation; and,
 - c. A First Nation, Inuit or Métis government that is established by or under legislation whether federal or provincial that incorporates a governance structure.
4. Federally or provincially incorporated not-for-profit organizations whose mandate is to improve Indigenous outcomes, organizations serving Indigenous communities living in urban centers and First Nations living off-reserve;
5. Indigenous development corporations; and,
6. Federally or Provincially incorporated not-for-profit organizations (when an application is submitted on behalf of any primary eligible recipients listed as 1-3 above).

The following are **not eligible** to apply to the Rural Transit Solutions Fund' planning and design project stream:

1. Individuals/private citizens;
2. For profit/private sector organizations; and,
3. Federal entities, including federal Crown corporations.

Partnerships

Infrastructure Canada encourages applications for projects that connect communities and offer intercommunity transit within a region. Eligible recipients may partner together to submit an application for the Rural Transit Solutions Fund to jointly complete a transit study to determine their needs. A lead applicant must be identified and submit one application on behalf of all partners. The application form will ask that you identify the partner organization(s) and outline their respective roles and responsibilities. Each partner must also provide a letter of support confirming the roles and responsibilities identified in

the application, as well as any financial contributions. If the project is approved, the lead applicant will enter into a grant agreement with Infrastructure Canada and oversee the project's implementation.

Eligible Activities

Proposed planning and design projects are intended to assess and/or develop a rural transit solution that is appropriate for the local community. Eligible planning projects can include assessing routes and modes of travel, feasibility studies, public and stakeholder engagement and surveys.

Planning and design projects to support transit solutions to connect nearby communities in a region are eligible for funding, if they support day-to-day activities (e.g., get to work, school, appointments, run errands or visit friends).

Proposed solutions that rely on air travel as a means of serving the community are ineligible under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund.

Maximum Funding Amount

There is no limit to the cost of a planning project, however, the maximum grant available under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund is limited to \$50,000. The total funding allocated under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund and from all federal sources cannot exceed 100% of the total costs of the planning and design project.

Infrastructure Canada will not provide additional funding over the amount agreed upon in the grant agreement.

Contracts

It is important to note that costs can only be incurred after federal approval of the project. Costs associated with any contract signed **BEFORE** federal approval are not eligible for Rural Transit Solutions Fund funding. As such, please make sure you do not sign contracts before your organization receives federal approval by way of an approval in principle letter.

Contracts for professional services, must be awarded in a way that is fair, transparent, competitive and consistent with value-for-money principles, and in a manner which is acceptable to the Government of Canada.

Evaluation of Applications

Projects will be evaluated according to the Rural Transit Solutions Fund merit criteria. In the Project Rationale section of the application, applicants must demonstrate how their projects will meet the **merit criteria, including why the project is needed and how the community/area self-defines as rural**. You should be descriptive in responding to the questions and, where possible, provide evidence or documented support, by including any links to web pages. Sources of information could include, but are

not limited to, studies, reports, municipal documents, government data/statistical sources (e.g., Statistics Canada), surveys, or the results of public consultations.

Merit Criteria	DESCRIPTION
Need	<p>Description and demographics for the community for the planning and design project.</p> <p>The current state of transit programming in the community.</p> <p>How the proposed planning and design project will identify community populations who will benefit from improved transit solutions.</p>
Scope	<p>How the planning and design project will contribute to developing a proposal that could be integrated into the future development of the community or region.</p> <p>How the planning and design project will support the development and implementation of a future project in the community.</p>
Viability	<p>How the planning outcomes will be shared with be communicated to community members to support the development of a project proposal that has community support.</p> <p>The expected time frame of the planning process.</p>

Planning and Design Projects Deadlines

Planning and design projects must be completed before March 31, 2026.

Supporting Documents

Certain documents may be needed to support your application, depending on your organization type or whether you have project partners.

Eligible Recipient	Document type
<p>Public sector bodies that are established by or under provincial or territorial statute, or by regulation, or are wholly-owned by a province, territory, municipal or regional government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (if applicable) Letter of support from partners with a direct role in the project, confirming the role and confirming any financial contributions.



<p>Indigenous governing bodies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (if applicable) Letter of support confirming any financial contributions from partners. • (if applicable) Band Council Resolution that confirms the applicant has responsibility for transit services for their community.
<p>Federally or provincially incorporated not-for-profit organizations whose mandate is to improve Indigenous outcomes, organizations serving Indigenous communities living in urban centers and First Nations living off-reserve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from the community where the transit solution is operating confirming support, including Indigenous governing body, that confirms the applicant has responsibility for transit services for their community (if applicable). • Proof of incorporation status (e.g., articles of incorporation). • (if applicable) Letter of support from partners with a direct role in the project, confirming the role and confirming any financial contributions.
<p>Indigenous development corporations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter confirming support and organization mandate from Indigenous governing body.
<p>Federally or Provincially incorporated Not-for-profit organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of support from a primary eligible applicant listed on page 3 (1-4) confirming that the application is made on their behalf OR a letter from an order of government (e.g., province, regional government or municipality) confirming that the applicant has the mandate for delivering transit services in the community/region or the organization is recognized for its services in the community/region. • (if applicable) Letter of support from partners with a direct role in the project, confirming the role and confirming any financial contributions. • Proof of incorporation status (e.g., articles of incorporation).



Decisions for Applications

Once your application is received by Infrastructure Canada, it will go through a review and approval process. Applicants may be contacted by Infrastructure Canada for additional information throughout the review process.

Funding decisions will be communicated as soon as possible to all applicants. If your project is successful, applicants will receive an approval in principle letter from Infrastructure Canada confirming the federal funding for your project. After receiving the approval in principle letter, Infrastructure Canada will then initiate communication with successful applicants to finalize a grant agreement.

A friendly reminder that costs and contracts signed **BEFORE** the signature date on the approval in principal letter are not eligible for Rural Transit Solutions Fund funding.

Agreements and Reporting

Funding will not be distributed until a grant agreement is signed between the eligible recipients and the Government of Canada. It will be provided in accordance with program parameters and within the terms outlined in the grant agreement. The grant agreement will also indicate the conditions under which federal payment will be made.

All recipients of funding under the Rural Transit Solutions Fund are required to provide a final narrative report once their project is complete. This reporting allows Infrastructure Canada to track project results and results for Canadians.

Definitions

Term	Explanation
Fixed route service	It is defined as a service provided on a repetitive, fixed-schedule basis along a specific route with buses stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations; each fixed-route trip services the same origins and destinations.
Indigenous governing body	A council, government or other entity that is authorized to act on behalf of an Indigenous group, community or people that holds rights recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the <i>Constitution Act, 1982</i> . Indigenous peoples of Canada have the meaning assigned by the definition Aboriginal peoples of Canada in subsection 35(2) of the <i>Constitution Act, 1982</i> .
Intermodal hubs/intermodal (transit) facilities	An intermodal hub or intermodal transit facility gathers many modes of transportation together and is strategically located to increase destination alternatives. Intermodal hubs/facilities can help to improve mobility for a city and a region.



Low-carbon technology	Low and zero carbon technology (LZC) is the term given to technologies that emit low levels of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) emissions, or no net CO2 emissions.
Mobility-as-a-Service	Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is the integration of various forms of transport services into a single mobility service accessible on demand. To meet a customer’s request, a MaaS operator facilitates a diverse menu of transport options, be they public transport, ride-, car- or bike-sharing, taxi or car rental/lease, or a combination thereof.
Municipal Plan/alternate local community planning documentation	A municipal development plan (sometimes referred to as a community sustainability plan) is a framework used by municipalities or other local government bodies to address long-term community development, land use, and growth.
On-demand services (Demand-response)	On-Demand services enable passengers to book their journey at a convenient time (during service operating hours), and to be picked up from an agreed location.
Public Transit	Public transit refers to modes of public transportation that allow for the movement of passengers. Modes of public transportation offered locally to a community or to communities within a region that enables the movement of passengers between specific destinations.
Ride-sharing or ride-hailing	An arrangement in which a passenger travels in a private vehicle free or for a fee, especially as arranged by means of a website or application.
Rolling stock	Refers to vehicle assets (e.g., car, minivan, bus, small craft, and train) except for an aircraft(s).
Rural	The Fund acknowledges the diversity of rural and remote communities in Canada and avoids the application of an arbitrarily established population size in the definition of rural populations. It will be up to each applicant to demonstrate the rural character of the communities served by their project.
Transit Plan	A Transportation Master Plan integrates existing and future land-use planning and the planning of transportation infrastructure with the principles of environmental assessment planning. Many Transportation Master Plans at the regional and local levels emphasize that increased use of transit is a key component of an integrated transportation strategy that considers all modes of travel.



Vulnerable population	Vulnerable populations include but are not limited to, Indigenous peoples, racialized peoples, youth, persons with disabilities, seniors, linguistic minorities, newcomers to Canada (immigrants, refugees), women, persons experiencing poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, and 2SLGBTQI+.
------------------------------	---

