

# Green and Inclusive Community Buildings

Applicant Guide

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and Communities Canada

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## **What is the objective of the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program?**

The Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB) program is a national merit-based program with the objective of improving the availability and condition of community buildings in Canadian communities experiencing higher needs and who are currently underserved. At the same time, the Program helps to stimulate the economy while creating good job opportunities and aligning to the goals of Canada's strengthened climate plan.

The program advances the Government's climate priorities by improving energy efficiency, reducing GHG emissions, and enhancing the climate resilience of community buildings.

## **How does the program work?**

In 2020, the Government of Canada announced up to \$1.5 billion in federal funding over five years to establish the GICB program. On April 16, 2024, the Government of Canada released [Budget 2024](#) which provided a \$500 million top-up and extended the program until March 2029.

Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) will open a third application intake to receive project proposals on August 1, 2024, for small and medium retrofits, and on September 4, 2024, for large retrofits and new builds. Both intakes will close on October 16, 2024, at 15:00 Eastern time.

The Program supports retrofits, repairs or upgrades of existing publicly-accessible community buildings and the construction of new publicly-accessible community buildings for underserved and high-needs communities across Canada.

Community buildings are non-commercial community-oriented structures and spaces that provide open, available, and accessible community services to the public. With this Program, the Government of Canada is making investments to improve the availability and condition of community buildings – in particular in areas with populations experiencing higher needs – while also making the buildings more energy efficient, lower carbon, resilient, and high performing.

The Program focuses on publicly accessible community buildings with a recognition that these structures and spaces are at the heart of community vitality: they are the places where Canadians gather, access essential services, and learn and play. The quality, availability and location of these spaces – along with the services that they sustain – plays a meaningful role in fostering inclusion in society and combating systemic inequities.

## **How does this program fit in with Canada's fight against climate change?**

The GICB Program is part of Canada's strengthened climate plan, which was introduced in December 2020 as the Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy. The Program supports the first pillar of the plan by improving the places where Canadians live and gather – which will cut pollution, make life more affordable and create thousands of jobs in construction.

Funding through this Program will build and adapt community buildings to reduce carbon emissions, advance best practices to implement GHG mitigation measures, foster awareness and alignment to green building standards nationally and internationally, and encourage best practices in building design for climate change resilience, including the use of natural infrastructure (NI) or nature-based solutions (NbS). Investments in the repair and construction of community buildings will generate employment and community development opportunities, helping communities to recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19.

## Who can apply to the GICB Program?

Funding under the GICB Program is provided directly by Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada to recipients at the local community level.

### Eligible applicants include:

- A municipal or regional government established by or under provincial or territorial statute
- A provincial or territorial government
- A public sector body that is established by or under provincial or territorial statute or by regulation or is wholly-owned by a province, territory, municipal or regional government, including, but not limited to:
  - Municipally-owned corporations (e.g. autonomous organizations owned by municipalities, used to produce or deliver local public services outside the local bureaucracy, such as water management, economic development or tourism agencies)
  - A provincial or territorial organization that delivers municipal services (e.g. community health services)
  - Any other form of local governance that exists outside of the municipality description (e.g. local service districts)
- Federally or provincially incorporated not-for-profit organizations and registered charities
- Indigenous recipients
  - Indigenous Governing Body, including the following:
    - A band council within the meaning of section 2 of the [Indian Act](#)
    - 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
    - A First Nation, Inuit or Métis government that is established by or under legislation whether federal or provincial that incorporates a governance structure
  - A federally or provincially incorporated not-for-profit organization whose primary mandate is to serve Indigenous peoples (e.g. Friendship centres, aboriginal women's associations)
  - Not-for-profit Indigenous development corporations

### Ineligible applicants include, but are not limited to:

- Commercial and for-profit organizations
- Individuals and private citizens
- Federal entities, including federal Crown corporations

To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must demonstrate that they have the required authority to undertake the project on the building/asset or land.

**Please Note:**

- The **primary contact** and the person submitting the application **must** be an employee or officer of the applicant organization, or a member of an applicant Indigenous governing body, who is duly authorized to:
  - complete the attestations contained in the application; and
  - verify that the application is complete, accurate, true, and reliable, and that it complies with GICB criteria.
- The **Secondary Contact** may be a third party engaged to support in the completion of an application (as applicable).

## What kinds of projects are eligible for funding?

The GICB Program funds two types of projects:

- **Retrofits, repairs and upgrades to existing community buildings.** Retrofits are changes to an existing building/asset that seek to renovate, upgrade, or repair aspects of the building/asset in a manner that improves environmental outcomes. Retrofits must be to a facility that is fully accessible to the public and that will provide non-commercial services to the community. For a detailed description of retrofit projects and their conditions for eligibility, see the section below [“Retrofits – Applying for funding for retrofits, repair and upgrades to existing buildings.”](#)
- **The construction of new community buildings.** New builds must be of a building/asset that is open and accessible to the public and that will provide non-commercial services to the community. For a detailed description of new build projects and their conditions for eligibility, please see the section below [“New builds - Applying for funding for the construction of new community buildings.”](#)

To be eligible for funding, retrofitted and new buildings must be in areas with underserved populations experiencing higher needs and be the site of programming and/or activities that demonstrably serve these populations. Note: Outdoor facilities (such as sports fields, outdoor arenas, tennis courts, outdoor lighting) are not eligible for funding.

## Types of projects and funding streams

The GICB Program has two main funding streams: a continuous, non-competitive intake for small and medium retrofits, and a scheduled, competitive intake process for large retrofits and new builds.

Continuous intake stream for small and medium **retrofit projects** across Canada.

- **Small retrofit projects** are those that range in size from \$100,000 to \$249,999 in total eligible costs.
- **Medium retrofit projects** are those that range in size from \$250,000 to \$2,999,999 in total eligible costs.



Scheduled competitive intake for **large retrofits** and **new buildings** across Canada.

- **Large retrofit projects** are those that range in size from \$3,000,000 to \$25,000,000\* in total eligible costs.
- **New build projects** are those that range in size from \$3,000,000 to \$25,000,000 in total eligible costs.

*\*Projects in excess of \$25,000,000 may be considered on a case-by case basis.*

A minimum of 10% of the total funding envelope will continue to be allocated on a distinctions-basis to Indigenous projects being led by and for Indigenous populations and communities. Indigenous applicants are encouraged to apply through the process described above for projects of all types and sizes.

## How do I apply?

Applications will be accepted **starting August 1, 2024**, for Small and Medium retrofit projects and the intake will remain open **until October 16, 2024, at 15:00 (Eastern Time)**.

Large Retrofits and New Build applications will be accepted **from September 4, 2024, until October 16, 2024, at 15:00 (Eastern Time)**. Applications can be submitted through the Housing, Infrastructure and Communities' online and accessible application portal.

Applicants who are unable to apply through the portal are asked to reach out to the GICB program team at [gicbp-pbcvi@infq.gc.ca](mailto:gicbp-pbcvi@infq.gc.ca).

Eligible applicants must submit a separate application for each project they wish to have considered for funding.

In the case of multiple applications from a single applicant, applicants must provide ranking information regarding the priority of each project.

### Continuous intake stream

Applications for **small and medium retrofit projects** to existing community buildings ranging in total eligible cost from \$100,000 to \$2,999,999 will be accepted on a continuous basis from **August 1, 2024, until October 16, 2024, at 15:00 (ET)**.

The selection of projects for funding is based on eligibility criteria and the achievement of a minimum merit threshold as well as the availability of funding. For more details on eligibility and merit criteria for the continuous intake stream, please see "[How will my application for retrofit funding be evaluated?](#)"

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## How is the size of my project determined?

*The size of a project is based on total eligible costs. This figure is lower than total project costs because certain expenses will not be reimbursed by HICC (e.g., land, lease of building, staff salaries, maintenance and operations, etc.).*

*Please refer to the sections entitled [What costs are eligible?](#) and [What costs are ineligible?](#) to determine the federal contribution for your project and the balance of funds your organization will need to secure for your project.*

*The maximum federal contribution amount approved is described in the section entitled [How much of my costs will this program cover?](#) Any cost increases or overruns for the project will be the responsibility of funding recipients.*

### Scheduled intake stream

Applications for **large retrofit projects** to existing community buildings or **new community building projects** with total eligible costs ranging from \$3 million to \$25 million\* will be accepted through a scheduled, competitive intake process **from September 4, 2024, until October 16, 2024, at 15:00 (ET)**.

*\*Projects in excess of \$25,000,000 may be considered on a case-by case basis.*

The selection of projects for funding is based on eligibility criteria and the competitive evaluation of applications using merit criteria. For more details on eligibility and merit criteria for the scheduled intake stream, please see "[How will my application for retrofit funding be evaluated?](#)" and "[How will my application for funding for a new building project be evaluated?](#)"

### What are the minimum requirements for buildings?

The following are required for projects of all types, sizes and streams:

- The building/asset must be a non-commercial community-oriented structure or space that provides open, available, and publicly-accessible community services.
- The building/asset must be located in an area with underserved populations experiencing higher needs and be the site of the publicly-accessible programming and/or activities that demonstrably serve these populations.
- The building/asset must be an eligible asset type.
- At least two-thirds of the building/asset's floor space must be used for publicly open and accessible services. Please see section below on [Mixed-Use Buildings](#).
- The applicant must have authority over the building/asset either as the owner or have secured an agreement with the asset owner for a minimum of 6 years, to carry out the project. (**Note:** Asset ownership will be confirmed for all approved projects through the provision of a signed proof of ownership, a declaration or written authority that the applicant has permission from the owner to undertake the project.)
- Applicants must award contracts in a way that is fair, transparent and competitive. If you have or are planning to award non-competitive contracts (sole source) as part of your project, you must receive authorization from the Government of Canada for these costs to be deemed eligible for federal reimbursement. See section below on [Non-competitive Procurement \(Sole Sourcing\)](#).
- The project must be implemented no earlier than April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, and completed no later than March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2029.
- Applications for completed projects will not be considered for funding.
- The applicant must submit their building's energy profile, and GHG emissions using the RETScreen® Expert software (retrofits only).
- The project must not lead to an increase in the building's operational GHG emissions (retrofits only).
- Applicants for new construction projects must demonstrate that a climate risk assessment was conducted and mitigation measures are identified for the project. For retrofit projects, applicants must demonstrate that climate data was examined to identify the risks and associated mitigation measures for the project.
- The applicant must commit to securing the necessary capital to proceed if approved for federal funding.



- The applicant must attest to the manner in which the project conforms to relevant building and construction laws and regulations. This includes the completion (or planned completion) of an environmental assessment, as well as public and Indigenous consultation as may be required by federal and provincial/territorial governments.
- The applicant must attest to the manner in which the project aligns with building standards and codes that apply to the jurisdiction of the existing building and, as applicable, those set out in the section entitled [“What are the required construction standards for new buildings?”](#)
- All new build project applicants, must attest that the project will, at a minimum, meet the highest published accessibility standard(s) - as defined in the [Canadian Standards Association's Technical Standard Accessible Design for the Built Environment \(CAN/CSA B651:23\)](#), (or its most recent version), or relevant provincial or territorial building codes, or municipal by-laws.

## What are the specific application requirements?

### Retrofits - Applying for funding for retrofits, repairs and upgrades to existing buildings

#### What kinds of buildings can be retrofitted?

The GICB Program provides funding towards retrofits, repairs, and upgrades to the space of a community building that is accessible to the public and provides a community service.

The expansion or addition of 30% or greater of an existing building's footprint\* is considered a new build project. Projects involving the demolition of over 30% of an existing building's footprint are also considered new build projects. Projects involving the demolition and/or rebuilding of under 30% of an existing building's footprint are considered retrofit projects.

\*A building's footprint provides the outline of a building drawn along the exterior walls, with a description of the exact size, shape, and location of its foundation. Floorspace is the surface area of the floor(s) in a building.

The following community buildings/assets are eligible for retrofit projects:

- Community, culture and recreation facilities (e.g. community centres; public sports and recreation facilities; cultural buildings; libraries; child and youth centres; community adult learning centres; seniors activity centres)
- Community health and wellness facilities (e.g. food safety and security; community food storage facilities; greenhouses and food banks; community health centres; addictions and mental health centres; rehabilitation centres, etc.)
- Indigenous health and social infrastructure facilities (e.g. short-term medical recovery facilities, long-term care facilities/elders lodges, family violence and homeless shelters)
- Indigenous education facilities (e.g. schools, universities and colleges, early childhood and daycares)

## What kinds of buildings cannot be retrofitted?

The following types of buildings cannot be funded under the GICB Program:

- Administrative buildings (town and city halls, courthouses, band offices, etc.)
- Hospitals, police, fire, paramedic/ambulatory stations, long-term care facilities (except Indigenous facilities specified as eligible)
- Daycare centres (except Indigenous facilities specified as eligible, or as part of a mixed-use building)
- Shelters (except Indigenous facilities specified as eligible, or as part of a mixed-use building)
- Religious facilities (places operating for religious worship, training or study, places administering or promoting organized religious activities)
- Multi-unit housing and Hospices
- Schools and post-secondary facilities, including their recreational facilities (except Indigenous facilities specified as eligible)
- Projects to be undertaken in a federally-owned building
- Public Works buildings and associated facilities (utilities, water treatment plants, etc.)

## What types of retrofit measures are eligible?

Eligible retrofits must include **green** retrofit measures, and, where applicable, must include measures that increase the overall **accessibility and/or safety** of the building.

## Green retrofit measures and requirements

Green retrofit measures are those that renovate, upgrade, and/or repair aspects of a physical building in a way that improves environmental outcomes.

In order to be eligible for funding consideration, all retrofit projects are encouraged to achieve at least 25% in energy efficiency improvements compared to the building's baseline energy consumption. Projects with greater energy efficiency improvements will receive a higher score and are more likely to be selected for funding.

Projects that demonstrate the ability to achieve greater GHG emission reductions relative to the building's baseline will receive a higher score.

Examples of retrofit measures could include:

- Sealing with caulking or spray foam
- Adding insulation
- Upgrading lighting systems
- Replacing window glazing
- Updating low-flow faucets with sensors and automatic shut-offs
- Installing sub-metering
- HVAC upgrades
- Implementation of new operating mechanisms such as:
  - An energy management system
  - Building automation system
  - Sensors
  - Control equipment
  - Metering equipment
- Related communication systems to support above renovations

Other examples of retrofits can include but are not limited to:

- Significant reconfigurations to the interior for the purpose of energy savings
- Roof replacement
- Climate resilience retrofits (including natural infrastructure (NI) or nature-based solutions (NbS))
- Adding or rearranging windows to increase interior sunlight
- Renewable energy retrofits
- Solar PV array
- Wind turbines
- Geothermal exchange systems

Applicants are also encouraged to consider including retrofit measures that will increase the resilience of the building to climate change impacts. For example, projects located in a high wind area might consider using wind resistant material or design, projects in areas affected by heat island effects could consider incorporating NI or NbS to enhance cooling, comfort and energy efficiency, and projects located in areas with high risks of flooding may consider flood-resilience design elements.

While resiliency measures and improvements are not required for a project, applicants must demonstrate that they have considered future potential climate impacts on their project, and the current resilience of the asset to those potential impacts.

### Accessibility and/or safety retrofit measures and requirements

Retrofit measures that increase an eligible building's accessibility and/or safety are eligible under the GICB Program, as long as the project **also** meets the program's green retrofit measures criteria (e.g., ambitious energy efficiency improvements).

Please consider the [definitions](#) of "disability" and "barriers" per the [Accessible Canada Act](#) (2019) in your application.

- **Barrier:** means anything – including anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice – that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

- **Disability:** means any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment – or a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.

Accessibility measures within retrofits or renovations can include, but are not limited to the following:

- Wheelchair ramps for accessibility
- Visual fire safety devices
- Firm, slip resistant floor finishes, with no glare or busy patterns
- Widened doorways
- Washroom renovations for wheelchair access
- Automated doorways
- Tactile walking surface indicators
- Installing screen readers
- Assistive listening and communication enhancement technologies
- Constructing a universally designed office
- Smooth, ground level entrances without stairs
- Surface textures that require low force to traverse on level, less than 5 pounds force per 120 pounds rolling force
- Single-hand operation with closed fist for operable components including fire alarm pull stations
- Auditory output redundant with information on visual displays
- Visual output redundant with information in auditory output
- Choice of language on speech output
- Ramp access in swimming pools
- Instruction that presents material both orally and visually
- Labels in large print and/or braille on equipment control buttons

Retrofit projects that intend to include improved accessibility measures are encouraged to meet the [Canadian Standards Association’s Technical Standard Accessible Design for the Built Environment \(CSA/ASC B651-23\)](#) (or its most recent version) or relevant provincial or territorial building codes, or municipal by-laws.

### What kinds of retrofit measures are ineligible?

The following measures and activities are **ineligible** under the GICB Program:

- Electricity and/or energy production, transmission, and distribution
  - Electricity production for sale on the market (except in jurisdictions that require energy to be sold back to the grid)
  - Transmission and distribution infrastructure (district energy)
- Low-emission fuels
  - Fuel transportation infrastructure
  - Production of low emissions fuels for sale on the market
- Research, Development and Demonstration (RD&D)

- Any RD&D projects aimed at demonstrating the effectiveness of a product of technology used as part of the project must conclude prior to the application. Any concurrent RD&D activities cannot be included in the project scope and costs. Exceptions may be given to certain technologies at the discretion of HICC.

### How will my application for retrofit funding be evaluated?

#### **Continuous and Scheduled intake (Small/medium retrofits & Large retrofits)**

- Small/medium retrofit projects with total eligible project costs between \$100,000 and \$2,999,999 are evaluated on a continuous basis, with projects needing to meet or exceed a minimum merit score threshold in order to be considered for funding.
- Large retrofit projects with total eligible project costs between \$3,000,000 and \$25,000,000 are evaluated on a competitive basis, with projects being scored and ranked against one another.

Retrofit projects that meet all the mandatory eligibility criteria are evaluated based on the strength of the application and will receive a merit score in relation to the following criteria:

**Located in and demonstrates the ability to serve one or more communities with high needs:** Projects that provide greater benefits to high need communities will receive a higher score.

**Increased accessibility:** Projects that increase accessibility and projects that commit to including accessibility elements that meet the highest standards for accessibility will receive a higher score.

**GHG Reductions:** Projects that demonstrate the ability to achieve greater GHG emission reductions relative to the building's baseline will receive a higher score.

**Energy Savings:** Projects that will achieve at least 25% in energy efficiency improvements compared to the building's baseline energy consumption, as calculated with the RETScreen® Expert software, will receive a higher score.

**Climate resiliency and best practices adoption:** Projects that demonstrate strong climate resiliency considerations and measures will receive a higher score. Applicants must consult climate data to identify climate risks relevant to their project/building location. Projects that provide clear, reasonable and accurate detail for why climate resiliency is already addressed/not within the scope of the project will not be subject to this criterion and will be assessed relative to other project merits.

**Confidence in delivery/risk:** Applicants who can demonstrate strong project risk identification and propose practical mitigation measures will receive a higher score. Other factors considered under this criterion include: the amount of information provided in the budget, outcomes of community consultation(s) undertaken, permits identified/obtained, phase of the project's design.

## New builds - Applying for funding for the construction of new community buildings

The construction of new community buildings is eligible under the GICB Program in cases where construction will fill a missing or distinct gap in a service requirement of high needs communities where critical community infrastructure is lacking.

### What kinds of buildings can be newly constructed?

Eligible new buildings construction projects must be facilities that are accessible to the public and that provide a community service. They include the following:

- Community, culture and recreation facilities (e.g. community centres; libraries; public sports and recreation facilities; cultural buildings; child and youth centres; community adult learning centres; seniors' activity centres)
- Indigenous health and social infrastructure facilities (e.g. community health centres, long-term care facilities/elders' lodges, family violence and homeless shelters)
- Indigenous education facilities (e.g. schools, universities and colleges, early childhood and daycares)

All new building projects must be planned to be completed within the timeframe between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2029.

### What types of new buildings are ineligible?

The following types of buildings cannot be funded under the GICB Program:

- Community health and wellness facilities (e.g. Community health centres, community greenhouses, etc.) except Indigenous facilities specified as eligible.
- Administrative buildings (town and city halls, courthouses, band offices, etc.)
- Hospitals, police, fire, paramedic/ambulatory stations, long-term care facilities (except Indigenous facilities specified as eligible)
- Daycare centres (except Indigenous facilities specified as eligible, or as part of a mixed-use building)
- Shelters (except Indigenous facilities specified as eligible, or as part of a mixed-use building)
- Religious facilities (places operating for religious worship, training or study, places administering or promoting organized religious activities)
- Multi-unit housing and Hospices
- Schools and post-secondary facilities, including their recreational facilities (except Indigenous facilities specified as eligible)
- Projects to be undertaken in a federally-owned building
- Public Works buildings and associated facilities (utilities, water treatment plants, etc.)

### What are the required construction standards for new buildings?

On June 5, 2024 the Canada Green Building Council (CAGBC) introduced the latest version v4 of its Zero Carbon Building (ZSCB) Design Standard. In accordance with the requirements set



by the CAGBC, all buildings in Canada seeking the ZCB-Design Standard certification must register and certify the design of their building under the new ZCB-Design Standard v4.

All applications for New Build projects under the GICB Program's third scheduled intake will be required to meet the ZCB-Design Standard v4. Exceptions to this requirement will be granted if a project was registered for ZCB-Design v3 before September 30, 2024. Projects must submit for certification before September 30, 2024, or upgrade to version 4.

New construction projects will be required to meet the minimum standards below.

**Built to be net-zero carbon**

- A net-zero carbon building means a highly energy efficient building that produces onsite, or procures, carbon-free renewable energy or high-quality carbon offsets in an amount sufficient to offset the annual carbon emissions associated with building materials and operation without the need for a transition plan.
- An attestation letter from a qualified registered professional (i.e. a professional engineer, architect or certified engineering technologist etc.) that verifies that the project is designed to meet the Zero Carbon Building Design Standard V4 without the need for a net-zero carbon transition plan is required. The attestation letter is intended to provide the required level of assurance that the project will be able to obtain ZCB-Design V4 certification.

[EN GICB Attestation Letter Template - Net Zero:](#)

**OR**

**Built to be net-zero-carbon-ready**

- A net-zero-carbon-ready building is one that has been designed and built to a level of performance such that in accordance with a transition plan it will, i.e. with the addition of solar panels or other renewable energy technologies, achieve net-zero performance in carbon emissions.
- An attestation letter from a qualified registered professional (i.e. a professional engineer, architect or certified engineering technologist etc.) that verifies that the project is designed to meet the Zero Carbon Building Design Standard V4 with a transition plan is required. The transition plan for achieving net-zero-carbon performance is also required as part of the application.

[EN GICB Attestation Letter Template - Net Zero-Ready](#)

**OR**

**Be exempt from net-zero-carbon and net-zero-carbon-ready and built to the highest standard**

- Applicants from remote and/or Northern communities, (including all communities in the territories and typically [climate Zone 8](#) - communities with more than 7000 Heating Degree Days, as identified in the 2020 National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings) may seek an exemption to the net-zero requirement for new builds if the project is in a location where standards cannot be met due to geographical or logistical constraints.
- In cases where an applicant is seeking an exemption, their new building must be built to a 'high efficiency standard,' that will allow the building's energy performance to exceed the [2020 National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings](#), or the provincial or territorial code (where the project site is located), whichever code is the higher standard.
- An attestation letter from a qualified registered professional (i.e. a professional engineer, architect or certified engineering technologist etc.) that verifies that the building is designed to exceed the energy performance of the 2020 National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings (or the newest energy code published) or the provincial or territorial code (where the project site is located), whichever code is the higher standard, is required. The specific design measures being implemented for the building are also required as part of the application.
- [EN GICB Attestation Letter Template - Seeking Exemption](#)

**What other criteria does my new building project need to meet?**

**Climate resiliency**

To be eligible for funding, new building projects must demonstrate they have conducted a climate risk assessment and identify measures mitigating all medium and high risks. The data sources used in the risk assessment must be cited, and explanations provided for identified climate risks.

For instance, new buildings in areas prone to flooding or wildfires should take into account the effects these events can have on the building and should include resiliency measures in their building's design to mitigate the risks that these events will pose to the building and to the community.

For guidance and advice on the climate-related requirements of this program, please contact the new Climate Help Desk at <https://support-infc.canada.ca/>.

**How will my application for funding for a new building project be evaluated?**

All new build projects will be evaluated on a competitive basis, with projects being scored and ranked against one another.

New build projects that meet all mandatory eligibility criteria are evaluated based on the strength of the application and will receive a merit score in relation to the following criteria:

**Located in and demonstrates the ability to serve one or more communities with high needs:** Projects that provide greater benefits to high needs communities will receive a higher score.

**Accessibility:** All new build projects must meet the highest published accessibility standard(s) – as defined in the [Canadian Standards Association’s Technical Standard Accessible Design for the Built Environment \(CSA/ASC B651-23\)](#) (or its most recent version) or relevant provincial or territorial building codes, or municipal by-laws.

**Zero carbon design standard:** Projects that are designed to meet net-zero carbon performance without the need for a transition plan will be scored higher. Applicants may seek an exemption from this requirement, however the project will receive a lower score.

**Climate resiliency and best practices adoption:** Projects that demonstrate strong climate resiliency considerations and measures will be scored higher. Applicants that consult and cite climate data sources to identify climate risks relevant to their building/location will receive a higher score.

**Confidence in delivery/risk:** Projects that demonstrate a strong risk assessment and mitigation measures will be scored higher. Factors considered under this criterion include the amount of information provided in the budget, outcomes of any community consultation(s) undertaken, whether permits have been identified/obtained, and the internal capacity to manage and deliver the project.

## Additional Information

### How much of my costs will this program cover?

The GICB Program will provide funding up to the following limits of total eligible project costs:

Table 1: Project cost share, by project type and size		
Total Eligible Project Cost	General program (up to % max from program)	In the territories and for Indigenous* communities (up to % max from program)
Retrofits up to \$9,999,999	80%	100%
Retrofits costs \$10,000,000 +	60%	100%
New builds up to first \$9,999,999 of costs	60%	100%
New build costs \$10,000,000 +	50%	100%

\*All Indigenous eligible recipients as defined in the terms and conditions of this program are eligible for up to 100% federal stacking.

The maximum amount permitted from all Government of Canada sources is 100% of eligible costs.

The maximum amount permitted from Canadian governments combined (including municipal, provincial and territorial) is 100% of eligible costs.

**Note:**

- **Applicants are responsible for considering inflation when deciding on project costs for projects.**
- The application of the maximum level of funding provided by the program towards eligible costs will be implemented on a marginal dollar value basis whereby the total eligible project costs up to the first \$9,999,999 will have the higher maximum % funding rate applied and for every dollar above \$10,000,000 the lower % rate applied. For example: a retrofit project with \$12,000,000 in eligible costs would be provided a maximum of  $\$9,999,999 \times .80 + \$2,000,001 \times .60 = (\$7,999,999.20) + (\$1,200,000.60) = \$9,199,999.80$  in funding from GICB towards eligible costs.

**Special Consideration:** Applicants are responsible for considering Government of Canada funding program eligibility criteria and funding limits as project costs cannot necessarily be stacked or duplicated across multiple programs.

If you have applied for, or have received funding from any other Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) program, you are advised to email program officials at [gicbp-pbcvi@infcc.gc.ca](mailto:gicbp-pbcvi@infcc.gc.ca).

## When will I know if I my project has been selected for funding?

Applicants are able to track the status of their application using the online application portal. Once a decision has been made on project funding, HICC will notify successful and unsuccessful applicants of the outcome of the process. If a project is approved for funding, HICC will contact the project's primary contact and indicate next steps for moving forward with a funding agreement. This notification does not necessarily guarantee that federal funding will be provided. Funding may be subject to certain conditions, such as the completion of an environmental impact assessment, regulatory authorization/permits, or consultations with Indigenous Peoples.

## How will I receive funding?

Funding amounts will be determined based on an assessment of the recipient's planned activities and budget submission, previous financial performance and capacity of the recipient to achieve results.

Funding will be provided as contributions for all GICB projects.

## What is the maximum amount payable under this program?

The maximum amount allocated to any project under this program will up to \$25 million in contribution funding.

Larger retrofits and new build projects (above \$25 million in total eligible costs) may also be considered in cases where the federal investment can be effectively delivered by March 31, 2029, either to complete the project or bring the project to a next phase of funding for completion where the investments are secured.

## What costs are eligible?

Eligible costs are those considered by Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada to be direct and necessary for the successful implementation of an eligible project. Eligible expenditures for contribution funding under the GICB program are as follows:

- costs that are incurred between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2029
- costs to build, renovate, expand or improve fixed capital assets and community buildings
- fees paid to professionals, technical personnel, consultants and contractors specifically engaged for the purpose of the renovation, expansion or improvement work or new builds of eligible infrastructure, including planning and energy audit costs
- costs of environmental assessments, monitoring and follow up activities as required by the *Impact Assessment Act* or equivalent legislation
- costs associated with a public announcement and official ceremony or of required temporary or permanent signage that includes the cost of creation and posting of signage
- costs for the purpose of Indigenous consultation/engagement activities
- other costs that are considered to be direct and necessary for the successful implementation of the project and that are approved in advance by the Government of Canada
- salaries, wages and other incremental costs (i.e. materials or equipment) of the recipient provided that:
  - the recipient confirms and substantiates that it is not economically feasible to tender a contract
  - the costs are incurred and directly in respect to the work that would have been subject of the contract, and
  - costs are approved in advance and are included (in a contribution agreement)

Applicable to Indigenous and not-for-profit recipients only:

- legal fees (excluding those related to litigation) up to the amount specifically identified within contribution agreement.

## What costs are ineligible?

Ineligible costs include:

- project costs incurred prior to April 1, 2021, or after March 31, 2029
- services or work that is normally provided by the recipient or a related party
- salaries and other employment benefits of any employees of the recipient except as outlined above in Eligible Project Expenditures
- in-kind contributions (goods or services)

- taxes, such as GST and HST, for which the recipient is eligible for a tax rebate and all other costs eligible for rebates
- cost of leasing of equipment by the recipient except for as indicated in eligible costs above
- legal fees (except as specifically indicated as eligible for Indigenous non-government and not-for-profit recipients)
- purchase or lease of real property (land or building), or any interest therein, and related costs
- collateral on mortgage financing and payment of interest charges
- structural renovations not specific to the project
- costs related to marketing activities and business promotion
- costs for activities intended to directly influence/lobby governments
- operations and maintenance costs, and
- other costs not specifically related for the project.

## How will I be reimbursed for eligible project costs?

### Contributions

Eligible project costs can be reimbursed to the recipient if a contribution agreement is signed between Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada and the recipient, and once all application payment conditions have been met.

## RETScreen® software requirements

### About RETScreen®

Developed by Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN), the software is free to download and works as a comprehensive 'design support tool' for energy efficiency, renewable energy and cogeneration project feasibility analysis, as well as ongoing energy performance analysis.

A completed RETScreen® Assessment provides an overview of your building's current or baseline energy consumption, fuel consumption, energy cost savings, GHG emissions reductions, and the financial viability and risk analysis of a proposed project.

**All retrofit** projects applying for funding under the GICB Program **are required** to submit their building's energy profile, and GHG emissions using the RETScreen® Expert software.

Applicants are required to enter information regarding their building and project into RETScreen® including: site location, building characteristics, current or baseline energy consumption, proposed measures, project costs, etc.

Please consult [Using RETScreen for your GICB application with HICC](#) to complete your draft RETScreen. Applicants are encouraged to consult Natural Resources Canada at [RETScreen@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca](mailto:RETScreen@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca) for advice and clarification prior to submitting their RETScreen Assessment.

**New build** projects may create a RETScreen® profile for their building(s) as well, but it **is not required**.



For more information, please visit the [RETScreen® Capacity Building Page](#).

## **Non-competitive Procurement (Sole Sourcing)**

Are non-competitive procurement processes (“sole-source” contracts) allowed?

All contracts must be awarded in a way that is fair, transparent and competitive. When non-competitive contracts are necessary for the implementation of a project, HICC's approval of the contract as an eligible expenditure is required before the signature of the contract.

The Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities may approve funding for projects involving non-competitive contracts that:

- have an estimated value below \$40,000 for construction or goods contracts, or \$100,000 for service contracts; or
- are with a public sector entity; or
- can only be performed by one person or entity; or
- are with an Indigenous organization and or governing body and there is a benefit to an Indigenous community.

If you are seeking a non-competitive procurement process outside of the Minister's delegation cited above, HICC will need to seek approval from the Treasury Board of Canada (TB). Obtaining Treasury Board approval is a lengthy and resource-intensive process that may take several months and will require a strong rationale for the non-competitive procurement process as well as more complex and in-depth information requirements.

## **Mixed Use Buildings**

Community buildings often serve multiple purposes and can include uses that are not eligible as stand-alone buildings. For example, a community centre could include a portion of its space for a daycare, or a building could also provide some offices for administrative use but include a majority of the space for a community hall. As noted above, at least two-thirds of the building or asset's floor space must be used for publicly open and accessible services in order to be eligible. This permits some flexibility in determining eligibility of mixed-use buildings.

Note that the amount of funding requested may be adjusted to account for the amount of space that is used for publicly open and accessible services. Furthermore, some types of buildings remain ineligible (e.g., hospitals, police, fire, paramedic/ambulatory stations, schools and post-secondary facilities).

## **Environmental assessments**

An Environmental Assessment ensures that project impacts are carefully reviewed before a federal department or agency recommends whether a proposed project may proceed. Depending on where the project is located and the potential for adverse effects, an environmental assessment may be required prior to undertaking construction activities.

Applicants are responsible for providing information to determine whether their project may require an impact assessment under the federal [Impact Assessment Act \(IAA\)](#), or an environmental assessment under Modern Treaties or Northern Regimes. If you are unsure of the legislative responsibilities, please consult the appropriate provincial or territorial government for environmental assessment requirements and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's (IAAC's) [website](#) for the basics of federal environmental assessment requirements. Under the IAA, projects may be designated (s.8) or may be subject to requirements if they are on federal lands (s.82).

**Environmental assessment requirements must be met for the project to proceed.** Costs of environmental assessment, monitoring and follow up activities as required by the IAA or equivalent legislation are eligible expenditures and applicants should include these costs in their overall funding request.

## Indigenous Consultation

The Government of Canada may have a legal duty to consult with, and if applicable, accommodate, Indigenous Peoples when it contemplates conduct that might adversely impact Aboriginal or treaty rights. These rights include, but are not limited to, the right to hunt, fish, and practice traditional activities and ceremonies. Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada will assess potential impacts of projects on these constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights to ensure that those affected are properly notified, consulted and, where required, accommodated.

While the duty to consult is an obligation that rests with the Crown, the Government of Canada will expect funding recipients under the GICB program to carry out certain procedural aspects of consultation on a proposed project, where appropriate (e.g. providing notification letters to, and organizing consultation sessions with, Indigenous communities that will be affected by the proposed project). Costs associated with engagement and consultation, including those costs incurred by Indigenous peoples whose rights are potentially impacted by the project, are eligible expenditures and applicants should include these costs in their overall funding request.

## Reporting and audit requirements

All recipients of contribution funding must provide reports to Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada. The terms of reporting requirements will be set out in project funding agreements. These may include any of the following: annual and final reports, status and progress updates, financial reports and evaluation reports. Annual and final reports will include, at minimum, information regarding the implementation progress of the retrofit or new building project and details of project funding and their management.

Recipients undertaking projects with total eligible project costs of \$10,000,000 and above will be required to report on Community Employment Benefits (CEB) to provide public reporting on the employment and procurement opportunities achieved with a range of target groups (e.g., apprentices, Indigenous peoples, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, youth, recent immigrants, small-sized, medium-sized and social enterprises) as detailed in the CEB Guidance. The framework for CEB has been designed to encourage recipients to consider measures to increase access for specified groups to employment through their projects while ensuring

compliance with all trade obligations. Recipients with projects below this threshold are also invited to report on these targets, but are not required to do so.

Reports on progress toward climate-focused objectives can be created through the RETScreen® Expert software by inputting the building's new energy consumption information into the building's profile. At minimum, the report should include the building's net energy savings and net GHG emission reductions. Exact requirements regarding eligibility to hire an external third party to conduct reporting on behalf of the recipient(s) will be included in the contribution agreements with recipients. Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada will monitor approved projects to ensure that funds are used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contribution agreement.

Recipients will be required to conduct and submit one audit over the course of the contribution agreement, carried-out by an independent third party. Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada will reserve the right to review and audit recipients as deemed necessary.

## **Endorsement**

In order for Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada to provide funding, projects must be duly authorized or endorsed by a resolution of Council, Band or Board of Directors, as applicable. The resolution must be received before a contribution agreement can be executed.

## **Disposal of assets**

If at any time within six (6) years from the date of completion of the project, the recipient of project funding under the GICB Program sells, leases, encumbers or otherwise disposes of, directly or indirectly, any asset funded, in whole or in part, with the financial assistance contributed under the terms of the program, the recipient will have the responsibility to inform Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada and the recipient may be required, at the department's discretion, to repay the federal government contribution in full or in part. Contribution agreements will include clauses on the disposal of asset period.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

The information provided by an applicant in their application and under any other form will be used by the Government of Canada for the review, evaluation and selection of applications under the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program, that is administered and managed by Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, and/or for confirming past federal funding sought by the applicant.

Federal government institutions are bound by the requirements of the [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Privacy Act](#), as well as the [Library and Archives Canada Act](#). These laws apply to the use, disclosure and retention of information (such as personal, confidential or other) under the control of federal government institutions.

Applicants should note that Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada may consult and share the information provided in applications with other federal government institutions or other organizations for the purpose of assisting the department with project reviews and evaluations,

determining eligibility under other federal government programs, and confirming past federal funding sought by an applicant. Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada may also use and disclose the information to external experts (e.g., scientific, technical, financial, marketing, or commercialization), hired by the Government of Canada under contract with confidentiality obligations, for the purpose of assisting the department with project reviews and evaluations and/or determining eligibility under other federal government programs.

In submitting an application, applicants are consenting to such uses, sharing and disclosures of the information for the purposes described above. Applicants are invited to clearly identify in their application the provision of any information that contains trade secrets, is confidential or that if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to result in material financial loss or gain to, or to prejudice the competitive position of, a third party, or, to interfere with contractual or other negotiations of a third party, as outlined in section 20 of the *Access to Information Act*. Once a funding agreement is signed, the name of the successful applicant, location, date of approval, the funding amount, and the project description may be proactively disclosed to the public.

## **Any questions?**

If you have any questions about the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program that were not answered by this guide, please contact the GICB program team at [gicbp-pbcvi@infcc.gc.ca](mailto:gicbp-pbcvi@infcc.gc.ca).

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