

# Guidelines:

# Civil Society

# Fund

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Information on eligibility and applying for funding

October 2021

**Guidelines: Civil Society Fund – Information on eligibility and applying for funding**

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# 1. Purpose and objectives

The Civil Society Fund (CSF) aims to harness the power of civil society. It reflects a conviction that the most effective, lasting solutions to pressing social challenges often lie with civil society, and that government has a key role in supporting these efforts.

Civil society includes a diverse and evolving array of organizations and individuals, including formally established not-for-profit organizations (including registered charities and faith-based organizations), informal groups or movements pursuing shared interest or values, and a range of private-sector organizations and individuals pursuing social good.

The CSF provides \$20 million over three years to expand civil society capacity. The first year of the CSF (Round 1, Fall 2020) focused on civil society's recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the goal of building a more effective and resilient civil society for the future.

## Round 2 (Fall 2021) – Strategic Focus

**Round 2 of the CSF (Fall 2021) will focus on achieving social recovery and inclusive economic participation by building civil society's capacity to address social challenges impacting Albertans.**

COVID-19 has created hardships for all Albertans. However, vulnerable Albertans or those already facing challenges or barriers have been impacted disproportionately, both **socially**, including their mental health and well-being, and **economically**. The strategic focus of the Civil Society Fund for Round 2 is about harnessing the power of civil society to support an inclusive recovery, one that is mindful of the diverse challenges facing particular groups or vulnerable populations. Civil society is well positioned to identify opportunities for transformational change in our communities. Round 2 of the Civil Society Fund seeks to build civil society's capacity to address these two related aspects of Alberta's recovery.

- **Social Recovery:** social recovery means ensuring all Albertans and all communities have capacity to prevent and/or address the diverse social challenges they face. This includes but is not limited to: mental health and well-being, domestic/family or sexual violence; active citizenship and volunteerism; community inclusion; racism or discrimination; homelessness or housing security; and income or food security.
- **Economic Participation:** economic participation means ensuring all Albertans are able to realize their potential and fully participate in Alberta's economy. This includes but is not limited to: job training or preparation; unemployment or underemployment; workplace diversity and inclusion; financial literacy; and career advancement or entrepreneurship.

**Note: Eligible organizations of all sizes, from all sectors of civil society and in all communities are encouraged to apply.**

Within this strategic focus for Round 2, the objectives of the CSF are to support transformational change, improving how civil society organizations function and building their capacity to work together.

Specifically, the two complementary objectives of the CSF are to:

- enable transformational change in the sector, to support civil society to become more effective, sustainable and resilient; and
- increase civil society’s capacity and ability to adapt, innovate and collaborate to address social issues.

## 2. Program overview – Round 2 (Fall 2021)

Fund Overview	
Target Organizations	Eligible organizations of all sizes and located in all communities are encouraged to apply
Funding Range	Maximum funding: \$1 million per project
Project Length	Up to 24 months from date of the grant agreement
Application Deadlines	Full Application: December 17, 2021
Application Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the Civil Society Fund Guidelines at <a href="https://www.alberta.ca/civil-society-fund.aspx">https://www.alberta.ca/civil-society-fund.aspx</a>.</li> <li>2. Submit application and any supporting documents by <u>December 17, 2021</u> online at <a href="https://extranet.gov.ab.ca/opinio6//s?s=CSFundRound2">https://extranet.gov.ab.ca/opinio6//s?s=CSFundRound2</a></li> </ol> <p>Applicants may be asked to submit supplementary information.</p> <p>The only requirement to open the portal is internet access. Note that if the portal is unavailable, please try again later.</p> <p>The application form does not need to be completed in one session; you may save information entered at any time and return/submit the final application at a later date.</p> <p>If you wish to submit a PDF version of the application form instead of using the online portal, contact us at <a href="mailto:CSFund@gov.ab.ca">CSFund@gov.ab.ca</a>.</p>
Grant Agreement	Grant agreement upon approval of the application.

Reporting Requirements (as specified in the grant agreement)	Interim reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes progress update and interim financial reporting</li> </ul> Final Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes outcomes reporting and financial reporting (audited statements or review engagement report)</li> </ul>
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### 3. Funding

CSF funding is one-time only. Funding will not be provided to support the ongoing delivery of social programs and services, or routine operational requirements of organizations.

CSF funding is also time-limited. Successful applicants will have a maximum of 24 months from the date of the grant agreement to complete their grant activities. CSF funding may be provided to successful applicants in installments. The funding schedule will be set out in the grant agreement.

Eligible applicants can apply for up to **\$1 million per project**.

Proposals may be approved at a lesser amount than what was requested.

Organizations with an existing CSF grant may submit an application but it must be for a different project.

### 4. Eligibility

#### Strategic Focus - Round 2 (Fall 2021)

For Round 2 of the CSF (Fall 2021), proposals must demonstrate how CSF funding will help achieve social recovery and inclusive economic participation by building civil society’s capacity to address social challenges impacting Albertans, including mental health and well-being.

The CSF’s eligibility requirements and criteria will be applied based on this strategic focus.

#### 4.1 Eligible projects

As outlined above, proposals must demonstrate how the project can support the strategic focus for Round 2 of **social recovery**, including mental health and well-being, or **inclusive economic participation** for Albertans.

Within this strategic focus, proposals must align with the CSF’s objectives by demonstrating how the project can create *transformational* change for their organization or the broader civil society. Transformation should be interpreted as going beyond marginal or incremental changes to program delivery or operations, or regular efforts at continuous improvement. Transformational change may include designing new systems, developing innovative approaches, or exploring novel collaborations with partners. It involves significantly expanding the capacity of civil society to address pressing social challenges. Organizations of all sizes can achieve or contribute to transformational change.

Applicants must demonstrate that their proposed project aligns with at least one of the following priority areas:

- 1. System infrastructure:** to enable the coordination, collaboration or integration of civil society efforts to address social issues. Eligible projects may include but are not limited to developing:
  - cross-sector networks or partnerships (including essential assessments or collaborative planning exercises); or
  - technology solutions to enable collaboration coordination and integration (including database development, digitization, and training).
  
- 2. Civil society research and data:** to advance priority research, data collection, analysis and sharing, with a focus on projects that can enhance cross-sector collaboration or build system-level capacity to address social issues in Alberta. Eligible projects may include but are not limited to developing:
  - shared data systems;
  - organizational capacity to collect and utilize data more effectively;
  - evaluation capacity to assess impact and communicate the results; or
  - sector-wide data or research strategies.
  
- 3. Organizational transformation:** to help organizations develop or significantly extend innovative delivery models and build adaptive capacity for more collaborative approaches. This includes organizational changes that significantly increase the efficiency or effectiveness in how they address social issues. Eligible projects may include but are not limited to developing:
  - staff capacity (leadership, strategic, technical, etc.);
  - innovative service delivery models, including designing or deploying technology to support service innovation; or
  - governance models or business strategies to support innovation or adaptation.
  
- 4. Financial sustainability and resilience:** to support innovation and capacity building in the areas of fundraising, social finance and social enterprise for civil society groups and organizations addressing social issues. Eligible projects may include but are not limited to:
  - developing new fundraising tools and capacity (e.g. online fundraising strategies);
  - developing new or diversified business models to ensure long-term, stable funding;
  - building organizational readiness or capacity for social enterprise, or substantially scaling up existing social enterprises; or
  - increasing access for Alberta social enterprises to new investment capital.

## 4.2 Ineligible projects

CSF funding will not support projects focused on the ongoing delivery of programs or services. CSF's one-time funding may support the design and development of innovative approaches to service delivery.

CSF funding will not support routine operational needs of civil society organizations.

Operational and administrative costs beyond those related directly to the project will not be funded.

## 4.3 Criteria

Primary Criteria - Successful proposals must meet all three of the following primary criteria:

1. **Duplication:** The proposal does not duplicate already funded projects (i.e. does not have the same objectives and outcomes as one currently receiving Government of Alberta funding).
  - If the proposal is related to an existing project receiving funding from the Government of Alberta, the proposal must explain the reason and identify a specific need this project will address or the value it will add.
2. **Sustainability:** The proposal demonstrates sustainability of the project beyond the term of the grant, and/or how the time-limited CSF funding will generate lasting impacts on organizational or broader civil society capacity to address social issues.
  - Proposals for the design or testing of new program or service innovations must address how programs or services can be delivered on an ongoing basis, including all required human, organizational, technological and financial resources.
3. **Need and Impact:** The proposal addresses a pressing gap or need within the civil society sector that is not met by other funding sources.
  - Proposals should identify the community, region or population the project will impact and provide evidence of the gap, need or social issue being addressed.

Secondary Criteria - Successful proposals must meet three of the four following secondary criteria:

1. **Capacity:** the proposal builds capacity for civil society organizations or the broader civil society sector to learn, adapt, innovate, and better integrate and coordinate efforts to address social issues.
2. **Sector level impact:** the proposal will have positive impact for multiple organizations or groups across the civil society sector that are working to address social issues.
3. **Collaboration:** the proposal leverages support, partnerships, and/or funding within and across the civil society sector.
4. **Diversity:** the proposal will lead to improved social outcomes for Alberta's diverse populations (e.g. Indigenous, immigrant/refugee, women and girls, LGBTQ2S+, individuals with disabilities) and/or Albertans in rural or remote areas.

### Additional Funding Considerations

Proposals will be evaluated based on additional considerations, including:

- **Organizational capacity:** the organization has the ability to execute the project.
- **Project viability and feasibility:** the proposal is viable, feasible, and aligns with the proposed budget.
- **Project impact and evaluation:** the proposal outlines the expected impact of the project, demonstrates a clear connection between proposed activities and expected impact on civil society, and outlines a plan to evaluate the project.



## 4.4 Project outcomes

Proposals must identify intended outcomes, how outcomes will be measured, and include a plan to evaluate the project, consistent with the CSF's reporting requirements.

Proposals must identify one or more of the following outcomes for the primary priority area selected above (s. 4.1). You do not need to identify outcomes for any secondary priority areas you identify.

Note: For Round 2, proposals must also include at least one additional outcome and related indicator(s) specific to the project. This outcome must be based on your selected focus area of **social recovery** or **economic participation**. See the Application Form for more information.

### System infrastructure

- Civil society organizations demonstrate increased collaboration and coordination in planning and delivering services and supports that address pressing social issues, including collaboration and coordination across civil society sub-sectors, or to new communities or regions.
- Civil society organizations demonstrate increased support for and use of shared services and resources.

### Civil society research and data

- Civil society organizations have increased capacity to collect, analyze, utilize or share data on programs and outcomes.
- Civil society organizations demonstrate increased ability to co-develop and use shared outcomes in programs and services.
- Civil society organizations have access to high-quality research that identifies evidence-based strategies to improve social outcomes.

### Organizational transformation

- Civil society organizations have increased capacity to develop and implement innovative approaches to the delivery of programs and services.
- Civil society organizations adopt more effective ways to collaborate, coordinate, integrate or co-design programs or services.
- Civil society organizations demonstrate the ability to adapt their governance or operations to dynamic community needs and resources constraints.

### Financial sustainability and resilience

- Civil society organizations develop innovative tools and strategies that build financial stability and support continuity of programs and services.
- Civil society organizations increase their capacity to successfully develop or expand social enterprises.
- Civil society organizations increase their knowledge and use of new sources of finance in the social economy.

## 4.5 Eligible organizations and entities

To be eligible for the CSF as a primary applicant, all applicants must:

1. Be classified as one of the following:

- A registered community not-for-profit organization or charity, in good standing, under one of the following acts:

Provincial Legislation (Alberta)

- *Societies Act*
- Part 21 of the *Business Corporations Act* - Extra-Provincial Corporations\*
- *Companies Act*, Part 9 (Not-for-profit companies)
- Special Act of the Legislature
- *Agricultural Societies Act*
- *Religious Societies Land Act*, Part 2
- *Post-secondary Learning Act*

Federal Legislation (Canada)\*

- Special Act of Parliament
- *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act* and must be registered in Alberta under the *Business Corporations Act*
- *Income Tax Act* (and operating in the Province of Alberta (Charities))\*
- *Board of Trade Act*, Part 2 (Chambers of Commerce)

\* Must have an Alberta-based address that is regularly monitored by an active member of the organization.

- A First Nation
  - A Metis Settlement, or
  - A Collaborative: Collaboratives and/or collaborative projects are eligible for funding when the following elements are in place:
    - the applicant organization is a registered not-for-profit organization or charity, in good standing, under one of the above mentioned acts;
    - the collaborative's structure, including the roles and responsibilities of the collaborative partners and the decision-making process is clearly documented;
    - a multi-year strategic plan with clear goals and priorities is utilized;
    - there is a documented history of operating in Alberta for at least one year; and
    - financial resources are shared among the collaborative partners.
2. Have been legally registered and operating in Alberta for a minimum of one full year.

CSF encourages applications from rural areas, Indigenous-led organizations, faith-based organizations, and organizations serving minority or marginalized communities. All applications will be evaluated based on the criteria and considerations outlined above.

## Note: Fiscal Agents

While it is preferable for applicants to be legal entities, using a fiscal agent is acceptable. Fiscal agents:

- must be legal entities capable of entering into a grant agreement with the department;
- are responsible for overseeing compliance of the terms/conditions of the grant agreement;
- are responsible for ensuring that all reporting requirements in the grant agreement are met;
- will be the point of contact for the department in relation to the grant agreement, and are responsible for working with the collaborative as necessary to ensure overall compliance with the grant agreement.

## 4.6 Ineligible organizations and/or applicants

The following groups or organizations are ineligible to apply to the CSF as the primary applicant:

- municipalities;
- for-profit organizations;
- schools or school boards;
- organizations not registered under one of the acts mentioned in section 4.5;
- funding agencies or other funders;
- organizations that primarily benefit those outside of Alberta;
- organizations that have overdue or incomplete accounting/reporting relating to any grant previously awarded by the Government of Alberta;
- organizations that are not legally registered or operating in Alberta for less than one full year; and
- individuals.

Ineligible organizations may partner with eligible organizations on proposals if appropriate.

## 4.7 Eligible expenses

Approved budgets and expenses depend on the nature and scope of the project and will be approved on an individual basis. Examples of eligible expenses include:

- Salaries and wages for individuals whose duties are directly and primarily related to activities undertaken as part of the project as set out in the grant agreement
- Consulting or professional services directly related to project's outcomes (e.g. technology design/development; research; business strategy development)
- Staff training/development costs
- Rent/utilities directly related to the project as set out in the grant agreement
- Travel costs – in accordance with standard Government of Alberta rates for fieldwork, research, and other related activities directly related to and necessary to carry out the activities under the project as set out in the grant agreement
- Small capital purchases (e.g. office equipment and furnishings) directly related to the project
- Evaluation costs

- Office supplies
- Advertising, promotion, and marketing
- Administration costs directly related to the project (e.g. office operations, human resources, leadership, accounting) (maximum 10% of total budget).

## 4.8 Ineligible expenses

CSF project funding can only be used for costs identified in the approved proposal. CSF funding cannot be used for expenses related to:

- Time and labour related to the preparation of funding applications
- Discretionary severance packages
- Staff bonuses or other discretionary income paid to staff
- Staff awards and recognition
- Post-secondary certificate or degree course costs
- Liquor and alcohol costs
- Clothing costs
- Parking fees (unless required for project field work)
- Lease hold improvement
- Maintenance expenses
- Facility upgrades, renovations, construction
- Moving expenses
- Large capital expenditures (higher than \$5,000)
- Information technology hardware not directly related to the project as set out in the grant agreement
- Vehicle purchase or lease
- Operational and administrative costs directly related to fundraising activities or events (e.g., planning and hosting events, creating and distributing promotional materials)
- Endowments or matching grants
- Charitable donations or donor recognition
- Bursaries, scholarships and awards (unless part of the approved project)
- Debt reduction, mortgage pay-downs, financing charges and/or interest payments on loans
- Regular operational expenses
- Reserves
- Purchase of land as a stand-alone project
- Expenditures for which other Government of Alberta grant dollars have been allocated
- Flow-through funds to another organization
- Retroactive expenses incurred prior to application approval date

## 5. Application process

The completed application must include:

- Completed full application form, signed by the organization's duly authorized signing authority (e.g. the Executive Director, CEO, Department Chair). The full application form specifically requires the following:
  - Detailed Project Plan (planned phases, key activities, deliverables and timelines)
  - Detailed Project budget
  - List of confirmed Project partners (if applicable)
    - Letters of Partnership from all partners indicating their specific contributions (in-kind and monetary) are required.
    - Letters of support from organizations or individuals who are not partners are not required.
- Most recent financial statements (audited or unaudited) or Council Resolution signed by two (2) authorized representatives of the organization.
- Current list of the organization's Board of Directors that includes: names, positions/titles, daytime phone numbers, and email addresses (if applicable).
- A current Alberta Corporate Registry search, Certificate of Status or equivalent document (if applicable).

Applicants may be asked to provide supplementary information about their proposed project. The request for supplementary information is at the discretion of CSF staff. Applicants will be notified by CSF staff if supplementary information is required.

The completed application is due by **11:59 pm MST on December 17, 2021**.

Applications and supporting documents be submitted using the online application here:

<https://extranet.gov.ab.ca/opinio6//s?s=CSFundRound2>.

Submitting a full application does not guarantee funding.

## 6. Notification

Applicants will receive a decision regarding their application by email no later than March 31, 2022. All decisions on grant applications are final, and no appeals will be considered.

## 7. Reporting requirements

Reporting requirements for successful applicants will be outlined in the grant agreement. Reporting requirements will include:

- interim financial report and progress update; and
- final financial report and project summary/outcomes report.

Templates for reports will be provided to successful applicants.

## 8. Funding conditions

Applicants that are successful in receiving grant funding must be aware of and observe the following funding conditions:

After the review and approval of an application:

- the grant recipient must sign a formal grant agreement with the ministry outlining the terms and conditions of the grant funding prior to funding being released; and
- the CSF staff will provide the grant funding agreement to the grant recipient.

Grant funds must be deposited into an account in accordance with the terms of the grant agreement.

The grant funds must be spent according to approved eligible costs outlined in these Guidelines or as determined by CSF staff.

Grant funding not used or accounted for in accordance with the approved eligible costs shall be repayable by the grant recipient to the Government of Alberta. CSF staff should be contacted for instructions, if repayment is required.

Approval of CSF funding in no way constitutes commitment of longer-term funding by the Government of Alberta to the organization.

### 8.1 Project extensions

If a grant recipient anticipates that funding will not be expended within the allotted term of the grant agreement and wishes to request an extension, a request must be submitted to CSF staff in writing. Extension requests for grants must be made at least 60 days in advance of the grant expiry date outlined on the grant agreement.

The extension request must include:

- the reasons why the funding could not be spent within the term of the grant agreement;
- a description of grant activities performed to date and costs incurred to date (in order to demonstrate the amount of progress that has been made);
- a description of outstanding grant activities and a reasonable timeline for completion (including a proposed new completion date – year/month/day); and
- a copy of an updated bank statement showing the balance of the grant funding.

The decision on extension requests will be communicated in writing to the grant recipient by CSF staff.

### 8.2 Change of project scope

The grant recipient must notify CSF staff of any anticipated material change in project scope, the intended purpose for which the recipient plans to use the funds, or a proposed reallocation of funding for the project prior to spending any grant funds in accordance with a new or revised purpose.

The grant recipient may be requested to submit a written request to use the remaining funds for the proposed change in scope or new purpose, and only if approved, can the recipient apply the unexpended funds to this purpose.

If the change of project scope is not approved, the grant recipient may be required to submit a cheque made payable to the Government of Alberta for the remaining, unexpended funds (once this amount has been confirmed by CSF staff). Repayment must be submitted to CSF staff for processing and file closure. The decision on change of scope requests will be communicated in writing to the grant recipient by the CSF staff.

Approval of CSF funding in no way constitutes a commitment, implicit or otherwise, of additional or longer-term funding by the Government of Alberta.

## 9. Acknowledgment of standards and requirements

Recipients of CSF grants are encouraged to acknowledge the Government of Alberta wherever possible and appropriate. The Government of Alberta logo is available upon request and recognition of funding can be achieved in a variety of ways:

- news release or submitted article to local/regional media;
- social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and blog postings, etc.;
- organization's website or newsletter; or
- signage, either temporary or permanent.

Recipients of CSF grants must secure Government of Alberta approval for any social media or promotional content referencing CSF funding prior to its use or publication.

## 10. Conflict of interest

A grant recipient or the grant recipient's employees, subcontractors, or agents must avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest when using the grant funds. Conflicts of interest exist where an individual's personal interest could improperly influence (or reasonably be perceived to influence) the grant recipient's duty to utilize the grant funds in a responsible and accountable manner. For example, the recipient should ensure that businesses in which they or their family members have an interest do not benefit from the grant funds.

As soon as possible after becoming aware of a personal interest that causes (or may be perceived to cause) a conflict of interest in relation to the use of the grant funds, the recipient must give notice of the conflict to the Minister, by notifying CSF staff. After giving notice, the recipient may not expend funds for the project until approved to do so by CSF staff. If, in the opinion of the Minister, a conflict of interest warrants such action, the grant recipient may be notified that the agreement will be terminated and directed to return the grant funds.

## 11. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act

The personal information provided on the grant application form will be used for the purpose of administering the CSF and advising the applicant of grant program updates and relevant ministry initiatives. This personal information is collected under the authority of section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* and will be managed in accordance with part 2 of FOIP.

The FOIP Act applies to any personal information that is within the Department's custody or control. Personal information may be disclosed in response to an access request under FOIP, subject to any applicable exceptions to disclosure.

Please note, once an application has been approved and funding is issued to an organization, the grant recipient, funding purpose, amount funded, community/city, and fiscal year become a matter of public record. Information on grants awarded by Government of Alberta programs is published on the Government of Alberta Grant Payments Disclosure database: <https://www.alberta.ca/grant-payments-disclosure.aspx>.

Only authorized contact representatives noted in the grant application may request specific information about grant applications from the CSF office.

For questions about the collection and use of this personal information, please contact CSF staff.

## 12. Contact information

If you have questions, please contact the CSF team at [CSFund@gov.ab.ca](mailto:CSFund@gov.ab.ca)