



# Women's Economic Recovery Challenge Grant

Program guidelines

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# Women's Economic Recovery Challenge Grant Program Guidelines

## Program Overview

Women's Economic Recovery Challenge Grant funds initiatives led by Alberta non-profit organizations to support Alberta women and girls in their economic recovery from COVID-19. The Challenge Grant supports Alberta's non-profit ecosystem and will increase economic opportunities for Albertan women and girls who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 in four specific program outcomes outlined below.

For a project to be eligible, it must create a measurable impact and align with one or more of the following **Challenge Grant program outcomes**:

1. Increase women and girls representation in STEM.
2. Increase women and girls representation in entrepreneurship.
3. Decrease barriers women face in the workplace.
4. Foster ease of women's career transitions, employment skills and labour entry or re-entry.

Challenge Grant funding for economic development initiatives will range from \$25,000 to \$250,000 per approved project. Eligible applicants can apply for projects that support Alberta women and girls in any of the four Challenge Grant program outcomes. Funding can be used for the creation of a brand new project or used to expand an existing project/program. All projects should be complete within two years of award. Successful applicants will receive the grant funding up-front so that their projects can commence immediately.

Projects or initiatives that have a positive impact beyond an individual community or organization, target Indigenous communities and/or leverage financial supports beyond the Challenge Grant may be given higher consideration during the evaluation process. Please see pages 5 – 6 for more information on application requirements and the evaluation process.

## Eligible Entities

**To be eligible for funding, an organization must:**

- be a recognized legal entity in Alberta for a minimum of two years;
- have the ability, including financial management, to implement a grant agreement;
- demonstrate at least two years of relevant experience in delivering community-based supports for economic growth.

**Eligible non-profits include, but are not limited to**

- community organizations;
- municipalities, including municipal districts,
- First Nations or Metis Settlements;
- industry associations;
- Economic Development organizations.

## Funding

**The funding parameters for Challenge Grant are as follows:**

- Minimum Funding: Minimum of \$25,000 must be requested per application.
- Maximum Funding: Maximum of \$250,000 can be requested per application.

Justification for all eligible costs must be included alongside each budget line item in the comments/explanation column on the budget sheet.

### **Eligible costs include:**

- travel expenses (meals, accommodation, parking, essential travel in Alberta for the purpose implementing the project)\*<sup>1</sup>
- materials, printing of materials, and project supplies (items directly needed to carry out the proposed project)
- communication costs (advertising, marketing and communication expenses)
- project planning, administration and overhead costs
- other expenses (any other costs will be approved if deemed to be direct and necessary for the successful implementation of the proposed project – see Budget Template Attachment for more information).

### **Ineligible costs include:**

- core education, health and wellness, and advancement of specific faith or political based activities
- gifts, gift cards, contests, prizes, awards, trophies, plaques
- contingency and miscellaneous costs
- legal and accounting fees, goods and service taxes (GST), insurance
- membership fees
- sponsorship
- re-granting
- non-arm's length transactions (payments to an affiliated organization, payments to Directors/Board Members or their families)
- debt reduction
- lobbying or advocacy activities
- expenses related to preparation of funding applications, committee planning meetings
- fundraising and similar activities not related directly to the project
- retroactive funding for costs that have already been incurred prior to application submission
- operating costs and day-to-day expenses of business
- capital-related purchases (e.g. printers, office equipment etc.)

The list of eligible and ineligible project costs is subject to change and/or expand in response to priorities of the Government of Alberta and the Ministry of Jobs, Economy, and Innovation.

## **Eligible Projects**

### **To be eligible, projects must:**

- be time-limited, with all program components completed within 24 months;
- fit within at least one of the four program outcomes listed above;
- cost no more than the funding cap set for the program (\$250,000 per project) and meet the minimum project cost set for the program (\$25,000 per project).

## **Eligible Activities**

For a project to be eligible under the Challenge Grant program, it must create a measurable impact or positive outcome in at least one of the four Challenge Grant program outcomes. Examples of eligible activities to this end include:

- Program development
- Training for women and girls
- Media or educational campaigns
- Educational tools
- Employer and workplace training or plans
- Mentorship or networking programs

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<sup>1</sup> All travel expenses must meet Government of Alberta Travel, meal and hospitality expenses policy: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/travel-meal-and-hospitality-expenses-policy-expenses-policy>

For more examples of eligible activities/ideas, see Appendix A. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list of eligible activities and undertaking one of the examples does not guarantee the applicant funding.

## Application Requirements

Only complete applications will be considered. A complete application consists of three mandatory components:

- Application Form
- Implementation Plan
- Budget
  - All sources of funding must be disclosed (i.e. municipal, provincial/territorial, federal).
  - If salaries for existing staff and/or new contract positions are included in the budget, job descriptions including responsibilities of the position, term, and salary/wage are required. Funds provided to salary can only be given to employees directly supporting the project/program.
- Plus Other Attachments
  - Signed letter(s) from other funding source(s) or email from funder(s) acknowledging their funds for the proposed project, if applicable
  - Up to two maximum signed reference letter(s) or email(s) speaking to the applicant's knowledge and experience regarding the proposed project
  - Organizational Chart and/or Staff List

## Application Process

### Step 1. Download Application Form and Attachments

- Application Form
- Implementation Plan
- Budget

### Step 2. Complete the application

We will only consider complete applications. A complete application consists of an application form along with supporting documentation as outlined above.

Read the Application Guidelines carefully for the details to ensure you have included all necessary information.

### Step 3. Submit the application

Submit your completed application documents in one email to [JEI.WERC@gov.ab.ca](mailto:JEI.WERC@gov.ab.ca)

Title the subject line of your email as:

[Organization Name]: 2021-22 Challenge Grant Submission

If there are server restrictions that prevent you from sending large email attachments, send an email to [JEI.WERC@gov.ab.ca](mailto:JEI.WERC@gov.ab.ca) indicating you will need to send multiple emails to fulfil all the submission requirements, and proceed to do so.

## Application Deadline

January 12, 2022

## Evaluation & Selection

Applications received by the submission deadline will be screened for eligibility. A cross-ministry review committee, whose recommendations will be considered by department staff, will score eligible applications. All applicants will be notified of the results of their application.

Funding recommendations are based on a competitive, merit-based process in accordance with the application requirements noted above. Once all applications are reviewed to confirm basic eligibility requirements are met and the application is complete, applications will be assessed by a review committee based on the following six areas in the application.

- A) Challenge Grant Outcomes
- B) Project Summary
- C) Ability to Deliver
- D) Implementation Plan
- E) Risk Identification and Management
- F) Budget

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the decision within approximately 90 days of the application closing date.

Successful applicants will be contacted by program staff immediately after the review process is completed. The program staff will email a copy of the approved eligible budget and grant agreement to the organization. The organization must agree to the terms of the grant agreement, sign and return it an email to [JEI.WERC@gov.ab.ca](mailto:JEI.WERC@gov.ab.ca) for full execution.

Funding will be disbursed upon grant execution and project commencement.

## Expectations of Successful Applicants

Upon project approval, successful grant recipients agree to:

- comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement
- demonstrate sound financial and personnel management
- spend the grant funding according to the approved eligible budget
- submit complete, timely and accurate interim and final reports within the specified time frames
- respond to further information requests regarding the project
- assist department staff with verification of agreement compliance (file audits, client follow-up), and
- complete all project components within 24 months of project commencement.

## Reporting

- Grant recipients are required to submit an interim and/or final report for each funded project. The interim report must be submitted no later than March 2023.
- The final report must be submitted within 60 days after the project end/completion date.

### Important notes:

- Any applicant that does not comply with the reporting requirements may be in default of its obligations under the grant agreement.
- The grant recipient must permit the Minister or the Minister's representative to examine, during regular business hours, the books or records relating to the expenditure of the grant to determine if the grant has been properly spent.
- Records should be kept for seven years following completion of the project.
- The interim and/or the final report must be properly completed and signed by an authorized signing authority of the non-profit who signed the original application.
- Program staff reserve the right to request additional interim reports.

## Additional Information

### Financial Considerations

- Monies must be deposited into a separate account where the funding and accrued interest can be tracked.
- Grant funding not used or accounted for in accordance with the approved eligible budget is repayable by the recipient to the Government of Alberta.
- The grant recipient is required to notify program staff if the project cannot be completed or if the applicant organization has ceased operations. If this happens, the applicant will be required to repay to the Government of Alberta all unexpended grant funds.
- The program funding is limited, and not every eligible application will receive funding. The amount approved for each project may be less or more than the amount requested and is based on how closely the project meets grant criteria, eligible expenses, the number of requests received, budget availability and consideration for providing support across the province.

## Extensions

- Extensions on project completion and/or reporting dates may be requested by submitting a written request to program staff a minimum of 60 days prior to the originally-stated date. The request should include an explanation of why the extension is necessary. The Program Administrator will inform the organization of the decision. If approved, an amendment to the grant agreement is required.

## Appeals

- All decisions made are final and appeals will not be accepted.

## Recognition

- Projects funded through the program are required to acknowledge Government of Alberta support for the initiative. The Government of Alberta reserves the right to make a joint public announcement on any project funded by the program.

## Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Acknowledgement

- Information collected under the Challenge Grant Program is collected by Jobs, Economy and Innovation under the authority of section 33(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP Act) for purposes of evaluation, analysis and review of the submitted applications, and administration of the Challenge Grant Program.
- Information provided in an application (including any attachments) may be disclosed to members of an evaluation committee made up of individuals external to the Government of Alberta to review and assess applications.

All information will be managed in accordance with the FOIP Act, and may be disclosed in response to an access to information request, subject to any applicable exceptions to disclosure under the FOIP Act. Questions relating to the collection, use and disclosure of information can be directed to [JEI.WERC@gov.ab.ca](mailto:JEI.WERC@gov.ab.ca)

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## Appendix A: Examples of Eligible Activities

For a project to be eligible under the Challenge Grant program, it must create a measurable impact or positive outcome in at least one of the four Challenge Grant program outcomes.

Examples of eligible activities/ideas include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. Increase women and girls representation in STEM**
  - Develop and support a self-sustaining Alberta ecosystem for women and girls that provides training, mentorship, networking, and tools to ensure they thrive.
  - This Challenge could be met through program design, training, media campaigns and educational campaigns, among other ideas.
- 2. Increase women and girls representation in entrepreneurship**
  - Aiming to drive change and encourage greater impact in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, including more women and girls looking at and considering entrepreneurship as a viable career option. Women entrepreneurs remain one of the fastest-growing business segments in Canada. To continue this accelerated growth, women entrepreneurs must remain competitive and we must ensure girls are thinking about entrepreneurship from a young age.
  - This Challenge could be met through program design, training, media campaigns and educational campaigns, among other ideas.
- 3. Decrease barriers women face in the workplace**
  - Options might be:
    - Create employer educational tools to address barriers women face in the workplace.
    - Training targeted at women to teach them about their rights in the workplace. Some examples are diversity and inclusion training and unconscious bias training.
    - Transition plans for employers to decrease barriers for women pre- and post- mat-leave.
    - Assisting employers to create a competency based model for compensation.
    - Help employers implement stretch projects for women that would increase their competencies in areas they might not be able to have opportunities in otherwise.
    - Mentorship programs – particularly women-to-women mentorship – and networking opportunities that lead to job growth and job creation.
- 4. Foster ease of women's career transitions, employment skills and labour entry or re-entry.**
  - This stream could help low-skilled, low-income women move into more high-skilled, high-income employment opportunities.
  - It could also help mid-career women transition to new opportunities.

The examples listed above are for illustrative purposes only and are not an exhaustive list of initiatives that an applicant can undertake. All activities that aim to help women and girls in Alberta's economic recovery, including those with examples listed here, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. **Please note, undertaking one of the above examples does not guarantee the applicant funding.**

## Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Child care	The ongoing care of children by a day-care centre, babysitter or other provider while parents are working.
Community	Locations and/or groups comprised of people with similar characteristics or goals (e.g. shared sense of belonging).
Community organization	Community organizations are non-profit organizations that are created to support and revitalize communities or areas in which they are located (e.g. Economic Development Organization).
Entrepreneur	A person who organizes and operates a business or businesses, taking on greater than normal financial risks in order to do so.
Entrepreneurship	The activity of setting up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit.
Implementation Plan	Description and timeline of the steps that must be taken in order to achieve the proposed program's goals and objectives. It gives the reader an idea of how the program will unfold, and it often illustrates the breakdown of smaller and more manageable goals.
Intersecting identity factors	Identity factors refer to characteristics such as gender, age, culture, language, sexual orientation, education ability, geographic location, migration status, faith, ethnicity and socio-economic status. The overlap of these characteristics contributes to one's experiences and influences the achievement of intended outcomes of an initiative.
Legal entity	<p>Non-profit registered under a special act or a private act of the Alberta legislature</p> <p>Non-profit registered under part 9 of the Companies Act (Alberta)</p> <p>Society registered under the Societies Act (Alberta) or Agricultural Societies Act (Alberta)</p> <p>Cooperative registered under the Cooperatives Act (Alberta)</p>
STEM	STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math and often integrates some or all four disciplines together into a single program or approach.
Outcome Measure	The per cent (%) change in the target population/group that "results" from the products and/or services delivered. Examples of measurement tools include: administering a follow up procedure with each learner/client, administering a knowledge test to demonstrate improvement as a result of direct instruction, conducting a survey, or organizing a focus group.
Output/Output Measures	<p>The number of products and services produced by the activities (deliverables).</p> <p>Examples include: number of materials or resources developed, number of clients served, number of workshops delivered, or number of community members who attended the workshops.</p>
Qualitative Results (themes, patterns, cases)	Indicators of success can be measured qualitatively through more descriptive data that can be analyzed for common themes or patterns. Indicate what themes or patterns you intend to report (for example, promising practices)
Quantitative Results (# and % change in target population)	Indicators of success can be measured quantitatively with meaningful numbers. Indicate what numbers you intend to report (for example # and % of participants who report increased confidence)