



Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission

Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des
télécommunications canadiennes

Canada

BROADBAND FUND

APPLICATION GUIDE

for the April 9, 2026
Call for Applications



Application Guide for the 9 April 2026 Call for Applications for the Broadband Fund

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A. Introduction

Canadians need access to reliable, affordable, and high-quality Internet and cellphone services for every part of their daily lives.

The CRTC launched its Broadband Fund in 2019. Through the Broadband Fund, the CRTC contributes to a broad effort by federal, provincial, and territorial governments to address the gap in connectivity in underserved rural, remote, and Indigenous communities across Canada.

The Commission is launching its fourth call for applications to the Broadband Fund (Call 4). The Application Guide provides an overview of Call 4. Applicants are encouraged to review this guide along with the [Technical and Program Details Guide](#) when applying for funding from the Broadband Fund. Applicants must enter all required information directly in the [Online Intake System](#) and submit supporting documents. Together, this information will form an application.

The CRTC will not consider applications submitted under previous calls. A new application must be submitted for Call 4.

B. What is the objective of Call 4?

The objective of Call 4 is to increase the number of households with access to reliable high-speed Internet services that meet or exceed the universal service objective¹ speed target of 50/10 megabits per second (Mbps). Eligible projects include both (i) universal service objective projects that provide fixed broadband Internet access to households in an underserved area that is not considered to be a satellite-dependent community²; and (ii) satellite-dependent community projects that provide improved telecommunications services to satellite-dependent communities. See [section 2.1.2 of the Technical and Program Details Guide](#) for a detailed list of eligible project types.

Information on assessment criteria can be found in [section 2 of the Technical and Program Details Guide](#).

C. How does the Broadband Fund work?

The Broadband Fund provides funding to projects that will improve access to reliable high-speed Internet services that meet or exceed the universal service objective speed target of 50/10 Mbps. These projects may not be financially viable without its support.

Funding model

Under the Broadband Fund, recipients are reimbursed for eligible expenses incurred during project implementation (see [section 5 of the Technical and Program Details Guide](#)).

Expense claims must be submitted to and approved by the CRTC, after which funds will be released to the recipient. The CRTC will retain 10% of the amount of funding provided for each project, which it will disburse six months after project completion, provided that the project is completed to the CRTC's satisfaction and the recipient demonstrates that it is fulfilling the conditions of service.

Indigenous funding recipients are exempt from the 10% holdback requirement in the case of projects with approved funding of \$5 million or less.

Funding process

The funding process for the Broadband Fund follows a sequence of steps, with distinct responsibilities for applicants, recipients, and the CRTC. The process is designed to help ensure projects are evaluated fairly and efficiently.

Step 1: Application submission

Applicant: Prepares and submits a complete application using the [Online Intake System](#). Applications must be submitted by the deadline and include all required forms and supporting documents listed in the [Technical and Program Details Guide](#). Applicants may update their application at any time before the deadline. They can also request clarification on the general application process or the information required. However, CRTC staff cannot advise applicants on how to best present their applications or assist applicants with completing their applications.

Step 2: Application evaluation

CRTC: Triages applications to help ensure funding is allocated to the most impactful projects as quickly as possible and prioritizes projects that propose to serve the greatest number of households.

Applications are evaluated in three stages:

1. **Eligibility:** The CRTC evaluates applications according to eligibility criteria described in [section 2.1 of the Technical and Program Details Guide](#). Applications that do not meet all the eligibility criteria are not considered further.
2. **Assessment:** The CRTC assesses eligible applications according to assessment criteria described in [section 2.2 of the Technical and Program Details Guide](#). An

application that receives an unfavourable evaluation for one or more assessment criteria may not be further considered for funding.

The CRTC will also:

- apply special weighting to assessment criteria that promote the universal service objective of connecting 100% of Canadian households to fixed broadband Internet access service.
- emphasize the assessment of cost per household, with projects demonstrating a lower cost per household being assessed more favourably.
- emphasize applications that minimize overbuild and funding overlap. The CRTC will give preference to projects that do not target geographic areas that are already forecasted to receive services that will meet the universal service objective through other public funding programs.

3. **Selection:** The CRTC selects projects from among the proposed projects deemed suitable for funding based on specific selection considerations described in [section 2.3 of the Technical and Program Details Guide](#).

Step 3: Conditional funding decision

CRTC: Issues a conditional funding decision for each selected project, approving it in principle and setting requirements the applicant must meet before final approval is granted. Successful applicants are notified when the CRTC issues its funding decisions. Applicants whose projects are not selected are notified confidentially when their application is no longer being considered.

Applicant: If selected, prepares a detailed statement of work that includes full project details, including scope, timeline, budget, technical specifications, milestones, and reporting obligations. CRTC staff is available to work with applicants on their draft statement of work.

Step 4: Final funding decision

CRTC: Reviews the statement of work and issues a final funding decision if the statement of work is approved. This confirms the applicant as a recipient of funding.

If the CRTC does not approve a statement of work, it provides reasons for not doing so to the applicant. The applicant may submit a new statement of work for consideration.

Step 5: Project implementation and reporting

Recipient: Implements the project and submits progress reports and claims for reimbursement quarterly. Also aims to complete its capital project and have service available within three years following the conditional funding decision.

CRTC: Tracks progress, reviews reports, ensures compliance with funding conditions, and approves eligible expense claims.

Central Fund Administrator: The administrator of the fund will release funds to the recipient for approved expense claims after the CRTC directs it to do so.

Step 6: Project completion and holdback release

Recipient: Submits a project completion report detailing services offered and milestones met, any delays, and any requests by service providers or non-carriers for access to funded transport infrastructure.

CRTC: Reviews completion report and approves the release of the 10% holdback, where applicable, once all conditions and obligations have been met.

D. How do I determine if an application or a project is eligible for funding?

Before starting an application, use the self-assessment tool below to check whether your project would be considered eligible for funding. If you answer “yes” to every question, your project may be eligible to receive funding. Please note this is not an exhaustive list of eligibility criteria. A complete list of eligibility criteria, along with examples, can be found in [section 2.1 of the Technical and Program Details Guide](#).

Eligible project type

Is your project one of the following?

- **a universal service objective fixed broadband project:** your project proposes to deliver new or improved wireline or wireless broadband Internet access service that meets or exceeds 50/10 Mbps directly to households in an underserved area that is not considered to be a satellite-dependent community
- **a satellite-dependent community operational expense project:** your project proposes to increase satellite transport capacity to improve telecommunications services beyond the highest speeds currently available in a satellite-dependent community

- **a satellite-dependent community capital project:** your project proposes to build or upgrade earth station equipment and/or access infrastructure to improve telecommunications services in a satellite-dependent community

Project location

- Does your project serve an eligible geographic area, as identified for Call 4 (see sections [2.1.3\(a\)](#), [2.1.4\(a\)](#), and [2.1.5\(a\)](#) of the [Technical and Program Details Guide](#))?
- For universal service objective fixed broadband projects:** does your project area include households that do not have 50/10 Mbps broadband Internet access service?
- For satellite-dependent community projects (both types):** does your project area serve satellite-dependent communities?

Applicant eligibility

- Is your organization, or your applicant group, one of the following?
 - a corporation (for-profit or not-for-profit) incorporated in Canada
 - a provincial, territorial, or municipal entity (or a public body established by law and wholly owned by one of these governments)
 - an Indigenous government or band council (First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, including self-governing nations)
 - a partnership, joint venture, or consortium made up of any one of the above types (an applicant group)
- Is your organization, or at least one member of your applicant group, eligible to operate as a Canadian carrier under the *Telecommunications Act*?
- Is your organization, or are the members of your applicant group, financially solvent? Can you/they provide independently prepared financial statements for the last two fiscal years?
- Does your organization, or a member of your applicant group or a partner/supplier you have identified and have a signed letter of intent or equivalent with, have at least three years' experience building and operating broadband infrastructure in Canada?³

Project contingency

- Is your application financially and technically independent of other applications and/or unsecured funding? This means it is not dependent on other projects or funding that has not yet been secured.

E. How do I apply for funding?

Broadband Fund applications must be filed in accordance with the [Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure](#) (the Rules of Procedure). Given the nature of the Broadband Fund, sections 9, 22–27, and 32–33 of the Rules of Procedure do not apply to Broadband Fund applications.

The process for filing Broadband Fund applications is set out below:

1. This procedure must be read in conjunction with the [Rules of Procedure](#) (with the exception of sections 9, 22–27, and 32–33) and related documents, which can be found on the CRTC’s website at www.crtc.gc.ca, under “Statutes and regulations”.
2. The deadline for filing applications is **13 August 2026 at 5 p.m. Vancouver time (8 p.m. Gatineau time)**. Applicants are responsible for ensuring the timely delivery of their applications. The CRTC will not consider late applications. Applicants must keep proof of the sending and receipt of each document for 60 days after the date on which the document is filed. In addition, there will be a process for applicants and communities affected by proposed projects to file additional documents related to community engagement after the deadline for filing applications has passed.
3. Applications must be made using the [Online Intake System](#) on the CRTC’s website.
4. Applicants must complete all forms and templates included in the [Online Intake System](#).
5. Applications that are incomplete or that have not been filed in accordance with the process set out herein by the application deadline may not be accepted. The CRTC may give an applicant the opportunity to clarify or correct inadvertent errors, deficiencies, or omissions in its application.
6. Applicants must not amend their application or file any supplementary documents related to their application with the CRTC after the application deadline, unless the CRTC requests that they do so or such documents are additional community engagement documents permitted to be filed after the application deadline.
7. Applicants should refer to the Application Guide and the [Technical and Program Details Guide](#) for additional details and explanations to assist them in completing their application.
8. The CRTC will not make available for public inspection, whether on its website or otherwise, any Broadband Fund application for which confidentiality is claimed,

except to the extent that the CRTC has determined that disclosure is in the public interest in accordance with section 39 of the *Telecommunications Act*, or as may otherwise be required by law. Details on confidentiality are available in the [Technical and Program Details Guide](#).

9. The CRTC will notify applicants by email that their application has been received and will provide a confirmation number. The CRTC will not inform applicants of the status of their application prior to issuing funding decisions. Successful applicants will be notified when the CRTC issues its funding decisions. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will be notified confidentially.

Applicants should consult the [Broadband Fund](#) web page regularly to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information when filing their applications. This web page provides access to all important information concerning the Broadband Fund. It also includes links to the [Online Intake System](#) and other relevant documents, instructions on how to contact the CRTC, any additional or updated information on the application process, and any other clarifications. In addition, applicants can subscribe to the CRTC's [RSS feed](#)⁴ to be notified of any updates.

F. What reference documents and tools are available for me to apply?

Several documents and tools are available to help applicants prepare their submission under Call 4:

1. [Broadband Fund policy review – New policy for funding capital projects, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2024328](#) (the Broadband Fund policy) – The official policy outlining the Broadband Fund's objectives and the evaluation criteria. It is the authoritative source on the Broadband Fund policy; if the Application Guide, the [Technical and Program Details Guide](#), or any other sources differ, the Broadband Fund policy takes precedence. The Broadband Fund policy also covers other key areas, including administration, the application process, project-specific criteria for universal service objective and satellite-dependent community projects, selection considerations, confidentiality, funding conditions, and distribution of funding.
2. [Application Guide](#) – An overview of the Broadband Fund and Call 4, including its objectives, the general process, and available supports. It also highlights considerations for eligibility and provides information on additional supports for Indigenous applicants as well as guidance on community outreach and engagement.

3. [Technical and Program Details Guide](#) – Provides detailed instructions and policy interpretations – beyond what is provided in the Broadband Fund policy and the Application Guide – explaining what applicants must demonstrate and how to present the required information.
4. [Online Intake System](#) – The secure online portal through which applications must be completed, managed, and submitted.
5. [Eligibility Mapping Tool](#) – An interactive tool that applicants must use to create their maps to apply to the Broadband Fund. The mapping tool shows existing broadband coverage and funding across Canada and allows applicants to create coverage shapes, sites, and routes. Applicants must subsequently download their completed map. Applicants can also use this tool to determine the number of eligible underserved households under their proposed coverage area.
6. [Call 4 Reference Map](#) – A map showing geographic areas that are eligible for funding under Call 4. The map also shows census subdivisions and communities, including official language minority communities, which will assist applicants in fulfilling their community outreach and engagement obligations. Applicants can use this map to view eligible areas and areas that are already forecasted to receive broadband funding, which may render them ineligible as a result.

G. If I am an Indigenous applicant and my application is successful, what supports will I have?

The CRTC aims to help advance reconciliation and reduce barriers for Indigenous funding recipients. Indigenous applicants are invited to self-identify during the application process in order to benefit from the following measures if their project is selected for funding:

- **Reduced barriers:** Indigenous recipients face fewer requirements, including an exemption from the requirement to provide retail and wholesale open access to funded transport infrastructure.
- **Upfront funding:** Indigenous recipients may receive upfront funding of up to 15% of the total approved funding for a capital project (capped at \$750,000) to cover costs for equipment, materials, or expertise once a project has received final funding approval.
- **Technical training support:** Funding is available for up to two years of initial technical training for local Indigenous staff in communities that Indigenous applicants propose to serve. Applicants must provide justification for the number of staff that need training in each community.

- **Holdback exemption:** Indigenous recipients are exempt from the 10% holdback requirement in the case of projects with approved funding of \$5 million or less.

These measures are in addition to the general requirement that, where an applicant proposes to provide service or build infrastructure in an Indigenous community, it must engage meaningfully with that Indigenous community. Further, the applicant must obtain proof of consent for the project from representatives of that community before the CRTC provides its final funding approval.

More information on each of these measures can be found in sections [2.1.4\(b\)](#), [2.1.4\(c\)](#), [3.1](#), [5.1](#), and [5.3](#) of the [Technical and Program Details Guide](#).

H. How should I engage with communities affected by my proposed project?

Applicants are required to notify and conduct outreach to all communities they propose to serve. This outreach is a crucial aspect of effective project planning and successful implementation. As explained in detail in sections [2.1.1\(e\)](#) and [2.2.1\(d\)](#) of the [Technical and Program Details Guide](#), an applicant must, among other things, identify and list all communities that will be served by the proposed project or that are located where the proposed infrastructure will be built. The following guidance and tools are provided by the CRTC to support applicants in contacting communities and identifying Indigenous communities and groups that may be affected by their proposed projects.

Applicants should use the [Call 4 Reference Map](#) to identify all communities that may be affected by their proposed project, including:

- Indigenous communities
- communities that will directly benefit from receiving services
- communities where infrastructure is being built (e.g., roadside installations or towers) that would not receive new or improved service as a result of that construction

Applicants should also consult the [Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System \(ATRIS\)](#). ATRIS helps applicants to identify and obtain contact information for representatives of Indigenous communities and provides information on any established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights in the proposed project area. Applicants can use the information obtained from ATRIS to engage with Indigenous communities in a meaningful and informed manner.

How to appropriately contact communities

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the applicable level of elected governance:

- First, contact the local government (e.g., town, city, municipality, or equivalent), where applicable
- If local government does not exist or is not responsive, contact the regional government (e.g., county or equivalent), where applicable
- For areas with no local or regional governance, contact the provincial electoral district representative
- For Indigenous communities, contact the First Nations, Métis, or Inuit government representative, as appropriate

Once an applicant is ready to engage with a community, they should send an outreach letter to community representatives, as identified above. The outreach letter should provide community representatives with details about the proposed project, including information about the proposed service and projected timelines. The letter should also provide contact information and allow sufficient time for community representatives to discuss the proposed project with the applicant.

Evidence of engagement or support could include letters from elected officials, minutes from meetings or calls, or community investment (financial or otherwise) in the project.

To support you in your notification and outreach efforts, the CRTC has developed [community outreach template letters](#) that can be used when first contacting affected communities. Use of the template is not mandatory, but applicants should, at a minimum:

- notify key community representatives of project details early, openly, and respectfully, identifying the proposed project and providing key project details
- invite community representatives to discuss the proposed project with the applicant
- request information regarding Aboriginal or treaty rights that may be adversely impacted
- provide the CRTC's contact information in case a community wishes to discuss the proposed project directly with the CRTC

Guidance for engaging with Indigenous communities

- **Start early, using a distinctions-based approach:** Engage with Indigenous communities as soon as possible to understand potential impacts of the proposed project and respond to any concerns. Engage in a manner that respects the unique rights, interests, and circumstances of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. Engagement should respect the community's preferred or established approach.
- **Take a broad view of potential impacts:** A project may impact an Indigenous community's Aboriginal or treaty rights, even if the applicant is not proposing to directly serve that community. These can be identified through the [Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Information System \(ATRIS\)](#).
- **Respect the community's desired level of engagement and capacity to participate:** Outreach should be conducted in the format and timeframe requested by the community and should include an invitation for community representatives to discuss their priorities and concerns.
- **Obtain consent:** Projects that propose to provide service or build infrastructure in an Indigenous community require written consent from the community's representatives before the CRTC will issue a final funding decision. While proof of consent is required before final funding approval, applications that include this evidence at the time of submission will be assessed more favourably. Written consent can be provided in any form chosen by the Indigenous community: e.g., a letter, a formal resolution (such as a band council resolution), an agreement or a memorandum of understanding, or a transcript of oral consent (such as minutes from a meeting). If proof of consent is not available at the time the application is submitted, the CRTC may issue a conditional funding decision requiring the applicant to obtain this before it issues the final funding decision.
- **Consider community benefits:** The CRTC encourages projects that propose to provide economic or employment opportunities in Indigenous communities, or co-investment or co-ownership arrangements with them. Projects that show evidence of collaboration and support with Indigenous communities will be considered more favourably by the CRTC.

Duty to consult

Applicants must consider impacts that their proposed project may have on established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights. Applicants should engage with Indigenous

communities to identify any potential impacts on established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights, and any accommodation measures that have been or will be implemented, along with plans for future engagement.

In support of this and as part of the application process, applicants must:

1. indicate whether the proposed project presents a risk of adversely affecting any established or asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights
2. demonstrate how this view was informed

As rights holders, Indigenous communities are best positioned to identify any impacts on their rights and advise on potential measures to avoid them. If a risk is identified at the application stage, applicants must provide details on consultations undertaken and any accommodation measures that have been or will be implemented as a result. The CRTC may request additional information during the application stage.

Applicants must also sign a declaration confirming their understanding that if a duty to consult arises, they must conduct all necessary consultations to the Crown's satisfaction before the CRTC publishes a final funding decision.

Final funding decisions include a condition that, if a risk of adverse impact becomes known following the approval of a statement of work, the recipient must notify the CRTC. Release of any further funding is contingent on demonstrating that necessary consultations and accommodations were conducted to the Crown's satisfaction.

I. How will applications be selected for funding?

Once applications are evaluated, the CRTC identifies a subset of projects that meet the eligibility and assessment criteria. From this subset, the CRTC selects projects for funding, taking various policy considerations into account.

When selecting projects for funding, the CRTC considers the following factors:

- **Efficient use of funds:** The CRTC considers the amount of funding required, when the funds should be distributed, and the amount of funding available in the Broadband Fund. The CRTC will also consider whether the project minimizes overlap with other projects or sources of funding.
- **Projects in multiple regions of Canada:** The CRTC may consider how funding can be distributed across multiple regions of Canada, so that more than one region or a small number of regions benefits.

- **Social considerations:** The CRTC may consider whether the project proposes to serve Indigenous communities or official language minority communities, or whether the applicant is Indigenous.

Projects that demonstrate strong alignment with these considerations and show evidence of community support are more likely to be selected. Applicants will be notified whether or not their project is selected for funding.

J. Who can I contact about the application process or the status of my application?

The CRTC is an independent quasi-judicial tribunal that regulates the communications sector in the public interest. It must follow the administrative law principles that apply to statutory tribunals. To ensure fairness, contact between applicants and CRTC staff is limited.

- **Before the application submission deadline:** Applicants may request clarification on the application process or the information required. CRTC staff cannot provide advice on how to complete an application. To submit a question to the CRTC, please visit the [Frequently asked questions](#) web page. Please note that responses may be published (with no identifying details) on the Broadband Fund web page.
- **After the application submission deadline:** CRTC staff can no longer respond to applicants' questions after the application submission deadline.
- **After application evaluation:** Applicants do not need to request updates on the status of their application. The CRTC will contact both successful and unsuccessful applicants directly. Successful projects will be announced through the publication of a conditional funding decision, and applicants whose projects are not selected will be notified confidentially.

If you have questions related to the Broadband Fund, visit the [Frequently asked questions](#) web page and submit your inquiry using the online contact form provided there.

Footnotes

1. In 2016, the CRTC set the following universal service objective:
 - all Canadians should have access to Internet speeds of at least 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload (50/10 Mbps) with unlimited data options

- all Canadians should have access to the latest generally deployed mobile technology, not only in homes and businesses but also along major transportation roads
2. A satellite-dependent community is a community that relies on satellite transport capacity for one or more telecommunications services, such as voice, wireless (both fixed and mobile), and Internet services.
 3. An applicant group can use combined experience to meet this criterion. For example, one member can have the required experience building broadband infrastructure in Canada while another member has the required experience operating such infrastructure.
 4. Rich Site Summary (RSS), or, as some refer to it, Real Simple Syndication, is an XML-based format for content distribution in real time.