

BCAT Grants Overview Instructional Video Transcript

British Columbia Active Transportation Grants Program

Program Overview

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Hello. My name is Maryanna and I work on the BC Active Transportation Grants Program within the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. During this presentation, I'll give you an overview of the BC Active Transportation Grants Program. For more detailed information specific to the infrastructure grant application, or active transportation network plan grant application you can find similar presentation links on the BC Active Transportation Grants main web page.

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In this presentation I'll briefly cover the background and objective of the program. I'll review some highlights of the application process, provide an overview of the network planning and infrastructure grants, the evaluation process and timelines as well as when you can expect to hear the outcome of your application.

This year, we have an improved, more user-friendly online application that will walk you step-by-step through the application process. We no longer require a fillable PDF. Instead, the online application will prompt input, allow you to save your application to return to later and, give you the ability to share the application within your organization through your BCeID – giving you secure access just for your organization.

That does mean your organization will need to have a BCeID and if you don't already have one, you can go to the BCAT website and click on the link which will take you to the Provincial website that will allow you to set one up.

This is the first iteration of the online portal, and we look forward to your feedback in the spirit of continuous improvement.

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This grant program is the latest iteration of provincial funding programs that support cycling and active transportation projects in communities around British Columbia.

Since 2011, we have provided over \$180M in grant funding for active transportation projects throughout the province.

Our consultations with the public, Indigenous communities, local governments, engineers, planners and active transportation advocacy groups revealed the need to support more than just cycling.

For that reason, we included network planning grants for populations of under 25,000 to support the development active transportation network plans.

We know more people choose active travel when they have continuous and connected active transportation networks.

New micro-mobility technologies and an increased focus on safety also meant communities – big and small – would benefit from a fulsome design guide to help with planning and infrastructure development that is safe and accessible.

That is why we developed the BC Active Transportation Design Guide to provide support for best-practice networks.

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The BC Active Transportation Grants Program provides cost-shared, grant funding to encourage more British Columbians to choose active transportation in their daily lives.

We know that increased cycling, walking and wheeling gets more people out of their cars, improves health outcomes and encourages community engagement.

It also helps build a cleaner, greener future for all British Columbians.

Through CleanBC, the province has committed to doubling the percentage of trips taken by active transportation by 2030.

Achieving this target requires the support of communities expanding their active transportation infrastructure.

The BC Active Transportation Grants help communities promote safety, build integrated and accessible active transportation infrastructure and develop community plans that support complete, active transportation networks.

We also look at the principles of gender and equity-based analysis as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

The BC Active Transportation Design Guide is an award-winning guidebook that supports these goals and principles and provides communities with detailed, infrastructure designs and best practices for network planning and development.

Active transportation networks are for everyone and projects that consider the needs of all citizens, are more likely to encourage greater use.

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As mentioned, you will have to have a BCeID to access the application site and we do have links handy on the BC Active Transportation Program site.

To be eligible to apply for a BC AT grant, you must be an:

Indigenous government/Indigenous economic development corporation where the Nation is the shareholder or

Local government, which includes municipalities, regional districts & Islands Trust

This year, grant applications will be accepted from September 1 to October 27, and, in response to feedback we've heard from our government partners to have more certainty for planning, all future years will have the same, early September intake.

The September intake aligns with municipal budget planning and helps prepare for the spring construction window.

To support this, program materials are available online early so you have the resources available to get your applications ready.

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The online grant portal is a new and improved online application system to deliver a better application experience. We've heard from communities that the previous PDF version was cumbersome, presented challenges with the emailed application process, and didn't allow for saving the application mid-development.

The new portal provides step-by-step prompts that help ensure all critical information is included before moving to the next phase.

A reminder that this presentation is one of the many resources that have been available to governments to review in advance of when the grant portal opens on September 1st. While this site is available now, you will not be able to submit your application until September 1st but this information will help you prepare for that submission.

A reminder that Indigenous governments and Indigenous partner projects may submit their applications at any time. This new 'rolling intake' makes it easier for Indigenous projects to be reviewed and receive grants at any time during the year.

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One of the two grants available through the BC Active Transportation Grants Program is the Infrastructure Grant.

Indigenous and local governments can apply for cost-shared project funding for up to a maximum of \$500,000.

Indigenous governments or projects that are a partnership between an Indigenous and local government can have up to 80% of their project funded.

Communities of less than 15,000 can have up to 70% of their projects funded.

Communities of 15 to 25 thousand can receive up to 60% of their project funded and,

Communities 25 thousand or more can receive up to 50% of their project funded.

Again, all to a maximum of \$500,000 per project.

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One of the requirements to receive B-C-A-T infrastructure grant funding is for a community to have an active transportation network plan.

We know that active transportation use increases when people have consistent and safe connections to their destination.

For many small communities, network planning can be costly so, to support communities with populations under 25 thousand, cost-share grants are available for the development of network plans.

These grants will contribute up to 50% or \$50,000 – whichever is less – towards the development of the plan.

To be eligible, you must be a community with a population under 25 thousand,

Have no existing active transportation network plan or, your existing plan must be over 5 years old, and,

Your council, board, band council must have approved to fund half the cost.

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Once the intake closes after October 27th, we begin the process of evaluation.

The key criteria we consider includes safety, active transportation network connectivity, the economic benefits the project will bring to the community and the societal benefits such as environmental, physical and mental health.

Review of the eligible applications is done by experts across government to assess project design and viability, estimated costs, and alignment with other key areas for the Province such as GHG mitigation, accessibility, health, tourism etc. The questions within the online application highlight which government priorities we are looking to support.

Our grant funding for this year is \$20 million. Even with that amount, we can't guarantee every eligible project will receive funding.

We know you will be eager to hear about the status of your project and we will have an update in February of 2024.

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Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will then proceed to the evaluation process. The key criteria for network plans is noted Section 2.3 of the Program Guidelines, and includes community profile, strategic context, required data, community consultation summary, and plan and implementation.

Active Transportation Network Plan goals include safety, network connectivity, the economic benefits the project will bring to the community and the societal benefits such as environmental, physical and mental health. The Active Transportation Network Plan has a data collection element, requires community consultation, and should include an implementation plan. For the network planning grants, we are looking for a strong commitment that a comprehensive approach will be applied to make a high-quality network plan.

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I hope this video has provided some good information and insight as you begin your application. Please review the BCAT website where you will find the Program Guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions document and application questions. Please also review the B.C. Active Transportation Design Guide for guidance. If you have questions after reviewing all the program resources, I encourage you to contact us direct at BCATgrants@gov.bc.ca or call at 778 974 5469, and we'd be happy to assist.

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Your success benefits all British Columbians, and we want to make sure your active transportation infrastructure works for your community.

Thank you!