
Introduction

Diversity strengthens the well-being of Nova Scotians and enriches the experiences of visitors. The Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage recognizes that diverse populations and community activities are vital to the social and economic life of our province.

Note: The Building Inclusive Communities Fund was formally known as Diversity and Community Capacity Fund/Cultural Communities and Identities (DCCF/CCIF)

Program Description

The Building Inclusive Communities Fund(BICF) invests in initiatives, projects, and events that:

- Support cultural diversity by bringing people together to share, explore, and celebrate cultural identities and traditions.
- Advance diversity, inclusion, and social equity by increasing public awareness and understanding.
- Expand access and remove barriers so equity-deserving individuals and community organizations can actively participate in Nova Scotia's community life.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Community Supports & Infrastructure Team to discuss their project before applying:

CommunitiesNS@novascotia.ca or (902) 424-5793

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Commitment

- Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage supports our communities to thrive by promoting active living, tourism, and Nova Scotia's diverse culture, heritage, and languages. We pride ourselves on helping to grow communities and organizations by providing programs and services that support these areas.
- We are committed to ensuring that our programs and services are free of discrimination and barriers, and value equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA). By applying this lens and ensuring it is a core value in our programs and decision-making processes, we are taking steps to address the long-standing systemic barriers that impact many communities in our province.
- Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage is committed to advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility across Nova Scotia, and we support partners who share in this commitment.

Eligible Applicants

- Registered, Nova Scotia-based, non-profit society/cooperative/charity in good standing
- 13 Nova Scotia Mi'kmaw communities
- Registered Canadian charities actively operating in Nova Scotia
- Federally incorporated non-profit organization
- Registered non-profit social enterprises/community interest companies

Eligible Activities

The BICF grants are intended to support action-oriented activities that will guide future action in diversity and social equity including:

- Projects that improve awareness of and access to programs and services that advance equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Activities that support inclusive events and activities that bring people together to share, explore and celebrate diverse cultural identities and traditions.
- Projects that strengthen the capacity of organizations to support equity-deserving groups.

Ineligible Activities

- Research, studies, focus groups or public meetings.
- Fundraising events or activities.
- Operating expenses, e.g., salaries, heat, rent, etc.
- Projects and/or activities where religion and religious celebration are the primary focus.
- Language classes.
- EDIA Training.
- Recurring projects/events with budgets larger than \$80,000.
- Events or projects that have received funding for 2 consecutive years.
- Major equipment purchases.
- Projects whose primary purpose is employment.

Funding

Tier 1

- For requests of \$5,000 or less.
- Applicants are *not* required to provide a cash contribution, however, a minimum in-kind contribution of 15% is required.

Tier 2

- For requests of \$5,001 to \$10,000.
- Applicants must contribute **a minimum of 25%**. This includes a minimum 10% cash contribution from the project applicant.
- Collaborations are encouraged.

Please consider accessibility and the environment when planning your project or event. For more information visit [Accessibility resources - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada](#).

Application Procedure

Applicants are strongly encouraged to speak with the program officer to discuss their proposed activity well in advance of the deadline and before applying.

- All projects must have defined start and end dates.
- Relevant support materials such as photos and support letters are encouraged. Support letters from organizations partnering with cultural and equity-deserving communities are required.
- Applications must be completed in full.
- Forms must be signed and dated.
- Applications can be submitted by email (preferred), delivered by hand, courier, or sent by regular post (post marked on or before the deadline).

Requirements

Applicants are required to submit the following documents:

- Project Overview
- Project Budget
- Applicable supporting documents (e.g. letters of support, photos)

A. Project Overview Document

This document forms the core of your application. Please address the following areas:

1. Organizational Overview

Provide a brief description of your organization. Please include when you were established, your mandate and primary purpose. (Question does not apply to Mi'kmaq bands)

2. Project Description

Provide a detailed description of your proposed project or event, including:

- Key activities
- Project's goals or objectives, including if you have undertaken this project before
- Project personnel (including names, roles and responsibilities)
- Target participants/audience
- Number of people expected to attend your event, or participate in your project
- Are you selling tickets, or are there any participation fees? If yes, what are they.
- Partnerships: are you collaborating with other organizations? If so, who are they, describe their role(s) and attach letters of support.

3. Impact

Describe the anticipated impact of your project/event on the community. Who will benefit and how?

4. Workplan

Provide a detailed work plan for the project/event. Dates can be tentative. See Frequently Asked Questions for a sample work plan

5. Promotion

How will you promote your project/event? (e.g., social media, website, print).

6. Evaluation

What does success look like? Explain how you will evaluate the project and include applicable evaluation documents (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, reports).

7. Acknowledgement

If your application is successful, how will you acknowledge the Province of Nova Scotia (e.g., social media, website, print).

B. Project Budget

Applicants must submit a **detailed project budget** that includes the following components:

- Total Project Costs
- Revenues and Expenses

Funding contribution requirements correspond to the tier of funding requested:

Tier 1

- Applies to funding requests of \$5,000 or less.
- Applicants are **not required** to provide a cash contribution.

Tier 2

- Applies to funding requests between \$5,001 and \$10,000.
- Applicants must provide a **minimum of 25%** of eligible project costs.
 - Of this amount, at least **10% of the total project cost** must be a cash contribution from the applicant organization.

Please Note:

- Ensure all contact information is accurate and that listed contacts can be reached.
- A program officer may contact you using the information provided in your application.

Application Deadlines and Activity Start/End Dates

- Applications must be received no later than **11:59 on the deadline date**.
 - Deadline dates are May 15 and October 15, 2026.
- Mailed applications must be postmarked on or before the deadline date.
- Projects must have defined start and end dates.

Application Assessment

Applications will be assessed based on the following considerations:

- Completeness of the application.
- Demonstration of how the proposed activity supports at least one of the program themes identified in the program description.
- Projects/events that include one or more of the following may be given higher priority
 - Applications from new and emerging cultural and equity-deserving communities, or new projects and events.
 - Applications received directly from cultural and equity-deserving communities, or groups with a demonstrated relationship with these communities (Letters of Support required).
 - Applications from rural areas.

Please note: it can take up to 12 weeks for applications to be reviewed and results communicated.

Conditions of Funding

- Approved applicants will receive a letter outlining the terms and conditions of funding. This letter must be signed and returned before funds can be issued.
- Payment will be issued to the applying organization only; payments cannot be made to individuals.
- Payment will be made at 100% of the approved funding amount.
- Funds must be used for the activity as described in the application.
- The department must be notified **in advance** of any changes to the project, including start and end dates, location, or any other significant modifications.
- If the project does not proceed after grant payment has been issued, the recipient must return the funds to the department.
- Organizations receiving funding must submit a **Final Report** within **30 days** of the project end date. A reporting template will be provided.
- Funding recipients are subject to **provincial audits**. All receipts and financial records must be retained.

Please note: if the **Final Report** becomes overdue, no funds can be released for any subsequent grant approved through either the departmental or Arts Nova Scotia's programs until the overdue report has been received.

For more information, contact the Community Supports and Infrastructure Team:

Telephone: (902) 424-5793
E-mail: CommunitiesNS@novascotia.ca
Courier: Communities Nova Scotia
Homburg Building
Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage
1741 Brunswick Street, 3rd Floor Halifax, NS B3J 3X8
Mailing Address: Communities Nova Scotia
Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage
PO BOX 456
Halifax, NS B3J 2R5

Does your project need volunteers?

Volunteer Nova Scotia is a free searchable database that connects non-profits with skilled volunteers in Nova Scotia and nationwide. Volunteers can also easily search for opportunities, while organizations create profiles and receive support to fill vacancies, fostering community connections.

Visit: volunteers.ca



Frequently Asked Questions

What can a work plan look like?

For an application, the work plan can be simple. Outline the project key activities and tentative timeline. A table format is preferred.

Here is an example:

Date(s)	Activity and Outcome	Who is responsible?
August 1	Confirm venue booking and logistics	Team lead
August 5–10	Contact and book performers	Event coordinator
October 2–3	Venue set up and technical checks	Volunteers and tech support
October 20–November 4	Gather details, write and submit final report for funders	Chair

What is an in-kind contribution?

An in-kind contribution is the provision of a service or goods not involving money. An in-kind contribution must have a corresponding expense in a project budget.

Here is an example: *An applicant is contributing the use of its meeting space to the project. If the room wasn't being used for the project, it would be available for other activities or for rent.*

Project Expenses	
	Cost
Supplies	\$150
Facility Rental	\$150
Professional Fees	\$200
Totals	\$500
Total Expenses =	\$500

Project Revenues			
	Amount in Cash	Amount In-Kind	%
Donation	\$50		10%
Applicant (use of room)		\$150	30%
Funding Request	\$300		60%
Totals	\$350	\$150	100%
Total Revenues =	\$500 (350+150)		