



Minor Projects Application Guide

Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund

April 2026

K'áhshó got'jne xədə k'é hederı ɔedjhtl'é yerınıwę nı dé dúle.
Dene Kədə

ʔerıhtl'ıs Dēne Sųlıné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theɔɔ ɔat'e, nuwe ts'en yóttı.
Dēne Sųlıné

Edı gondı dehgháh got'je zhaté k'éé edat'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahlı.
Dene Zhaté

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ıjghch'uu zhit yınohthan jı', diıts'at ginohkhii.
Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqluta.
Inuvialuktun

Ć'bd< nŋsbΔ^c ΛrlJ&A^c Δm̄nɔc^{sb}/Lɔn̄b, ɔ<ε^cn̄m̄^c ɔ<ε^cl^{sb}e^cɔn̄^c.
Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun

kīspin ki nitawih̄tīn ē nīhīyawih̄k ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsīnān.
nēhiyawēwin

Tłıchq̄ yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq̄ dè, gots'ó gonede.
Tłıchq̄

Indigenous Languages
request_Indigenous_languages@gov.nt.ca

Une version française de ce document est disponible.

Table of contents

Introduction.....	4
Who can apply	4
Eligible project costs	5
Applying for funding.....	6
How to apply.....	7
Required documents.....	7
Application processing.....	8
Assessment and approval	8
Payment claims and reimbursement	9
Accountability	10
Facility licensing.....	10
Appendix A: Minor Projects Application Checklist.....	11

Introduction

The Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund (ECIF) is for projects that preserve or expand existing infrastructure of licensed centre-based child care spaces or to create new licensed centre-based child care spaces in NWT communities. The fund (ECIF) is available for both multi-year and single-year early learning and child care infrastructure projects.

ECIF features three distinct funding streams, *Minor Projects*, *Major Projects*, and *Developmental (Needs Assessment)* Funds, each with its own application process.

This application guide is for Minor Projects funding stream.

Under the *Minor Projects* Fund, eligible organizations can get up to \$250,000 in funding for accessibility upgrades, and space preservation projects, and renovations and retrofits that create new licensed centre-based child care spaces. This funding can also be used for project planning and design development and obtaining permits and approvals. Project funds can also be used to support construction project management, construction costs, and the purchase of accessible playground equipment.

Who can apply

To be eligible for the ECIF Minor Projects funding, applicants must be:

- Organizations which are registered and in good standing under the [NWT Societies Act](#) or be a recognized Indigenous government and/or community government,
- Non-profit organizations,
- Public organizations, or
- Education bodies.

All applicants must meet one or more of the following conditions:

- Currently operate a licensed early learning and child care program; or
- Intend to apply for a license to operate a licensed child care centre.

All applicants must demonstrate how they will meet regulatory requirements under the [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#) and [regulations](#).

Eligible project costs

Eligible project costs are reasonable direct costs which are necessary for the construction and completion of the project, and which are incurred and paid by the applicant that increase access to childcare, help to maintain existing child care spaces, and advance inclusion in early learning and child care programs.

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) is **not** responsible for any eligible project costs incurred by the applicant prior to the approval of funding and the signing of a Contribution Agreement specific to the project and the identified costs.

Eligible project costs include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Construction costs related to the development or renovation of existing infrastructure to increase the program's ability to meet physical accessibility standards
- 2) Landscaping sloping, surfacing or installation of paths/sidewalks to enhance the accessibility of an early learning and child care program's outdoor space
- 3) Pre-construction costs
 - Permitting and approvals (development and building permits)
 - Engineering and design (including architectural drawings)
 - Site pre-preparation
 - Environmental Assessments
 - Geotechnical Assessments
 - Survey
- 4) Purchase of accessible playground infrastructure
- 5) Fire safety mitigations
- 6) Cost of repairs and maintenance required by annual health and fire safety inspections.
- 7) Construction and renovation:
 - Construction materials and supplies
 - Construction labour and skilled trades
 - Construction project management
 - Decks
 - Fences
 - Driveways (paving)
 - Signage

- 8) Other costs which are reasonable for the purposes of retrofits, renovation or construction and completion of the project, as approved by ECE.
- Flooring
 - Roof
 - Water pump
 - Boiler repairs

Ineligible project costs include, but are not limited to:

- Costs related to property acquisition or purchase of land
- Expenditures made prior to the project being approved for funding
- Costs of leasing land and equipment
- Financing charges, including interest costs, and loan interest payments
- Furniture, fixtures and equipment (these items are funded under [New Child Care Spaces Fund](#))
- Third Party's legal fees
- Business plan development
- Website development
- Feasibility studies
- Proponent contingency fund (it is standard for quotations to include a contingency factor)
- Operational costs (rent, mortgage, utilities, insurance, staff wages, travel, lease payments or mortgages.)
- Advertising
- Leasing equipment other than equipment directly related to the project.
- Operation and maintenance costs
- Real estate fees and related costs
- Expenditures for equipment that is readily movable and suitable for personal use such as: computers, furniture, toys/equipment, musical instruments, etc.

If you have questions about eligible expenses, please email: elcc_operations@gov.nt.ca

Applying for funding

Applications for the ECIF Minor Projects funding are accepted throughout the year. There is no deadline to apply.

How to apply

1. Download the [ECIF Minor Projects Application Form](#)
2. Gather the required supporting documents.
3. Fill out the application form
4. Submit your completed application form and supporting documents by Secure File Transfer using FileDrop.

To use FileDrop:

- Save the application form to your computer
- Fully complete the application form
- Follow this link <https://sft.gov.nt.ca/filedrop/~5Cyggj> to Filedrop. Authenticate your email and then upload your application to FileDrop.

Before submitting your application and supporting documents please read [how to submit files using a secure file transfer \(SFT\) email](#).

You can also submit your completed application form and supporting documents by:

Mail: Early Learning and Child Care
Department of Education, Culture and Employment
Government of Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9.

If you have questions or need advice in preparing your application, email:
elcc_operations@gov.nt.ca

Required documents

The following documents are required as part of the completed application package:

1. Signed ECIF Minor Project Application Form.
2. Project budget, with detailed information on each budget item.
3. Project schedule (timelines and milestones).
4. Supplementary documentation as referenced in the application and appendices, including but not limited to:
 - Minutes of the governing body or Board of Directors authorizing the application
 - Written confirmation of funding sources, including donations or services in-kind
 - Quotes/estimates relating to the work to be completed
 - Architectural plans or designs (if applicable)
 - Written approval from property owner, if in a leased building

Incomplete applications will be returned with instructions on what information is required to be provided within 30 days. If the required information is not supplied within 30 days, the application is considered withdrawn.

Application processing

After submitting an ECIF application, an applicant can expect the following:

- ECE will acknowledge receipt of the application via e-mail.
- ECE will assess the application for completeness as well as eligibility for minor projects funding, assuming sufficient information is available to make that assessment.
- All requests will be reviewed by a team appointed by ECE.
- The applicant will be contacted if additional information is needed.
- ECE will notify the applicant within 30 days whether their request for minor projects funding is approved, not approved, or is under considered. Please note that being under consideration does not guarantee funding approval.

Note: If additional information is requested by ECE, the applicant must provide the material within 30 business days, unless an extension has been granted. Failure to submit the required information may result in the proposal being removed from consideration, and the applicant may be required to reapply for funding.

Assessment and approval

ECE will provide a decision to an applicant within 30 days of receiving a complete funding application. Projects deemed viable by the proposal review team may be recommended for approval.

ECIF Minor Projects funding allocations will depend on the overall budget, the number of funding requests received, community needs, and the availability of funds. To support as many projects as possible, the maximum amount of infrastructure funding may vary based on financial hardship, project costs, and availability of resources.

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Requests for Minor Projects funding may be approved without conditions, conditionally approved, or not approved.

- a. If the request for ECIF Minor Projects funding is not approved or the project does not meet the eligibility criteria, the applicant will receive an email explaining the decision along with feedback on their request for funding.
- b. If the funding request is conditionally approved, the applicant will receive a conditional approval letter via email. The letter will outline the specific conditions that must be met to receive ECIF Minor Projects funding, as well as the timelines for submitting the required

information. If the applicant is unable to meet the conditions within the agreed upon timeline, the conditional funding offer will be withdrawn.

- c. If the funding request is approved without conditions, the applicant will receive an approval letter via email. The letter will outline general funding terms.

Funding decisions will be based on the following criteria:

1. **Funding eligibility** - The application meets all eligibility requirements, including applicant and projects eligibility, and demonstrates the facility can meet applicable licensing requirements.
2. **Financial feasibility** - The application demonstrates that the project can be completed within the total available funding for the project type.
3. **Strength of the application** - The application form is submitted along with all required information and documentation, meeting the funding criteria and requirements.
4. **Project support (if applicable)** - The application demonstrates the availability of additional project support, such as other sources of funding (from other levels of government, organizations, or the applicant) at the time of application or secured during the duration of the project.
5. **Readiness to proceed** - The applicant confirms they are ready to begin the project. The application must include a project schedule detailing activities, timelines and anticipated completion dates.

All funding decisions are final. There is no appeal process.

Payment claims and reimbursement

Applicants approved for funding will receive a Contribution Agreement by email, which will outline the terms of funding, payment schedule, and reporting requirements.

Fund Recipients may claim reimbursement for eligible project expenditures after the costs have been incurred. Claims must include all relevant invoices, supporting documents, and use the template outlined in the Contribution Agreement.

Expense claims are to be required as frequently as quarterly, in accordance with the terms set out in the Contribution Agreement.

A claim will be reviewed upon submission. If additional information is needed to process the claim, program staff will follow-up with the fund recipient.

Organizations can only start incurring expenses from the date of signature of the contribution agreement and will be reimbursed for eligible and approved costs ONLY.

All funds **must** be spent within the Government of the Northwest Territories' fiscal year in which they are allocated, unless written approval has been granted to carry funds forward to the next fiscal year. Unspent funds may be recovered by the Government of Northwest Territories.

Accountability

Recipients are required to use the funding only for the purposes for which it was approved and to report on the outcomes of the funded project. Specific reporting requirements and timelines will be outlined in the Contribution Agreement and will include, but are not limited to, a project report and an expenditure report.

Failure to provide the required report may result in the recipient being required to repay the full amount of funding to the Government of Northwest Territories.

Facility licensing

If required, applicants will receive information on licensing and program requirements as part of the infrastructure project support process.

ECE strongly recommends that applicants contact the [Regional Early Childhood Consultant](#) to discuss building plans before construction to ensure the new facility will meet ELCC Regulations.

Once the project reaches substantial completion, an Early Childhood Consultant will complete the licensing process.

A license may be issued after all regulated licensing requirements under the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* and Regulations have been met.

Appendix A: Minor Projects Application Checklist

Prior to submitting an ECIF Minor Projects Application

- Review the ECIF Minor Projects Application Guide

Applications must include the following:

- ECIF Minor Projects Application Form
- Minutes of the Board of Directors or Governing Body authorizing the application
- Project budget, with detailed information on each budget item.
- Project schedule with timelines and milestones
- Architectural plans or designs (if applicable)
- Development and building permits (if applicable)
- Quotes/ estimates from two different contractors relating to the work
- Written confirmation of funding sources, including private donations or services in-kind. Attach a letter confirming the source and amount of project cost covered (if applicable)
- Written approval from the property owner, if in a leased building
- Other supporting documents (if applicable). Please list the documents in the area below:

