



Developmental (Needs Assessment) Fund Guide

Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund

April 2026

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Introduction

The Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund (ECIF) is for projects that expand existing infrastructure of licensed centre-based child care spaces or create new licensed centre-based child care spaces in NWT communities.

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 Developmental (Needs Assessment) Projects funding stream.

The ECIF Developmental (Needs Assessment) Fund provides one-time funding up to a maximum of \$15,000 to eligible entities to undertake child care needs assessment in their community.

Who can apply

Eligibility for the ECIF Developmental (Needs Assessment) Projects funding is limited to:

- Organizations who are registered and in good standing under the [NWT Societies Act](#) or are recognized Indigenous government and/or community government.
- Non-profit organizations
- Community-based organizations
- Education bodies.

Eligible costs

Eligible project costs include, but are not limited to:

- Consultant fee (to undertake a needs assessment and write a report)
- Consultant travel costs directly associated with the completion of the needs assessment.
- Meeting room/AV rental costs directly associated with the needs assessment (if applicable).
- External printing costs directly associated with producing a final report (if applicable)
- Any other cost directly relevant to the needs assessment may be eligible.

Ineligible project costs include, but are not limited to:

- Costs incurred (work started and/or deposits paid) prior to signing an agreement with ECE
- Food/beverage costs
- Staff travel, staff wages, or incremental staff and administration costs
- Routine or ongoing operating and/or planning costs

- Capital purchases/costs
- Purchase of software or subscription services

If you are in doubt about eligible expenses, please e-mail: elcc_operations@gov.nt.ca.

Applying for funding

Applications for the ECIF Developmental (Needs Assessment) funding are accepted throughout the year. There is no deadline to apply.

Before submitting a request for Developmental (Needs Assessment) funding, all applicants are required to contact the Early Learning and Child Care Division via e-mail: elcc_operations@gov.nt.ca to discuss their request for funding.

THERE IS NO APPLICATION FORM FOR THIS FUNDING. Organizations wishing to be considered for the ECIF Developmental (Needs Assessment) Project funding must send an email with the subject line: **Request for Developmental (Needs Assessment) Funding** to the Early Learning and Child Care Division via e-mail: elcc_operations@gov.nt.ca.

Developmental (Needs Assessment) Fund requests should include the following information:

1. Organization overview
2. Project summary and context:
 - Project overview and objectives
 - Community or Region where the needs assessment will occur
 - Rationale for the project
3. Information and data collection techniques
4. Communication plan: How communication will be maintained with community members and leadership throughout the project; and
5. Other Supporting Information:
 - a. Project schedule (tasks, timelines, dates, and milestones), and roles and responsibilities.
 - b. Budget (see the list of eligible expenses)
 - c. A letter confirming that the community's leadership (e.g., the Chief and Council) support the needs assessment and data collection approach, and
 - d. A letter confirming that your organization's Board of Directors or governing body supports the funding request.

Application processing

After submitting a request for needs assessment funding, an applicant can expect the following:

- The Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) will acknowledge receipt of the application via an email.

- ECE will assess the request for completeness as well as eligibility for developmental 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 via an email within 30 business days whether their request for ECIF Needs Assessment funding is approved, not approved, or is under consideration for funding. Please note that being under consideration does not guarantee funding approval.

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

Assessment and approval

Review of ECIF Developmental (Needs Assessment) project funding requests occur within 30 days of receiving the application. Projects deemed viable by the proposal review team may be recommended for approval.

ECIF Developmental (Needs Assessment) Project funding allocations will depend on the overall budget, the number of funding requests received, community needs, and the availability of funds.

Requests for Developmental (Needs Assessment) Project funding needs assessment funding may be approved without conditions, conditionally approved, or not approved.

- a. If the request for ECIF Developmental (Needs Assessment) Project 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 Developmental (Needs Assessment) Project 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.

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.

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.

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 report 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.