



NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION
OF MUNICIPALITIES



Sustainable Communities
Challenge Fund

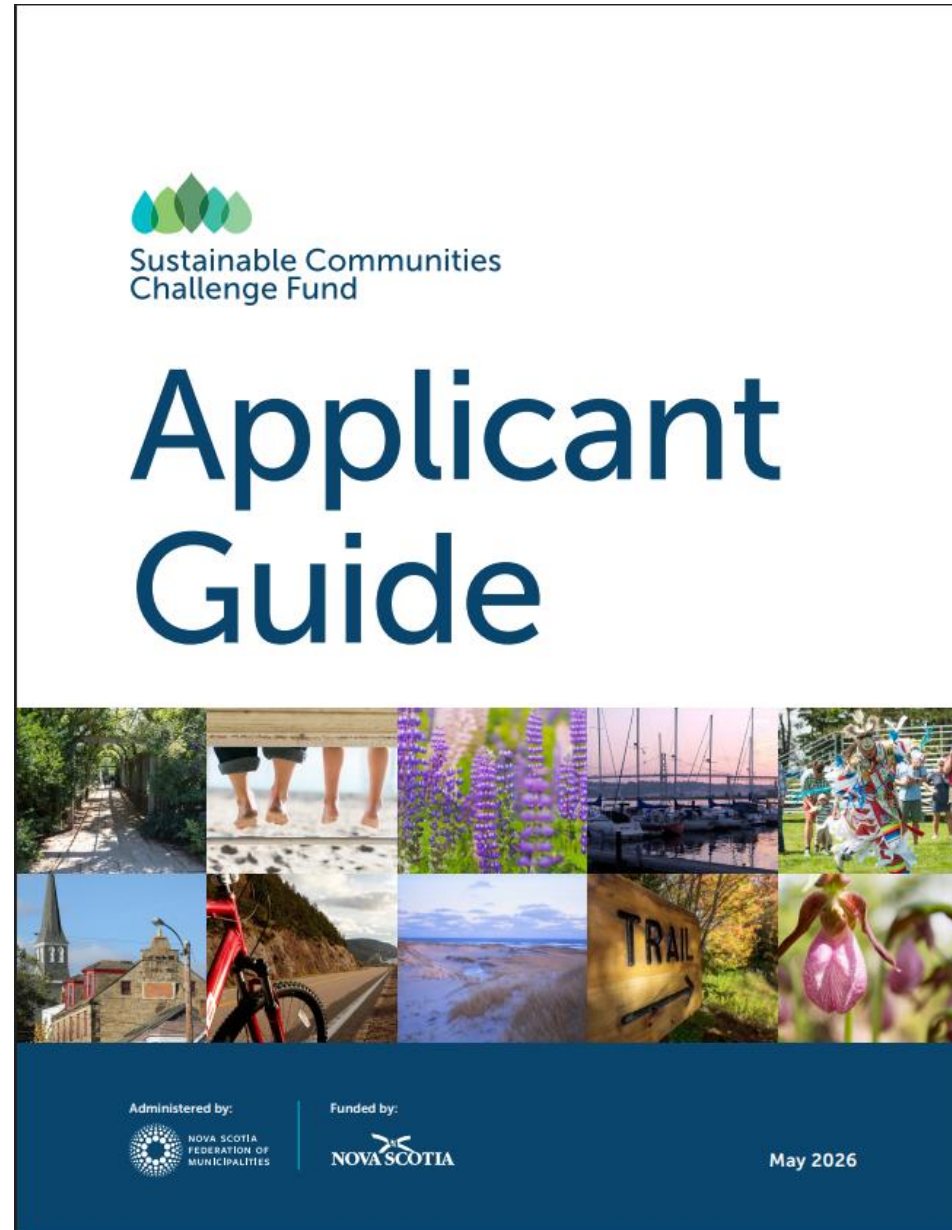
Program Information Session – June 11, 2026
Welcome!

Land Acknowledgement

Presentation content

- Program overview
- Eligible applicants
- Available funding
- Streams and focus areas
- Project selection
- Application and funding process

Key resource



Program overview

The Fund supports community efforts to reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions, or to prepare for and respond to the impacts of a changing climate.

Context

Effective climate action depends on the local context and is closely connected with other challenges and opportunities that communities face.



Key program objectives

Mitigation

- Support the implementation of initiatives that avoid and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to Nova Scotia's **targets for emission reduction**.

Adaptation

- Improve community **capacity to adapt** in an ongoing way to the changing climate and implement projects that help reduce vulnerability and exposure of human and natural systems.

Administration

Developed and administered by:



Funded by:



Staff



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COMMUNICATIONS AND
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GRANT COORDINATOR

Eligible applicants

Lead applicants

Nova Scotia municipalities

First Nations bands and tribal councils

Post-secondary institutions

Non-profit organizations operating in Nova Scotia

Partnerships

Collaboration, partnerships, and regional approaches between communities, organizations and sectors are encouraged.

Equity-deserving groups

Assistance is available for projects led by and/or benefiting equity-deserving communities, who will disproportionately experience the negative effects of climate change and face barriers to mitigation efforts.

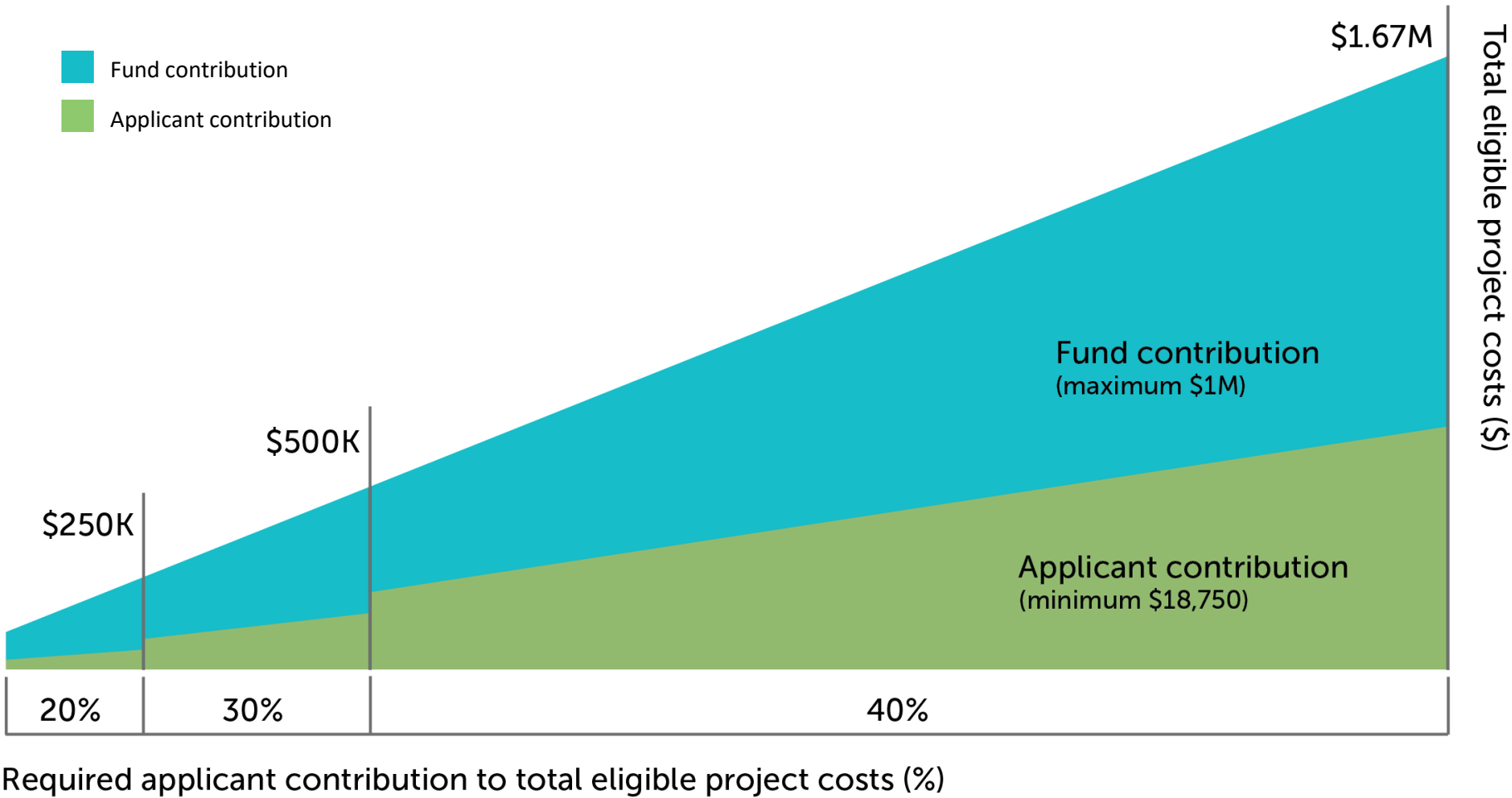


Available funding

Funding key facts

- Minimum \$75,000 per project
- Maximum \$1,000,000 per project
- 60 – 80% of eligible project costs
- Most applicants must contribute a minimum of 20%

Matching funding requirements



Contribution calculator

To assist in project budget planning, use the contribution calculator to determine your contribution amounts and project budget. Enter any one amount for the **Total Cost of Project** and the other three will fill in automatically.

Total Eligible Project Costs	Percentage Applicant Contribution	Applicant Contribution	Fund Contribution
\$ Enter here		\$ Enter here	\$ Enter here

[Calculate »](#) [Reset »](#)

www.nschallengefund.ca/funding-opportunities

Finer points

Payment schedule

Payment	Milestone
75%	At project start
25%	At project completion

In-kind contributions

- Includes staff time, donated material, equipment, and labour, or other non-cash contributions
- Can be a maximum of 10% of eligible project costs

Other funding and contributions

- Disclosure of all funding sources required
- No more than 80% of a project can be funded by the Province of Nova Scotia

Confirmation of matching funds

- Not required for application, but preferred
- Required before funding agreement

Eligible expenses

- Consulting costs for creating application – up to \$5,000 (note that staff salaries are not eligible for reimbursement)
- Costs that are directly linked or exclusively used for the project:
 - Management and professional services
 - Human resources like salaries and benefits
 - Material and supplies
 - Purchase or leasing of equipment and capital assets
 - Transportation costs
 - Facility and rental costs associated with public gatherings and meetings
 - Accessibility supports to enable participation of individuals who have disabilities

Ineligible expenses

- Anything that is not directly related to the implementation of the project
 - Existing employment or operating costs
 - Services or work normally provided by the funding recipient
 - Operating expenses and regularly scheduled maintenance work
 - Materials, equipment or other supplies not exclusively used for the project
- Initiatives that need to be undertaken as a result of federal or provincial regulation
- Purchase or leasing of property
- Financing charges, legal fees, and loan interest payments
- Any Goods and Services Tax (GST) / Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) that is reimbursable by the Canada Revenue Agency and any Provincial Sales Tax that is reimbursable by the province.



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Questions?

Streams and focus areas

Mitigation

1. Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Energy generation and storage
4. Waste management and circular economy
5. Carbon storage and sequestration

Adaptation

1. Climate-ready infrastructure
2. Ecosystems and nature-based solutions
3. Community coordination and planning

Mitigation

Projects in the Mitigation Stream seek to avoid and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to Nova Scotia's targets for emission reduction.

Adaptation

Projects in the Adaptation Stream help communities improve their capacity to adapt to climate change, with the goal of reducing vulnerability and exposure of human and natural systems.

Streams and focus areas

Mitigation

1. Buildings
2. Transportation
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Adaptation

1. Climate-ready infrastructure
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3. Community coordination and planning

Mitigation stream

1. Buildings

- Retrofit community buildings or recreation centers with deep energy upgrades
- Electrify heating, cooling, and ventilation (HVAC) systems and switch to cleaner fuels
- Strengthen green building code standards
- Implement energy efficiency technologies
- Develop the workforce for energy-efficient and high-performance buildings



Mitigation stream

2. Transportation

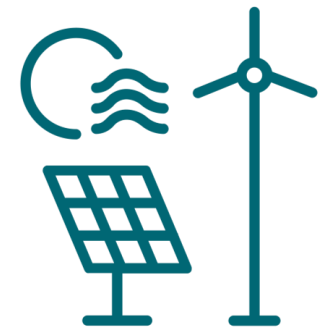
- Conduct fleet conversion studies
- Develop active transportation pathways and networks
- Implement shared mobility services
- Install electric vehicle charging infrastructure



Mitigation stream

3. Energy generation and storage

- Conduct feasibility studies and business cases for renewable energy generation
- Develop new renewable on-site energy production or retrofit existing systems to reduce fossil fuel use
 - Rooftop solar photovoltaic systems
 - Ground-mount solar photovoltaic systems
- Implement on-site combined heat and power projects (i.e. cogeneration)
- Develop energy storage projects



Mitigation stream

4. Waste management and circular economy

- Implement waste prevention or minimization projects
- Develop food rescue/donation system projects
- Carry out recycling, repair, refurbishing, or material recovery projects
- Develop anaerobic digestion projects
- Create policies to improve waste management practices



Mitigation stream

5. Carbon storage and sequestration

- Restore and enhance local seagrasses for blue carbon storage
- Enhance community forests to study the increase in carbon capture



Streams and focus areas

Mitigation

1. Buildings
2. Transportation
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Adaptation

1. Climate-ready infrastructure
2. Ecosystems and nature-based solutions
3. Community coordination and planning

Adaptation stream

1. Climate-ready infrastructure

- Reinforcement, rehabilitation, or modification of assets that protect community infrastructure and services from various climate risks
- Flood risk mitigation measures or infrastructure projects, such as channel improvement, flow regulation, and other flood-proofing measures
- Mapping of vulnerable and at-risk community infrastructure and services
- Storm surge protection measures that reduce the impact of high tides, storm surges, and coastal flooding on community infrastructure
- Groundwater protection measures that safeguard drinking water quality and supply from contamination, over-extraction, and saltwater intrusion



Adaptation stream

2. Ecosystems and nature-based solutions

- Projects that address the intersection of fresh water and coastal system impacts, including storm water, storm surge, saltwater intrusion, sea level rise, ice jams, etc.
- Protection and restoration for cultural assets and areas of significance
- Restoring wetlands or salt marshes for flood management
- Restoring dune systems to protect communities from coastal hazards
- Managing community forests to reduce floods, landslides and forest fire risks



Adaptation stream

3. Community coordination and planning

- Forest and wildfire strategy or vulnerability assessments
- Flood mapping, preparation, and prevention
- Sea level rise adaptation and managing retreat from shoreline
- Water sustainability planning, and drought mapping, preparation, and prevention



Prioritizing water resiliency projects

The Fund will give preference to projects that help communities adapt to drought conditions, manage water shortages, and strengthen long-term water security. Priority will be given to projects that:

- Improve reliable access to water for communities and critical services
- Increase water storage, conservation, and efficiency
- Strengthen understanding and management of local water resources
- Support nature-based or regional solutions that enhance water availability and quality

Project selection

Technical Advisory Committee

- Applications will be reviewed and scored by an external committee of people who have expertise and/or connections to community-level climate change mitigation and/or adaptation.
- The Technical Advisory Committee will evaluate grant applications and come to a final score for each project through consensus.
- The Minister of Environment and Climate Change makes final funding decisions.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation matrix is available in the Applicant Guide.

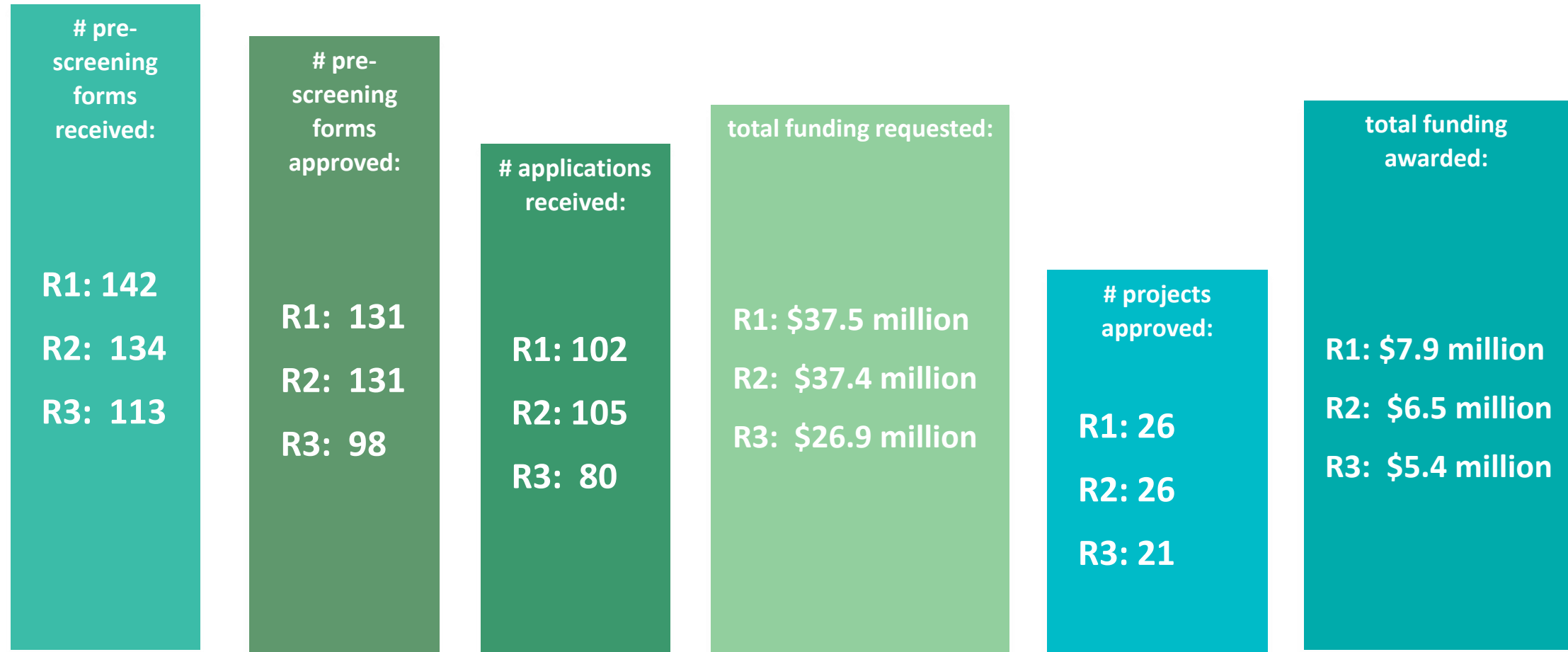
- A) Relevance to community needs and challenges – 15 points
- B) Core project impact (mitigation or adaptation) – 30 points
- C) Co-benefits & secondary objectives – 10 points
- D) Organizational capacity – 10 points
- E) Measurement and evaluation – 10 points
- F) Project budget and work plan – 25 points

Co-benefits

- Enhance social **equity** and reduce barriers to an equitable climate response.
- Generate local, **green jobs**, and grow the clean inclusive economy.
- Reduce costs and improve **affordability**.
- Build and contribute to community **wellbeing and health**.
- Work with, protect and enhance **natural assets**.
- Contribute to a **broader long-term shift** and build capacity for future climate change action.
- Generate **shareable knowledge** and support replication in other communities in Nova Scotia.
- Otherwise **benefit a community** or group of communities.
- **Please note:** If a task is committed to in your application, it must be reflected in your workbook to be considered valid.

Lessons learned and new information

Submissions received and approved in rounds 1 to 3



Application considerations

Likely to fund projects that:

- Focus on impact
- Have tangible or measurable outcomes or outputs
- Have strong partnerships
- Are effective, efficient and economical
- Address social equity
- Reduce GHG emissions or reduce risk, vulnerability, hazard of climate events

Application considerations

Unlikely to fund projects that:

- Are already underway
- Involve new builds or additions to existing buildings
- Focus on early-stage research and development for new technologies
- Relate to ocean technology
- Primarily support advertising
- Centre around academic conferences and symposia
- Include the purchase of new light-duty passenger electric vehicles

Round 1 to 3 takeaways

- It is very important to articulate how your project:
 1. aligns with the Fund's core objectives, and
 2. addresses an identified need in your community.
- Less is more.
- Each application should contain only 1 project.
- Review basic application requirements (Section 5.2 in the Applicant Guide), such as the requirement to have completed all necessary pre-feasibility and design work if applying for an implementation project, and for any solar installation, ensuring the building is energy-efficient and suitable to support the installation.

Round 1 to 3 takeaways

- If you have a large project with various components, your application should focus on the component for which you are seeking a Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund grant.
- Ensure that every deliverable included in your application is also incorporated into your workplan and budget; otherwise, it will not be considered valid.
- Use only the current workbook found in the Resource Hub on the Fund website: nschallengefund.ca/resource-hub/
- Project start dates should not be before the Fall of 2026.

What is new this round?

- **Prioritization of water resiliency projects:** Initiatives that improve community resilience during drought conditions, strengthen water-shortage management, and enhance long-term water security will be given priority.
- **Compressed timeline to complete projects :** Applicants must demonstrate their ability to fully complete the project by November 30, 2027. Projects with secured matching funds and required permits at the time of the funding decision may be viewed more favourably.



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Application and funding process

Step 1 – Pre-screening

1. Review the Applicant Guide.
2. Review eligible and ineligible costs.
3. Create a free account on Submittable (our grants management platform)
- 4. Submit pre-screening form no later than Thu, Jun 25 at 2:00 pm.**

If your project is a good fit for the program based on staff review, you will be invited to submit the full application form.

Step 2 – Full application

1. Receive invitation to complete full application in Submittable.
2. Review the Applicant Guide, especially evaluation criteria.
3. Download the Applicant Workbook Excel file found in the *Resource Hub* on the Fund website.
4. Gather supporting documentation (confirmation of matching fund, permits, letters of support, feasibility studies, quotes, etc.)
5. **Submit full application no later than Thu, July 23 at 2:00 pm.**

Funding agreement

A contract that is unique to each grant recipient and includes:

- Detailed financial terms of the funding
- Eligible costs
- Payment schedule
- Reporting requirements
- Milestones and deliverables

Reporting requirements

Brief quarterly reporting:

- Is the project on track?
- Any challenges?

Project impact final report

- How the grant was spent (financial report)
- How activities contributed to achieving objectives and co-benefits
- GHG reduction assessment for most mitigation projects
- Participant feedback survey

Key dates and deadlines

Thu, May 28: The Fund opened for intake of funding applications.

Thu, June 11, 10:30 am: Today's informational webinar

Thu, June 25, at 2:00 pm: Pre-screening deadline*

Tue, July 7, 10:30 am: Workbook webinar

Thu, July 23, 2:00 pm: Full application deadline

July-August 2026: Evaluation of submissions

Fall 2026: Funding decisions are expected to be finalized and applicants notified.

November 30, 2027 – All successful projects must be completed.

Additional support

- **Explore additional climate-project funding** by contacting the Climate Funding Navigator at the Department of Environment and Climate Change:
ClimateFundingNavigator@novascotia.ca.
- **Get help navigating provincial permits and approvals** through a dedicated Business Relationship Manager (see Applicant Guide, p. 8).
- **Access support for coastal projects** from the Province's Coastal Navigators for using the Coastal Hazard Mapping Tool: coastalnavigator@novascotia.ca or 1-888-570-4240.



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Questions

Thank you for joining us and best of luck!



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Email us at info@sccfns.ca

Visit: www.nschallengefund.ca