

Connecting British Columbia Program

Economic Recovery Intake

FAQs

What is the Connecting British Columbia Economic Recovery Intake?

- In addition to the scheduled quarterly intakes, the Connecting British Columbia Program (Program) has a short-term opening for funding applications that can be implemented immediately and completed by October 31, 2021, to expand connectivity in rural and Indigenous communities and along rural highway segments.

How is this funding different from the regular Connecting British Columbia program?

- The funding objective is for a rapid response, and to enable service providers to immediately expand or enhance connectivity.
- Program criteria changes such as increased funding ratios, expanded scope to include highway connectivity, and support for a wider range of eligible technologies.
- Broadband projects that achieve 50/10 Mbps are preferred, however projects that deliver a minimum of 25/5 Mbps speed are also eligible for funding.

What are the targets for this Economic Recovery Intake?

- It is anticipated that approximately 200 rural and Indigenous communities will benefit. Highway connectivity improvements include WiFi in at least 14 highway rest areas, 4 call boxes and 140 kms of improved cell service along unconnected highways as part of the Economic Recovery Intake.

Why is highway connectivity part of the Program's Economic Recovery Intake?

- Cellular connectivity along provincial highways and rural communities supports improved public safety, regional economic development and tourism.

Why is highway connectivity at rest areas included as part Program's Economic Recovery Intake?

- Community and highway connectivity will include the expansion of Wi-Fi service at rest areas i.e., rest areas along the route that can allow the travelers to access the internet and cell services at key locations along major highways, particularly where cellular services are not feasible.

Why are call boxes included as part of the Economic Recovery Intake?

- Alternate technologies including call boxes provide access to emergency services along remote highways where there is no infrastructure to support WiFi or cellular services.

Are inland ferries part of the intake?

- Yes, as inland ferries are part of the highway system, terminals could be considered as rest areas and therefore qualify for funding.

How will the highway connectivity funding be administered?

- The highway connectivity funding opportunity will be administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust until the funds are fully disbursed.

Who are the eligible applicants?

- Service providers including for-profit and not-for profit and other organizations based in B.C., who own and operate their own network and supply services to residents.
 - All eligible applicants should have experience deploying and operating the proposed broadband infrastructure in Canada for a minimum of three years.
 - Entities without sufficient experience may partner with an established service provider to complete the project.
- Eligible applicants must agree to own and operate the proposed network for three years after the project is complete.

When is the deadline for applying?

- There is no current cut-off date to apply however, the program is only open to receiving applications that can be completed by October 31, 2021.
- Northern Development reserves the right to adjust intake deadlines at any time.

How quickly will the funding decisions be made?

- Given this is a program designed for rapid response, complete applications received during the month will receive a decision no later than the 15th of the following month.

How much funding is available for approved projects?

- The program will fund up to 90% of eligible costs with remainder of costs expected to come from the applicant or other sources.
- The maximum grant request is \$10M per project or broken into separate projects without dependencies on approving more than one project.

Why does this program not fund transport connectivity infrastructure projects?

- New transport infrastructure projects are more complex and may take years to complete due to processes including permitting, acquisition of resources that may not be immediately available.
- Service providers that would like to submit an application for new transport infrastructure builds are encouraged to apply to one of the Phase 3 quarterly intakes of the Connecting British Columbia program.

Is this intake contingent on leveraging funds from other federal programs?

- No, funding for this intake is not dependent on other funding programs.

How do you apply for funding?

- Northern Development administers the Connecting British Columbia funding program. Applications must be sent directly to Northern Development for review and approval.
- The application form can be found here: <https://www.northerndevlopment.bc.ca/funding-programs/partner-programs/connecting-british-columbia/economic-recovery-intake/>
- Any questions regarding this intake must be in writing and addressed to Northern Development at connectingbc@northerndevlopment.bc.ca.

Where can questions about the Connecting British Columbia Program's Economic Recovery Intake be directed?

- All enquiries about the Connecting British Columbia program can be directed to:

Northern Development Initiative Trust

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