

Northern Community Shuttle Program

Application Guide – 2026 Intake



Program Overview

This program provides grant funding for passenger transportation services that help northerners access services and amenities, visit friends and family and connect to long-haul transportation options along major highway corridors.

Funding for this program has been provided by the Province of B.C.'s Ministry of Transportation and Transit and administered by Northern Development, who both recognize the continued challenges northerners face accessing safe, reliable transportation options.

Program funds are available to eligible communities, not-for-profits and transportation companies throughout Northern Development's [service area](#).

Funding Terms

The maximum grant applicants can seek is **80%** of the eligible budget to a maximum of **\$75,000** to support operating costs.

Application Intake Deadlines

The Northern Community Shuttle Program will be delivered through a single call for proposals. Please submit your application (with all required attachments) to transportation@northerndevelopment.bc.ca by **4:00PM September 16, 2026**.

Eligible and qualified projects will be reviewed by the Northern Development Board for a decision in November 2026.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

*All applicants must be located within Northern Development's service region.

- Registered First Nations bands, wholly owned Indigenous development corporations and tribal councils, Inuit and Metis organizations
- Local governments and wholly owned local government corporations
- Registered non-profits
- For profit transportation companies based in the Trust's service area with a minimum of three years' operating a similar service

Applicants are responsible for determining if they require a passenger transportation license. If one is required the applicant must indicate whether they have an existing passenger transportation license to operate the proposed service.

Preference will be given to applicants who have a minimum of three (3) years' experience operating transportation services within British Columbia and, if required for the service, who have an existing passenger transportation license.

Eligible applicants do not include the Provincial government or any of its Crown corporations and agencies.

Eligible Projects

Any currently operating community shuttle service based within Northern Development's service area may apply to the program, but **priority** will be given to applications that provide services for smaller, underserved communities located at a distance from hub communities or off major highway corridors that are not currently served by public transportation. **Proposed shuttles must be open to the general public** and not limited to one specific user group or purpose (i.e. medical travel or for seniors).

Eligible projects do not include air or marine services.

Please note that applications for services that connect to major hubs outside of the Trust's service area will also be considered. For example, this might include a community shuttle service that originates in Ashcroft or Logan Lake and provides service to and from Kamloops. Another example would be a service that originates in Dawson Creek or Pouce Coupe and provides service to and from Grand Prairie.

Examples of these service areas include but are not limited to:

Northwest

- South side of Francois Lake
- Lakes District Indigenous communities
- Granisle
- Gitanyow and Gitwangak
- Stewart and Meziadin
- The Nass Valley
- Haida Gwaii – rural Graham Island
- Bella Coola Valley

Prince George Area

- McBride – Dunster – Tete Jaune – Valemound
- Mackenzie – McLeod Lake – Bear Lake
- Hixon
- Fort St. James – Nak'azdli – Tachi – Takla
- Fort Fraser – Nadleh Whut'en – Fraser Lake – Stellat'en

Northeast

- Tumbler Ridge
- Chetwynd – Moberly Lake – Hudson's Hope
- Pouce Coupe
- Taylor – Fort St. John – Blueberry – Halfway River
- Fort Nelson

Cariboo- Chilcotin/Lillooet

- Nazko
- Wells
- Xatsull – Soda Creek
- Likely – Horsefly
- Canim Lake – Forest Grove
- Clinton – Cache Creek – Ashcroft
- Lillooet – Bridge River

Eligible Costs

- **Operating costs** *(up to 80% to a maximum of \$75,000 funding toward the eligible operating budget)*
 - Salary and benefits for the ongoing operation of the transportation services (i.e. coordinator, driver)
 - Maintenance costs
 - Fuel
 - Booking services
 - Driver training
 - Insurance
 - Legal services for drafting of agreements
 - Public outreach, awareness and marketing costs associated with promotion and delivery of the service
 - Rental equipment
 - Other costs as approved by Northern Development
- **Other costs**
 - PST

Other Eligible Costs

(Monetized Donations)

- When noting monetized donations in the budget and under other funding sources in the application, applicants must attach confirmation of the committed donation(s)
 - Monetized donations must be documented once projects commence and receipts must be obtained

Ineligibility

Ineligible Costs

- **Capital costs**
 - Vehicle purchase
 - Purchase/installment of accessibility equipment
 - Purchase of tires
 - Capital vehicle leasing costs
 - Real estate and other fees related to purchasing or leasing land, buildings, or facilities
- **Operational costs**
 - Upgrades to rented, leases or owned buildings
 - Existing or ongoing administrative costs to the organization
- **Other costs**
 - GST
 - In-kind volunteer labour or internal equipment use
 - Costs incurred (work started and/or deposits paid) prior to signing an agreement with Northern Development

Application and Program Requirements

Only applications that meet these requirements will be processed.

- Complete [Application Form](#)
- Detailed project budget using Northern Development's [Project Budget Template](#) (required; in Excel format)
- Supplemental [Service Breakdown Template](#) (required; in Excel format)
- Verification of approval from other funding sources (e.g., approval letter or contract; required prior to approval)
 - At least 20% of the total project funding must come from the applicant or sources other than Northern Development, including monetized donations, applicant contributions and other approved grant funding or corporate donations.
- Most recent annual financial statements
 - Must be specific to the legal entity applying for funding and may not be from a related organization
 - Statements submitted must be in the final approved form, including signatures from the organization's representatives
 - Statements must be submitted in their entirety; partial documents will not be accepted
 - The following types may be submitted:
 - Notice to reader financial statements
 - Review engagement financial statements
 - Audited financial statements
- A **detailed proposal/plan** for the service including
 - Routes and schedules of the service (frequency, days of service/proposed trip times, type of service etc.)
 - Map showing locations of stops or service area
 - Passenger fare structure and payment methods
 - Booking method
 - Asset management plan for vehicles and equipment
 - Detailed vehicle information including make, model, year, current kilometers, seating capacity, accessibility features etc.
 - Driver qualifications and training offered (ie. general safety, de-escalation, Indigenous cultural awareness, diversity, equity, inclusion, sexual exploitation/human trafficking)
 - Any policies/plans for elements including but not limited to:
 - How primary driver absence is handled
 - Emergency response plans (ie. wildfire, extreme weather, flooding)
 - Communications equipment and protocols
 - Maintenance plans and schedules
 - How the service will be advertised and how service disruptions will be messaged to riders and the general public
 - Plans for the future sustainability of the service post grant funding
 - Information about the current operations of the service, including but not limited to:
 - Ridership statistics
 - *If applicable:* changes proposed from the existing service (ie. service days, stop locations, etc.)
- Society certificate of incorporation (required for not-for-profit applicants)
- If applicable: Detailed quotes for consultant services, software costs, etc.

- If applicable: Letters of support from community organizations
- If applicable: Copy of passenger transportation [license](#)
- If applicable: Lease agreement/or user agreement
- If applicable: Financial plan, business case or other market research
- If applicable: Partnership agreement(s) outlining each partner's responsibilities

Note: Applications approved for funding will be required to provide proof of commercial vehicle insurance through ICBC prior to any payment being disbursed. Successful applicants will also need to supply Northern Development with copies of driver's licenses.

Application Assessment

Northern Development staff undertake comprehensive due diligence of each funding application received, which may include contacting relevant agencies and organizations as part of the review process.

All projects are assessed on the strength of the application, requested funding percentage, applicant contribution, and strategic factors identified in the funding application package.

The assessment of the required level of funding will take into consideration all other sources of funding available to the applicant. Preference will be given to projects that leverage incremental funding from local government, First Nations, Metis and Inuit organizations, the provincial government, federal government, the private sector and other non-government sources.

The Northern Community Shuttle Program will give priority to geographic dispersion of services throughout Northern B.C.

Northern Development will also use other key considerations as it assesses applications, including:

- Preference will be given to applicants that demonstrate their plans for the future sustainability of the service post grant funding (ie. Have a fare structure that assists with covering costs)
- The extent of Northern Development's financial contribution to the total eligible budget
- The extent of the applicant's financial and/or non-financial contribution to the total eligible budget
- A financial plan that includes:
 - Operating costs that support successful operations, including expected fuel, maintenance and labour costs
 - An indication of whether a fare would be charged for passengers and the amount of that fare
 - The organization's approach to qualified driver recruitment and retention
 - A demonstrated need for the program funding and overall strength and feasibility of the proposed plan
 - How information about the service will be marketed to ensure public awareness of the service and ease of access to book passage
- Demonstrated experience and/or capacity to operate the proposed service and carry out the workplan, outlining all tasks and resources needed
- Evidence of broad-based support from multiple stakeholders (i.e., letters of support or funding contributions confirmed via a letter from the contributing entity)

- The service promotes partnerships and inclusive ridership between Indigenous communities, industry, businesses, local governments, school boards and non-profit societies. Applications demonstrating partnership(s) with any of the listed bodies will be given preference
- Size of the catchment area (population served) of the service
- Estimated employment sustainment and/or creation
- Extent to which the proposed service meets local needs (tailored services that promote access to work, education, health services, social connections, etc.), with the potential to maximize local social or economic benefits
- Level of coordination (synchronized, flexible schedules) and inter-connectivity of the proposed services between transportation modes and connections to other services such as BC Bus North, BC Transit, Northern Health Connections, Interior Health Connections, etc.
- Inclusivity and accessibility of the proposed service to accommodate youth, seniors and persons with disabilities

Reporting and Payments

Applicants will be required to submit quarterly operating reporting to Northern Development. Applicants will be allowed to submit up to four interim financial reports (with supporting evidence) for reimbursement of expenses incurred throughout the year of operations. If an applicant chooses not to submit any interim reports, payment will be made at the end of the funding term following review of the final report.

Applicants should review the [Reporting Materials](#) and ensure they are comfortable with them prior to applying.

To Apply

Please review all program documents in detail as incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Completed application forms with all supplementary materials should be provided electronically to transportation@northerndevelopment.bc.ca.

Questions?

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