



LowCarbonCommunities

program description
2019 – 2020

Introduction

The Nova Scotia Department of Energy and Mines wants to help communities to create long lasting greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions and to develop bright ideas for low-carbon, clean energy projects. The Low Carbon Communities (LCC) initiative has been designed to help jump-start projects and activities by funding the development of feasibility studies and plans, engagement activities, and implementation of a variety of low-carbon initiatives.

Expression of Interest (EOI) deadline is on **September 13, 2019**.

Application submission deadline is on **September 20, 2019**.

To access an application form to submit a full proposal, applicants must first submit a summary of their project idea(s) in an [expression of interest](#) available online.

If you have questions, please contact the Program Coordinator at lowcarboncommunities@novascotia.ca.

Program Overview

LCC will help communities leverage funding presently available for energy projects, and help applicants prepare the plans and studies necessary to implement projects drawing on other funds [see: List below.] Low Carbon Communities will also help communities capture more energy cost savings and job creation by helping promote the new efficiency and solar programs supported by the Low Carbon Economy Fund.

We recognize that some communities are at different stages in their clean energy and climate change planning, and this initiative is designed to meet the needs of communities anywhere in the process of planning, engagement, and implementation. Our intention is that LCC will inspire communities to take on low carbon projects and increase uptake and awareness of funding programs.

Low Carbon Communities funding is open to eligible community groups including municipalities, universities, First Nations Bands, and non-profit organizations that have community connected projects. We encourage all applicants to connect with surrounding communities, local organizations, utilities, and private sector businesses when developing project ideas and applications.

The Province has allocated a fund of \$600,000 to the Department of Energy and Mines to advance low carbon projects in Nova Scotia communities. This grant will be awarded in the 2019/20 fiscal year.

Application Categories

The program considers applications under three categories:

1 Advanced Buildings

Projects under this category may include:

- Community building non-electric efficiency (energy audits and design plans)
- Demonstration of deep energy retrofits and/or innovative heating systems
- Building energy performance benchmarking, modeling, data collection, and analysis
- Advanced building design and plans (including: net zero, passive house, zero carbon, LEED etc.)
- Advanced building policies – such as bylaw development, strategies, and implementation plans
- Advanced building industry workforce development initiatives

Advanced Buildings will provide grants of up to **\$75,000** per project in this category.

2 Clean Electricity and Energy Transformation

Projects under this category may include:

- Smart grids and storage – plans and feasibility studies
- New energy financing mechanisms
- Community or neighbourhood energy planning
- Solar gardens and solar feasibility studies
- District energy – plans and feasibility studies
- Project strategies and implementation plans

Clean Electricity and Energy Transformation will provide grants of up to **\$75,000** per project in this category.

3 Community Building and Engagement

Projects under this category may include:

- Municipal staff training, capacity building, or networks
- Education – energy literacy initiatives
- Marketing and communication – social marketing and support for existing low-carbon programs
- Public engagement activities
- Community energy conservation challenges and other education and awareness campaigns

Community Building and Engagement will provide grants of up to **\$50,000** per project in this category.

Please Note: If a project falls into multiple categories, it will be first considered under the advanced buildings or the clean electricity and energy transformation category even if there are supporting engagement or education components to the project. [Please see the Connect2 program description for transportation related projects.](#)

Evaluation Standards

We request applicants to complete an Evaluation Plan when submitting their application to show how they plan on assessing the goals they aim to achieve through their project completion. The Measurability and Evaluation portion of the project will make up 10% of the total score. The purpose of this exercise is to encourage applicants to think of the best practices to achieve the proposed outcome.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

- This program is open to municipalities, universities, First Nations Bands, and non-profit organizations that have community connected projects. Non-profits must be registered entities and all projects are encouraged to show support from partners and local communities through letters of support.
- The primary partner must be based in Nova Scotia and ideally will be based in the community or region the project will serve.

Eligible Projects

- Must have all necessary permits at the time of application
- Must provide proof of matching funds
- It is recommended that the project be identified in a plan or Municipal document, or have a letter of support from Council
- Multiple submissions are allowed; however, the priority level of each submission must be identified

Examples of projects NOT eligible for funding

- Project is substantially a single large capital expense
- Project has not demonstrated strong community support
- Project does not materially advance the objectives of the [Pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change](#)

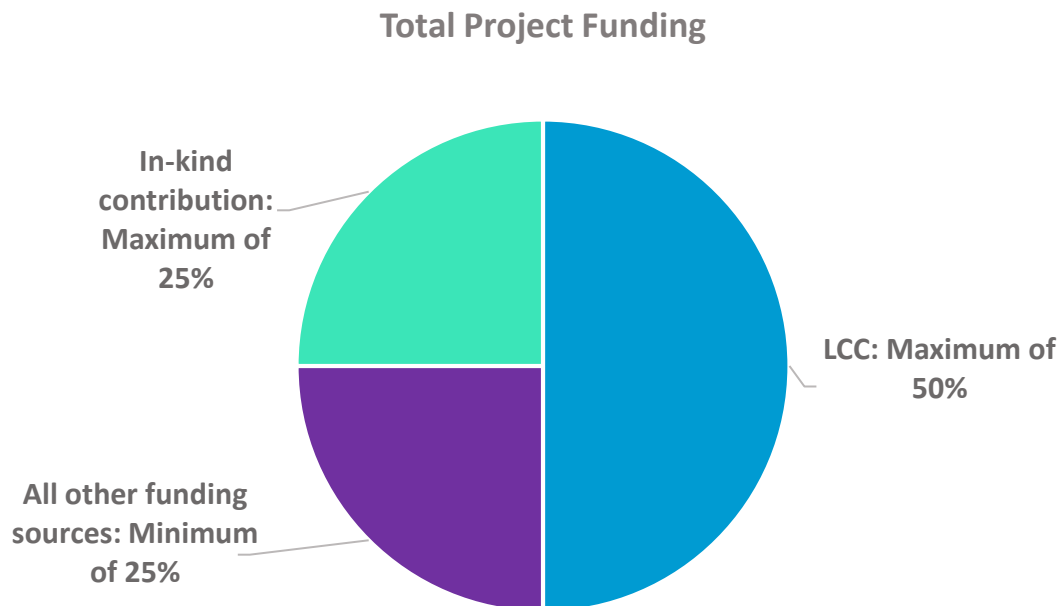
LCC Funding Guidelines

This grant will cover up to **50% of eligible costs**, up to a maximum of **\$75,000** for Advanced Buildings and Clean Electricity and Energy Transformation categories, and up to a maximum of **\$50,000** for Community Building and Engagement projects.

All reasonable and direct project costs are eligible for funding under this program. Low Carbon Communities staff reserve the right to question/decline funding for costs that are deemed unreasonable.

All applicants must provide a matching fund contribution that meets the following criteria:

- **In-kind contribution of no more than 25% of the total project cost**
 - Qualified in-kind contributions include; donated material, equipment and labour from another party (in-kind reporting form will be provided upon reporting time)
 - Incremental costs incurred by the applicant or partners must be in association with the proposed project. To be eligible, incremental costs must be new costs incurred because of the initiative, including new space provided for the project or volunteer labour associated with the project.
- **Remaining funding: minimum 25%**
 - Funding can include other sources of municipal, federal or community government contributions and/or other sources of funding, including resources from community organizations, non-profits or businesses.



Assessment Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by an interdepartmental committee of NS Government staff. Projects are scored on the extent to which it meets each criteria. Applicants will be expected to address each of the questions below in the application form.

Criteria	Scoring
Project Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project addresses an identified challenge of the community, with the aim of transforming the community toward a low carbon lifestyle. 	20
Partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The applicant has effectively engaged with all relevant groups impacted by the project or has a plan to do so. - The proposal represents new partnerships within the community. - There is a clear understanding of other funding sources that could support the current or future stages of the proposed project. 	20
Strategic Alignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has a clear alignment with the principles and the applicant demonstrates how the project will further these principles: - <i>GHG Reduction Potential:</i> Either the project itself, or future stages of the project, have a clear ability to reduce GHGs in the community. There is a plan to measure and report the GHG reductions. - <i>Action Orientation and Innovation:</i> How does the project idea lead directly to change, or gather the resources needed for that change? Has this project idea been done before? If so, how are you building on it to make it better? - <i>Local Economic Benefits & Cost-effectiveness:</i> Job creation, local suppliers and consultants will be used where possible, and development of skills and supports for low carbon industries. Project is cost effective and has a reasonable budget for the anticipated outcomes. - <i>Community Driven Initiative:</i> The project idea was developed from the community and takes local context into consideration. There is demonstrated local support and engagement of stakeholders (letter of support). - <i>Social Equity and Accessibility:</i> Projects with a focus on energy poverty reduction; or which improve access to energy and transportation services and products to underserved communities and demographics. 	30
Measurability and Evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a plan to evaluate the project's impacts, including engagement with the community, and successes and learnings around project management. - The project proponent knows what the project's success looks like and what the intended outcomes are. 	10
Budget and Workplan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific deliverables for the project have been identified, with a clear and achievable timeline for deliverables. - The applicant demonstrates experience and understanding of how the project will be managed and completed on time. - Projects with diverse funding partners are encouraged 	20

Application Submission Process

- Step 1** Submit a brief overview ([Expression of Interest](#)) of your project idea as soon as possible online.
- Step 2** You will receive an application form by e-mail from Department of Energy and Mines within 48 hours only if your EOI has been approved. The Program Coordinator may contact you with questions.
- Step 3** After receiving an application via e-mail, submit the completed application to lowcarboncommunities@novascotia.ca no later than **September 20, 2019**. Early application submission is highly encouraged.
- **Scanned applications or hard copies are not accepted.**
 - **Visual materials are encouraged.**

Due to the increased popularity of the LCC Program and limited funding availability, we encourage applicants to **put forth strong application packages**. Every round of the program is independent from the previous rounds. Applicants will be scored based on their alignment with the criteria set in the program description above. Applicants will be expected to ensure all required supporting documents are provided at the time of submission.

Applicants are welcome to contact the Program Coordinator for support while completing their application packages.

Timeline

- **September 13, 2019:** Deadline to submit expression of interest
- **September 20, 2019:** Deadline to submit completed application
- **October and forward:** Awards announcements

Questions? Contact the Program Coordinator at: lowcarboncommunities@novascotia.ca

Category	Project	Goal	Indicators of success	What data source will you be monitoring?	What evaluation tool will you use?	Main question(s)	Timeframe
Connect2 – AT Infrastructure	Adding protected bike lane infrastructure to create a bike lane network/minimum grid	Increased mode share Increased connectivity	Increased Cyclist usage	Cyclist Counts	AT/Bicycle Counter	By adding additional bike lanes that complete the network, will we see an increased use from our baseline?	Install an AT Counter over a two-week period
Connect2 – Community building and engagement	Creating awareness of our town's current AT corridors through an online presence campaign	Increased Unique Engagement Online	Increased unique online presence traffic Counts	Unique Page visits More engagement (likes, comments, shares, retweets, etc.)	Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Website) Tracking Google Analytics	By launching an online presence campaign on AT in our town, did we experience more engagement online (in comparison to our baseline)?	Over the course of our campaign period
LCC - Electricity	Community energy plan	Develop a long-term energy use and reduction plan	Proven energy use reduction, reduction in household energy poverty	Energy consumption data (from bills or utility provider); municipal buildings or households	Excel database Household surveys	How will our community reduce GHG and energy use?	Annual monitoring to meet 2030 energy plan goal

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Examples of Potential Funding Partners

Environment and Climate Change Canada

- [Low Carbon Economy Fund](#)
- [EcoAction Community Funding Program](#)

Nova Scotia Department of Energy and Mines

- [Solar Electricity for Community Buildings Pilot Program](#)

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)

- [Innovative Communities Fund](#)

Infrastructure Canada

- [Investing in Canada Plan](#)

Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

- [New programs \(federal budget 2019\)](#)
- [Green Municipal Fund](#)
- [Partners for Climate Protection](#)

Nova Scotia based programs

- [SolarHomes](#)
- [Efficiency Nova Scotia PACE](#) & [Clean Energy Financing PACE](#)
- [On-site Energy Managers](#)