

Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program

2021 Program & Application Guide

1. Introduction

In March 2019, the Province of BC released their poverty reduction strategy: [TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#). Mandated through the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*, the strategy set targets to reduce the overall poverty rate in British Columbia by at least 25%, and the child poverty rate by at least 50%, by 2024. *TogetherBC* is based on four principles: affordability, opportunity, reconciliation, and social inclusion. These principles guided the priority action areas that form the core of the strategy.

With investments from across government, *TogetherBC* reflects government's commitment to reduce poverty and make life more affordable for British Columbians. It includes policy initiatives and investments designed to lift people up, break the cycle of poverty, and build a better BC for everyone.

Local governments have long-advocated for a provincial poverty reduction strategy and are crucial partners in this work. They are at the front-line of seeing the impacts of poverty in their communities and play a central role in developing local solutions with community partners and other levels of government.

Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program

The intent of the Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program is to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level and to support the Province's poverty reduction strategy. In 2020, the Province provided \$5 million over three years and the program is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). The first intake of the program in Spring 2020 awarded over \$1 million to more than 50 local governments across the province.

2. Eligible Applicants

All local governments (municipalities and regional districts) in BC are eligible to apply.

Eligible applicants can submit one application per intake, including regional applications or participation as a partnering applicant in a regional application.

3. Eligible Projects

To qualify for funding, applications must demonstrate the extent to which proposed activities will reduce poverty at the local level.

To qualify for funding, projects must:

- Focus on one or more of the six priority action areas identified in *TogetherBC*:

○ Housing	○ Education and training	○ Income supports
○ Families, children and youth	○ Employment	○ Social supports
- Be a new project (retroactive funding is not available);
- Be capable of completion by the applicant within one year from the date of grant approval;

- Involve key sectors of the community including community-based poverty reduction organizations, people with lived experience of poverty, businesses, local First Nations and/or Indigenous organizations.

Within the six priority areas, eligible projects may also address one or more of the other key priorities identified in *TogetherBC*: mental health and addictions, food security, transportation, and/or access to health care.

Regional Projects

Funding requests from two or more eligible applicants for regional projects may be submitted as a single application for eligible, collaborative projects. In this case, the maximum funding available would be based on the number of eligible applicants included in the application. It is expected that regional projects will demonstrate cost-efficiencies in the total grant request.

The primary applicant submitting the application for a regional project is required to submit a resolution as outlined in Section 6 of this guide. Each partnering applicant is required to submit a resolution that clearly states their approval for the primary applicant to apply for, receive, and manage the grant funding on their behalf.

The total funding request for regional projects cannot exceed \$150,000.

4. Eligible & Ineligible Costs & Activities

Eligible Costs & Activities

Eligible costs are direct costs that are approved by the Evaluation Committee, properly and reasonably incurred, and paid by the applicant to carry out eligible activities. Eligible costs can only be incurred from the date of application submission until the final report is submitted.

Stream 1: Poverty Reduction Plans and Assessments

The intent of this funding stream is to support communities to develop or update assessments or plans in order to reduce poverty at the local level. The funding maximum under Stream 1 is \$25,000 for a single applicant and \$150,000 for regional applications.

Under Stream 1, eligible activities must be cost-effective and include:

- Development of a local Poverty Reduction plan or assessment that addresses one or more of the six priority action areas as identified in *TogetherBC*;
- Engagement of people living in poverty or with a lived experience of poverty in planning activities;
- Adding a poverty reduction lens including specific activities and outcomes to support people living in poverty, to existing plans or policies, such as:
 - Official Community Plans or community or neighbourhood plans;
 - Zoning and other policies;
 - Development permit requirements;
 - Emergency response, evacuation, and/or emergency support services plans;
 - Food security and food systems planning;
 - Community planning processes related to social determinants of health (e.g. affordable housing, homelessness, etc.).

Stream 2: Poverty Reduction Action

The intent of this funding stream is to support communities to undertake local projects in order to reduce poverty at the local level. The funding maximum under Stream 2 is \$50,000 for a single applicant and \$150,000 for regional applications.

In order to be eligible for Stream 2 funding, eligible applicants are required to have completed a Poverty Reduction plan or assessment, or demonstrate that their Official Community Plan, or an equivalent plan, is inclusive of poverty reduction principles.

Under Stream 2, eligible activities must be cost-effective and may include:

- Pilot projects to evaluate the impact of providing supports such as reduced-fare transit, recreation passes, or other service opportunities for low-income residents;
- Supporting financial security through tax-filing programs;
- Awareness campaigns to reduce stigma around poverty and promote social inclusion;
- Social enterprise initiatives that provide supported employment opportunities for people with multiple barriers to employment;
- Local food security initiatives including food-waste diversion projects and community kitchens that support training and social inclusion, as well as access to food;
- Pilot projects to assist key populations living with low income as identified in *TogetherBC*;

Stream 2 of the 2021 Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program is not intended to be a capital funding program. However, minor capital expenditures for eligible activities that have a clear and definable benefit to people living in poverty, that are clearly linked to activities identified in the application, and that are intended to reduce poverty at the local level will be considered for funding under Stream 2.

Capital costs cannot exceed 25% of the total requested Stream 2 grant (i.e. an application for a \$50,000 grant cannot include more than \$12,500 in capital costs).

Eligible Activities Applicable to Both Funding Streams

The following expenditures are also eligible, provided they relate directly to the eligible activities identified above:

- Honoraria for community member participants who are living in poverty. It is expected that the payment of honoraria should align with current best practices and that any honoraria paid for the ongoing participation of people living in poverty should be at least the current provincial minimum wage;
- Consultant costs;
- Incremental staff and administration costs;
- Public information costs.

Ineligible Costs & Activities

Any activity that is not outlined above or is not directly connected to activities approved in the application by the Evaluation Committee is not eligible for grant funding. This includes:

- Development of feasibility studies and/or business cases;
- Development of architectural, engineering, or other design drawings for the construction or renovation of facilities providing services to people living in poverty;

- Infrastructure projects or new construction;
- Regular salaries of applicant staff or partners;
- Routine or ongoing operating costs (e.g. heating and lighting; security; telephone; internet);
- Purchase of software, software licences, or ongoing service subscriptions;
- Existing programs with established, designated funding from other partners;
- Fundraising or lobbying.

5. Grant Maximum

The 2021 Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program provides two streams of funding. Projects funded under Stream 1 may receive up to 100% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of \$25,000. Projects funded under Stream 2 may receive up to 100% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of \$50,000. Regional projects under either Stream 1 or Stream 2 may receive up to 100% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of \$150,000.

In order to ensure transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds, all other grant contributions for eligible portions of the project must be declared and, depending on the total value, may decrease the value of the grant.

6. Application Requirements & Process

Application Deadline

The application deadline is March 5, 2021.

Applicants will be advised of the status of their application within 90 days of the application deadline.

Required Application Contents

- Completed Application Form;
- Detailed project budget, including itemized costs/activities that will be funded by the grant and separating out any in-kind and/or cash contributions from the applicant(s) or other grant funding;
- Council or Board resolution, indicating support for the current proposed activities and willingness to provide overall grant management;
- **For regional projects only:** Each partnering local government must submit a Council or Board resolution indicating support for the primary applicant to *apply for, receive, and manage the grant funding on their behalf*,

Resolutions from partnering applicants must include the specific language above.

- Optional: Up to three letters of support as evidence of partnership or collaboration with community-based poverty reduction organizations, people with lived experience of poverty, businesses, local First Nations and/or Indigenous organizations.

Submission of Applications

Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files. If you choose to submit your application by e-mail, hard copies do not need to follow.

All applications should be submitted to:

All application materials will be shared with the Province of BC
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Review of Applications

UBCM will perform a preliminary review of applications to ensure the required application elements have been submitted and to ensure that eligibility criteria have been met. Only complete application packages will be reviewed.

Following this, all eligible applications will be reviewed and scored by the Evaluation Committee. Scoring considerations and criteria include the following:

- Alignment with the intent and objectives of the Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program;
- Demonstration of direct participation in the proposed activities by people living in poverty or with a lived experience of poverty;
- Anticipated outcomes and a clear and achievable evaluation framework on how the success of the project or plan will be measured;
- Demonstrated clear and definable benefit to the community as a whole;
- Partnerships and demonstrated community support, including community-based poverty reduction organizations, people with lived experience of poverty, businesses, local First Nations and/or Indigenous organizations;
- Cost-effectiveness of the project, including in-kind or cash contributions to the project from the eligible applicant(s), community partners, or other grant funding.

Point values and weighting have been established within each of these scoring criteria. Only those applications that meet a minimum threshold point value will be considered for funding.

The Evaluation Committee will consider the population and provincial, regional, and urban/rural distribution of proposed projects. Funding decisions will be made on a provincial priority basis.

7. Grant Management & Applicant Responsibilities

Please note that grants are awarded to eligible applicants only and, as such, the applicant is responsible for completion of the project as approved and for meeting reporting requirements.

Applicants are also responsible for proper fiscal management, including maintaining acceptable accounting records for the project. UBCM reserves the right to audit these records.

It is expected that in-person activities, meetings, or events meet physical distancing and other public health guidance in relation to COVID-19.

Notice of Funding Decision

All applicants will receive written notice of funding decisions. Approved applicants will receive an Approval Agreement, which will include the terms and conditions of any grant that is awarded, and that is required to be signed and returned to UBCM.

Grants under the Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program will be awarded in two payments: 50% at the approval of the project and when the signed Approval Agreement has been returned to UBCM, and 50% when the project is complete and the final reporting requirements have been met.

Please note that in cases where revisions are required to an application, or an application has been approved in principle only, the applicant has 30 days from the date of the written notice of the status of the

application to complete the application requirements. Applications that are not completed within 30 days may be closed.

Progress Payments

In exceptional circumstances, to request a progress payment, approved applicants are required to submit:

- Written rationale for receiving a progress payment;
- Description of activities completed to date; and
- Description of funds expended to date.

Changes to Approved Projects

Approved grants are specific to the project as identified in the application, and grant funds are not transferable to other projects. Approval from the Evaluation Committee will be required for any significant variation from the approved project.

To propose changes to an approved project, approved applicants are required to submit:

- Revised application package, including updated, signed application form and budget and an updated Council or Board resolution (including resolution(s) from regional application partners in the case of a regional application); and
- Written rationale for proposed changes to activities and/or expenditures.

The revised application package will then be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee.

Applicants are responsible for any costs above the approved grant unless a revised application is submitted and approved prior to work being undertaken.

Extensions to Project End Date

All approved activities are required to be completed within one year of approval and all extensions beyond this date must be requested in writing and be approved by UBCM. Extensions will not exceed one year.

8. Final Report Requirements & Process

Applicants are required to submit an electronic copy of the complete final report, including the following:

- Completed Final Report Form;
- Financial summary;
- For Stream 1 only: electronic copy of the completed plan or assessment;
- Optional: photos of the project, media clippings, and/or any reports or documents developed or amended with grant funding.

Submission of Final Reports

All final reports should be submitted to:

Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities

E-mail: lgps@ubcm.ca

Mail: 525 Government Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 0A8

All final reports will be shared with the Province of BC
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9. Additional Information

For enquiries about the application process or general enquiries about the program, please contact:

Union of BC Municipalities
525 Government Street
Victoria, BC, V8V 0A8

E-mail: lgps@ubcm.ca

Phone: (250) 952-9177

For more information on BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy, please refer to [TogetherBC](#).