

Local Government Development Approvals Program

2024 Program and Application Guide

Applications will be accepted January 1, 2024 to March 8, 2024 using new [LGPS Online Application Tool](#)

1. Introduction

In 2019, the Province of BC initiated the Development Approvals Process Review (DAPR). Extensive local government and stakeholder engagement produced a comprehensive list of informed ideas for streamlining and speeding up the development approvals process, outlined in the [DAPR Report](#). The Local Government Development Approvals Program provides support to local governments to address the findings and adopt the recommendations in the DAPR Report.

To support getting the homes people need approved, built and available effectively and efficiently, local governments, the development sector and the Province all have a role to play in improving current development approvals processes.

Local Government Development Approvals Program

The development approvals process refers to all operational steps and decision making in relation to a local government's consideration of approving development, from the pre-application phase to the issuance of the building permit. The local government's review process ensures that development applications conform to policies, plans, and regulations for building and development.

The intent of the Local Government Development Approvals Program is to support the implementation of established best practices and to test innovative approaches to improve development approvals processes while meeting local government planning and policy objectives.

The Local Government Development Approvals Program is not intended to support projects where proposed deliverables require or are directly focused on provincial legislative changes or information technology projects, such as digitization of development approvals.

The Ministry of Housing has provided an additional \$10 million in funding and this funding is being administered by UBCM.

2. Eligible Applicants

All local governments (municipalities, regional districts, and the Islands Trust) in BC are eligible to apply. Eligible applicants can submit one application per intake.

3. Grant Maximum

The Local Government Development Approvals Program can contribute a maximum of 100% of the cost of eligible activities to a maximum of \$150,000.00.

The Evaluation Committee may recommend that an application be approved in part, based on available funding and the merit of the proposed project.

To ensure transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds, all other contributions for eligible portions of the project must be declared and, depending on the total value, may decrease the value of the funding. This includes any other grant funding and any revenue that is generated from activities that are funded by the Local Government Development Approvals Program.

4. Eligible Projects

To qualify for funding, proposed activities must meet the intent of the program and be:

- A new or subsequent phase of a project (retroactive funding is not available);
- Capable of completion by the applicant within one year of the date of grant approval;
- For projects that are dependent on external partnerships, provide evidence that external partners (e.g., development community, provincial Ministry, First Nations, other local governments, BC Hydro) are willing to participate.

5. Requirements for Funding

As part of both the development of the application package and the delivery of the approved project, local governments are encouraged to proactively engage local First Nations and Indigenous organizations. Engagement by local governments both locally and regionally can help build relationships with First Nations, support harmonization of land use planning, and enhance reconciliation. More information on engagement best practices is available [here](#).

As part of the approval agreement, approved projects must meet the following requirements for funding:

- Any in-person activities, meetings, or events meet public health orders or guidance;
- Activities must comply with all applicable privacy legislation under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* in relation to the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information while conducting funded activities. Personal information is any recorded information about an identifiable individual other than their business contact information. This includes information that can be used to identify an individual through association or inference.

6. Eligible and Ineligible Costs and Activities

Eligible costs are direct costs that are approved for funding, 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.

Table 1 identifies examples of activities that are eligible for funding. Please note that an internal review of current development approvals may be valuable before undertaking specific projects, but is not a pre-requisite for funding. However, evidence of readiness and/or rationale to undertake proposed activities is required in the application form and may contribute to higher application scores.

It is expected that proposed activities may involve internal or external partnerships. Please refer to [Section 4](#) for funding requirements for working with external partners. Eligible activities must be cost-effective.

Additional Eligible Costs and Activities

The following expenditures are also eligible provided they relate directly to eligible activities identified in Table 1:

- Incremental applicant staff and administration costs (i.e., creating a new position or adding new responsibilities to an existing position);
- Consultant costs (e.g., change management consultant);
- Public information costs (e.g., FAQs for the public, guidance on how to participate in the public process, role of the decision-maker in the process);

- Honoraria for equity-denied populations or service organizations that support equity-denied populations;
- Translation costs and the development of culturally appropriate education, awareness, or engagement materials.

Table 1: Activities Eligible for Funding

- A. Developing, reviewing and/or updating internal development approvals processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness. For example:
- Planning, training, and facilitating to improve collaboration between departments to improve development approvals process;
 - Planning and making recommendations for triaging development applications at the submission stage to identify incomplete, straight forward, complex, or high priority (e.g., aligned with council priorities on affordable and rental housing) applications and have a different process for acting on each kind.
- B. Developing, reviewing and/or updating development approvals guidance for staff and/or applicants. For example:
- Creating guides, templates, and/or checklists for applicants and/or staff;
 - Creating guidelines that define what constitutes a major or minor amendment change;
 - Change management training and capacity building for staff, or elected officials.
- C. Reviewing and making recommendations to improve development approval procedures bylaw. For example:
- Delegating authority to staff to make decisions where appropriate, including delegating technical development permits to staff.
- D. Reviewing zoning bylaw(s) and providing recommendations to improve development approval processes. For example:
- Reducing the need for commonly requested variances.
- E. Reviewing other land use bylaw(s) and providing recommendations to improve the development approval process. For example:
- Reviewing official community plans or regional growth strategies to identify opportunities to improve development approval process.
- F. Facilitating collaboration or coordination with external partners (e.g., development community, provincial Ministry, First Nations, other local governments). For example:
- Developing communication materials, user guidelines, and/or training modules for development approvals;
 - Establishing a pre-application process and/or guidelines (e.g., pre-application developer meetings; pre-application public engagement);
 - Training external partners on the development approvals process;
 - Coordinating with neighbouring communities to increase consistency across jurisdictions.
- G. Other activities that support the improvement of the local government development approval process and that meet the intent of the program may be considered for funding.

Ineligible Costs and Activities

Any activity that is not outlined in Table 1, or is not directly connected to activities approved in the application, is not eligible for grant funding. This includes:

- Purchasing, developing, or implementing new or upgraded digital platforms (hardware) or software;
- Development or update of housing needs reports, official community plans, regional growth strategies, local area plans, master plans, zoning bylaws, etc.;
- Routine or ongoing operating costs or activities (e.g., heating, cooling, and lighting; security; software or service subscriptions; or membership fees);
- Routine or ongoing planning costs or planning activities that are not incremental to the project (e.g., costs related to bylaw adoption);
- Regular salaries and/or benefits of applicant staff or partners;
- Development of architectural, engineering, or other design drawings for the construction or renovation of facilities;
- Capital costs (including computer hardware or software);
- Audit fees, legal fees, interest fees, or fees to incorporate a society;
- Fundraising, lobbying, or sponsorship campaigns;
- Project-related fees payable to the eligible applicant(s) (e.g., permit fees, community amenity contribution, etc.);
- Purchase of promotional items, door/raffle prizes, give-away items, and/or gifts for community members.

7. Application Requirements and Process

The new [LGPS Online Application Tool](#) is now available. Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for full information.

Application Deadline

The application deadline is **March 8, 2024**. Applicants will be advised of the status of their applications within 90 days of the application deadline.

Required Application Contents

All applicants are required to complete the LGPS Online Application Form and submit an electronic copy of the following:

- Completed Application Worksheet with all required attachments;
- Council, Board, or Local Trust Committee resolution indicating support for the current proposed activities and willingness to provide overall grant management;
- Detailed budget that indicates the proposed expenditures from Local Government Development Approvals Program grant and aligns with the proposed activities outlined in the application form. Although additional funding or support is not required, any other grant funding or in-kind contributions must be identified. Applicants are encouraged to use the new [LGPS Budget and Financial Summary Tool](#);
- For projects with external partners: written confirmation from the external partner confirming their role and willingness to participate.

Submission of Applications

Applications are required to be submitted in two steps **prior to the application deadline**:

1. [LGPS Online Application Form](#): This online form must be completed for all applications to LGPS funding programs and includes questions that are common to all grant applications. When the LGPS Online Application Form is submitted, the applicant will receive an email confirmation including the file number that has been assigned to the application, and a copy of the Application Worksheet that must be completed as part of Step 2.
2. Application Worksheet: This worksheet contains questions that are specific to the funding stream and must be submitted by email to UBCM with all other required attachments.

Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for more information on the new process and the information that will be required to be submitted during each step.

Worksheets and required attachments should be submitted as Word, Excel or PDF files. Total file size for email attachments cannot exceed 20 MB. All materials should be submitted to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities by e-mail: lgps@ubcm.ca

Review of Applications

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

Following this, an Evaluation Committee will assess and score all eligible applications. 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.

Higher application review scores will be given to projects that:

- Demonstrate alignment with intent of the Local Government Development Approvals Program;
- Are outcome-based and include performance measures;
- Provide evidence of readiness to undertake proposed activities;
- Include internal local government cross-departmental collaboration and/or collaboration with one or more external partners (e.g., development community, provincial Ministry, First Nations, other local governments, BC Hydro etc.);
- Are cost-effective.

The Evaluation Committee will consider the population and provincial, regional, and urban/rural distribution of proposed projects, and previous LGDAP funding. Recommendations will be made on a priority basis and preference may be given to local governments with growth rates higher than 1% (2021 Census, Statistics Canada) between 2016 and 2021. All funding decisions will be made by UBCM.

All application materials will be shared with the Province of BC.

8. Grant Management and Applicant Responsibilities

Grants are awarded to approved applicants only. The approved applicant is responsible for completion of the project as approved and for meeting reporting requirements.

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

Notice of Funding Decision and Payments

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 are 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 UBCM has received and approved the required final report and a financial summary.

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

To request a progress payment, approved applicants are required to submit the [Interim Report Form](#). The form will require the following information:

- Description of activities completed to date;
- Description of funds expended to date (applicants are encouraged to use the new [LGPS Budget and Financial Summary Tool](#)); and
- Written rationale for receiving a progress payment.

Changes to Approved Projects (Amendment Requests)

Approved grants are specific to the project as identified in the application, and grant funds are not transferable to other projects. Approval from UBCM will be required for any significant variation from the approved project. Generally speaking, this means funds cannot be transferred to an activity that was not included in the approved application or to a new or expanded location.

Approval from UBCM and/or the Evaluation Committee will be required for any variation from the approved project. Depending on the complexity of the proposed amendment, requests may take up to 90 days to review.

To propose changes to an approved project, applicants are required to submit the [Interim Report Form](#). If UBCM determines the amendment is eligible for consideration, applicants will be required to submit:

- Amended application package, including updated Application Worksheet, detailed budget (applicants are encouraged to use the new [LGPS Budget and Financial Summary Tool](#)), and an updated Council, Board, or Local Trust Committee resolution;
- Written rationale for proposed changes to activities and/or expenditures.

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 the time frame identified in the approval agreement and all extensions beyond this date must be requested in writing and be approved by UBCM.

The [Interim Report Form](#) will be required to be submitted for all extensions request over six months. Extensions will not exceed one year from the date of the original final report deadline.

9. Final Report Requirements and Process

All funded activities must be completed within one year of notification of funding approval and the final report is due within 30 days of project completion.

Final Reports

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

- Completed Final Report Form with all required attachments;
- Detailed financial summary that indicates the actual expenditures from the Local Government Development Approvals Program grant and other sources (if applicable) and that aligns with the actual activities outlined in the Final Report Form. Applicants are encouraged to use the new [LGPS Budget and Financial Summary Tool](#);
- Copies of any materials that were produced with grant funding (e.g., guidance material, reports on results of performance measurement);
- Photos of funded activities and/or completed projects; and,
- Links to media directly related to the funded project.

Submission of Final Reports

Final reports should be submitted as Word, Excel or PDF files. Total file size for email attachments cannot exceed 20 MB.

All final reports should be submitted to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities by email: lgps@ubcm.ca.

Review of Final Reports

UBCM will perform a preliminary review of all final reports to ensure the required report elements have been submitted.

All final report materials will be shared with the Province of BC.
--

10. Additional Information

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

E-mail: lgps@ubcm.ca

Phone: 604 270 8226 ext. 220

Appendix 1: LGPS Online Application Tool

As outlined in Section 7, Applications are required to be submitted in two steps **prior to the application deadline**:

1. [LGPS Online Application Form](#): This online form must be completed for all applications to LGPS funding programs and includes questions that are common to all grant applications. When the LGPS Online Application Form is submitted, the applicant will receive an email confirmation including the file number that has been assigned to the application, and a copy of the Application Worksheet that must be completed as part of Step 2.
2. Application Worksheet: This worksheet contains questions that are specific to the funding stream and must be submitted by email to UBCM with all other required attachments.

STEP ONE: LGPS Online Application Form

The following questions are required to be answered on the LGPS Online Application Form:

1. Name of the intake of the funding program that you want to apply for (select from menu)
2. Name of the Primary Applicant (select from menu). Please note: if the name of your organization is not included in the menu, contact UBCM in order to determine eligibility and next steps
3. Primary and secondary contact information: name, position, phone, email
4. Project title
5. Proposed start and end date
6. Total project budget
7. Total grant request
8. Other funding amount and source
9. Project summary
10. Progress to date. Provide an update on the status of previously approved projects if previously funded under same funding program/funding stream
11. Certification that the information is complete and accurate

When the LGPS Online Application Form is submitted, the applicant will receive an email confirmation including the file number that has been assigned to the application, and a copy of the Application Worksheet that must be completed as part of Step 2.

STEP TWO: Application Worksheet and Required Attachments

Application Worksheet

The following questions will be required to be answered on the Application Worksheet:

1. Name of Primary Applicant (local government).
2. File Number (this can be found on the confirmation email you will receive after the LGPS Online Application Form is submitted).
3. Local Development Context:
 - a) Current population (2021 census)
 - b) Population growth rate (2016-2011 Census, Stats Can)
 - c) Description of the development trends in your community in last 5 years. This could include scale and typical type of developments, number and type of applications and permits, and/or type of applicants (large developers, builders or contractors, property owners)

- d) General community awareness or engagement regarding development processes
4. Rationale for Proposed Activities: based on the local development context identified in Question 3, identify the current challenges facing your local government regarding development approvals.
5. Evidence and Readiness: based on the challenges identified above provide an overview of any additional evidence for making changes to the development approval processes. This may be derived from existing internal development approval process review, strategic plan, other relevant staff report, increase in development applications, projected increase in housing need based on recent housing needs assessment.
6. Proposed Activities:
 - a) Description of the proposed specific activities that will be undertaken
 - b) Description of how the proposed activities meet the intent of the funding program (support the implementation of established best practices and to test innovative approaches to improve development approvals processes while meeting local government planning and policy objectives), and the challenges identified in Question 4.
7. Outcomes and Performance Measures: describe the proposed outcomes and performance measures
 - a) What outcomes will indicate project success (addressing challenges identified in Q4)
 - b) What performance measures will be used to assess these outcomes
8. Internal and External Partnerships: indicate how you intend to consult, engage, or collaborate with the following and what specific role they will play in the proposed activities. If possible, identify the specific agencies or organizations you intend to work with.
 - a) Internal partners (i.e., local government departments)
 - b) External partners (i.e., development community, provincial Ministry, First Nations, other local governments)
 - c) Other
9. Additional Information: Any other information you think may help support your submission.

Required Attachments

The following attachments will be required to be submitted with the completed Application Worksheet:

- Council, Board, or Local Trust Committee resolution indicating support for the current proposed activities and a willingness to provide overall grant management.
- Detailed budget that indicates the proposed expenditures from Local Government Development Approvals Program grant and that aligns with the proposed activities outlined in the Application Worksheet. Although additional funding or support is not required, any other grant funding or in-kind contributions must be identified. Applicants are encouraged to use the new [LGPS Budget and Financial Summary Tool](#).
- For projects that include collaboration with external partners: written confirmation from the external partner confirming their role and willingness to participate.

Documents should be submitted as Word, Excel, or PDF files. Total file size for email attachments cannot exceed 20 MB.

All documents should be submitted to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities by e-mail: lgps@ubcm.ca.

Please note “2024 LGDAP” in the subject line.