

Community Excellence Awards

2026 Program and Application Guide

Applications will be accepted March 18 to May 29, 2026 using the new [UBCM Awards Online Application Tool](#).

1. Introduction

The Community Excellence Awards recognize and celebrate UBCM members that have implemented projects or programs that demonstrate excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC. The awards are designed to profile promising practices and to encourage local governments to learn from the success of other members in order to implement changes in their own communities.

UBCM has offered the Community Excellence Awards since 2004.

2. Eligible Applicants and Projects

The Community Excellence Awards program is open to UBCM members only, including local government and First Nation members. UBCM members may submit one application per category.

To be eligible for consideration, projects:

- Must have been initiated after January 1, 2021 and be substantially completed.
- Cannot be the subject of an application that was previously awarded a Community Excellence Award.
- May have been funded by grant programs administered by UBCM.

3. Categories

The purposes of local governments in BC are set out in both the *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act* and generally focus on good governance, providing services for community benefit, providing stewardship of public assets, and fostering sustainability. Based on this, the categories are:

Excellence in Governance

Governance is the process of decision-making and the means by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented).

This category recognizes UBCM members that utilize governance processes and policies that are outcomes-based and consensus oriented; support and encourage citizen participation in civic decision-making; are efficient, equitable and inclusive, open and transparent; and exemplify best practices in accountability, effectiveness, and long-term thinking. This may include projects focused on staff, elected officials and/or the community at large.

Excellence in Service Delivery

Service delivery involves the actual production and provision of goods and services to the community and should be integrated with community plans and aligned with financial plans.

This category recognizes UBCM members that provide effective services in a proactive manner and demonstrate benefit to the community.

Excellence in Asset Management

Asset management is an integrated business approach that involves planning, finance, engineering and operations to effectively manage existing and new infrastructure in order to maximize benefits, reduce risk and provide satisfactory levels of service to community users in a sustainable manner.

This category recognizes UBCM members that have developed and implemented a comprehensive system of asset management policies and practices, meeting and/or exceeding accepted best practices such as the International Infrastructure Management Manual, ISO 55000 or Asset Management for Sustainable Service Delivery: A BC Framework.

Excellence in Sustainability

Sustainability means meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

This category recognizes UBCM members that incorporate a long-term sustainability lens by considering the four pillars – cultural, social, economic and environmental issues – in planning, policy and practice.

4. Program Criteria

All applications will be scored against the following overall program criteria:

- Leadership: the extent to which the applicant acted as a local or regional leader in the development or implementation of the project.
- Financial management and planning: the degree to which the project and/or organization has implemented financial best practices that support long-term financial planning, value for money, financial sustainability and/or economic development.
- Partnerships and collaboration: the breadth and depth of community and/or regional partnerships that supported the project and the extent to which internal (e.g. inter-departmental and/or staff and elected officials) and/or external collaboration was evident.
- Innovation and promising practices: the degree to which the project demonstrated creativity and innovation, and contributed to increased efficiency or effectiveness.
- Engagement and communications: the extent to which internal and/or external engagement was foundational to the success of the project, including the use of communication tools such as social media.
- Transferability: the degree to which the process or outcomes of the project, or other learnings, could be conveyed to other UBCM members.
- Performance measurement: the extent to which the project has identified and/or utilized performance measures, benchmarks and/or standards to demonstrate benefit to the community.

5. UBCM Presidents Committee Choice Award

The Presidents Committee Choice Award is an opportunity for an outstanding, unique and/or special project that would otherwise not be recognized through the adjudication process, to be recognized in the Community Excellence Award's program.

The award is not an additional category that applicants can apply under; instead candidates for the award are identified during the regular adjudication process.

The criteria for considering a candidate for the Presidents Committee Choice Award include:

- Exemplary demonstration of excellence in meeting objectives of local government (for example, as demonstrated by highest application review score in a given intake).
- Outstanding achievement in relation to a current issue faced by local governments.

6. Application Process

The new [UBCM Awards Online Application Tool](#) is required to be used for all applications. Refer to Appendix 1 for full information.

Application Deadline

The application deadline is May 29, 2026.

Application Contents

All applicants are required to submit an electronic copy of the complete application package, including:

- Signed application form. Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files.
- Council, Board or Band Council resolution indicating support for the project to be considered for a 2026 Community Excellence Award. Note: UBCM will accept applications without a resolution, providing the resolution is received by August 14, 2026. Please contact UBCM if the resolution cannot be submitted by the application deadline.
- Five representative photos of the project. Photos should be submitted as JPEG files at a high resolution suitable for display.
- Links to any publicly available videos related to the project.

Submission of Applications

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

1. [UBCM Awards Online Application Tool](#): This online form must be completed for all Community Excellence Awards. When the UBCM Awards Online Application Tool is completed, 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 Community Excellence Awards and must be submitted by email to UBCM with all other required attachments.

Refer to Appendix 1 for the information that will be required to be submitted during each step, including all application questions.

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 email at awards@ubcm.ca.

Review of Applications

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

Should UBCM staff determine that a submission is more suitable to a different category than the one submitted to, they may transfer the application to that category.

Subject matter experts will assess and score all eligible applications. UBCM's Presidents Committee will then review recommendations and scores from the subject matter experts and select category winners and, if recommended, honourable mentions.

The committee may also consider if applicants have received past awards and the location and type of each project.

7. Awards Ceremony

Awards will be presented during UBCM's 2026 Convention. All applicants are invited to the Community Excellence Awards; however, only delegates with a Convention badge will be able to attend the awards event.

Please note that in the case that an application for a project with multiple partners is selected for an award or honourable mention, only the local government that submitted the application will be identified as the recipient.

8. Additional Information

Please visit the [Community Excellence Awards](#) section of the UBCM website or contact awards@ubcm.ca.

Appendix 1: UBCM Awards Online Application Tool

As outlined in Section 6, applications are required to be submitted in two steps **prior to the application deadline**:

1. [UBCM Awards Online Application Tool](#): This online form must be completed for all Community Excellence Awards. When the UBCM Awards Online Application Tool is completed, 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 Community Excellence Awards and must be submitted by email to awards@ubcm.ca with all other required attachments.

STEP ONE: UBCM Awards Online Application Tool

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

1. Name of the intake of the program that you want to apply for (select from menu).
2. Name of the 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: full name, position, email, phone.
4. Category (select from menu).
5. Name of project/program.
6. Project summary.
7. Name and email of person submitting application.

When the UBCM Awards Online Application Tool is completed, 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. Primary Applicant full name (local government or First Nation).
2. File Number (this can be found on the confirmation email you will receive after the UBCM Awards Online Application Tool is completed).
3. Purpose. What problem or issue does this project/program address? In other words, why was it started?
4. Outcomes. What outcomes have you seen, or expect to see, as a result of the project/program?
5. Demonstrating Excellence. Describe how your project/program demonstrates excellence in meeting the purposes of local government in BC, including how it provides promising practices for others to follow.
6. Timeline: When was the project/program initiated? Is it now substantially complete?
7. Category Criteria. How does your project/program meet the objectives of the category you have applied under. (Refer to Section 3 of the 2026 Community Excellence Awards Program and Application Guide)

8. Secondary Categories. Does it meet the criteria of more than one category? If so, please identify one or more category and describe how the project/program meets the criteria.
9. Leadership. Describe the extent to which your local government acted as a leader in the development or implementation of the project/program.
10. Innovation. How does the project/program demonstrate creativity and innovation? Does it contribute to increased efficiency or effectiveness?
11. Partnerships and collaboration. What partnerships supported the project/program? To what extent was collaboration (internal and/or external) evident?
12. Financial management and planning. What is the financial impact of the program/project? Describe any financial practices that support long-term financial planning, value for money and/or economic development.
13. Engagement and communications. How has the program/project been communicated, and what engagement has been foundational to its success? (Internally and/or externally)
14. Transferability. In what way could other local governments in BC learn from or duplicate the process or outcomes of the program/project?
15. Performance measurement: What performance measures, benchmarks and/or standards have been used to demonstrate benefit to the community?
16. Please share 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 Band Council resolution indicating support for the project to be considered for a 2026 Community Excellence Award. Note: UBCM will accept applications without a resolution, providing the resolution is received by August 14, 2026. Please contact UBCM if the resolution cannot be submitted by the application deadline.
- Five representative photos of the project. Photos should be submitted as JPEG files at a resolution suitable for display.
- Links to any publicly available videos related to the project.