

**Federal Grant Program Changes**  
**Frequently Asked Questions - Small Communities Fund (SCF)**

**1. What is the SCF program?**

The SCF is a competitive program under the federal government's New Building Canada Plan (NBCP); a diagram of the NBCP is provided in the Appendix. The SCF supports communities with populations under 100,000 and succeeds the Building Canada – Communities Component (BC-CC) provided under the previous Building Canada Plan.

Like its predecessor, the SCF funds projects that address local priorities while contributing to national or regional objectives, supporting economic growth, a clean environment and stronger communities.

In Alberta, the program is governed through an agreement between Canada and Alberta. Applicants choose projects that address local and/or regional priorities and submit applications to Municipal Affairs, where they are evaluated against established criteria. Projects receive final approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Infrastructure Canada.

**2. Who is eligible for SCF funding?**

Municipalities with populations under 100,000 are eligible to apply, including improvement districts, Metis Settlements, Special Areas Board and the Townsite of Redwood Meadows. Municipalities may also choose to provide funding to Aboriginal Band Councils as well as for-profit and not-for profit organizations. However, all applications must be submitted by a municipality, on behalf of such an organization and the project must provide a benefit to the municipality.

**3. What has changed under the new SCF compared to the BC-CC?**

Key changes under the SCF are:

- Eligible project categories have been expanded and now include: Highways and Major Roads, Public Transit, Disaster Mitigation, Innovation, Brownfield Remediation, Regional and Local Airports, Shortline Rail, Short-sea Shipping;
- Project categories not eligible under the SCF are Local Roads, Culture, Sports and Capacity Building;
- Municipalities are limited to two applications each.

**4. What kinds of projects are eligible for funding through the SCF?**

Eligible project categories are: Highways and Major Roads, Public Transit, Drinking Water, Wastewater (includes storm sewers), Disaster Mitigation, Connectivity and Broadband, Innovation, Green Energy, Solid Waste Management, Brownfield Remediation and Redevelopment, Local and Regional Airports, Shortline Rail, Short-sea Shipping.

## **5. What kinds of major road projects are eligible for funding through the SCF?**

Eligible major road projects include high capacity roads with an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) count greater than 3,000 vehicles and roads related to natural resource development opportunities.

For a new high capacity road project to be eligible, the municipality must have a municipal study/ declaration showing that the traffic count is expected to exceed 3,000 vehicles daily.

For a resource road project to be eligible, the road must be for new or significantly expanded natural resource development that has incremental economic benefits (e.g., a new road out to a recently open oil extraction site). The AADT requirement does not apply to resource roads.

## **6. How much funding can a project receive through the SCF?**

To encourage projects that provide a significant benefit, there will be a minimum funding amount of \$50,000 per partner. To ensure a reasonable number of municipalities have access to funding, there will also be a maximum limit of \$3 million each for the federal and provincial contributions.

SCF program funding is subject to a single call for project applications in 2015, and all available funds will be allocated to projects submitted during this period.

## **7. What are the cost-sharing requirements under the SCF?**

The maximum federal funding for a project will not exceed 33.33% of total eligible expenditures for that project and there is a \$3 million funding limit per share, per municipality. This maximum federal amount includes other federal sources (i.e. GTF). Alberta will match the federal contribution, with the municipalities responsible for the remaining funding.

There are two exceptions to the cost-sharing requirement:

- For transit projects and projects involving Major Roads and Highways, the maximum federal contribution is 50%, with 33.33% coming from SCF and the remaining federal contribution of 16.67% coming from other federal programs (i.e. Gas Tax Fund). For example, with a \$3 million dollar transit project, a municipality may apply for \$1 million from SCF and \$500,000 from GTF, for a total of \$1.5 million in federal funding. Alberta would match the SCF contribution with \$1 million and the municipality would provide \$500,000.
- For a project that is delivered as a Public-Private Partnership (P3), the maximum federal contribution from all sources is 25%, with the government of Alberta providing funding in an amount at least equal to that of the federal government. For example, a P3 project with eligible costs totalling \$2 million may apply for \$500,000 in federal SCF funding, \$500,000 in provincial SCF funding and would be required to provide the remaining \$1 million through their partnership agreement with the private entity.

**8. Can I use MSI funding as my municipal contribution to the SCF?**

Yes, municipalities may utilize funding acquired from other provincial grant programs, including MSI, for a portion or the entirety of their contribution, as long as stacking is allowed under that program. For example, an applicant with a project whose eligible costs total \$1.5 million could receive \$500,000 in federal SCF funding, \$500,000 in provincial SCF funding and may apply their MSI funding for all or a part of the remaining \$500,000, as long as the project meets MSI funding criteria. An MSI application is also required if the municipality intends to apply MSI funding to an SCF project.

**9. Can I use GTF funding as my municipal contribution to the SCF?**

No, GTF funds cannot be used for SCF projects except for Transit or Major Roads and Highways. See example in #6, above.

**10. Which ministry is responsible for the SCF program delivery?**

Municipal Affairs is responsible for the delivery of the SCF program.

**11. What is the SCF program budget?**

Alberta municipalities will receive \$94 million in SCF funding from the federal government and another \$94 million in matching funds from the provincial government, for a total of \$188 million. Municipalities will also contribute at least \$94 million into SCF projects.

**12. Where do municipalities submit their SCF project application(s)?**

Applications in fillable PDF format are available on the Municipal Affairs website. These applications are to be submitted electronically. The signature of the Chief Administrative Officer or Duly-Authorized Signing Officer is required to certify the application. This certification must be submitted separately, by fax or by mail, using the signature page attached to the PDF application form.

Applications are to be submitted to:

Alberta Municipal Affairs  
Grants and Education Property Tax Branch  
Small Communities Fund Program  
17th Floor 10155 – 102 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L4  
Ph: (780) 427-2225 (or toll-free: 310-0000)  
Fax: (780) 422-9133  
Email: [ma.scfgrants@gov.ab.ca](mailto:ma.scfgrants@gov.ab.ca)  
SCF website:  
[municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/smallcommunitiesfund.cfm](http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/smallcommunitiesfund.cfm)

### **13. When will I receive payment for my SCF project?**

SCF funds will be paid as follows:

- Approval of the annual SCF program funding allocation by the Alberta Legislature and the Parliament of Canada;
- Receipt of a signed Conditional Grant Agreement;
- Approval of project claims, which may be submitted on a quarterly basis.

Each year's SCF budget will be paid on a quarterly basis, pending fulfillment of the conditions above. Once the annual program budget has been fully expended, claims submitted during the remainder of the year will be held until the following year's budget has been approved by both the Alberta Legislature and the Parliament of Canada. Once the budget has been approved, payments will be made first to remaining project claims from the previous year, then to any claims submitted during the current year.

Claims for expenditures must be submitted in the prescribed format, which is available on the SCF website at: <http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/smallcommunitiesfund.cfm>.

It is the responsibility of municipalities to stage and manage project financials in a manner that recognizes these requirements.

### **14. Where do I submit my Claims?**

Claims can be submitted quarterly and should be sent to:

Alberta Municipal Affairs  
Grants and Education Property Tax Branch  
Grant Accountability Unit  
17th Floor, 10155 – 102 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4L4

### **15. I have a question about the SCF. Who should I contact?**

For general questions related to the SCF program, please visit our website: <http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/smallcommunitiesfund.cfm>. You may also contact the Grants and Education Property Tax Branch at 780-427-2225, toll free by first dialing 310-0000.

### **16. What information do I need to provide for partnerships?**

One application per project is submitted by the Managing Partner. The application must indicate the municipal funding share per partner and council resolutions must be provided to demonstrate each partner's commitment to the project.

### **17. How will projects be evaluated?**

Projects will be evaluated against established criteria and ranked amongst each other. The evaluation criteria are available on the website and is the last schedule at the back of the SCF Guidelines.

**18. When will I receive notice that my project has been approved?**

Projects go through a rating process which, when completed, will be used to make recommendations to the federal and provincial ministers. They will approve the projects and then all applicants will be advised the status of their applications.

**19. Can I begin projects in anticipation of project approval?**

No, costs incurred before project approval are not eligible for funding.

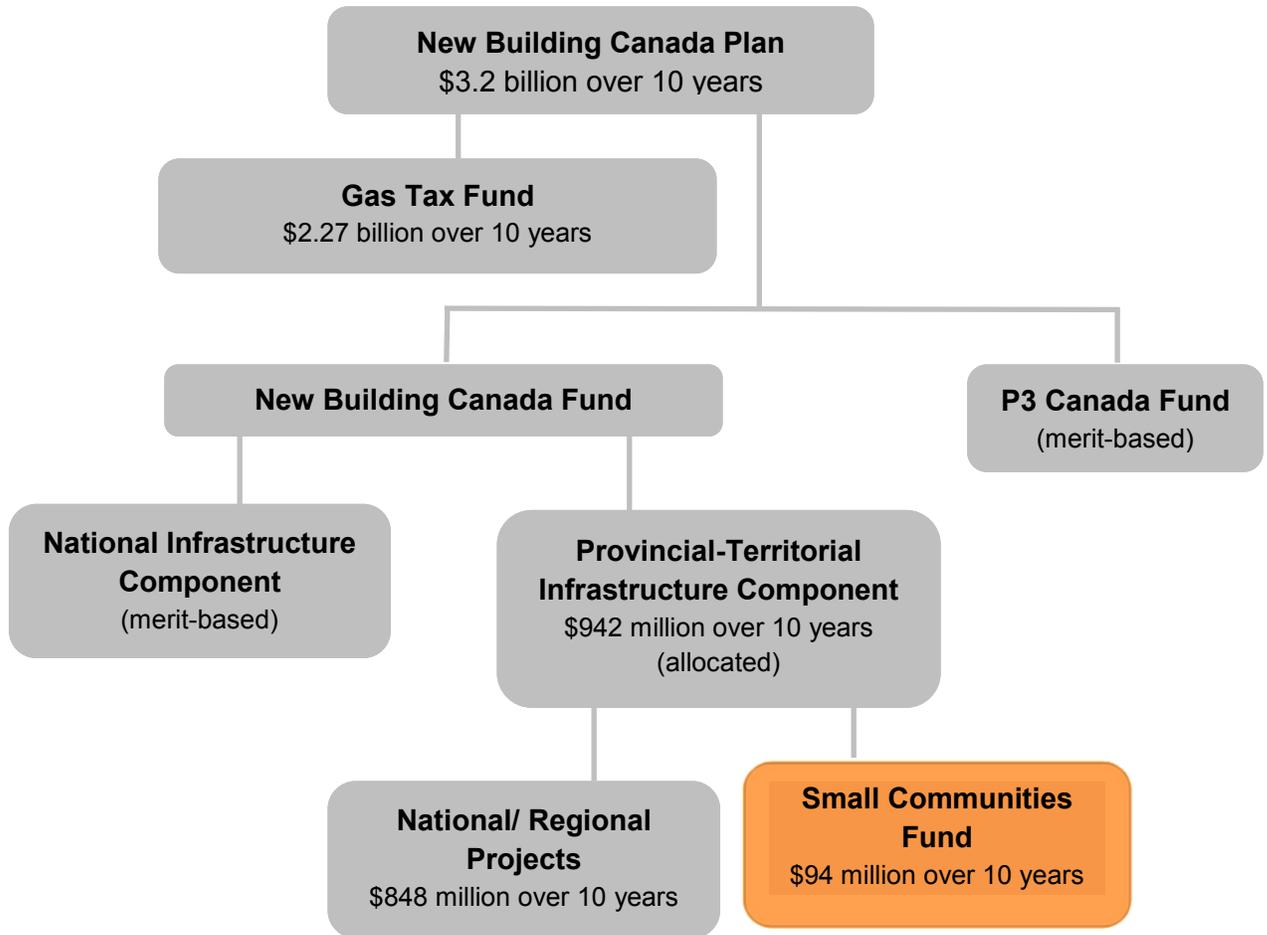
**20. Do I need to hold a media event for my SCF project?**

Municipalities may mark project milestones through media events or announcements or other communications activities related to their SCF funded projects. If your municipality chooses to initiate a communications event, please advise the Municipal Affairs Communications office of the proposed event a minimum of 20 working days prior to the campaign launch.

Municipalities may also install permanent plaques for projects that are funded through SCF. If your municipality intends on marking the project with a plaque, please be aware that the plaque must recognize Canada's and Alberta's financial contribution and be approved in advance by Alberta Municipal Affairs.

To discuss project recognition options and communications requirements, please call Municipal Affairs Communications at 780-422-8816, toll free by first dialing 310-0000, or by email at [magharita.reghelini-griffiths@gov.ab.ca](mailto:magharita.reghelini-griffiths@gov.ab.ca) .

**Appendix: New Building Canada Plan – Alberta**



Note: Amounts provided in the above chart reflect Alberta's funding only.