

Alberta Community Partnership Program Guidelines

**Effective April 1, 2016
First Release**



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1. GUIDELINES

These guidelines are the first of two releases and contain information on the Municipal Internship, Mediation and Collaborative Processes, and Strategic Initiatives components. Details on the Intermunicipal Collaboration and Municipal Restructuring components will be provided in the second release of the 2016/17 Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) guidelines expected to be available in the fall of 2016.

These guidelines are intended to assist applicants in completing ACP application and financial reporting requirements. Before applying, applicants should consider both the general program information supplied in the main part of the guidelines and the component specific information in the relevant schedule(s).

2. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2016/17

- The ACP Online system (ACPO) is now available through MAConnect (Section 4). ACPO gives municipalities the ability to:
 - create, edit, and submit ACP applications online;
 - view and track the status of ACP applications;
 - view agreement, payment, and reporting summary information for projects funded under ACP or the former Regional Collaboration Program (RCP); and
 - create, edit and submit ACP or RCP Statements of Funding and Expenditures (SFEs).
- The eligible population ranges for the Municipal Internship component have been adjusted to better align with the program objectives.

3. KEY DATES AND CONTACTS

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	QUESTIONS? CONTACT
Project Application Submission	Municipal Internship (MI) due October 1, 2016; Mediation and Cooperative Processes (MCP) accepted up to February 1, 2017.	Call a Grant Advisor at 780-427-2225 (toll-free 310-0000), or email acp.grants@gov.ab.ca
Statement of Funding and Expenditure (SFE)	Due within 60 days of project completion date identified in the conditional grant agreement.	Call a Grant Compliance Advisor at 780-427-2225 (toll-free 310-0000), or email acp.grants@gov.ab.ca
Communication and Project Recognition	Ongoing.	Call Communications at 780-427-8862 (toll-free 310-0000), or email acp.grants@gov.ab.ca

4. SUBMISSION METHODS

Project applications may now be submitted through ACP Online (ACPO). Access to ACPO is through MAConnect, the web portal that provides external stakeholders secure access to Municipal Affairs' key business applications.

Municipalities that have already signed up for MAConnect can request staff access to ACPO through the municipality's MAConnect Stakeholder Administrator. The Stakeholder Administrator is the person delegated to manage access to applications in MAConnect on behalf of the municipality through the MAConnect Stakeholder Agreement. If the municipality needs to assign another Stakeholder Administrator, a request can be emailed to ACPOaccess@gov.ab.ca.

Municipalities that do not have access to MAConnect will need to enter into a Stakeholder Agreement before requesting access to ACPO. The Stakeholder Agreement can be requested by emailing to ACPOaccess@gov.ab.ca or contacting 780-644-2413 (toll-free 310-0000). Once the Stakeholder Agreement has been signed and returned to Municipal Affairs, the municipality will be able to request access to ACPO through their designated Stakeholder Administrator.

An ACPO user guide is available on the ACP website at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/alberta-community-partnership.

ACP project applications, project amendment/time extension requests and SFEs can also be submitted by email, fax or mail. Fillable pdfs are available on the ACP website at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/alberta-community-partnership. Please note that older versions of these forms will not be accepted.

Email: acp.grants@gov.ab.ca

Fax: 780-422-9133

Mail: Attn: Regional Grant Programs (re: **applications**) OR
Grant Compliance and Payments (re: **SFEs**)
Grants and Education Property Tax Branch
Alberta Municipal Affairs
17th Floor, 10155 - 102 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 4L4

5. PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

The objective of the ACP program is to improve the viability and long-term sustainability of municipalities by providing support for regional collaboration and capacity building initiatives.

The ACP program is designed to support municipalities in attaining the following key program outcomes:

- New or enhanced regional municipal services;
- Improved municipal capacity to respond to municipal and regional priorities; and
- Effective intermunicipal relations through joint and collaborative activities.

6. FUNDING COMPONENTS

Project funding is administered under five distinct funding components: Intermunicipal Collaboration (IC), Municipal Restructuring (MR), Mediation and Cooperative Processes (MCP), Municipal Internship (MI), and Strategic Initiatives (SI). Information regarding specific objectives, eligibility criteria, and other conditions for each component are found in Schedules 1-5.

The IC and MR component schedules will be provided in the second release of these guidelines.

Intermunicipal Collaboration (Schedule 1A)	• Develop new or expand existing intermunicipal services
Municipal Restructuring (Schedule 2)	• Explore regional governance and minimize costs associated with municipal restructuring processes such as amalgamation, dissolution, or viability reviews
Mediation and Cooperative Processes (Schedule 3)	• Resolve intermunicipal conflict through dispute resolution alternatives and/or develop collaborative protocols
Municipal Internship (Schedule 4)	• Recruit and train interns to pursue senior administrator, finance officer, and land use planner positions in municipal government
Strategic Initiatives (Schedule 5)	• Support for initiatives that align with provincial priorities and address intermunicipal needs of strategic significance

7. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Eligible Applicants

Applicant Type	Funding Component(s)
Municipalities (cities, towns, villages, summer villages, municipal districts, specialized municipalities, special areas)	All
Improvement Districts	IC, MCP, MI*, or SI

Applicant Type	Funding Component(s)
Métis settlements	IC, MCP, or SI
Townsite of Redwood Meadows Administration Society	MCP, MI Administrator*, MI Finance Officer*
Capital Region Board and Calgary Regional Partnership	MI Land Use Planner*
Municipally-controlled planning service agencies and service commissions	MI Land Use Planner*

*Eligibility to apply under the MI streams is dependent on municipal population (see Schedule 4).

The Minister may vary any program criteria, such as eligibility and application requirements, to respond to the Government of Alberta and Municipal Affairs' priorities.

7.2 Contributions to other Entities

Ineligible entities under the ACP include individuals, for-profit corporations, not-for-profit organizations, regional services commissions (excluding planning commissions), intermunicipal entities, and municipal subsidiary corporations (for-profit and not-for-profit).

Successful applicants may contract these entities to conduct project activities. In these instances, the contracted entity is not considered a project partner, and the applicant remains responsible for the use of the funds, achieving project outcomes, and reporting on activities related to the approved project.

7.3 Eligible Projects

Eligible project information is provided in the component schedules.

7.4 Ineligible Expenses

The following expenses are ineligible:

- Existing and ongoing operational costs;
- Floodway mapping costs;
- Costs already funded under other grant programs; and
- Goods and Services Tax (GST).

8. APPLICATION AND AMENDMENT PROCESS

8.1 Project Application

A separate application form is required for each project submission, available through ACPO or on the program website at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/alberta-community-partnership.cfm. Please ensure the funding component being applied for is clearly checked off on page one of the application, and that the specific information requirements have been met.

Project applications can be submitted any time prior to the deadline(s) specified in Section 3.

Applications must be signed by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), or duly authorized authority, who certifies that the information is correct and in accordance with program guidelines.

8.2 Review and Approval Process

Each project application submitted to Municipal Affairs will be reviewed to ensure it meets the requirements outlined in these guidelines. Once a project is assessed, a recommendation is forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. All decisions by the Minister are final. Applicants will be advised in writing of the status of their submission, and a list of successful projects will be posted annually to the program website. It is anticipated that applications will be processed and municipalities advised of project funding status in writing, within ten to twelve weeks following submission.

8.3 Amending a Project

If project scope, costs, or time period to use grant funds change after the project approval, an amendment is required. This can be requested by submitting a Project Amendment/Time Extension Request Form, available on the program website at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/alberta-community-partnership.cfm.

The amendment request should be submitted prior to the conditional grant agreement (CGA) project completion date. Questions regarding scope and time changes can be directed to a Grant Compliance Advisor.

9. FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Following the Minister's approval of a project, successful applicants must enter into a CGA with Municipal Affairs. The CGA sets out the terms and conditions for the grant funding. This includes project start and end dates, project scope, grant payment conditions, and reporting requirements.

10. TIME PERIOD TO USE GRANT FUNDS

The ACP program delivery cycle is based on the provincial fiscal year which commences April 1. Grant funds can be retroactively applied to approved projects beginning April 1 of the current fiscal year unless otherwise stipulated in the signed CGA. See component schedules for specific details regarding time periods to use grant funds.

11. USE OF OTHER GRANT FUNDS

Program funding may be combined with funding from other provincial-municipal or federal-municipal grant programs, unless doing so is prohibited by the other program. If an applicant chooses to use multiple grant funding sources for a project, it is their responsibility to understand each grant program's specific funding requirements.

More information about specific requirements of provincial-municipal grant programs can be found on the respective program websites, accessible through the Municipal Grants Web Portal at <http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/municipalgrants.cfm>

12. REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF CONTRACT

All calls for proposals or tenders to be funded under the ACP shall be carried out in accordance with the rules, regulations and laws governing such activities and in accordance with the best current procurement practices. They must also be advertised in accordance with the guidelines of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (www.newwestpartnershiptrade.ca), and the Agreement on Internal Trade (www.ait-aci.ca).

13. PAYMENT PROCESS AND FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

13.1 Payments

ACP payments will be made following legislative approval of the provincial budget, and Ministerial authorization of the component budgets. Payments for approved projects will be made based on the conditions of the CGA. Typically the grant payment is made two weeks following the execution of the CGA, unless stated otherwise.

13.2 Statement of Funding and Expenditures (SFE)

The managing partner must submit an SFE. The SFE summarizes the grant amount received, the actual project costs, grant funding applied, portion of funding provided by other grant programs and municipal sources, and income earned and applied to the project. Income earned on the ACP grant funding becomes part of the funding available to apply to project expenditures.

The SFE must be signed by the CAO or delegate, who certifies that the grant recipient is in compliance with the terms of the CGA, program guidelines, and administrative procedures. All supporting documentation such as reports, drawings, and invoices for project costs must be retained by the municipalities for a minimum of three years following completion of the project. The SFE can be completed using ACPO or accessed on the ACP website at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/alberta-community-partnership.cfm.

The SFE may be subject to review by the Provincial Auditor General.

Additional reporting is required for the MI component (see Schedule 4), and may also be required on a case by case basis under other components.

13.3 Credit Items

Credit items shall be reported on the SFE, and should include:

- Income earned on deposited or invested ACP grant funds.

The amount of income earned on the funds becomes part of the total grant funding available for the project.

13.4 Calculation of Income Earned

The municipality must maintain separate accounting records for the grant funds.

The municipality is encouraged to invest and earn income on all unexpended grant funds, subject to the provisions of Section 250 of the *Municipal Government Act*.

The amount of income earned on grant funds may be calculated by one of two methods:

- the actual income earned on the funds being held; or
- the estimated (notional) income earned on the funds. For example, multiply the average grant funding balance over one or more months that the grant funds were held in an account by the average interest rate over those months.

14. SITE VISITS

On an annual basis, Municipal Affairs may select and visit a number of municipalities to discuss ACP program delivery, explore suggestions for program improvement, and view completed ACP-funded projects where appropriate.

15. COMMUNICATIONS AND PROJECT RECOGNITION REQUIREMENTS

Municipalities may choose to recognize a project milestone through advertising, public information campaigns, or ceremonies and events. If a municipality initiates a communications event related to an ACP-funded project, they are asked to advise the Municipal Affairs Communications office of the proposed event a minimum of 15 working days prior to the celebration/launch/event.

News releases should acknowledge the province's contribution and must include a quote from the Minister or other GOA representative as determined by the province. Any advertising of ACP-funded projects should include a reference to the ACP program and the province's contribution.

To discuss project recognition options or communications requirements, please call Municipal Affairs Communications at 780-427-8862, toll free by first dialing 310-0000, or email acp.grants@gov.ab.ca.

All other inquiries should be directed to 780-427-2225 (toll free 310-0000).

Schedule 1A – Intermunicipal Collaboration

Details on the Intermunicipal Collaboration component will be provided in the second edition of the 2016/17 ACP guidelines expected to be released in the fall of 2016.

Schedule 1B – Evaluation of IC Applications

Details on the Intermunicipal Collaboration component will be provided in the second edition of the 2016/17 ACP guidelines expected to be released in the fall of 2016.

Schedule 2 – Municipal Restructuring

Details on the Municipal Restructuring component will be provided in the second edition of the 2016/17 ACP guidelines expected to be released in the fall of 2016.

Schedule 3 – Mediation and Cooperative Processes

1. Objective

The Mediation and Cooperative Processes (MCP) component provides support to municipalities to help develop collaborative protocols and processes to proactively manage conflict, and to enable municipalities to rely on an agreed-upon process for collaboration. This component also supports municipalities in using mediation, facilitation, or other dispute resolution alternatives to resolve intermunicipal conflict, as local solutions provide the ability to control the outcomes and create options in the best interests of residents. It is comprised of a Mediation stream and Cooperative Processes stream.

2. Eligible Entities

The following entities are eligible for funding under the MCP component:

- municipalities (cities, towns, villages, summer villages, municipal districts, specialized municipalities, and special areas);
- improvement districts;
- Métis settlements; and
- Townsite of Redwood Meadows Administration Society.

3. Eligible Projects

a) Mediation

The Mediation stream supports mediation or facilitative services to develop local solutions to conflicts municipalities may be having with their municipal neighbours, regional services commissions or other boards or agencies.

Eligible projects include:

- mediating conflict or facilitated negotiations between two or more municipalities; and
- mediating conflict or facilitated negotiations between a municipality and another entity.

b) Cooperative Processes

The Cooperative Processes stream provides proactive support to municipalities for building relations and cooperative processes within and between municipalities through the Collaborative Governance Initiative (CGI). There are two phases of this stream. The assessment (protocol development) phase provides funding for a consultant to assist in creating collaborative principles, processes and protocols using consensus. The implementation phase is to implement the principles, processes, and protocols created in the assessment phase.

Eligible projects include:

- developing cooperation protocols to help municipalities to work more collaboratively either internally or intermunicipally;
- developing and implementing internal policies and procedures to address conflicts that arise during the delivery of municipal services; and

- developing formal collaborative governance protocols to address opportunities and challenges.

4. Application Process

Applications are typically completed after discussion with Ministry staff. Contact a Municipal Dispute Resolution Services staff at 780-427-2225 (toll free in Alberta first by dialing 780-310-0000) prior to completing the form.

For both funding streams under this component, an applicant is required to complete an application that is supported by council resolutions from all project participants. In the absence of council resolutions, an application may be submitted with a letter from the requesting municipality (with a copy to the partnering municipalities) that demonstrates support for the project and is signed by the Chief Elected Official.

Reporting from the Cooperative Processes stream - Assessment phase must be submitted to demonstrate the protocols have been developed and the funding has been fully expended prior to any applications under the Cooperative Processes stream - Implementation phase.

Applications will be processed according to timelines that consider the sensitivity of the situation.

5. Grant Amounts

The MCP component has funding maximums as follows:

- Mediation Stream: \$15,000
- Cooperative Processes Stream:
 - Assessment (protocol development) phase: \$50,000
 - Implementation phase: \$30,000

6. Component Conditions

The Mediation stream grant of up to \$15,000 provides one-third of the cost of mediation and is conditional on the municipal partners contributing two-thirds of the total costs.

The Cooperative Processes Stream – implementation phase grant of up to \$30,000 is conditional upon the municipality matching the grant funding, and can include verifiable in-kind contributions. The matching amount must be expended proportionately to the grant funding amount.

7. Payment of Funds

ACP funding will be paid following legislative approval of the provincial budget and is conditional on the following:

- a Conditional Grant Agreement (CGA) being duly executed; and
- for the mediation stream, by way of installment upon receipt of a copy of the mediator's invoices submitted that demonstrates project costs.

8. Time Period to Use Grant Funds

Successful applicants can apply grant funds towards approved projects retroactive to April 1 of the current fiscal year unless otherwise stipulated in the CGA. Applicants determine the appropriate project completion date and should ensure that it allows sufficient time for all reporting activities to be completed. If the funding will not be expended by the agreed to project completion date, a time extension request should be submitted, as per Section 8.3. Any grant funds unexpended upon completion or termination of the project shall be returned to the Government of Alberta.

9. Reporting Conditions

The grant recipient must submit an SFE (see Section 13.2), and may be asked to provide additional reporting on the outcome of the grant.

Schedule 4 – Municipal Internship

1. Objective

The Municipal Internship (MI) component provides support to municipalities and planning service agencies to recruit, train, and retain competent municipal employees who can progress into leadership positions in Alberta municipalities. The intent of this program component is to help train interns so that they may pursue careers in municipal administration, finance, or land use planning and help build the capacity of Alberta's municipal sector.

2. Eligible Entities

The following entities are eligible under the MI component, including:

- municipalities (cities, towns, villages, summer villages, municipal districts, and specialized municipalities);
- improvement districts;
- Townsite of Redwood Meadows Administration Society;
- the Capital Region Board and the Calgary Regional Partnership; and
- municipally-controlled planning service agencies.

Applicants requesting funding under the MI component must meet specific population thresholds to be eligible (based on Municipal Affairs official population figures in effect at the time of application):

Program Stream	Population Range
Administrator	Between 700 and 75,000
Finance Officer	Between 2,500 and 125,000
Land Use Planner	Between 5,000 and 125,000

3. Eligible Projects

The MI component has three streams:

a) Administrator

The Administrator stream allows for the hosting of an intern for a one-year period. Host organizations help train and develop interns by providing them with learning opportunities across the key functional areas of municipal operations and management.

b) Finance Officer

The Finance Officer stream allows for the hosting of an intern for a one-year period. Host organizations help train and develop interns by providing them with learning opportunities in the finance department and exposure to other key functional areas of municipal operations and management.

c) Land Use Planner

The Land Use Planner stream allows for the hosting of an intern for a two-year period. Host organizations must undertake the majority of land use planning activities in-house and have a senior planner on staff to supervise the intern. Interns in the Land Use Planner stream are expected to work towards attaining the Registered Professional Planner accreditation by documenting their education and responsible professional experience in the logbook under the Alberta Professional Planners Institute, the affiliate of the Canadian Institute of Planners.

For all streams, host organizations are expected to provide their intern with experience across the key functional areas of municipal operations and management. Municipalities that are not able to offer an intern experience in all of the functional areas are encouraged to collaborate with another municipality. Collaborations can be arranged so that the intern spends small blocks of time with each host (e.g. two or three months on a rotating basis or the term may be split into two six-month blocks).

Having the opportunity to work closely with staff, council, and senior management in a municipality or a planning service agency is a valuable experience for new professionals pursuing a career in the municipal sector.

4. Application Process

Applications for the MI component are due by October 1 of the funding year, with the internship to commence the following May.

MI applications are evaluated after the October 1 deadline. Funding is awarded based on information provided in the ACP application form up to the maximum number of internship positions available in the program year.

5. Grant Amounts

The amounts available under the MI component vary by host type as follows:

- Administrators: \$43,000
- Finance Officers: \$43,000
- Land Use Planners: \$58,000

6. Component Conditions

Just as interns are expected to demonstrate certain attributes, host organizations are also expected to meet certain criteria, including:

- The municipality must meet the population thresholds as outlined in Section 2 of this schedule, to be eligible for grant funding. Municipally-controlled planning service agencies are also eligible for the Land Use Planner stream;
- For the Land Use Planner stream, host organizations must undertake the majority of their planning in-house and have a senior planner on staff;
- A strong council-administration relationship must exist and there must be strong commitment from both groups to have an intern;

- There must be an organizational commitment to the MI program's vision and goals;
- A dedicated supervisor is appointed for the intern. The supervisor is to be the Chief Administrative Officer or a senior manager (Administrator stream); senior financial officer (Finance Officer stream); or a senior planner (Land Use Planner stream);
- A sufficient commitment of resources, both financial and staff, must be made; and
- There must be an ability to provide training in a wide range of municipal functions and interest in sharing knowledge and experiences with the intern.

A municipality or organization can apply under any or all of the streams of this program component in a program year; however, the applicant must complete separate applications as each stream is evaluated separately.

Collaboration with another municipality is not required to host an intern if the municipality has the capacity and desire to host on its own. A municipality may wish to partner with another municipality if it is not able to provide an intern with experience in the major functional areas of municipal operations and management. Refer to the Internship Program website at www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/ms/internship/ for information on these functional areas and program expectations.

If choosing to collaborate, one municipality is to be named the Managing Partner. This municipality must meet the minimum population requirement for the stream being applied for and is responsible for submitting the application.

7. Payment of Funds

ACP funding will be paid following legislative approval of the provincial budget and is conditional on a Conditional Grant Agreement (CGA) being duly executed.

8. Time Period to Use Grant Funds

Successful applicants can apply grant funds to eligible project expenditures effective January 1 of the hosting year. Administrator and Finance Officer internships are to be completed one year from the intern start date; Land Use Planner internships are to be completed two years from the intern start date. Any grant funds unexpended upon completion or termination of the project shall be returned to the Government of Alberta.

9. Reporting Conditions

The grant recipient must submit an SFE (see Section 13.2). Additionally, supporting documentation is required and may include a Workplan, an Interim Report, a Year 1 Report (Land Use Planner) and a Final Report, as per the CGA.

Schedule 5 – Strategic Initiatives

1. Objective

The Strategic Initiatives (SI) component provides support to initiatives where the project outcomes are of ministry or provincial strategic significance and does not align with the other funding components.

2. Eligible Entities

The following entities are eligible for funding under the SI component:

- the Capital Region Board and the Calgary Regional Partnership;
- municipalities (cities, towns, villages, summer villages, municipal districts, specialized municipalities, improvement districts, and special areas);
- Métis settlements; and
- Townsite of Redwood Meadows Administration Society.

3. Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include:

- support for the operations of the Capital Region Board and the Calgary Regional Partnership; and
- projects of strategic provincial significance that are deemed a ministry priority.

4. Application Process

Contact a Grant Advisor to discuss any proposed SI projects. Application forms for the SI component will be provided after discussion with Ministry staff.

5. Grant Amounts

The maximum amount of funding available under the SI component is a ministry determination.

6. Component Conditions

All projects funded through the SI component will need to demonstrate the strategic significance of their project and how it aligns with ministry or provincial priorities.

The Minister may modify any program criteria such as eligibility and application requirements to respond to Government of Alberta and Municipal Affairs priorities.

7. Payment of Funds

ACP funding will be paid following legislative approval of the provincial budget and is conditional on a Conditional Grant Agreement (CGA) being duly executed.

8. Time Period to Use Grant Funds

Successful applicants can apply grant funds towards approved projects effective April 1 of the current fiscal year unless otherwise stipulated in the CGA. Applicants determine the appropriate project completion date and should ensure that it allows sufficient time for all reporting activities to be completed. If the funding will not be expended by the agreed to project completion date, a time extension request should be submitted, as per Section 8.3. Any grant funds unexpended upon completion or termination of the project shall be returned to the Government of Alberta.

9. Reporting Conditions

The grant recipient must submit an SFE (see Section 13.2), and may be asked to provide additional reporting on the outcome of the grant.

