

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Who is eligible to apply for the Major Infrastructure Program?

Eligible entities include:

- Municipal governments or organizations wholly owned by a municipality;
- Universities or Nova Scotia Community College;
- Mi'kmaw/Indigenous communities/organizations in Nova Scotia; and
- Registered not-for-profit organizations.

### 2. Can commercial developers apply for the Major Infrastructure Program?

No. Commercial developers are not eligible applicants. An eligible applicant may be approved for a project in a leasehold property owned by a commercial developer.

### 3. What is eligible under the Major Infrastructure Program?

The Major Infrastructure Program is available for significant renovations, new constructions or the purchase of land or buildings that support the creation of new child care spaces. The following costs are eligible for funding:

- Construction costs related to building or renovating a child care facility;
- Purchase of a building or land for the specific purpose of child care;
- Purchase and installation of a modular building for use as a child care facility;
- Site development costs (water, sewer, road, sidewalk) and landscaping for outdoor play environments;
- Purchase of fixtures, fittings and equipment required for licensing a child care facility;
- Costs related to meeting physical requirements that support accessibility;
- Professional service fees including construction project management, design/engineering costs and site evaluations, project-related architectural, accounting, legal, business-case planning;
- Mortgage, rent or lease payments during the construction phase only;
- Start-up costs including some consumables (up to a max of 1% of the total budget); and
- Mandatory construction insurance.

#### 4. What is not eligible under the Major Infrastructure Program?

The following costs are not eligible:

- Costs incurred before a funding agreement with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) is signed;
- Mortgage, rent or lease payments before or after construction;
- Any/all ongoing operating costs (staff salaries, software, consumables, content insurance); and
- Project-related costs payable to the applicant (or the applicant's Directors or Officers) and/or fees payable to a third party not at arm's length from the project or applicant (including the applicant's Directors or Officers).

Proposed projects under the Major Infrastructure Program must be completed within the funding maximum of up to \$20,000 per space for leasehold/rented properties and up to \$40,000 per space for operator-owned/public properties, including the cost of classroom materials. EECD will not fund cost overruns.

In exceptional circumstances, EECD may increase project maximums and/or per space amounts to address the needs of diverse and/or vulnerable populations or communities requiring exceptionally large projects.

#### 5. Does the funding include outdoor play spaces?

Yes, the major infrastructure program will provide grant funding for outdoor spaces.

#### 6. Will the program provide funding for new school-age spaces?

No. The Major Infrastructure Program only provides funding for creating child care spaces for children ages 0 to 5 years.

#### 7. Is there a deadline for project concept applications?

Yes. Applicants must submit their project concept by **June 13, 2024**. Applicants are encouraged to submit project concepts even if all details are not yet known.

Projects may continue to be considered after the closing date, subject to budget availability. However, priority will be given to applications received by June 13, 2024, since they are more likely to meet the **March 31, 2026** timeline requirement.

## 8. Where to apply?

Project concepts can be submitted via the online application form found at the following link:  
[surveys.novascotia.ca/major](https://surveys.novascotia.ca/major)

## 9. Do we need to have all the information to submit the project concept application?

Step 1 of the application process involves providing general information about your organization and the proposed project. You can submit even if you don't know the answers to all the questions in the online form.

The application form must be completed in one session and cannot be saved for future editing. Therefore, familiarizing yourself with the application and compiling the required information before completing the application is strongly recommended. You can review the form <https://childcarenovascotia.ca/creating-spaces>.

## 10. What if our project ends up not being viable or costing more than we estimated?

Applicants who have their project concept approved will be provided funding to complete Step 2 of the process, which is submitting detailed planning documents to demonstrate that projects are viable and within the initial project scope. At Step 2, a decision will be made whether the project is viable or above the estimated cost. A non-viable project will not be approved to proceed. If project costs are higher than initially estimated, an applicant will need to secure additional sources of funding, or the project will not be approved to proceed.

## 11. What if we have not identified a child care operator for the proposed center?

The two-step application process will provide time for applicants to explore a licensed and provincially funded child care operator they can partner with. EECD staff can also match applicants with potential operators. If you have any questions, please reach out to [ECDSInfrastructure@novascotia.ca](mailto:ECDSInfrastructure@novascotia.ca).

## 12. Are standards for accessibility a requirement?

Yes. All design plans will be assessed to ensure compliance with the Provincial [Access by Design 2030](#) framework, reflecting our commitment to creating inclusive and accessible child care spaces.

### 13. How will EECD ensure underserved communities are prioritized?

To ensure underserved communities are prioritized, the application will gather detailed information about the target populations the proposed child care center will serve. Final project assessments will be completed using criteria scoring and review of available demographic data, where projects supporting underserved and diverse and/or vulnerable groups will receive greater consideration.

### 14. How will applications be assessed?

An assessment team comprised of government representatives from various backgrounds, ensuring appropriate subject matter expertise, will evaluate the application against the assessment criteria. The assessment criteria can be found in the program guidelines available <https://childcarenovascotia.ca/creating-spaces>.

### 15. How is the funding provided for the project after final approvals?

Applicants approved after Step 2 will enter a formal funding agreement with EECD and complete **Appendix C - Project Status Update** (provided by EECD). Once the agreement has been signed and Project Status Update has been finalized, applicants will be advanced 20% of the total approved amount to support the required cash flow. Subsequent disbursements will be based on the accomplishment of associated milestones identified in Appendix C - Project Status Update (and outlined in the Funding Agreement).

### 16. What if the centre faces potential closure during the required commitment period? E.g. a 10-year lease is terminated early.

As a part of their formal agreement with EECD, grant recipients will be required to operate the facility as a child care centre for the minimum commitment period outlined in program guidelines. If the child care centre ceases to operate within the commitment period, EECD may require, in its sole discretion, full or partial recovery of the original grant by the original applicant. For leasehold properties, grant recipients are responsible for ensuring that their commercial lease protects their tenancy for the duration of the commitment period.

### 17. Will ongoing operational funding be available from EECD for new spaces?

Once licensed, any new spaces will be eligible for departmental funding under existing grant programs, as applicable, including the Quality Investment Grant, the Inclusion Support Grant, and the Infant Quality Care Grant.

## Questions?

- For more information on the Major Infrastructure Program, and other space creation funding programs, visit <https://childcarenovascotia/creating-spaces> or email [ECDSInfrastructure@novascotia.ca](mailto:ECDSInfrastructure@novascotia.ca).
- For more information about becoming a licensed and provincially funded early learning and child care provider, visit [Licensing Services](#) or email [ECDServices@novascotia.ca](mailto:ECDServices@novascotia.ca)