



Minor Infrastructure Program for New Early Learning & Child Care Space Creation

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Early Learning and Child Care Division

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1 Overview

The Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Minor Infrastructure Program provides funding for the creation of not-for-profit child care spaces. Entities with projects approved are eligible for up to \$250,000 (based on a maximum of \$10,000 per space) towards eligible project costs, with up to an additional \$25,000 (based on a maximum of 10% of the total project cost) for expenses related to project design, project management, and legal fees.

2 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible, applicants must fully demonstrate that their proposed project meets the following criteria:

- A. **Eligible entities:** The following entities are eligible to apply under the Minor Infrastructure Program:
- The 13 First Nation communities in Nova Scotia
 - Registered non-profit or charitable organizations
 - Municipalities or organizations wholly owned by a municipality
 - Universities or Nova Scotia Community College

Applications will be accepted from entities who intend to become not-for-profit and operate licensed child care. Projects may be approved on the condition that the entity becomes a not-for-profit organization and has been approved to operate licensed child care. Contact ECDServices@novascotia.ca for more information on the process to become a licensed child care provider.

- B. **Financial feasibility:** Applicants must be able to demonstrate their project will be completed within the total available funding amount of \$250,000 (based on a maximum of \$10,000 per space) with up to an additional \$25,000 (based on a maximum of 10% of the total project cost) for additional expenses related to project design, project management, and legal fees. Projects must include quotes from reputable contractors and/or suppliers. The application package must include a completed **Appendix A - Project Description and Cost Estimate** to demonstrate financial soundness.

The Department may consider projects above the \$250,000 funding cap on a case-by-case basis, subject to budget availability. Project must still be within the \$10,000/space threshold and meet all other program requirements (such as one year time frame).

- C. **Community need:** Applications must be for projects located in Nova Scotia communities with a demonstrated lack of child care to create full-time, infant, toddler, and pre-school spaces, with a priority for projects serving diverse and/or marginalized populations.

- D. **Readiness to proceed:** Approved projects must be completed within one (1) year of approval. Applications must include a timeline for project completion. Projects will be assessed based on their timeline relative to the number of spaces created.
- E. **Operational viability:** Projects must demonstrate a plan for ongoing operational viability with funding provided by fees collected from parents/guardians with children enrolled in the program, and regular grant funding provided by the province. The application package must include a completed **Appendix B - Operating Budget** to demonstrate the proposed operating budget for whole centre operations. Existing providers must provide two (2) years of financial statements (including the statement of financial position/balance sheet and statement of operations/income statement) for the site and any satellite sites.

3 Eligible Project Costs

Eligible project costs are reasonable direct costs which are necessary for the construction and completion of the project, and which are incurred and paid by the applicant, including design fees, site surveys and assessments.

Eligible project costs include:

- Construction materials and labour costs
- Fixtures, fittings, equipment and fit-up costs (ex., tables, chairs, cupboards, appliances, cots)
- Project design costs (ex., architecture, floor plans, project management, legal fees secured from third party contractors) not to exceed 10 % of project value.

Eligible project costs **do not** include costs related to:

- Property acquisition or construction work undertaken prior to notice of grant approval;
- Land or acquiring land; leasing land, buildings, equipment, and other facilities;
- Portable rental costs, or other temporary location costs that do not create stable child care spaces;
- Staffing costs of existing child care centre operations;
- Project financing, including interest.

4 Application and Approval Process

Applications will be reviewed as received and those that meet all eligibility criteria may be approved for funding.

ELCC staff are available to answer questions and provide assistance to anyone interested in submitting a project for consideration under the Minor Infrastructure Program. Existing licensed child care providers are encouraged to discuss their projects with their Licensing Officer and Early Childhood Development Consultant prior to submitting an application.

Step 1: Completing the Minor Infrastructure Program Application Package

An application package must include:

1. **Minor Infrastructure Program Application:** A complete application must be submitted which demonstrates how the project proponent meets program eligibility criteria.
2. **Appendix A - Project Description and Cost Estimate**
 - Part 1: Project Description
 - Part 2: Estimated Project Costs
 - Part 3: Sources of Funding
 - Part 4: Project Timeline and Estimated Cashflow
3. **Appendix B - Operating Budget**
 - An operating budget form including signed Minutes of the Board of Directors (or appropriate signing authority) authorizing the budget.
 - Two (2) years of financial statements (including the statement of financial position/balance sheet and statement of operations/income statement) for the site and any satellite sites to demonstrate organizational viability.
4. **Supporting documentation** as referenced in the Application and Appendices, including but not limited to:
 - Minutes of the Board of Directors authorizing the budget
 - Written confirmation of funding sources, including private donations or services in kind.
 - Quotes/estimates relating to the work to be completed.
 - Zoning permit(s) (where applicable).
 - Building designs/floor plans
 - Written approval from property owner (landlord, municipality, RCE/CSAP)

Step 2: Submitting your Application Package

Applications must be completed electronically and submitted with all supporting documentation via Minor Infrastructure Program Application Form.

Application Link: <https://surveys.novascotia.ca/MIP#>

Incomplete applications **will be returned** with instructions on what information is required to be provided within 30 days. If the required information is not supplied within 30 days, the application will be considered withdrawn.

Step 3: EECD Review and Assessment

An assessment team will review applications as received. Projects that meet program eligibility criteria may be recommended for approval.

Step 4: Decision

Applicants will be notified regarding decision/next steps for their projects **within 45 days** of the Department receiving a complete application. Applicants who are not approved will be notified of the reasons why and may choose to submit an application for a new project.

A signed **Appendix C - Minor Infrastructure Program Agreement (Sample)** will be required before a project can commence.

5 Reporting Requirements and Funding Disbursements Process

Upon request, the applicant will be advanced 25% of the total project value to support required cashflow.

Applicants are required to submit **Appendix D - Monthly Progress Claim**, along with all supporting documentation, by the **15th of each month** for the duration of their project:

Funds for eligible project costs will be disbursed **within 10 business days** of the Monthly Progress Report and Claim being submitted.

ELCC will not advance funds for the portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) that is recoverable by the applicant from the Canada Revenue Agency.

6 Facility Licensing Process

ELCC Licensing Services will inform applicants of all required licensing documentation. Applicants will be provided with the **Guidelines for Licensees Approved for Space Expansion** by the licensing services team which details licensing and program requirements. Once the project reaches substantial completion, a Licensing Officer will complete the licensing process.

A license may be issued after the facility receives its final occupancy permit, has met Fire and Public Health inspections, and has met all regulated licensing requirements for child care.

7 Project Close-Out

Within 30 days of project completion, all outstanding claims and reports must be provided to the Department. The Department will complete a reconciliation of all funding and invoices and advise in writing if any amounts are outstanding. As per the Minor Infrastructure Program Agreement, the applicant is required to retain all records for future auditing purposes.