

EXTENDED DEADLINE: Government of Canada Introduces Broadband Funding Program

UPDATE: the deadline to apply for funding under the Connect to Innovate Program has been extended to April 20, 2017

On December 15, 2016, the Government of Canada announced the **Connect to Innovate (CTI)** program, which provides up to \$500 million in funding by 2021 for enhancing rural broadband infrastructure across Canada.

Funding Components

Backbone/middle-mile funding

- Relates to transport fibre that last-mile infrastructure is connected to.
- CTI-eligible backbone projects must serve an eligible community, which is defined as a named place that is two kilometres or more from existing backbone infrastructure that provides at least 1 Gbps of capacity. For a map of eligible communities, [click here](#).
- CTI-eligible backbone projects will be expected to connect anchor institutions such as schools, hospitals, etc., in addition to providing a point of presence to connect final-mile infrastructure.
- While most funding in this component will go towards new backbone infrastructure projects, some funding will be available for backbone upgrades and network resiliency projects.

The AAMDC advocated for broader eligibility criteria that supports fibre infrastructure to standalone towers, as in many cases, rural areas do not have institutions to serve as points of presence. Additionally, the AAMDC advocated for eligibility criteria that focused more on population density rather than specific place names. There is some concern that projects which would fund truly rural areas not included on the list of eligible communities may not be eligible for funding. The AAMDC will follow up with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada to gather clarification and keep members informed as new information is gathered.

Final-mile funding

- Relates to infrastructure required to connect individual households, businesses, etc. to nearest suitable point of presence.
- CTI-eligible final-mile projects must serve an eligible hexagonal area identified as lacking any infrastructure to support the provision of 5 Mbps download/1 Mbps upload speeds to households within it. Hexagons can be viewed on the [map of eligible communities](#).
- While most funding in this component will be used to serve areas that are completely underserved, some funding may be available to enhance funding in partially served hexagonal areas, if the proponent presents sufficient evidence that specific areas within the hexagon cannot currently receive 5/1 speeds.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible recipients include:

- A Canadian province, territory, or municipal entity
- A corporation, either for-profit or not for profit that is incorporated in Canada
- A band council within the meaning of section 2 of the Indian Act or an Indigenous government authority established by a Self-Government Agreement or a Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement
- A public sector body that is established by statute or by regulation or is wholly owned by a province, municipal or regional government which provides services to communities; or
- A partnership, joint venture or consortium that is composed of parties identified in (a), (b), (c) and/or (d) above;

And that

- Builds, owns and operates broadband infrastructure
- Or enters into a contract with an entity above to build, own, and operate broadband infrastructure

Application Timelines and Process

The deadline to apply for funding is **April 20, 2017 at 12:00 pm ET**. Applications will be accepted beginning on January 16, 2017.

The [CTI Application Guide](#) provides a helpful overview of eligibility and funding parameters and a detailed explanation of the application process. Applicants must apply through an online system using the [CTI application form](#). Additionally, FAQs on the program are available [here](#).

The Government of Alberta has requested that any municipality applying for CTI funding inform Service Alberta of their application, so that the province can provide support for the application to the federal government. To make Service Alberta aware of your application, please inform:

Holly Saulou, SuperNet Secretariat

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Enquiries may be directed to:

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