

Education and Capacity Building (ECB) Program

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Version 7.0
May 2018

ECB Program resources available at:
www.ieso.ca/ecb

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1. Background

Since 2009, the Independent Electricity System Operator (“**IESO**”) (previously, the Ontario Power Authority) has designed, administered and managed a portfolio of Energy Support Programs (“**ESPs**”) to promote community energy security and inclusive participation in Ontario’s green energy future. More information about the ESPs can be found at www.ieso.ca/funds.

In 2018, the IESO articulated forward-looking priority areas through the implementation plan for the Long-Term Energy Plan (“**LTEP**”). The IESO implementation plan recognizes the leadership of First Nations and Métis in Ontario’s energy sector, while acknowledging the ongoing challenges many First Nations and Métis face in accessing clean, reliable and affordable energy. The new portfolio of ESPs is designed to address these ongoing challenges while demonstrating the IESO’s commitment to supporting Indigenous capacity and leadership in the electricity sector.

2. Program Objective

The objective of the ECB Program is to support awareness, education, skills, and capacity building initiatives that help prepare communities to fully leverage energy opportunities and contribute to cleaner, more reliable and more affordable energy systems for First Nations and Métis, by providing funding support for:

- community capacity-building initiatives;
- education, community data collection and knowledge mobilization initiatives;
- skill building and project-readiness training; and
- innovative projects and initiatives relating to the ECB Program objective.

3. Eligibility Criteria

a. Eligible Applicants

- First Nation or Métis Communities;
- First Nation or Métis Organizations (including Friendship Centres, Indigenous housing providers, and others); and
- Non-Indigenous entities working in partnership with, and for the benefit of, First Nation or Métis Communities, or First Nation or Métis Organizations (Note: Non-Indigenous entities may only apply as joint applicants working with a First Nation or Métis Community or First Nation or Métis Organization as the lead applicant).

Funding is not provided to individuals. Joint applications for a shared single project may be submitted by two or more eligible applicants. Applicant eligibility for the ECB Program is determined in the sole and absolute discretion of the IESO or the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, as applicable.

Please see section 6 below for definitions of key eligibility terms.

b. Eligible Projects and Funding

All applications to the ECB Program must fit within one of the following ECB Program Streams:

Stream	Maximum Funding Amount per Project
<p>Capacity Building</p> <p>Projects that enhance awareness of, and knowledge about, energy-related issues in First Nation or Métis Communities, or First Nation or Métis Organizations. This may include community workshops and meetings, projects to engage youth and Elders in energy-related initiatives and issues, and other activities that educate and enhance energy-related capacity.</p>	<p>Up to \$125,000</p>
<p>Skills, Training, and Job Readiness</p> <p>Projects that build job-ready capacity and develop tangible skills within First Nation or Métis Communities, or First Nation or Métis Organizations to prepare these communities or organizations to participate in, develop, manage and own energy projects. This may include training related to energy management, technical skills, operation and maintenance, financial modeling and project management with respect to energy projects.</p>	<p>Up to \$125,000</p>
<p>Innovation</p> <p>Projects that demonstrate and deploy novel initiatives, approaches, and delivery models</p>	<p>Up to \$125,000</p>

<p>related to energy issues in First Nation or Métis Communities, or First Nation or Métis Organizations. The Innovation Stream also supports the cultivation and collection of energy-related research, data, and Traditional Knowledge, and the engagement of youth and Elders. The application must clearly demonstrate how the project approach or delivery method is unique or innovative within the context of the community or organization, and how the unique or innovative approach will contribute to the success of the project.</p>	
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The ECB Program may also accept proposals based on priorities identified through strategic research and program evaluations, from time-to-time. Through a request for proposals process, these “targeted calls” help to address specific and emerging needs. Details of these calls will be published on the ESP website as they arise. To maintain the ECB Program’s flexibility to respond to emerging needs and opportunities, the investment priorities of the ECB Program are subject to change.

c. Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Additional criteria regarding Eligible Expenses and a list of Ineligible Expenses are set out in the Funding Agreement, which must be signed by all successful applicants in order to receive funding.

Eligible Expenses

Funding is provided under the ECB Program for Eligible Expenses that are directly related and reasonably necessary to complete the project. Eligible Expenses can include costs associated with activities carried out by duly qualified internal resources, and with the services of duly qualified external service providers. Any contract with an external service provider in excess of \$50,000 must follow a competitive procurement process prior to being awarded.

Ineligible Expenses

Funding is not provided under the ECB Program for Ineligible Expenses, which include:

- Costs that are not directly related to the project;
- Costs related to the provision of legal advice or the development or distribution of legal templates, precedent agreements, or materials that are considered or could be considered legal or financial advice;

- Costs related to activities for which funding was received in relation to the project from another source;
- Costs that the applicant or joint applicant(s) did not directly incur;
- Costs incurred, or relating to any activity, matter or thing carried out before the start of the Funding Agreement;
- Costs associated with meeting the administrative obligations of the application or Funding Agreement under the ECB Program or any other IESO program, including preparing status and other reports as may be required under the Funding Agreement;
- Costs associated with submitting the application, or applications or proposals under any of the IESO programs, or entering into a funding agreement under any of the IESO programs;
- Costs related to meetings with or the lobbying of any governmental authority or the IESO;
- Costs associated with the use of personal devices (e.g. personal mobile or landline phones, laptops or internet service provider fees, etc.);
- Costs related to administrative operating expenses such as real estate expenses, insurance, utilities, memberships, dues, subscriptions, accounting, or maintenance of equipment;
- Costs incurred that are not evidenced by deliverables, including the supporting documentation required by the Funding Agreement, or other evidence of payment satisfactory to the IESO, in its sole and absolute discretion;
- Costs not approved by the IESO as part of the application and budget, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the IESO, in its sole and absolute discretion;
- Costs incurred by means of services in-kind, bonds, promissory notes or barter;
- Costs for travel, hospitality or meals that do not comply with the Ontario Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive;
- Costs that, in the IESO's view, in its sole and absolute discretion, materially deviate from the approved application in relation to the work plan, budget, project team, timelines or project description;
- Costs in respect of HST; and

- Costs in respect of any deductions and withholdings, including any taxes, union dues, Canada Pension Plan contributions, employment insurance contributions and employer contributions.

4. Application Process

a. Background

The ECB Program accepts submissions on an ongoing basis, with application submission dates spread throughout the year. The application review dates will be posted online from time-to-time at <http://www.ieso.ca/funds>. Before applying to the ECB Program, applicants should review these ECB Program Guidelines and the Funding Agreement carefully, and are encouraged to seek independent legal and other professional advice, as needed.

The ECB Program application development process is supportive. Applicants should contact ECB Program staff with any questions at ecb@ieso.ca or (416) 969-6317. ECB Program staff will be available to provide feedback and guidance throughout application development. As a condition of funding support, the IESO may require changes to the project scope, design, or budget, and may ask for additional information or references. The development of a complete application can take several months – please allow sufficient time for application review and feedback prior to submittal of your final application.

b. Application Format

Please ensure your application is no longer than 6 pages (not inclusive of the title page, check list, work plan and budget). All applications must be in the form provided by the IESO, and include the following:

- Title page: The title page should include a project title and a list of the project team members. If the application includes joint applicants, list all joint applicants and identify the lead applicant.
- Description of community/organization (150 words maximum): Provide a basic description of the First Nation or Métis Community, or the First Nation or Métis Organization that the project will benefit, and their energy priorities. If the community or organization has completed a community energy plan, please indicate that here.
- Applicant eligibility (50 words maximum): Describe how the applicant(s) meets the eligibility requirements of the ECB Program.

- Project purpose and description (225 words maximum): Describe the project and how the ECB Program funding will be used. Identify the applicable ECB Program Stream.
- Project team (100 words per project team member maximum): Include a brief description of the key members of the project team and summarize how they are qualified to support the success of the project.
- Anticipated impact on community (250 words maximum): Describe the anticipated impact the project will have on the applicable First Nation or Métis Community, or First Nation or Métis Organization. What contributions will it make to the community's energy security? Will the project have any broader social or economic benefit to the community? Describe how the impact of the project will be evaluated. What constitutes success, and how will it be measured?
- Knowledge mobilization (125 words maximum): Describe what materials or resources will be developed as part of the project and how they will be made easily accessible, publicly available and free of charge to the relevant target audience(s).
- Community involvement (including community agreement) (150 words maximum): Describe how community or organization members have been or will be involved, and include a Band Council Resolution, board resolution, or other endorsing document as appropriate with your application. In the case of joint applications, all joint applicants must provide a Band Council Resolution, board resolution, or other endorsing document as appropriate.
- Budget and work plan (separate document): Complete the work plan and budget document.
- Application checklist (separate document): Complete the application checklist.

c. Application Submission

Please submit your application to ecb@ieso.ca. Applicants are encouraged to contact ECB Program staff prior to submitting an application.

5. Application Evaluation

Complete and eligible applications submitted to the ECB Program are assessed by a review committee comprised of members from both inside and outside the IESO. The review committee makes funding recommendations to the IESO. Final funding decisions are made by, and are at the discretion of, the IESO.

Funding decisions are based on the extent to which a proposed project addresses community energy needs and the degree to which it satisfies the ECB Program application review criteria outlined immediately below:

Strategic fit	Will the project enhance First Nation or Métis energy-related capacity and leadership and support awareness, education, skills, and/or capacity building?
Community benefit, need and support	How are community members involved in the project? How does the project benefit the community? Is there an identified need for the project? Has a document expressing community support (Band Council Resolution, board resolution, etc.) been included in the application?
Project team and partners	Does the project team have the qualifications and experience required to execute the project? Is there evidence of strong and appropriate partnerships if applicable?
Financial feasibility	Is the budget for the project detailed, reasonable and justified? Have revenue sources for costs outside of those assigned to ECB Program funding been identified and secured?
Project purpose and outcomes	Are the project’s purpose and intended outcomes clearly articulated? Is the plan to realize and evaluate the project outcomes sufficiently detailed and reasonable?

6. Key Definitions

First Nation or Métis Community	<p>means, for the purposes of the ECB Program:</p> <p>(a) a First Nation in Ontario that is a “band” as defined in the <i>Indian Act</i> (Canada);</p> <p>(b) the Métis Nation of Ontario or any of its active Chartered Community Councils; or</p> <p>(c) a Person, other than a natural person, that has previously been determined by the Government of Ontario to represent the collective interests of a community that is composed of First Nation or Métis individuals.</p>
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First Nation or Métis Organization	means, for the purposes of the ECB Program, an organization that, as determined in the sole and absolute discretion of the IESO, represents the interests of more than one First Nation or Métis Community, or was established to provide key services to one or more First Nation or Métis Communities or members of one or more First Nation or Métis Communities.
Funding Agreement	means the agreement that successful applicants must sign in order to be eligible to receive funding under the ECB Program.

7. General

- a. Receipt of an application to the ECB Program does not constitute a commitment by the IESO to support the application, nor does it create a business relationship between the applicant, its partners and the IESO.
- b. The approval of the ECB Program review committee is required for the IESO to provide any financial support for a project, and the IESO will not provide financial support for the work of applicants performed prior to the review committee’s decision.
- c. Financial support from the IESO to an applicant to the ECB Program will only be provided upon execution of the Funding Agreement between the applicant and the IESO, and only according to the terms and conditions therein.
- d. The IESO reserves the right to make public the names of applicants, the title and a description of their proposed project, and the amount of funds applied for. All other information submitted by the applicant in their application will also be treated as non-confidential unless clearly labelled as confidential by the applicant.
- e. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the ECB Program Guidelines and any Funding Agreement entered into, the provisions of the Funding Agreement govern.
- f. The IESO reserves the right to:
 - i. cap the amount of funding provided under the ECB Program in any year; and
 - ii. change the ECB Program Guidelines from time to time.