

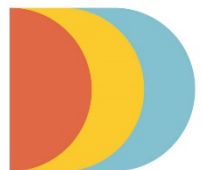
Ontario Active School Travel Fund Program Guide

October 2020



Guidelines and Application Process for Round 3 Funding

Ontario Active
School Travel





“Ontario Active School Travel Fund Round 3 Program Guide”

© 2020 Green Communities Canada

Introduction

The Ontario Active School Travel Fund aims to reverse the decline in active school travel in Ontario, and to establish a culture of walking and wheeling for school journeys. The Fund is managed and delivered by Green Communities Canada (GCC) as part of GCC's Ontario Active School Travel program, supported by funding from the Ontario government. For further information about Ontario Active School Travel see: <http://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/>

Fund description

The objective of the Fund is to **increase active school travel opportunities for elementary students in Ontario** to:

- **Prepare students for learning:** Active school travel supports mental health and wellness, which are critical to student success, by offering increased opportunities to engage in physical activity. Research has demonstrated a positive correlation between physical activity and improved academic outcomes.
- **Improve safety:** Active school travel helps to decrease traffic in school zones, thereby improving safety for all students, regardless of travel mode.

GCC is soliciting applications to the Fund from communities across Ontario. The Fund will support initiatives that are expected to have a significant and lasting impact in their communities by establishing a foundation for continuing growth in active school travel. Support is available to expand and strengthen existing active school travel initiatives, or to help get initiatives underway in new communities.

This is the third round of application-based funding available from the Ontario Active School Travel Fund.

Between 2018-2020 Green Communities Canada awarded \$2.1m from the OAST Fund to support 28 projects that delivered AST initiatives in 52 communities across the province. Further details of the 28 funded projects are available at:

<https://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/ontario-active-school-travel-fund/>

Funding amount

The range of funding available is \$20,000 to \$60,000 per grant.

Timeline for Round 3 Funding

- Release Program Guide: 7 October 2020
- Fund Overview Webinar: Wednesday 28 October 2020, 1pm
- Applications due: 20 November, 2020
- Notification of decisions: by 11 December 2020
- Award of funds: January 2021
- Project start date: January 2021
- Public announcement of funded projects: January/February 2021
- Final report: March 2022
- Project completion date: by 30 June 2022

Priority areas

The intention of this Fund is to build capacity within communities that will foster long-term commitments to increase active school travel. ***This requires a comprehensive approach that involves all key stakeholders and that addresses all of the [Five E's](#): Evaluation, Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Encouragement.***

The Ontario Active School Travel Fund supports initiatives that focus on:

1) School Travel Planning

- appointing dedicated Facilitator(s) to provide direct support to schools to implement School Travel Planning
- developing School Travel Plans
- implementing the actions identified in School Travel Plans

[School Travel Planning](#) (STP) is a community-based model for increasing active school travel that systematically addresses barriers to and incentives for walking and cycling for the school journey. Through STP, school and community stakeholders collaborate to create and implement action plans that use all of the Five E's to:

- Address ongoing transportation and traffic safety problems
- Increase the number of students using active and sustainable modes for all or part of the school journey

STP guidance, tools and training resources are available from GCC's [School Travel Planning Toolkit](#). The STP model is flexible to allow specific actions and areas of interest to be tailored as needed by communities.

2) Strengthening stakeholder partnerships, collaboration and coordination to leverage resources and support long term program sustainability

- building and strengthening partnerships between stakeholders, such as school boards, public health, municipalities and police services.
- enhancing collaboration and information-sharing between stakeholders
- creating or strengthening a committee that coordinates active school travel initiatives

- securing stakeholder commitment e.g. signing of an Active School Travel Charter
- building links between schools and community-wide initiatives to maximize access to the active transportation programs and resources available.
- creating opportunities for staff and volunteers to increase skill levels and leadership in active transportation

3) Developing policy and procedures that support active school travel

- conducting an environmental policy scan for your region/area
- determine if and how existing policies and procedures are being implemented
- developing or updating policy and procedures, e.g. winter maintenance, student transportation, school siting and design, land use and transportation master planning

4) Building public and political support

- raising awareness through events, campaigns and media
- sharing news and information, celebrating success
- engaging and involving local champions and leaders

Communities are encouraged to develop proposals that address all of the priority areas. The coverage of these priority areas will be taken into account when evaluating all applications received. Initiatives that address all four of these priority areas will be more competitive in the application process.

Eligibility

This Fund targets local initiatives operating at a community scale or regional scale, rather than province-wide, and supported by partnerships among key regional stakeholders. As such GCC will not award funds to individual schools.

This funding is designed to support a range of projects across Ontario and avoid concentration in any one location. Therefore, only one application can be accepted per community. For the purposes of this Fund, a community is defined as a lower-tier or single-tier municipal area.

A community that received funding in Round 1 or Round 2 may not apply to Round 3, regardless of the amount requested.

Communities that were unsuccessful in Round 1 or Round 2 may submit an application for Round 3 funding. All applicants from previous Rounds received a feedback report from the peer review committee and should modify and strengthen their application accordingly.

Initiatives must take place in Ontario and the lead applicant must be one of the following key local stakeholders for active school travel in the applicant community:

- public health
- municipality (lower, single or upper tier)
- school board
- student transportation consortium
- non-profit corporation

The lead applicant will be responsible for receiving and managing funds, coordinating and managing the initiative, including local governance and partnerships, and monitoring and reporting on progress at regular intervals. Therefore, the lead applicant will need to demonstrate these capabilities in their submission (Section 3.2 of the Application Form).

Applications will also need to demonstrate (in Section 4) that:

- The project team has the experience, capability and support to deliver the initiative.
- Key local stakeholders will be coordinated through a committee or working group.
- There is a track record of engagement in active school travel initiatives in your community, as may be demonstrated by an established community/regional steering committee and/or formal partnerships with at least one school board and members of municipal government.
- There is municipal and school board support for the proposal.

Matching funds

For sustainability purposes, communities must contribute matching funds (cash and in-kind) towards their proposed initiative. The minimum amount of matching funds required is 50% of the grant requested. For example, a community requesting a grant of \$50,000 will need to contribute at least \$25,000 of matching funds (cash and in-kind), resulting in a total project budget of at least \$75,000.

Communities are encouraged to contribute higher levels of matching funds wherever possible. The proportion of matching funds will be taken into account when evaluating all applications received.

Matching funds (cash and in-kind) may include any of the following:

- municipal, regional or provincial government cash contribution
- school board cash contribution
- grants or cash contributions from another organization
- in-kind contribution of staff time (e.g. municipal, public health, school board, school)
- in-kind contribution of space, equipment and supplies (e.g. meeting space, printed materials)
- in-kind contribution of professional services (e.g. graphic design, legal advice, event speaker)
- in-kind contribution of volunteer hours (e.g. school council, parents, students)

All matching funds (cash and in-kind) must come from sources that were not already committed to active school travel prior to the proposed initiative. Capital works cannot be counted towards matching funds.

Other criteria

Funding can be used for honoraria, incentives and prizes up to a maximum of 5% of the grant requested.

Administration costs allocated to the initiative must remain below 15% of the grant requested.

Grant recipients are responsible for identifying and obtaining any permits, insurance, licences or other approvals required to deliver the initiatives, including **school board ethics approval for mandatory data collection** at the school level. Applicants are encouraged to identify the annual ethics review committee schedule(s) for the relevant school board(s) and incorporate those deadlines into the project plan.

The following activities and expenses are ineligible for funding:

- fees not directly related to delivering the initiative
- partisan activities
- previously funded costs (i.e., this funding cannot be used as a substitute for existing funding commitments)
- expenses incurred prior to contract date

Grant timeline and key dates

Grants will be made for a period of 18 months (ending 30 June 2022).

Funded initiatives should start as soon as possible after award of funds in January 2021. It is anticipated that grant recipients will initially undertake planning and preparation tasks, but must be actively implementing their initiative by 1 February 2021. Grant recipients should aim to complete the selection of schools by the end of January 2021 at the latest, in order to be ready for full implementation from February 2021 onwards.

Grant recipients will be required to sign an agreement with GCC prior to receiving the first grant payment. The agreement will specify the activities to be carried out, timelines, grant payment dates, data collection and reporting requirements, and eligible expenses. The agreement will be conditional upon receiving Letters of Support from the municipal and school board project partners.

Learning supports

Grant recipients will be supported in delivering their initiative in the following ways:

- the [School Travel Planning toolkit](#), plus other tools, templates and information resources provided by GCC on the ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca website
- training, coaching and mentoring services from GCC, including STP training modules and information webinars
- advice and guidance from GCC, e.g., for school ethics applications
- grant recipient gatherings (online or in-person) to share experiences and learnings
- facilitated knowledge exchange of grant recipient learnings, successes and impacts through the Ontario Active School Travel Network

Expectations of grant recipients

Successful grant recipients are expected to participate in several activities that are designed to raise awareness, promote engagement or assist with the evaluation of initiatives. The activities are listed below and must be incorporated into the proposed Project Plan, Budget and/or Evaluation Plan.

- **Ontario Active School Travel Summit:** Grant recipients are expected to send representatives to attend the Ontario Active School Travel Summit in Spring 2021. If needed, bursaries for travel and accommodation will be available from GCC for one representative from each funded community project.
- **Media launch:** Grant recipients are expected to hold a community-level media launch for their initiative within three months of the award of funds.
- **Story telling:** Grant recipients are expected to document and share some of the highlights, learnings and/or outcomes of their initiative by undertaking photography and/or videography for online publication through websites and social media.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluation is an essential component of the Ontario Active School Travel framework. Data collected by grant recipients will feed into overall evaluation and be reported to the Ministry of Education. Data collection tools and reporting templates will be provided by GCC. Grant recipients will be required to support program evaluation by:
 - submitting an Evaluation Plan as part of their application
 - keeping a record of all project documents, correspondence, activities and expenses, including invoices and receipts, and making all records available for audit upon request by GCC
 - submitting progress reports to GCC according to the following schedule:
 - 16 July 2021
 - 11 March 2022
 - completing an environmental policy scan that identifies existing policies and procedures that affect active school travel, and new policies and procedures that are needed

Content required for progress reports will include:

- A. Project delivery (e.g., tasks and actions completed)
- B. Risk management (e.g., risks/challenges for successful project delivery and potential mitigation measures)
- C. Communications (e.g., media launch plans)
- D. Evaluation (e.g., school selection; mandatory data collection: Student Travel Surveys, School Profile Forms)
- E. Environmental Policy Scan (i.e., identification of policies, procedures and legislation that are supportive or may pose challenges to active school travel at five levels of governance: school, school board, local municipality, upper-tier municipality, provincial government)

Application process

The deadline for applications is 5pm EST on Friday 20 November 2020.

Interested applicants are required to complete the [Registration Form](#) in order to receive a copy of the Application Package and reminders about funding deadlines, updates to the application process, and information about registering for the Fund Overview Webinar to be held by GCC 28 October 2020, 1pm.

All applications must be submitted by the deadline using the online application process, accessed from <http://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/ontario-active-school-travel-fund/>. The webpage also includes a list of Frequently Asked Questions.

Evaluation of applications

Step 1: All applications received will be reviewed by GCC to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria set out in this Program Guide.

Step 2: Each eligible application will be assessed by an evaluation committee, in accordance with a standard evaluation process that will be based on the following criteria:

- relevance and lasting impact of proposed initiative
- track record of lead applicant
- organizational capacity of Project Team
- strength of local and regional partnerships and stakeholder engagement
- feasibility of Project Plan
- realistic and effective budget
- proportion of matching funds

Step 3: Notifications of grant decisions will be made by 11 December 2020.