

Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund Guidelines and Procedures

Guide for Applicants

IMPORTANT

**Before beginning a grant application, please read this
Guide for Applicants.**

This Guide for Applicants and Grant Application Forms are available on the Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities website at www.achsc.org

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IN BRIEF
Wellness Fund – Winter 2010
Grant Application Process

The **School of Public Health, University of Alberta** and the **Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities (ACHSC)** are pleased to provide you with information about funding for projects that support healthy school communities available from the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund. Organizations that meet the eligibility criteria are invited to submit proposals for consideration.

In 2007, **Alberta Health and Wellness** established the **Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund** to address issues of health and wellness among children and youth within Alberta school communities. There are **two** categories of funding available:

Category A. Larger Grant: Grants of over **\$5000 and up to \$25,000** are available for approved projects. Larger Grant projects must incorporate activities that demonstrate partnerships that include more than one school or community and preferably at a jurisdictional level and address at least two of the three priority areas of the Wellness Fund of Active Living, Healthy Eating, and Positive Social Environments.

Category B. Smaller Grants: Grants of **up to \$5,000** are available for smaller school community projects or activities or with the approval of the Project Coordinator, for specific components of larger school community projects. The project must address at least one of the three priority areas of the Wellness Fund of Active Living, Healthy Eating, and Positive Social Environments.

Projects should aim to implement Comprehensive School Health initiatives which enable them to build and strengthen the capacity of each school community.

A healthy school community is one in which all citizens including teachers, students, parents, administrators and community leaders from the private, public and social sectors as well as government, organisations, clubs, and institutions work together to create physical and social environments that support active, healthy lifestyles for school-aged children and youth.

Projects could consider working towards:

- Linking food choices to the "Choose Most Often" category from Alberta's Provincial Nutrition Guidelines and ensuring curricular and extra-curricular links have been made to healthy eating.
- Embedding a culture of active living by making links to both curricular and extra-curricular activities, making any necessary changes to the school community environment to support physical activity.
- Fostering a culture within school community where students, staff, parents, and community partners feel safe, valued and connected.
- Enacting policies that promote Comprehensive School Health and which encompass Healthy Eating, Active Living and Positive Social Environments.

**We are no longer accepting applications for either the
Larger Grant A or Smaller Grant B**

Foreword

The Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund is funded by Alberta Health and Wellness and managed by the School of Public Health, University of Alberta in partnership with the Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities (ACHSC). The Wellness Fund was established to provide close to \$3 million over the next three years to support innovative initiatives that promote healthy living in school communities. Funding will be provided to support school communities committed to a collaborative, coordinated response that promote healthy choices for healthy living, including physical activity, healthy eating, and positive social environments in school communities.

Health promoting school communities give children and youth opportunities to observe and learn positive health attitudes and behaviours. School health promotion includes a broad spectrum of programs, policies, activities, and services that take place in homes, schools, and communities in order to help children enhance their health, improve their learning, and build productive and satisfying relationships. School programs that are integrated, holistic and strategic appear to produce better health and education outcomes than those which are mainly information-based and implemented only in the classroom (www.iuhpe.org).

The Goal of the Wellness Fund

The goal of the Wellness Fund is to support school communities in Alberta to plan, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school health approaches to enhance the health outcomes of school-aged children and youth.

Wellness Fund Strategies

Build Capacity through Collaboration, Communication, and Cooperation The Wellness Fund will support school communities to develop collaborative, cooperative approaches to activities aimed at improving the health and wellness of Alberta's youth. The resulting initiatives will demonstrate the benefits of effectively communicating and working together to improve the health and wellness of school-aged children and youth through the school community, where efforts are proven to be effective. The Wellness Fund is not intended to duplicate or replace the excellent work that is already going on in many Alberta communities. Rather, it is meant to build on, enhance and strengthen existing networks as well as to stimulate new activity.

Mobilize Stakeholders The Wellness Fund recognizes that school communities need to involve and mobilize a variety of stakeholders to enhance health outcomes of school-aged children and youth. Some communities have already established school community networks and coalitions and formulated plans with concrete goals, objectives and activities. Others are just becoming aware of the potential.

Healthy School Community

A healthy school community is one in which all citizens including teachers, students, parents, administrators and community leaders from the private, public and social sectors as well as government, organizations, clubs, and institutions work together to create physical and social environments that support active, healthy lifestyles for school-aged children and youth.

A. Wellness Fund Guidelines

What is the purpose of the Wellness Fund?

The goal of the Wellness Fund is to support school communities in Alberta to plan, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school health approaches to enhance health outcomes of school-aged children and youth.

The fund is intended for specific projects that address problems or unmet school community needs in areas of active living, healthy eating, and positive social environments. A “project” is a coordinated series of non routine tasks over a specified period of time designed to achieve specific measurable results.

What are the Objectives of the Wellness Fund?

Wellness Fund Objectives

1. Mobilize partnerships in school communities to identify and address issues concerning active living, healthy eating and positive social environments within the school community through sustainable, multi-sectoral, collaborative, coordinated, school community planning and action.
2. Build and strengthen the capacity of school community organizations to develop, implement, and evaluate initiatives that increase active living, healthy eating and positive social environments among school-aged children and youth in Alberta.
3. Improve coordination, focus efforts, fill gaps, and reduce duplication of initiatives to improve active living, healthy eating and positive social environments for school children in Alberta.
4. Encourage school community organizations to share the results of active living, healthy eating and positive social environments with other organizations and school communities to improve knowledge of children’s health and wellness issues and for possible replication or adaptation of successful projects.

What are the priority issues to be addressed by the Wellness Fund grant program?

Wellness Fund projects should address active living, healthy eating and positive social environments in the school community.

Initiatives will also be considered if they address an additional health and wellness problem, issue or need specific to a school community or target group that can be identified, supported by evidence, and demonstrated as a local priority.

What else does the Wellness Fund support?

Grants may be provided for:

1. Projects that demonstrate strong community collaboration, particularly projects submitted by, or on behalf of, or that will result in establishing a broad, cross-sectoral action group, coalition, alliance, or network that has a long-term commitment improve the health and wellness of school-aged children and youth in the school community.
2. New and innovative projects.
3. The replication of projects or programs that have demonstrated success in other school communities.
4. Projects that previously received a Category A: Larger Grant and after the first year of funding provide evidence of a positive impact on at least two of the priority issues for the Fund with the intention of further developing the intervention strategy. The Wellness Fund will consider

extending Category A grant support to sustain successful projects for a maximum of three years dependant on when the project begins within the Wellness Funds cycle.

5. Delivery of a successful project that can be replicated in other Alberta school communities. Providers must show evidence of the expressed desire and need for the project from the other school communities and evidence of active collaboration with those school communities.
6. Projects that demonstrate good potential for sustainability in the school community.

How long does the funding last?

Funded projects that are planned for a **two or three year term** must submit interim reporting at the end of each year prior to the release of the next grant payment. Such projects must demonstrate significant development based on **evidence** of successful delivery and of positive, measurable results for the project in the previous year(s). **Please note all projects are one year in length at this time.**

What types of community supports are recommended and/or required?

Applications should demonstrate a collaborative and coordinated approach to project planning, design, development, implementation and evaluation.

1. Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) are key stakeholders in the health and wellness of children and youth. All Wellness Fund projects should consider inviting the participation and support of the RHA that serves the school community. Invitations must be done in writing as early as possible in the planning process. **Attach the dated letters of invitation to the grant application. Attach copies of responses** from the RHA to strengthen the application.

Larger Grant applicants are **required to inform the Regional Health Authority (RHA) of the proposed project and to extend an invitation to be involved as a partner**. There is no obligation on the part of RHAs to be a partner with each Category A grant project.

2. Other key stakeholders:
Support, involvement or endorsement of the following stakeholders is encouraged but not required:
 - School-aged children and youth.
 - The school community's local governing body such as city, town or county council, band council, neighbourhood association, school jurisdiction, etc. depending on the "community".
 - Key provincial organizations with a mandate and expertise on particular issues.
 - Representatives of the public, not-for-profit, voluntary and private sectors including volunteer and groups, government and non-governmental agencies and organizations, publicly funded organizations and institutions, labour and professional organizations, business and industry, municipalities, health service providers, and the media, among others.
3. Co-resourcing for the project by the applicant and/or other partners is encouraged and will strengthen an application. **Matching funding is not a requirement.** However **in-kind support** is expected. Applications should indicate what other financial or in-kind contributions and support are being sought or are already committed to the project by the applicant or partners.

B. Eligible Project Sponsors

Who can receive funding?

In order to ensure financial accountability of the funds, grants can only be issued to a sponsoring organization that is:

- A publicly funded organization or institution.
- A non-profit society or association registered with Alberta Registries;
- A non-profit charitable organization registered with the Government of Canada.

Grants will not normally be issued to:

- A regional health authority (RHA) unless it is sponsoring the application on behalf of a school community action group, coalition, alliance, or network that is otherwise ineligible to access the funds.
- Fundraising foundations (e.g. education and health foundations).
- Organizations with a regional or provincial mandate unless:
 - a. Their proposed project will be carried out within and in partnership with a specific school community; or
 - b. Their proposed project will facilitate the establishment of projects in multiple school communities within the region or perhaps the province.

Can a coalition that is not incorporated apply for a grant?

If it is the case that a school community action group, coalition, alliance, or network would like to seek funding for a project but is not incorporated as a society or association, the application may be submitted by an eligible member/partner organization that will sponsor the project on its behalf.

If the application is successful, the sponsor is responsible for signing the funding agreement, administering the funds, and ensuring the obligations of the agreement are met. The coalition should be identified in the application as a co-applicant.

C. Eligible Costs

What costs will the fund support?

1. Direct project costs

Funding can be used for direct costs associated with the development and delivery of project activities and materials. These costs may include overhead expenses such as phone, postage, volunteer training, travel, printing, copying; specialized project supplies and materials. The costs of renting needed equipment or space is allowed, but discouraged in favour of obtaining “in-kind” donations of equipment and space.

2. Capital equipment costs

Capital equipment purchases will be considered only if necessary to the project and if renting or in-kind donations are not feasible or reasonable options. Please note that playgrounds are typically considered capital expenditures and as such are not a good fit for the fund.

3. Evaluation

Costs associated with project evaluation should be included in the overall budget. As a **guideline**, 10% but no more than 15% of the project budget may be allocated to evaluation.

4. Personnel

Funding may be used to support contract fees, salaries and benefits for personnel necessary for development, implementation, delivery or evaluation of the project. Wellness Fund grants cannot be used to replace the salaries or portions of salaries of existing employees already being paid from other sources.

5. Travel

Support for automobile travel is permitted up to the government rate currently at \$.43 per kilometre.

6. Administrative overhead

Budgets may include up to 10% of the grant total to cover the costs of administrative overhead specific to the Wellness Fund granted project.

Are there costs the Wellness Fund won't support?

The Wellness Fund will not cover or subsidize the following costs:

- Health care delivery services
- Profit-making activities or business ventures
- Administrative functions or core operations which are normally part of the regular, ongoing business of a school, organization, agency, network, coalition or program (e.g. rent, utilities, or sharing the cost of an ongoing staff position)
- Constructing or renovating facilities
- Staff in existing or ongoing positions
- Programs or projects that are already funded as part of an organization's mandate
- Sending individuals to conferences or other professional development activities (other than training sessions or meetings related to the specific project)
- Expenses for activities or projects that have already been completed
- Deficit budgets from other projects or of the organization's operations
- Capital equipment not integral to the project. (See above Eligible Costs – Item 2)
- Studies or research on a health and wellness issue, unless the proposal also includes a intervention component that addresses the issue

D. Grant Application Review Process

What is the Wellness Fund process for reviewing applications, notifying applicants of review outcomes, and the release of the grant?

1. Review Process for Category A: Larger Grants

- Each application will be screened to ensure it is complete and that the eligibility criteria have been met. Only eligible and complete applications will be forwarded to the Wellness Fund Grant Review Committee for review and approval or denial of support.
- The Wellness Fund Grant Review Committee consisting of the project team and an external advisory committee made up of knowledgeable representatives of community and provincial organizations involved in the field of health and wellness. The Wellness Fund Grant Review Committee will meet to assess applications about four weeks after the application deadlines.
- Category A applicants will be notified by telephone or email **within one week** after the Review Committee's deliberations of the status of their applications. A written notification of the Review Committee's decision will be provided no later than **1 month after** the Review Committee deliberates.
- Obligations and expectations of funded projects as well as any conditions for final approval will be specified in a **Letter of Agreement**. The Letter of Agreement must be signed by the applicant and returned to the Wellness Fund **Project Coordinator** prior to the release of grant funds.
- In all cases, the signed Letter of Agreement must be returned prior to **June 30, 2009**. If the signed Letter of Agreement is not returned by this date, grant approval will lapse. In the case of a lapsed grant, project organizers will need to re-apply for a new grant.
- Funds will be released as soon as possible after the Letter of Agreement is signed and returned.

2. Review Process for Category B: Smaller Grant

- Category B applications are reviewed by an internal Wellness Fund Review Committee generally within two weeks of the deadline for submissions.
- The Wellness Fund will notify Category B applicants of the status of their applications by telephone or email **within one week** after the Wellness Fund Review Team deliberations.
- Written notification of the Review Committee's decision will be provided no later than **1 month after** the Wellness Fund Review Team deliberations. Notification of approval as well as of obligations and expectations of funded projects (such as reporting, acknowledgements, dissemination of results, unused funds, etc.) will be specified in a Letter of Agreement.
- Missing, incomplete, inconsistent, or unclear information may cause delays in processing an application or cause it to be rejected in the screening process and not proceed to the review process.
- The Letter of Agreement must be signed by the applicant and returned prior to the release of grant funds.
- Funds will be released as soon as possible after the Letter of Agreement is signed and returned.

During each funding year, a school community may submit applications for more than one project in either Category A or B, but may not apply for more than one grant for any one project.

What are the criteria for assessing grant applications?

Note: Reviewer Assessment Forms used by the Review Committee and Review Team members for Category A and B project grant proposals are included in this Guide for the information of applicants.

Category A and B applications will be reviewed and assessed on their individual merit. Reviewers' assessments will be guided by the following questions and criteria:

- **Problem:** Is the priority issue to be addressed clearly identified and **supported with evidence**? Does the project focus on the health and wellness of school-aged children and youth?
- **Wellness Fund Priorities:** How well does the proposed project fit with the purpose and priorities of the Wellness Fund?
- **Sponsoring School Community:** Does the quality of the application build confidence in the applicant's ability to plan, implement and follow through with the project? Does the project management structure provide evidence of collaboration, communication and coordination?
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Are the project partners appropriate and are their roles clearly defined?
- **Goals and Objectives:** Do the goals and objectives of the proposed project clearly address the identified problem or need? Are the objectives specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-limited?
- **Target Group:** Is the target group well defined and appropriate, based on the identified problem and need? Are they involved in the planning and implementation of the project?
- **Project Information:** Does the project information explain what will be done and how? Do the project activities address the stated problem? Can this project impact the problem identified? Does the application provide **evidence** that the approach to the problem is likely to produce positive results? (Citing research studies, prior experience, or previously evaluated projects of a similar nature are good ways to produce this evidence.)
- **Workplan:** Does the workplan describe the sequencing of major tasks and timelines of the project? Is the workplan realistic given the scope, timeframe and resources of the project?
- **Budget:** Is the budget complete, clear, realistic, cost-effective, and adequately explained? Is the allocation of the Wellness Fund grant clearly shown?
- **Evaluation:** Will the evaluation plan adequately **measure the success** of the proposed objectives? Does it describe how it will assess the project's expected results?
- **Effectiveness:** Does the application demonstrate consideration of the Elements of "A Shared Vision for Building Healthy School Communities" through comprehensive school health described by ACHSC (Appendix A)?
- **General Considerations:**

- Is there reason to question aspects of the application such as eligibility or accuracy?
- Are there any discrepancies, contradictions, or inconsistencies in the information provided?
- Does the application demonstrate an understanding of school health promotion and the relationship between active living, healthy eating, and positive social environments?
- Is the application coherent and reasonably free of confusing language and errors?
- How is the project likely to have a positive impact on the wellness of school-aged children and youth?

Assessment of Category A: Larger Grant applications may also include the following considerations

- **Evidence:** Is the identified problem supported by statistical or other evidence? Is the proposed strategy for addressing the problem based on evidence that this strategy has worked elsewhere or by research studies or reports?
- **Approach:** Does the proposal demonstrate a cross-sectoral, collaborative, coordinated approach to developing and delivering the project?
- **Representation:** Does the project involve representatives from the public, private, not-for-profit and volunteer sectors in identifying and addressing the issue?
- **Collaboration:** Does the project involve a collaboration of school community groups with a vested interest in the outcomes of the project?
- **Endorsements:** Does the application include dated copies of notices/letters to the Regional Health Authority and other appropriate vested interests notifying them of the proposed project and inviting them to be involved?
- **Health Promotion Approach:** To what extent does the project take a health promotion approach encouraging people to be active participants in improving their health and wellness rather than passive recipients of program delivery?
- **Building on Experience:** Does the application demonstrate awareness, understanding, and/or use of existing information regarding what strategies, programs, or activities have already been proven successful or promising in addressing the identified problem?
- **Sustainability:** Does the application highlight specific strategies/activities indicating how the project will be supported long-term?
- **Information Sharing:** Does the application describe reasonable and sufficient ways for sharing information and results about the initiative with other school communities and organizations?
- **Potential Model:** To what extent does the project have the potential to serve as a model?
- **Role of Collaborators:** Do the letters of endorsement included with the application indicate relevant and appropriate support and involvement of key stakeholders?
- **Co-resourcing:** Is there evidence of co-resourcing?

What are the obligations and expectations of funded projects?

Use of Funds:

- All funding must be used as proposed in the application form or according to the amendments outlined in the letter of agreement.
- Any significant changes or alterations to the original proposal must be submitted to and approved by a Wellness Fund Project Facilitator (including budget, workplan and timelines).

- If any funds are unused after completion of the project, grant recipients have two options. They can return the unused funds to the Wellness Fund or receive approval from the Wellness Fund for a proposal to use the remaining funds. The use of remaining funds must align with the funding guidelines of the Wellness Fund.

Acknowledgement of the Wellness Fund:

- **Alberta Health and Wellness and the Alberta Healthy School Community Wellness Fund** must be acknowledged as a funder in reports and presentations about the funded project. Other acknowledgements are appreciated, but not required.

Final Project Report:

- Grant recipients are required to submit two copies of the final project report to the Wellness Fund within six weeks after the end of the project. Final project report templates for Category A and B grants are available from the Project Facilitators.

Sponsored Programs:

- For grant recipients that undertake to deliver commercial or packaged programs, the Wellness Fund recognizes that these programs, while often evidence-based and theoretically sound, have not yet been sufficiently evaluated to demonstrate behavioural change from pre training to post training. Consequently, the evaluation component of sponsored programs should attempt to include one or more of the following indicators (**evidence**) of success:
 - mechanisms to gauge attitude, knowledge, perception changes in participants (pre- and post-event tests),
 - citations from reputable programs
 - a summary of evaluation results from other jurisdictions that have delivered the program,
 - references to published evaluation reports, program studies, and outcome reports by other project evaluators.

Sharing Information:

- Grant recipients are encouraged to share information about their funded projects with other communities and organizations, including project outcomes, lessons learned and the potential for replicating or adapting the project as a model for other school communities. The Wellness Fund retains the right to disseminate information and reports about funded projects.

Non-compliance:

- If a grant recipient is non-compliant or non-responsive about meeting reporting obligations, after fair warning (three written warnings), they will be expected to return the full amount of the grant. In instances where this is the case, future grant applications from non-compliant applicants will not be considered.

Appendix A

A SHARED VISION FOR building HEALTHY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES through comprehensive school health

In April 2005, 270 delegates from Alberta and across Canada participated in describing components for a shared vision for healthy school communities in Alberta. The following statements exemplify a comprehensive school health approach (ACHSC, 2006):

HEALTH is a core value and school health promotion can be found to the same, great extent at all levels – in all elementary, junior and senior highs in Alberta.

HEALTHY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES are created and sustained through a whole school approach where students, teachers, parents, school staff, community groups, agencies, and institutions work together on key priorities for improving health and educational attainment. It takes good, strong relationships between home, school, and community partnerships and services.

ALL ADULTS have shared beliefs, understanding, and responsibility that the development of healthy children is our most profound mission in society.

STUDENTS feel cared for and respected and have strong and confident self-images. They are engaged in readily available, relevant and engaging learning activities and feel connected to their schools because they can get involved.

SCHOOL STAFF are not overwhelmed with high expectations to implement numerous new initiatives because health is integrated into the fabric of schools. We have appropriate class sizes and school staff are involved in creating healthy workplaces. There are **CHAMPIONS** in schools that promote and integrate health into the school.

PARENTS are engaged in and participate in school and community life.

THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY helps develop tomorrow leaders today by advocating and supporting healthy school communities

POLITICIANS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS are aware of what it takes to create and sustain healthy school communities and support a provincial multi-faceted strategy for school health promotion.

ALL SECTORS work together to incorporate a common framework with respect to policy, programs, and research and evaluation. We have strong partnerships between health and education – at all levels.

We have adequate **FINANCIAL SUPPORT** to implement promising practice in school health. We have long-term sustainable support from a variety of sources. Health Action Teams identify **PRIORITY HEALTH ISSUES** for each school community because each has its own unique needs and capacities. Priority issues are addressed through integration, coordination, and enhancements to a) curriculum and teaching methods, b) social and physical environments, and c) home, school, and community partnerships and services.

We have exemplary **HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS OF STUDY** in Alberta however we do not only focus on these curricular areas. Health is integrated into the broad curriculum. **INSTRUCTION** methods offer children and youth practice in social and relational skills.

We have moved from an emphasis on individuals to a more balanced approach to also focus on the **PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS FOR HEALTH**. School cultures exemplify a safe and caring climate where diversity is considered an asset.

Strategies or interventions that are implemented have a strong indication that they are **PROMISING PRACTICE**. We choose carefully what we implement. Evaluation methods are utilized to report on the benefits or desired outcomes for school communities. We contribute to knowledge development with respect to effective school health practice.