

Ontario Active School Travel Fund Program Guide

January 2018



Guidelines and Application Process for Round 1 Funding

**Ontario Active
School Travel**





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Introduction

The Ontario Active School Travel Fund is part of Ontario Active School Travel, a provincial framework for increasing active transportation for school journeys. Ontario Active School Travel is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, and managed and delivered by Green Communities Canada (GCC). The ultimate goal is to achieve population-level change – to reverse the decline in active school travel in Ontario, and to establish a culture of walking and wheeling for school journeys.

For further information about Ontario Active School Travel see:

<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/ontario-active-school-travel/>

Fund description

The objective of the Fund is to increase physical activity opportunities for Ontario students by supporting and expanding active school travel programs for elementary age students (Grades K-8). We want more students to walk, cycle, scoot and skateboard for their daily school journeys.

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.

There will be more than one round of application-based funding available over the course of the three-year pilot project, to ensure that all communities have the opportunity to prepare and submit an application:

- Round 1 – January-March 2018
- Round 2 – Fall 2018
- Further rounds – *to be determined*

Funding amount

The range of funding available is \$30,000 to \$100,000 per grant.

Timeline for Round 1 Funding

- Applications due: 9 March, 2018
- Notification of decisions: End of March, 2018
- Public announcement of funded projects: April 2018
- Award of funds: May 2018
- Latest project start date: September 2018
- Completion and final report: End of June 2020

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 achieve a comprehensive approach through a combination of:

- **School Travel Planning**
 - appointing dedicated Facilitator(s) 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.

- **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
- **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

- **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

Additional action areas that increase opportunities for Ontario students to engage in active school travel will also be considered. These include:

- Initiatives that **encourage** daily walking and wheeling for the school journey, such as:
 - walking buddy programs, walking school bus or other walking groups
 - bike trains or other bike to school groups
- Initiatives that **educate** students and families about the benefits of active transportation, and develop awareness and skills in areas such as:
 - pedestrian safety
 - cycling skills
 - transit use

Eligibility

This Fund targets initiatives operating at a community scale or regional scale, and supported by partnerships between the key regional stakeholders. As such GCC will not award funds to individual schools.

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.

Applications will also need to demonstrate 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 – this should be evidenced by a letter of support from each municipality and school board that will be involved in the initiative. Letters should identify commitments to the proposed initiative and be signed by senior management.

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 25% of the grant requested. For example, a community requesting a grant of \$100,000 will need to contribute at least \$25,000 of matching funds (cash and in-kind), resulting in a total project budget of at least \$125,000.

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 total budget.

Administration costs allocated to the initiative must remain below 15% of the total budget.

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 data collection at the school level.

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 26 months (ending 30 June 2020).

Funded initiatives should start as soon as possible after award of funds in May 2018. It is anticipated that grant recipients will undertake planning and preparation for the remainder of the 2017-18 school year, but must be actively implementing their initiative by 4 September 2018.

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.

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 saferoutestoschool.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 and 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 Toronto in May 2018, and may be asked to participate in a media launch. 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 six months of the award of funds.
- **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:

Report #	Date
1	1 June 2018
2	30 November 2018
3	7 June 2019
4	29 November 2019
5	5 June 2020

- o completing an environmental policy scan (as part of progress report 1) 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:

- o data collected from the School Travel Planning process (e.g., student travel modes)
- o tasks and actions completed
- o performance against goals
- o measurement of process and outcomes

Application process

The deadline for applications is 5pm EST on Friday 9 March 2018.

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

Interested applicants should register for a Fund overview webinar to be held by GCC in January 2018. To register see: www.saferoutestoschool.ca/ontario-active-school-travel-fund. A recording of the webinar will be archived and an email link will be sent to all registrants.

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 the end of March 2018.