

Rural Growth Initiative Program Guidelines 2025-26

Rural and Regional Development,
Department of Fisheries, Tourism, Sport and Culture



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

The Rural Growth Initiative (RGI) provides community organizations with the opportunity to fund initiatives that strengthen rural community life in PEI.

Two main funding streams are offered by the RGI with the following outcomes:

- **Community Revitalization** - Enhance, maintain, or expand access to spaces that provide services which enhance rural communities.
- **Community Capacity Building** - Increase community or organizational capacity to support rural population growth, economic growth, or ability to provide services that enhance rural communities.

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible Organizations:

Organizations that have a mandate for community and/or economic development in rural PEI who are either a:

- PEI incorporated non-profit
- Municipality
- Band Council
- Development agency

Ineligible organizations and/or applicants:

- Private Businesses
- Provincial or federal-owned organizations
- Places of worship (*unless applying for the Heat Pump Initiative only under the Community Revitalization Funding Stream*)
- Organizations whose services benefit urban populations only (*unless applying for the Reception Centre Resiliency Program or Heat Pump Initiative only*)
- Cooperatives that share dividends

Eligible Projects:

Eligible projects must demonstrate that they will increase the quality of life in rural PEI, whether in a particular community or region. Specific activities are eligible under each stream of funding:

Community Revitalization – Infrastructure updates, expansions or capital costs which could include, but are not limited to:

- Building renovations to centers such as community halls, recreation centers, or municipal buildings.
- Energy efficiency updates (see [Heat Pump Initiative – Additional Guidelines](#) for heat pump installations)
- Renovations to help an eligible center become a designated reception center in times of emergencies (see [Reception Centre Resiliency Fund – Additional Guidelines](#)).

Community Capacity Building – Community or organization planning activities which could include, but are not limited to:

- Strategic plans
- Community infrastructure plans
- Regional economic development plans
- Diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Training and skills development

Ineligible Projects:

Ineligible projects that will normally not be funded by RGI include:

- Projects whose benefit would not extend to PEI rural populations
- Projects that may result in increased competition for existing private businesses regardless of potential economic benefits.
- Municipal spaces/ offices that account for more than 20% of the building
- Projects that better fit with other provincial funding sources
- Projects whose objectives and benefits are the mandate of another government department or agency

For a full list of normally eligible and ineligible types of projects and activities that can be funded by the RGI, applicants should refer to the Applicant Guide. Rural and Regional Development staff may deem additional expenses or types of projects to be ineligible. These decisions may be based on the project scope, their relevancy to fulfill RGI outcomes, or funding availability.

CRITERIA

All projects will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Alignment with RGI program outcomes
- Applying organization's project management capabilities to complete the project on budget and on time
- Applying organization's capacity to maintain, insure and finance the approved project long-term
- Project's ability to leverage funding support from other partners
- Demonstrated community and/or organizational support for the project
- Applying organization is in good standing with Rural and Regional Development
- Project not suited for other provincial government funding programs
- Does not duplicate existing services or initiatives in the community
- Community and/or regional need for project benefit

Projects applying to the **Heat Pump Initiative** sub-stream will also be required to demonstrate that:

- The applicant hosts community events, programming, or rentals during the winter months. For places of worship, this includes events that happen outside of regular worship services in the winter months. Examples of this could include a food bank, senior clubs, or events that are open to the general public.
- The heat pump will be installed in areas where community programming, events, or rentals occur
- The heat pumps will be installed by a contractor on [efficiencyPEI's Network of Excellence list](#).
- The heat pump is listed under the NEEP Cold Climate Air Source Heat Pump List. The list can be found at: <https://ashp.neep.org/#/> Talk to your contractor for more details.

- Energy audits are recommended, but not required. See [here](#) for more information about getting an energy audit through efficiencyPEI.
- See [Heat Pump Initiative – Additional Guidelines](#) on page 5 for more details.

Projects applying to the **Reception Centre Resiliency Fund** sub-stream will also be required to demonstrate that:

- The applying organization is or is eligible to become a designated reception centre (must be done prior to applying and receiving funding assistance).
- See [Reception Centre Resiliency Fund – Additional Guidelines](#) on page 7 for more details

Not all projects or requests that meet the established criteria will be funded and may depend on funding demands in the given fiscal year.

The Minister responsible for Rural and Regional Development may also exercise discretion in approving applications that fall outside the general intent of the program, based on the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate the project's potential and vital contributions to the community.

AVAILABLE FUNDING

The amount of funds available to projects normally under each RGI stream is described in the table below

RGI Program	Program sub-stream (if applicable)	Funding Range
Community Revitalization	Small-scale projects	Maximum contribution of 75% up to \$250,000 of total eligible costs.
	Large-scale projects	Maximum contribution of 50% up to \$2 million of total eligible costs.
	Heat Pump Initiative	One-time assistance of 100% of heat pump costs up to a maximum of \$20,000.
	Reception Centre Resiliency Program	Maximum contribution of 80%, up to \$250,000 of eligible costs.
Community Capacity Building		Maximum contribution of 75%, up to \$50,000

Specific types of projects may only be eligible for certain funding. See the [Applicant Guide](#) for more details.

Rural and Regional Development reserves the right to adjust funding contributions according to project scopes and funding availability in a given year.

Client contributions:

All projects normally require that at least 10% of the total project costs be covered by the applying organization's own funds. Exceptions may apply.

APPLICATIONS:

Eligible organizations interested in applying to the RGI must retrieve an application package from the Community Development Officer in their region (contact details below).

Applications are accepted throughout the fiscal year and funds are allocated until the budget for the fiscal year is spent (fiscal year operates from April 1 – March 31).

It is highly recommended that applicants read the [Applicant Guide](#) prior to applying (link to Government of PEI webpage or available from your local Community Development Officer).

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Heat Pump Initiative – Additional Guidelines](#)
- [Reception Centre Resiliency Fund – Additional Guidelines](#)

CONTACT:

If you have any questions about the RGI, please contact your local Community Development Officer:

Location	Officer	Phone Number	E-mail
West Prince	Ellen Rennie	902-853-0104	emrennie@gov.pe.ca
East Prince/Central Queens	Kellie Mulligan	902-887-3975	kamulligan@gov.pe.ca
Evangeline	Giselle Bernard (bilingual)	902-854-3680	gbbarnard@gov.pe.ca
Southern Kings/Queens	Sonia Dixon		SDDixon@gov.pe.ca
Eastern Kings	Chris Blaisdell	902-208-0032	cwblaisdell@gov.pe.ca

HEAT PUMP INITIATIVE – ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

The Heat Pump Initiative helps community groups to purchase and install heat pumps in community spaces as part of the Government of PEI's Net Zero Initiative. This Initiative is offered in partnership between the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action and Department of Fisheries, Tourism, Sport and Culture.

The Heat Pump Initiative is a sub-stream of funding offered under the Community Revitalization Funding Stream of the Rural Growth Initiative Program. Rural Growth Initiative Guidelines also apply to the Heat Pump Initiative, unless stated otherwise on this page.

ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS:

Eligible organizations under the Rural Growth Initiative are also eligible to receive Heat Pump Initiative funding.

Places of worship are eligible to receive funding for Heat Pump Initiative funding only.

Eligible applicants must be able to demonstrate that they host community events, programming, or rentals during the winter months. For places of worship, this includes events that happen outside of regular worship services in the winter months. Examples of this could include a food bank, senior clubs, or events that are open to the general public.

Organizations ineligible to receive Rural Growth Initiative funding are also ineligible to receive Heat Pump Initiative funding (except for places of worship).

ELIGIBLE COSTS:

Heat pumps and necessary installation costs. Eligible heat pumps must be:

- Installed in areas where community programming, events, or rentals occur
- Installed by a contractor on [efficiencyPEI's Network of Excellence list](#).
- Listed under the NEEP Cold Climate Air Source Heat Pump List. The list can be found at: <https://ashp.neep.org/#/>. Talk to your contractor for more details.

AVAILABLE FUNDING:

Eligible organizations may receive a one-time funding contribution of up to 100% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$20,000.

If the heat pump is part of a larger building renovation, additional costs may be eligible to be covered through the Community Revitalization Fund (of the Rural Growth Initiative). Places of Worship are not eligible for this assistance.

RECEPTION CENTRE RESILIENCY FUND – ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

The Reception Centre Resiliency Fund provides financial assistance to eligible organizations to retrofit community spaces with the necessary equipment or upgrades so they are able to serve as a designated reception centre for those in their communities when the need arises.

This funding is being provided in partnership between the Department of Justice and Safety, Emergency Measures Organization, Public Safety Division and Department of Fisheries, Tourism, Sport and Culture, Rural and Regional Development Division.

The Reception Centre Resiliency Fund is a sub-stream of funding offered under the Community Revitalization Funding Stream of the Rural Growth Initiative Program. Rural Growth Initiative Guidelines also apply to the Reception Centre Resiliency Fund, unless stated otherwise on this page.

ELIGIBILITY:

Eligible Organizations:

Applying organizations must be a designated reception centre prior to applying and receiving funding assistance. Review the Reception Centre Guidelines for more information on how to become a designated reception centre or get in touch with the PEI Emergency Measures Organization (contact information below).

Eligible organizations must also fall into one out of the two categories stated below and meet the criteria listed under each:

1. Municipality for a designated Municipal Reception Centre

- Be an incorporated municipality
- At the time of application have an approved Municipal Emergency Plan, according the Municipal Government Act,
- Own the building where the work will take place OR maintain a long-term lease of at least 5 years with the owner of the property.

2. Incorporated Not-for-Profit Organization for an Unincorporated Reception Centre

- Incorporated not-for-profit organization located in PEI
- Have an approved Organizational Emergency Plan from PEI EMO for reception centre operations,
- Have been designated to operate a reception centre in or be delegated by a municipality to operate a municipal reception centre,
- Own the building where the work will take place OR maintain a long-term lease of at least 5 years with the owner of the property.

Priority will normally be given to designated primary reception centres. Organizations that serve urban populations may be considered for funding.

Ineligible Organizations:

Organizations ineligible for Rural Growth Initiative funding are also ineligible for Reception Centre Resiliency Funding, unless it is deemed by the Province that there are no other possible designated reception centres that are owned and can be operated in a particular area by eligible organizations.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible costs must demonstrate that they are necessary for the operations of a designated reception centre. This may include but is not limited to:

- Purchase and delivery of equipment required for a reception centre
- Purchase and delivery of equipment to enhance the safety and security of the reception centre (e.g. communication equipment, first aid supplies, etc.)
- Purchase and delivery of equipment to provide enhanced reception centre features (see enhanced reception features below).
- Signage for advertising reception centre services
- Professional services required to install eligible equipment
- Site preparation work
- Repairs to existing infrastructure required for being a designated reception centre.

If eligible reception centre costs are part of a larger building renovation, additional costs may be eligible to be covered through the Community Revitalization funding stream.

AVAILABLE FUNDING:

Maximum contribution of 80%, up to \$250,000 of eligible costs.

BECOMING A DESIGNATED RECEPTION CENTER.

To become a designated reception center, applicants are responsible for reviewing the How to Become a Reception Centre document. Please click [here](#) to access the document from the Government of PEI website or it can be made available from the PEI Emergency Measures Organization or Community Development Officer. Applicants are also required to contact the PEI Emergency Measures Organization to go through the formal designation process.

If you have any questions about **becoming a designated reception centre**, please contact:

Emergency Measures Organization - Public Safety Division

Phone: 902-894-0385

Email: emo@gov.pe.ca