

Research Capacity Program  
Guidelines 2019-2020

Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Government of Alberta

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Research Capacity Program Guidelines 2019-2020

For more information regarding this content visit: <https://www.alberta.ca/research-capacity-program.aspx>

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# 1. Overview

The Research Capacity Program (RCP) is a competitive funding program designed to support the acquisition of small equipment and large research infrastructure to build research capacity in Alberta's post-secondary institutions and attract, retain, and develop researchers undertaking transformative and applied research programs.

The RCP strongly encourages the submission of applications that align with the Government of Alberta's [Alberta Research and Innovation Framework \(ARIF\)](#) and the research priorities expressed in the strategic plans of the applicant institutions.

The RCP uses a cost-sharing funding approach to **provide up to 40% of the total eligible project costs** for successful applications, enabling applicants to leverage support from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and other sources. To facilitate this cost-sharing approach, the RCP coordinates its competition streams and competitive cycles with the CFI, as shown below. The RCP competition stream descriptions and timelines are outlined in Section 8 below.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <b>College-Industry Innovation (CII)</b><br>🇨🇦 College-Industry Innovation Fund<br><br>Supports applied research infrastructure in colleges and polytechnics |  <b>Cyberinfrastructure (CYB)</b><br>🇨🇦 Cyberinfrastructure Initiative<br><br>Supports the infrastructure needs of computationally and data-intensive research |
|  <b>Research Infrastructure (RI)</b><br>🇨🇦 Innovation Fund<br><br>Supports large research infrastructure for research teams of up to 10 principle users     |  <b>Small Equipment Grants (SEG)</b><br>🇨🇦 John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF)<br><br>Supports research equipment for individual researchers or small teams    |

 = RCP stream    🇨🇦 = CFI stream

## 2. Objectives

The intent of the program is to:



Support research, applied research, and technology development excellence



Build capacity for innovation and support the attraction and retention of promising and established researchers



Promote initiatives of strategic benefit to Alberta

Achieving these objectives requires coordinated planning, strategic research investments, and the sustainable and effective use of resources.

Establishing and sustaining state-of-the-art infrastructure underpins Alberta's academic and economic competitiveness by providing the tools to generate new knowledge and to transform that knowledge into products, services, processes, and policies.

The RCP is focused on maintaining a strong base of research capacity by supporting the recruitment, retention, and development of skilled researchers, through building, enhancing, and sustaining leading-edge research and innovation infrastructure. As such, the RCP places a high priority on innovative research and scientific excellence and, like the CFI, invests in infrastructure that will enable researchers, institutions, and their partners, to develop innovative research programs and in the case of colleges and technical institutes, support Alberta's small and medium-sized business community.

## Strategic Alignment

The RCP strongly encourages the submission of applications that align with Government of Alberta's [Alberta Research and Innovation Framework \(ARIF\)](#). The ARIF establishes outcomes for Alberta's research and innovation system and includes innovation targets which research and innovation stakeholders can rally around to deliver results for Albertans.

The Innovation Targets are intended to inspire transformational solutions in priority areas. The targets, developed by the Government of Alberta and Alberta Innovates corporations, with input from post-secondary institutions and industry leaders, support increasing Alberta's competitiveness, growth and export readiness in sectors of strength.



The criterion on alignment to these outcomes and innovation targets does not preclude the submission of applications from other areas of research, particularly those of international calibre or high impact, however, priority will be given to applications that support the ARIF.

## CFI Coordination

In order to maintain coordination with the CFI, the RCP guidelines are consistent with the [CFI Policy and Program Guide](#). Accordingly, all submissions must adhere to the *CFI Policy and Program Guide* with respect to eligibility criteria, application processes, and related requirements. The RCP guidelines are thus intended to supplement the *CFI Policy and Program Guide* by articulating Alberta-specific requirements and processes associated with an RCP funding application.

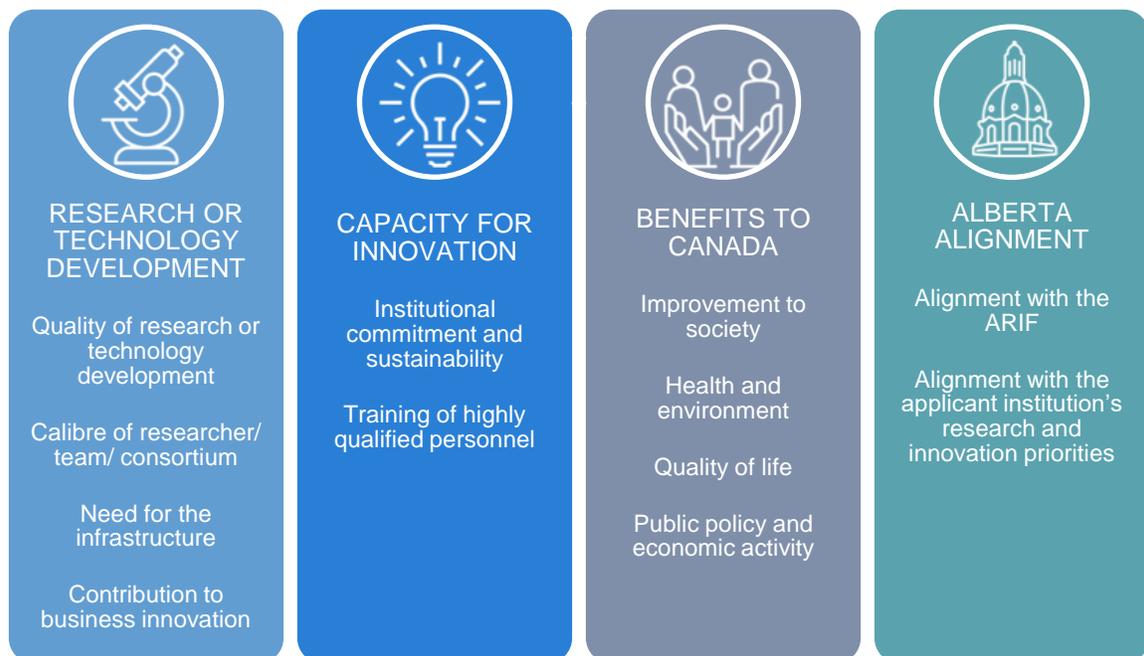


## Review Criteria

In coordination with the CFI, all requests for RCP funding are subject to a formal, independent, merit-based review. The review process will determine the relative merit of each application, with respect to the program criteria and the competitive context. Please refer to the *CFI Policy and Program Guide* for related details.

Notwithstanding coordination with and leverage of the CFI as a key program strategy, the RCP review and recommendation processes are conducted independently. The Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism (“the Minister”) will make all final funding decisions.

The RCP evaluates all applications using the following four key criteria that reflect its mandate (the specific criteria vary within each stream):



Applications are encouraged to align with the outcomes stated in the ARIF and to support the institutional research priorities in the applicant institution's Comprehensive Institutional Plan.

The proposed infrastructure is expected to strengthen the province's research infrastructure in its priority areas and/or have the potential to develop emerging capacity and capabilities of strategic importance. In addition, the proposed infrastructure is expected to support research excellence or an emerging area of research excellence in Alberta and to support the attraction and retention of internationally recognized researchers.

## 3. Eligibility

### Eligible Institutions

The RCP adheres to the CFI's applicant eligibility guidelines. Accordingly, RCP streams are limited to institutions approved as CFI-eligible. Please refer to the *CFI Policy and Program Guide* for details.

The table below outlines the specific eligibility requirements of the RCP funding streams in relation to the CFI.

| RCP Streams                       | Eligibility                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| College-Industry Innovation (CII) | Institutions that have established CFI eligibility for the College-Industry Innovation Fund |
| Cyberinfrastructure (CYB)         | Institutions that have established CFI eligibility for the Cyberinfrastructure Initiative   |
| Research Infrastructure (RI)      | Institutions that have established CFI eligibility for the Innovation Fund                  |
| Small Equipment Grants (SEG)      | Institutions with CFI JELF allocations                                                      |
| Exceptional Opportunity (EO)      | Institutions must first engage the RCP to discuss eligibility                               |

### Project Costs

The RCP will provide support for up to 40% of the total eligible project costs of successful applications. Eligibility of project costs is consistent with those outlined in the *CFI Policy and Program Guide*.

## Partner Contributions

In order to be eligible for support, project proponents must have a plan in place for securing the balance of project costs from eligible funding sources. The RCP is primarily aimed at leveraging those CFI awards that support Alberta priorities. Thus, the project scope, budget, and funding sources should be identical in the submissions to the CFI and to the RCP.

Accordingly, the RCP considers any of the following as possible sources of partner contributions:

- Institutional funds (i.e., derived from applicant institution)
- Other Government of Alberta ministries
- Other government sources
- Alberta Innovates
- Business and industry
- Non-profit organizations
- Endowments
- User fees
- Licensing fees and royalties

To coordinate with the CFI, the RCP normally does **not** consider the following sources to be acceptable:

- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)
- Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR)
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
- Tri-council programs (e.g., Networks of Centres of Excellence and Canada Research Chairs)

## Government of Alberta Infrastructure Contributions

In cases where Alberta Infrastructure capital funding sources are being used for equipment and/or infrastructure contributions, such sources, combined with the requested RCP contribution, should not exceed 40%.

## 4. Submissions

To streamline the application process, the RCP accepts submissions in the same format as those submitted to the CFI's corresponding RCP stream. Applications must be submitted to the CFI and follow CFI guidelines on eligibility, in-kind contributions, eligible expenditures, and funding partners. RCP accepts electronic submissions. Do not include scanned copies of documents, other than signature pages. **All submissions must be received by the RCP by 4:30 PM MST on the deadline date listed in Section 8.** RCP contact details are listed in Section 10.

### Notice of Intent (NOI) Submission

All NOI submissions must include a cover letter authorized by a designated institutional representative, a PDF of each NOI, and an excel attachment listing the individual NOIs, indicating the provincial request for each project.

### Full Application Submission

All submissions must include a cover letter authorized by a designated institutional representative, a PDF of each application package, and an excel attachment listing the individual application submissions, indicating the provincial request for each project

**The application package should be in the following order:**

1. [Alberta Alignment Module](#)
2. CFI Application
3. Curriculum Vitae (where required by the CFI)

### RCP Stream-Specific Instructions

**College-Industry Innovation (CII) Stream 2:** Applications must also attach a copy of the NSERC Five-Year Community College Innovation (CCI) Program-Innovation Enhancement grant application.

**Research Infrastructure (RI):** Proponents may submit an Alberta Alignment Module of up to two pages if they are preparing a multi-institutional project which is either Alberta-led, or for which an Alberta post-secondary institution is a participant in a project led by another institution. The additional page enables proponents to identify which infrastructure and/or capability will be acquired in Alberta, the impact in the province, and a rationale for the requested provincial contribution.

**Small Equipment Grants (SEG):** If the SEG application is in conjunction with a JELF Partnership application, applicants must also attach a copy of the partnering application and submit the corresponding expert review reports.

## 5. Review Process

The RCP employs an independent Multidisciplinary Review Panel, comprising of academic and research experts from across Canada with senior research and administrative experience.

Panel members are chosen based on their research record, area of expertise, senior leadership and knowledge of the research funding environment, and for their collective ability to bring multidisciplinary expertise to the review process.

The RCP does not disclose the identities of its Multidisciplinary Review Panel members to ensure their objectivity and impartiality. RCP may provide anonymized reviewer feedback to institutions, at its discretion.

**The review process encompasses three stages:**



The applications undergo review using the objectives and criteria identified in the RCP Guidelines.

The Panel uses the program guidelines and criteria to review all applications, taking into account the CFI and/or partnering agency expert reviews, and assessing the alignment of applications with Alberta's research and innovation outcomes and the research priorities expressed in strategic plans of the applicant institutions.

The Panel deliberations result in a set of recommendations, which are provided to the Minister to inform final decisions.

# 6. Accountability and Reporting Requirements

## Accountability Requirements

### Finalization of Awards

Funding for successful applications will be conditional on securing the balance of project funding from eligible partners and submitting the CFI's award finalization documentation. Institutions should engage the RCP if challenges arise associated with the identified timeframe.

### Grant Agreement

A grant agreement will be developed for awarded projects. This agreement will outline the terms and conditions of support and must be signed by both parties (institutional representative and Economic Development, Trade and Tourism representative) prior to the release of payment. As a part of this agreement, institutions will be required to regularly report on the financial status of projects and on the outcomes achieved. The schedule and reporting requirements will be outlined in the agreement. Any significant variations in project scope or other requirements of the contract must be agreed upon by both parties.

## Reporting Requirements

The RCP generally adheres to CFI's pre-and post-award guidelines. However, any variations requiring CFI review and approval also require RCP review and approval.

RCP requires the submission of formal written requests for any changes to projects that do not fall within the parameters of RCP and/or CFI guidelines. RCP will assess any such requests on a case-by-case basis.

### Financial Reporting – All RCP Funding Programs

The institution must provide the following documents for *all RCP projects*:

1. A copy of CFI Award Finalization documents one year after project funding is announced.
  - Institutions must notify the RCP if additional time is required.
2. Financial accountability report(s)
  - RCP will accept an electronic copy of the CFI financial report, plus an itemized listing and description of actual and total expenditures to March 31 in lieu of a RCP Financial Accountability Report.

## Financial and Progress Reporting – Stream-Specific

### *College-Industry Innovation (CII) and Cyberinfrastructure (CYB)*

The institution must provide:

1. Interim Financial Report
  - Yearly by September 15 – for actual expenditures to March 31 (cumulative).
2. Final Financial Report
  - Due within six months of completion/project completion date confirming actual eligible costs and contributions for the project.
3. Outcomes Report
  - Due within one year of completion/project completion date.
4. Second Outcomes Report
  - Due five years following the completion/project completion date.

### *Research Infrastructure (RI), Small Equipment Grants (SEG), and Exceptional Opportunity (EO)*

The institution must provide:

1. Interim Financial Report
  - RCP funding **\$1,000,000 or more**
    - Yearly by September 15 – for actual expenditures to March 31 (cumulative).
  - RCP funding **less than \$1,000,000**
    - Every two years by September 15 – for actual expenditures to March 31 (cumulative).
2. Final Financial Report
  - Due within six months of completion/project completion date confirming actual eligible costs and contributions for the project.
3. Outcomes Report
  - Due within one year of completion/project completion date.
4. Second Outcomes Report
  - Due five years following the completion/project completion date.

## Amending a Project

It is requested that institutions provide written project change requests to RCP **3 weeks prior** to the due date of the next report or the completion date (expiration) of the grant agreement. Failure to do so could impact payment(s).

## Residual Funds

We require a written request to retain residual funds in advance of expenditures with an explanation of how the residual funds were realized and a plan to spend the funds. This request must come in advance of the grant agreement term date. Expenditures must relate to the enhancement or advancement of the original scope of the application, and may include capital or operating expenses. Financial reporting will be required and timelines will be established in the approval notice.

## 7. Communications

To measure and promote the impact of the research enabled by our funding contributions, the RCP expects that institutions, communications staff and project leaders acknowledge Government of Alberta support in all public communications activities and products, including institutional and scholarly publications, presentations, media relations, and facility or lab openings. The official Government of Alberta logo is an appropriate identifier for acknowledging RCP contributions. Please contact the RCP for further assistance.

The RCP will engage with researchers and communications teams should a research project or lab be chosen for any RCP communications product. Information provided to the RCP within the brief plain-language summary in the application and the outcomes reports of awarded projects will provide the RCP's team with additional ideas for the development of features for use in a range of RCP outreach products.

# 8. Research Capacity Program Competition Streams

## College-Industry Innovation (CII)

The College-Industry Innovation (CII) streams will enhance the capacity of colleges/technical institutes to support business innovation in Alberta by providing state-of-the-art, industry-relevant research infrastructure to foster partnerships with the private sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. Applications are encouraged to align with areas of strategic priority to the institution and the province's priorities in the context of the ARIF. Institutions must demonstrate how the research will contribute to program delivery and student engagement. There are two streams under the CII:

**Stream 1:** Infrastructure requests to enhance existing applied research and technology development capacity in colleges. Colleges/technical institutes with an established capacity, in particular, those who have received a Five-Year College and Community Innovation Program (CCI) – Innovation Enhancement (IE) grant or research and development funding from provincial, industrial, or other sources, are encouraged to apply to this stream.

**Stream 2:** Joint initiative for applications requesting research infrastructure to support an application to the Five-Year College and Community Innovation Program Innovation Enhancement grant. These are joint applications to the CFI/NSERC.

### Applicant Eligibility

Eligible colleges/technical institutes may submit two applications to each stream per competition, requesting up to \$1 million per application in funding support from the CII. Applicants must be CFI-eligible/funded under the CFI-CII Fund. The expected request from the RCP should be included when submitting a Notice of Intent. All submissions to the CFI-CII rounds are also accepted. If an application is declined by the CFI, it will be removed from the CII competition.

### Application Deadlines

|          | Notice of Intent Deadline | Application Deadline | Decisions     |
|----------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Stream 1 | April 8, 2019             | May 24, 2019         | February 2020 |
| Stream 2 | June 18, 2019             | November 8, 2019     | Spring 2020   |

## Cyberinfrastructure (CYB)

The Cyberinfrastructure (CYB) stream coordinates with the CFI's Cyberinfrastructure Initiative to enhance the capacity of Canadian institutions and researchers to conduct leading-edge research in areas of demonstrated strength. The RCP will support the infrastructure needs of computationally and data-intensive research in alignment with institutional priorities and the government priorities, such as the ARIF, by investing in a limited number of research data infrastructure projects in collaboration with Compute Canada. Funded research initiatives will enable communities of researchers, along with data scientists, data analysts, software developers, and other experts to devise optimal ways of organizing and using research data resources.

There are two challenges under the CYB:

**Challenge 1:** Funding for institutional research data infrastructure projects that, in collaboration with Compute Canada, enable communities of researchers, along with data scientists, data analysts, software developers, and other experts to devise optimal ways of organizing and using research data resources.

**Challenge 2:** Funding will be provided for upgrading and modernizing computational and data storage capacities of the pan-Canadian advanced research computing platform, managed by Compute Canada.

### Applicant Eligibility

Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals, and non-profit research institutions that have been recognized as eligible by the CFI can apply. For applications submitted under Challenge 2, the administrative institution must be a member of Compute Canada as well as a CFI-eligible institution. Please note that eligible costs are those costs identified according to the *CFI* requirements. If an application is declined by the CFI, it will be removed from the CYB competition.

### Application Deadlines

|             | Notice of Intent Deadline                                                                                                                | Application Deadline | Decisions |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Challenge 1 | RCP will hold complementary CYB Challenge 1 and 2 competitions for future CFI Cyberinfrastructure competitions, as announced by the CFI. |                      |           |
| Challenge 2 |                                                                                                                                          |                      |           |

## Research Infrastructure (RI)

The Research Infrastructure (RI) stream coordinates with the CFI's Innovation Fund (IF) to invest in transformative research infrastructure projects of strategic significance to the institutions and the province's priorities in the context of the ARIF. These projects will secure and strengthen Alberta's competitive position in research and technology development.

### Applicant Eligibility

Eligible institutions are expected to submit only projects of exceptional quality that will support promising and innovative research or technology development in areas where Alberta currently is, or has the potential to be, competitive on the global stage. The RCP will support initiatives that allow institutions and their researchers to build on and enhance an emerging strategic priority area, accelerate current research and technology development work, and/or take established capabilities to a globally competitive level.

Institutions are encouraged to increase their application's competitiveness through collaboration with appropriate partners and to plan co-operatively to acquire, develop, utilize, operate, and maintain infrastructure. Institutions are encouraged to engage with end-users of the research or technology development to clearly define the potential benefits for Albertans.

### Application Deadlines

|      | Notice of Intent<br>Deadline | Application<br>Deadline | Decisions     |
|------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 2020 | September 23, 2019           | January 27, 2020        | February 2021 |

## Small Equipment Grants (SEG)

The Small Equipment Grants (SEG) stream is intended to help Alberta institutions attract and retain outstanding talent in the context of significant international competition. The SEG will support leading-edge research infrastructure that will enable talented faculty to undertake innovative research programs. Applications are encouraged to align with provincial priorities in the context of the ARIF and address strategic infrastructure needs related to maintaining or enhancing the competitiveness of the proponent's and institution's research programs.

### Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include institutions that have a CFI JELF allocation. Submissions are restricted to applications that have either garnered a JELF award in the October 2018 or February 2019 JELF competitions, or applications that have submitted to the June 2019 JELF competition. However, if an application is declined at the CFI it will be removed from the SEG competition.

In addition, any CFI requests associated with JELF partnerships (joint process that has been developed with the CRCs, NSERC, and SSHRC), for which a decision is expected at or prior to the November 2019 CFI Board meeting, are eligible.

If an institution submits a JELF partnership application, they are expected to provide the associated partnering agency application and expert review materials.

Up to three candidates may apply together for one SEG award, but all co-applicants must be eligible candidates.

### Application Deadlines

|      | Notice of Intent Deadline | Application Deadline | Decisions     |
|------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 2019 | N/A                       | October 28, 2019     | February 2020 |

## 9. Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Information gathered in the application forms are collected under the authority of the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism in accordance with section 33 (c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP). It will be used in assessing applications to the RCP. The information contained in the applications is subject to the disclosure and privacy provisions of FOIP. For further information, see the contact information below.

## 10. Contact Information

All correspondence including application submissions are to be directed to the following address:

Neil Sulakhe  
Research Capacity Program  
c/o Research Capacity Planning  
Economic Development, Trade and Tourism  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Phipps-McKinnon Building  
10020 101A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3G2  
Email: [Neil.Sulakhe@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Neil.Sulakhe@gov.ab.ca)