

Municipal Governance

During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Frequently Asked Questions – July 31, 2020

Over the last several months, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented unique operational challenges for local government operations. Since March 2020, Alberta Municipal Affairs has released 15 Municipal Governance (During the COVID-19 Outbreak) updates, which remain available at www.alberta.ca/municipal-government-resources.aspx.

The following issue will be the last regularly scheduled update. Future information will be provided to you on a timely basis as new information arises.

This final issue provides information on the additional funding available to help municipalities address operational needs relating to COVID-19 and respond to recent questions about updated relaunch strategies and resources.

Municipal Advisory Services

If you have any questions relating to municipal governance, finance, planning, etc., please call:

780-427-2225 or toll-free by first dialing 310-0000 or email ma.lgsmail@gov.ab.ca

Funding to Help Municipalities Cope with COVID-19

The province recently announced additional funding for infrastructure projects as part of Alberta's Recovery Plan and additional funds to support municipal operating costs during the pandemic. Are there additional details and can we apply now for the funds?

YES. Municipalities and Metis Settlements can now apply for capital funding under the Municipal Stimulus Program (MSP), which is providing \$500 million for projects aimed at supporting local jobs and stimulating the economy. MSP project eligibility is based on the Municipal Sustainability Initiative guidelines, modified to exclude categories and activities with minimal contribution to economic recovery. MSP funding has been allocated using the same formula as the federal Gas Tax Fund and municipalities can access their allocation by submitting project applications before October 1, 2020. More information about the MSP, including program guidelines, project application forms and allocation amounts, is available on the [program website](#). MSP applications will be reviewed as they are received and payments will begin shortly after projects are approved.

The province also announced \$606 million in funding, shared on a 50/50 basis between the federal and provincial governments, to support municipal and public transit operating costs. Further information about this funding will be made available soon.

General Questions

Has additional information been made available to assist municipalities with addressing beaches and recreational areas near water?

YES. A [guidance document](#) is now available to support local authorities, visitors and operators in reducing the risk of transmitting COVID-19 at recreational water sites.

If public gatherings contravene public health orders for social distancing or limits to the size of gatherings (e.g., gatherings on local beach areas), can public health orders be enforced?

YES. Municipalities have the authority to close or restrict access to municipal parks and facilities. Community signage may also promote public awareness and education. In addition, local bylaws can be enacted and enforced.

Community peace officers are encouraged to continue educating individuals on the public health orders. If enforcement is required, the RCMP or public health inspectors are authorized to enforce orders issued under the *Public Health Act*.

Our municipality is planning an outdoor vocal concert? Is there new information available?

YES. Municipalities planning outdoor vocal concerts (a vocalist with or without a band) should review the [Guidance for Outdoor Vocal Concerts](#) prepared by [Alberta Biz Connect](#) to ensure steps are being taken to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission among attendees (including workers, volunteers, patrons and the general public).

Have a question?

If you have a specific question you would like answered, please email your request to ma.lgsmail@gov.ab.ca.

Have there been other relevant updates and information made available to help municipalities and businesses reopen during stage 2?

YES. [Alberta Biz Connect](#) has also released new guidance documents addressing [sport, physical activity and recreation](#), [swimming pools and whirlpools](#), and [trade shows and exhibiting events](#). The guidance provided outlines public health and infection prevention and control measures and is subject to change, as it will be updated as needed. Current information can be found at: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information.aspx>.



Additional Resources

Are there additional resources for municipalities to help with the COVID-19 response and reopening of communities?

YES. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities continues to compile a list of links and resources for municipalities at <https://fcm.ca/en/resources/covid-19-resources-municipalities>.

In addition, Alberta municipal associations continue to provide comprehensive resources to assist members during the pandemic. The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association has developed a webpage to act as a quick first reference with links to credible sources for up-to-date information at <https://auma.ca/business-services/employee-benefits/employers/covid-19>. The Rural Municipalities of Alberta's COVID-19 response hub is accessible via <https://rmaalberta.com/about/covid-19-response-hub/>.

