



ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants Submission Guidelines 2026–2027

At **Alberta Conservation Association (ACA)**, we believe it is our responsibility to join and support the collective effort to conserve, protect, and enhance Alberta’s wildlife, fish, and habitat. In addition to delivering conservation programs throughout the province, we administer a fund that has been awarding conservation grants since 1997. Funded by the province’s anglers, hunters, and other conservationists, ACA’s grants support projects that benefit Alberta’s wildlife and fish populations, and the habitat they depend on.

ACA is proud to enter into its 29th year of conservation funding. Project funding will be available via the **ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants (CCEG)** during the 2026 – 2027 funding cycle.

These Guidelines provide the eligibility criteria and application information you need to apply to the ACA CCEG for a project taking place between April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027. You are strongly encouraged to read these Guidelines in full before submitting your application.

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Section 1:

About ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants

Purpose

ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants aim is to aid Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) in the delivery of its mission. Grants made to partners are intended to enhance and supplement ACA activities.

ACA Conservation, Community, and Education Grants fund conservation activities by individuals (with appropriate insurance coverage), organizations, and communities that contribute to healthy fish and wildlife populations, to a healthy environment for fish and wildlife **in Alberta**, and to the understanding, appreciation, and use of that environment. This grant program also funds projects which increase the level of attendance and awareness of outdoor opportunities, while developing knowledge and respect for conservation.

Section 2:

Funding Eligibility

Who Can Apply?

Any legally-recognized organization or individual (with appropriate liability insurance and WCB coverage) can apply if they have a suitable project, with the **exception of a federal or provincial government staff and ACA staff**. ACA does not fund applications where the federal or provincial government employee is the principal applicant (Principal applicant is considered the lead on a project) or the principal applicant is a federal or provincial ministry. Federal or provincial government employees may be part of the project but must not be responsible for the majority of the project.

ACA administers multiple grant streams. **If you apply to the CCEG, you cannot apply with the same project to ACA Grants in Biodiversity or to ACA Research Grants. However, you may apply to the Minister's Special Licence Resident Draw Grants with the same project, if your project meets that grants criteria.**

Anyone engaged in the activities outlined in the "Grounds for Disqualification" outlined on ACA's Grants website here <https://www.ab-conservation.com/grants-program/grounds-for-disqualification/> are not eligible to apply for an ACA grant.

Successful applicants will be expected to follow the ACA Cooperative Project Agreement, which includes the requirement to submit two reports to ACA (a copy of the Cooperative Project Agreement can be found on ACA's Grants website here <https://www.ab-conservation.com/grants-program/aca-conservation-community-and-education-grants/applicant-information/>). Please check that your organization is willing to use ACA's Cooperative Project Agreement before applying.

Grants are available for:

- Projects that meet and further ACA's mission:
ACA conserves, protects and enhances fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for Albertans to enjoy, value, and use.
- Travel and fees for conferences on a case-by-case basis for the applicant/co-applicant to present on the CCEG-funded project.
- Projects that contribute to the priorities as outlined in the funding priorities section of this document.
- Priority is given to projects that demonstrate a “self-help” attitude, i.e., partner contributions, matched funding dollars, and public involvement.

ACA CCEG does not provide funding for:

- Projects outside of Alberta.
- ACA and federal and provincial government staff projects. See previous section ‘Who Can Apply?’
- Research projects (Applications for research projects may go to one of the two ACA grant programs supporting research, either ACA Research Grants or the ACA Grants in Biodiversity for graduate student projects. Minister’s Special Licence Resident Draw Grants also accepts research applications on specific topics).
- Grants are not normally offered towards profit-making activities.
- Overhead costs.
- Emergency funds or deficit financing.
- General fundraising.
- Land acquisition.

Important Granting Information:

- Successful applicants will be expected to follow the ACA Cooperative Project Agreement (A sample can be found here: <https://www.ab-conservation.com/grants-program/aca-conservation-community-and-education-grants/applicant-information>) and adhere to the reporting schedule identified in the Cooperative Project Agreement.
- The grants are normally paid in three equal payments. The initial payment is made upon signing the Cooperative Project Agreement, the interim payment is made upon approval of the interim report due Sept. 1st, and the final payment is a hold back paid on approval of the final report due Mar. 15th of the term year and receipt of the signed financial statement.
- *Please note the initial payment can be delayed, due to time it takes to sign and process new Cooperative Project Agreements; applicants should be aware that the first grant payments might not be made before June.*
- Project activities must occur between **April 1, 2026 and March 31, 2027**.
- Grants **cannot** be made retrospectively, that is for work started prior to the current fiscal year, i.e., before April 1, 2026.
- If this is a request for repeat funding from ACA and your current 2025-26 project will not be completed as of March 31, 2026, you should extend your current project by contacting the ACA Grants Coordinator rather than reapplying for the same project in 2026-27.
- ACA may charge an administration fee for any monies held in trust.
- Capital equipment purchases in excess of \$500 may remain the property of ACA upon project completion.

- Your information will be used only for the purpose for which it was originally collected, and it will be disclosed only on a strict “need-to-know” basis. Be assured that we manage the information contained in your submission in manner commensurate with its sensitivity.
- Applicants are responsible for ensuring they have the proper insurance, licences, and approvals required to carry out the project and have complied with all the requirements of their organization.

Section 3

How and When to Apply?

Read this document carefully to determine if your project is eligible for funding prior to preparing a formal submission to ACA.

ACA CCEG has two application forms:

- Small Grant Application Form – requests of \$3,000 and under.
- Large Grant Application Form – requests over \$3,000.

Download the appropriate ACA CCEG application form based on the funding request from here: <https://www.ab-conservation.com/grants-program/aca-conservation-community-and-education-grants/applicant-information/>

Complete the Application Form, noting the following:

- Ensure that all sections of the application are complete, clear, and thorough. Additional guidance on filling in the application form is provided in Section 5.
- **Do not append supporting documents.**
- There is a **maximum page limit of 8 pages** for ACA CCEG applications (excluding the cover page). Please use a legible font size, nothing smaller than Arial 10).

Please contact Amy MacKinven by telephone toll-free on **1-877-722- 4323** or by email amy.mackinven@ab-conservation.com, if you have any questions regarding your application to the ACA CCEG.

Submit your application by e-mailing it to ACA (amy.mackinven@ab-conservation.com) between **November 1, 2025 and December 10, 2025** before the deadline **Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 4:30pm MST**. Applications emailed after December 10, 2024, 4:30 pm MST will not be accepted.

ENSURE YOUR APPLICATION IS ACKNOWLEDGED: upon receiving your application, ACA will email you an acknowledgement receipt within five business days. **It is your responsibility to contact the ACA Grants Coordinator if you have not received acknowledgement of receipt within 5 business days**, as the application may not have been received in good order.

Section 4:

Major Funding Priorities 2026 – 2027

Funding Priorities

All applicants to the ACA CCEG should be aware that these grants are fully funded by the hunters and anglers of Alberta. All proposals should be able to demonstrate how the proposed project will aid ACA in meeting its mission of conserving, protecting, and enhancing wildlife, fish, and habitat for all Albertans to enjoy, value, and use. To help direct potential applicants the following list of priority areas has been developed. While the ACA CCEG will accept applications that do not relate to these suggested areas, projects that address one or more of these priority areas will have a higher probability of being funded than those that do not.

A. Habitat enhancement activities specifically listed on provincial recovery plans for Alberta's *Endangered* species (to be done in cooperation with recovery teams). (See: www.alberta.ca/species-at-risk-resources.aspx).

B. Site-specific enhancements of habitat, structures, and facilities aimed at increasing recreational angling or hunting opportunities, improving habitat or increasing wildlife/fish productivity on the site (i.e., planting/seeding vegetation, development of new fisheries access sites, nest box initiatives, food plot trials and cover plot trials, spawning bed enhancement, culvert removals, fishing docks, etc.).

Stewardship Initiatives (e.g., ongoing maintenance of conservation sites or fisheries access sites, adopt a fence, property inspections for invasive weeds, manual weed control, and grass mowing).

C. Fisheries development, including initial evaluation of water quality aspects of existing ponds to determine their suitability for fish stocking; purchase of equipment required to ensure suitable water quality for fish stocking (e.g., aeration equipment); fish stocking in public ponds; and promotion of rural and urban fisheries (including natural waterbodies).

D. Impacts of non-native species on the persistence of native species.

E. Projects related to the retention, recruitment, and education of hunters, anglers, or trappers (including attracting new mentors, training mentors, and providing mentors for new hunters/anglers/trappers; sharing information in schools and with the public about the link between conservation and hunters/anglers/trappers; this category also includes educating new hunters/anglers/trappers; fishing and archery events for kids). Generate awareness of the hunting/angling/trapping opportunities available to the public.

Regardless of the order in which the above priorities are listed, for the purposes of project evaluation, all priorities are considered equally important.

Section 5: Application Instructions

Most of the application form is self-explanatory, however some additional notes have been provided to help you with completing the application form.

- All text boxes expand.
- There is a **maximum page limit of 8 pages** for CCEG applications (excluding the cover page).
- **Use a legible font size** (i.e., nothing smaller than Arial 10 font).
- Do NOT append supplementary information other than the optional project location map (e.g., resumes or publications).
- **If you would like to submit photos, diagrams, or illustrations, please do so within the page limit**; also, please note ACA cannot guarantee the adjudicators will be viewing the applications in colour.

Organization

If the application is successful, ACA will issue the payment in the name of the organization/individual. The organization/individual must have a liability insurance policy and WCB coverage to adequately protect those involved with the funded project. For example, an application received in the name of ABC Group will be issued payment in this name, unless otherwise stipulated in the application.

How much?

How much can be applied for? There is no maximum specified, but special justification is expected if the request is over \$40,000. Last year, the average large grant awarded was approximately \$12,300 (Range: \$700 to \$ \$61,600).

Previous funding from ACA

If this is a request for repeat funding from ACA, make sure you demonstrate evidence that you have made progress with your project, e.g., preliminary results, deliverables, etc., and justify why another year of funding is necessary to the project. There is a box provided in the application form for this.

If your 2025-26 project will not be completed as of March 31, 2026, you should extend your current project by contacting the ACA Grants Coordinator rather than reapplying for the same project in 2026-27.

Link with ACA

Be specific as to which funding priority or funding priorities (listed in previous section) your project addresses and describe the link. If your project doesn't address one of the funding priorities, make sure you demonstrate how your project will support ACA's mission, **ACA conserves, protects and enhances fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for Albertans to enjoy, value, and use.**

The grant money is generated through the fishing and hunting license fees collected in Alberta, therefore we ask you to explain how your project will benefit hunters, anglers or trappers in Alberta.

Budget Notes

ACA expects funding requested will be spent as close to the budget as possible, however it is within the grant recipient's discretion to move funds to different categories, as long as the overall objectives of the project are achieved.

Contract Services: Mention in the budget commentary section who will be contracted for the services required and provide a breakdown of the payment, e.g. cost per sample, rate per hour, etc. For example, if your project requires water testing, specify what you are testing for, the number of samples required, and how much it costs per sample.

Honoraria: Provide a breakdown for any honoraria, e.g. amount per volunteer.

In-kind Volunteer Contributions: To standardize in-kind contributions from volunteers to the proposed project, please use \$30/hour for unskilled labour work and \$125/hour for professional services.

Mileage: The maximum allowed mileage is based on current CRA rates.

Capital Assets: Items > \$500 that can be reused on other projects. Capital assets may remain the property of ACA upon project completion.

Other: Overhead costs and unforeseen/contingency budget lines are not eligible under the ACA CCEG. We consider office rental, on-going office bills, etc. as overhead expenses.

Partner Funding: Be sure to itemize partner funding dollars and public involvement in your proposed project in the appropriate boxes; projects that have no partner or matching funding will benefit from an explanation as to why they don't have any. In-kind contributions can be listed in the in-kind column of the budget. Make sure any revenue that is generated by the project (e.g. participant contribution to an event or course) is clearly listed in the budget (as co-funding) and in the budget notes.

Section 6: Grant Application Screening & Decision Process

ACA receives funding requests far in excess of our financial resources and often must decline funding to worthy projects and programs.

The ACA Board of Directors appoints an Adjudication Committee comprised of two ACA board members, an ACA staff member, and a minimum of six external citizens of Alberta having conservation backgrounds, that referee and assess the grant applications based on the established funding criteria and funding priorities. An adjudication meeting will be held and chaired by a non-voting ACA board member. Applications are adjudicated in the order they are received by ACA.

The Adjudication Committee members assess and rank the grant applications based on the established assessment criteria and funding priorities independently prior to meeting. These rankings are then discussed at the adjudication meeting. Only the top ranked proposals will receive funding.

Applicants will be notified of the status of their submission by March 31, 2026. Successful grant applicants will be expected to sign and follow the ACA Cooperative Project Agreement.

Assessment Criteria

1. Are one or more of the priorities being addressed with this project?
2. Does the applicant demonstrate a “self-help” attitude (e.g., do they have co-funding or in-kind support, other funders)?
3. Are the deliverables clear and are they good value for the funding requested?
4. Will the proposed activities of the project support the delivery of the project objectives?
5. Does the applicant have the ability to deliver the proposal as written?
6. Is the workplan clear?
7. Is the budget reasonable to the project objective?