

Financial Programs for Co-operative Businesses

This section provides an overview of financial programs available to co-operatives across Canada. In some cases, co-operatives are identified as an intended recipient of the program, but most programs are open to a variety of organizations. This section is further divided into programs that are administered by the federal government, provincial governments, and the private sector.

Federal Government

Several federal government departments provide programs that have been accessed by co-operative businesses. This list will not include programs that are no longer offered, Canada Summer Jobs grants, or grants for festivals and celebrations. The information provided in this list relies on publicly available information provided through government websites. Programs that are not well suited for co-operatives or have not garnered uptake among co-operatives will also not be included.

Innovation, Science, and Economic Development

- Business Scale-up and Productivity: Administered by the regional development agencies, the program is focused on productivity improvement, business scale-up, and technology commercialization.
- Regional Innovation Ecosystem: Administered by the regional development agencies, the program seeks to foster entrepreneurship and innovation through the development of clusters, new product creation, and business growth.

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

- Business Development Program: Focused on SMEs and co-operatives, the BDP provides interest-free repayable assistance and non-repayable assistance to not-for-profit organizations.
- Atlantic Innovation Fund: Focused on businesses, co-ops, and academic institutions seeking to bring new products, technologies, or processes to market.
- Innovative Communities Fund: Designed for non-profits, co-ops, and municipal organizations, the fund invests in community infrastructure, industry sectors, and overcoming economic development challenges through non-repayable contributions.

Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions

- Initiative for Infrastructure Development: The program supports projects that enhance Quebec's regional economic development through three streams: research, tourism, and transportation.
- Diversify your economy: The program supports projects that support economic activity, business attraction, tourism, and economic development infrastructure.



Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

- Community Readiness and Opportunities Planning: Designed for Inuit and First nation communities and organizations seeking to engage in economic development planning, conduct research, create resources, and expand capacity.
- Entrepreneurship and Business Development: Created to support business start-ups and expansions. The funds can be used for skills development, research and planning, operating costs, developing a market, innovating, and other start-up and expansion costs.
- Inclusive Diversification and Economic Advancement in the North: Designed for public and private organizations that seek to support underrepresented groups and enhancing and diversifying economic activity in the north.

Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario

- Community Economic Development and Diversification: Designed for non-profits (non-repayable contributions) and for-profit businesses (repayable contributions), the program supports business attraction and expansion, regional competitiveness, and development of regional businesses hubs, and communities.

Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario

- Community Economic Development: The program is designed for non-profits, associations, communities, and first nations seeking to engage in community economic development. Funding is designed for youth internships, economic development infrastructure, planning, and leveraging strategic sectors.
- Economic Development Initiative: The program supports community projects and businesses in official language minority communities.

Western Economic Diversification

- Strategic Innovation Fund: This program is designed to facilitate new innovations among businesses, networks, and non-profits leading large projects (over \$10 million contributions). Priorities include business attraction, expansion, ecosystems, technology development, and commercialization.
- Economic Development Initiative: The program provides support to SMEs in official language minority communities.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

The department maintains a comprehensive list of programs for producers, processors, and researchers. This list includes all programs that specifically identify co-operatives as an intended recipient. Other programs that do not specifically identify co-operatives would likely be available to a co-op, provided the applicant still met the program's criteria (e.g. "for-profit organizations").



- Agricultural Greenhouse Gases Program
- AgriInnovate Program
- AgriInsurance
- AgriInvest
- AgriRisk Initiatives
- AgriScience Program – Projects
- AgriStability
- Canadian Agricultural Loans Act Program
- Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program
- Canadian Animal Genetic Resources
- Drought Watch
- Price Pooling Program

Provincial Government Programs

The following list provides an overview of grants that would fit most co-operatives, provided by provincial and territorial governments. In most cases, provinces do not provide specific programs for co-ops. The grants listed here include those that are available to most businesses and not-for-profit organizations.

Newfoundland and Labrador

- Business Investment Fund: Loans or equity funding for SMEs in strategic growth sectors seeking to expand and improve competitiveness and productivity.
- Regional Development Fund: Designed for non-profit organizations, the fund supports projects seeking to enhance capacity, infrastructure, marketing, and research.
- Supporting Business Sectors: The Province provides a range of supports to select industry sectors operating in the province.
- Economic Diversification and Growth Enterprises: The program supports businesses seeking to expand and create new jobs through financial incentives.
- Co-operative Development NL: This initiative is a partnership with the Newfoundland-Labrador Federation of Co-operatives that raises awareness of co-ops among government and supports the creation of co-ops through a development fund.

Nova Scotia

- Invest Nova Scotia: The program is designed for non-profits, networks, and associations that support sector development, diversification, job creation, and R&D.
- CEDIF Tax Credit: The provincial government provides a tax credit for community economic development investment funds.



Prince Edward Island

- Small Business Investment Grant: The grant supports small businesses making capital expenditures.
- Capital Acquisition Assistance: The grants supports businesses making capital expenditures.
- Development and Commercialization Fund: The program support new businesses and organizations that are introducing a new product or service in a strategic industry sector.

New Brunswick

- Opportunities New Brunswick: ONB supports new and existing businesses in the province by providing guidance, mentorship, planning, and identifying available resources.
- Community Investment Fund: The program seeks to support communities and non-profit organizations creating new community spaces and events.
- Miramichi Regional Economic Development and Innovation Fund: The fund provides support to businesses in the Miramichi region investing in commercial and non-commercial projects.
- Northern New Brunswick Economic Development and Innovation Fund: The fund supports businesses operating in northern New Brunswick investing in economic development.
- Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program: The program is offered under the Federal Government's infrastructure program and is designed for communities and organizations focused on four areas: public transit, green infrastructure, rural and northern communities, and community, culture and recreation.

Quebec

The province of Quebec, is home to the most co-operatives in Canada. This is largely a result of the concerted effort to support the creation of co-operatives led by the provincial government. The Cooperative Development Policy details the four measures the province has implemented to support co-ops.

- Cooperative Investment Scheme: This program has been operational since 1985 and supports the capitalization of co-ops by granting tax benefits to those that purchase securities from eligible co-operatives.
- Collective Entrepreneurship Immobilization Program: designed for non-profits and co-operatives, the program supports organizations seeking to acquire or renovate buildings to expand their business.
- Support Program for the Development of Strategic Sectors and Niches of Excellence: The program is designed to support coordinated activities around strategic sectors. The program identifies grouping of co-operatives as an eligible clientele.



- Social Economy Support Program: The program is designed for regional, sectoral, and national projects that support the advancement of the social economy.
- Desjardins Regional and Cooperative Capital: The provincial government partnered with Desjardin to implement a venture capital fund that supports regional and co-operative development. Investors in the fund receive tax credits of up to 50% on investments.
- Purchase of Equipment: The provincial government offers multiple programs designed for organizations seeking to purchase new equipment based on sectors and regions.
- Expansion, Construction: The provincial government offers a series of programs for organizations investing in new infrastructure to support business activities.
- Marketing: The provincial government offers several programs designed to support organizations in their marketing strategies based on region and sector.
- Entrepreneurship Assistance Program: The program is designed to support start-up enterprises and entrepreneurs among disadvantaged groups or those in the tech sector.

Ontario

- Indigenous Economic Development: The provincial government provides support for Indigenous communities and organizations through three programs focused on business and entrepreneurship, community capital, and new relationships.
- Digital Main Street: The provincial government supports small businesses enhance their online presence through small grants.
- Northern Ontario Heritage Fund: Administered the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, several programs are available to northern Ontario organizations focused on start-ups, expansions, innovation, R&D, capacity building, infrastructure, and job creation.
- OMAFRA Funding: The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, food, and Rural Affairs provides several program to organizations operating food production, agricultural businesses, and rural economic development.

Manitoba

- Innovation Growth Program: The program is designed for for-profit businesses seeking to invest in new products and processes, commercialization, or hiring new employees.
- Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit: The tax credit is available for co-ops and corporations as well as investors, investing in community-based enterprises.
- Employee Share Purchase Tax Credit: The tax credit is designed for employees that are purchasing ownership of/in a company.



Saskatchewan

- Indigenous Business Funding Programs: The provincial government supports three organizations that provide grants and loans to first nation and metis businesses.
- Business Incentives and Tax Credits: The provincial government provides a variety of tax credits for oil and gas, agricultural, and manufacturing companies setting up or expanding in the province.

Alberta

- Renewable and Alternative Energy: Administered by Alberta Innovates, the program supports low carbon energy producers and those modernizing the grid.
- Alberta Export Expansion Program: Designed to support organizations export products outside of Canada.
- Indigenous Community and Economic Development Program: A variety of support programs for Indigenous-owned organizations.
- Community Initiatives Program: Grants for community-based organizations that undertake projects to support cultural and sporting events as well as local engagement.
- Community and Regional Economic Support Program: The program provides matching support for projects that enhance local economic development capacity and business support.

British Columbia

- Investment Capital: The provincial government provides two tax credits for people investing in small businesses and employees investing in their company.
- Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust Grant Program: The program administers funds from a trust for projects investing in economic development in the southern interior.
- BC Employer Training Grant: The grant supports organizations offer skills training for employees.
- Vancouver Foundation Grants: The Vancouver Foundation provides grants through several programs designed to support community projects in BC.
- Northern Development Initiative Trust: The Trust provides a variety of grants to support communities and organizations throughout northern BC.
- Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC: The Foundation provides a variety of programs for agricultural initiatives in BC.
- Nechanko-Kitimaat Development Fund: This fund offers funding for a variety of economic development projects including 'cooperative ventures'.
- Island Coastal Economic Trust: The trust supports governments and organizations on Vancouver Island leading economic development projects.
- Columbia Basin Trust: The trust supports a wide variety of programs led by individuals, communities, and organizations.



Yukon Territory

- Community Development Fund: The fund provides funding for projects and events led by communities and non-profit organizations that have a sustainable economic impact on the territory.
- Strategic Industries Development Fund: The fund supports businesses operating in strategic industries that are creating jobs and economic activity.
- Innovative Renewable Energy Initiative: The program supports organizations or local governments investing in electrical or heat energy projects.
- Enterprise Trade Fund: The fund supports businesses and support organizations expand outside of the Yukon by supporting event attendance and consultant support.
- Regional Economic Development Fund: The fund provides support to local governments and organizations leading projects focused on economic development planning, capacity building, research, and training.
- Yukon Small Business Investment Tax Credit: The program provides a tax credit to investors investing in Yukon-based businesses.
- Yukon Venture Loan Guarantee Program: The program provides a guarantee on commercial loans from financial institutions for start-ups and expanding businesses.

Northwest Territories

- Support for Entrepreneurs and Economic Development: This initiative provides support to communities and organizations enhancing economic development through several grants.
- Market Development Program: This program provides a variety of supports to agricultural businesses and producers with marketing support and subsidizing shipping costs.

Nunavut

- Culture and Heritage Grants and Contributions: The department provides a variety of grants for community-based organizations leading projects that advance heritage and culture.
- Strategic Investments Program: Through two funds, the program supports businesses with start-up and expansion costs as well as development of economic development infrastructure.
- Small Business Support Program: Through three funds, the program supports small businesses with start-up and expansion costs.



Private Sector Programs

Many larger co-operatives support the development and expansion of other co-ops through financial contributions. This list includes organizations with funds designated to support co-operatives.

The Canadian Co-operative Investment Fund

- Co-operative Lending and Equity Investment: The CCIF supports the capitalization of new and expanding co-operatives.

The Co-operators

- Co-operative Development Program: This program supports the creation and growth of Canadian co-ops.
- Community Economic Development Funds: This program seeks to contribute to the financial security of Canadians and communities. Funding targets projects that create jobs for marginalized youth and individuals with mental health challenges.

The Canadian Worker Co-op Federation

- Tenacity Works Fund: Invests \$15,000-\$125,000 in worker owned co-ops.
- Technical Assistance Program: Provides a grant to worker co-operatives to cover the cost of working with a consultant.

Provincial Co-operative Associations

- Each province is home to a co-op federation that supports the co-ops in that province. Some of these organizations provide financial contributions, lending, and development support for co-op start-ups.

Credit Unions

- Large credit unions offer financial services for all types of business. Some credit unions (e.g. Vancity, Assiniboine) provide unique support for co-ops and their members.

