Call for Proposals: Capacity-Building Initiatives for Grassroots and Ethnocultural Organizations Supporting Newcomers

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1) What is the goal of the Equity Project?
To fund grassroots organizations across Atlantic Canada for up to 21 months to strengthen organizational capacity, improve stability, and build readiness to support newcomers. Funding is paired with mentorship, training, and networking.

2) Who can apply?
Registered non-profits (including charities and societies). Faith-based organizations may apply if they are registered non-profits providing community/settlement services (not religious activities). Applicants must serve newcomers in Atlantic Canada and have an annual operational budget of $500,000 or less. Organizations currently or previously funded by IRCC, individuals, and for-profits are ineligible.

3) Are faith-based organizations eligible?
Yes—if they are registered non-profits serving newcomers. Funds **cannot** be used for religious/faith-promoting activities (e.g., worship, prayer, proselytizing, religious instruction).

5) How do collaborations work if transferring funds to other organizations is not allowed?
One organization (the applicant) manages the full budget. For example one organization can pay for the rent for a shared space for a collaborative group, or software for several organizations to share.   Funds cannot be transferred to partner organizations.

6) What kinds of activities are eligible?
Capacity-building only (not direct services). Examples include: hiring staff/consultants to lead capacity work; volunteer systems; strategic/sustainability planning; diversified revenue training; grant/financial planning support; professional development; newcomer-

service training; websites/communications; setting up digital communication systems (team messaging platforms, cloud file sharing, shared calendars, etc); outreach to rural/under-represented groups; networking and peer-learning; shared space/hubs (with a plan to sustain after funding); coordination tools; simple impact measurement; needs assessments. See full CFP for more examples.

7) What is not eligible?
Direct services to newcomers (e.g., cultural activities, conversation circles), for-profit businesses, individuals, organizations with budgets over $500,000, organizations currently or previously funded by IRCC, or projects serving newcomers outside Atlantic Canada.

8) Do we have to complete the Self-Assessment Tool?
 Yes. It helps you reflect on current capacity, identify growth priorities, and align your project and learning plans. Results inform your proposal and training/mentorship participation.

9) What do we submit and by when?
 After completing the self-assessment:

- Document that includes Tool, Application form, and Budget (link to be provided)
- Most recent financial statement (audited **not** required)
  Deadline: January 31, 2026. Oral application options are available by emailing equityequite@araisa.ca by **January 15, 2026**.

10) How will proposals be assessed?
 By an impartial panel with diverse experiences, including in capacity building, economic development, newcomer services, and lived experience. Criteria and weights:

- Alignment with Capacity-Building Goals **(20%)**
- Feasibility and Planning **(15%)**
- Learning and Readiness **(15%)**
- Budget Fit **(20%)**
- Sustainability **(15%)**
- Collaboration & Community Connection **(15%)**
- Balance (regional/stream) **(0% qualitative consideration)**

11) What does "Budget alignment" mean?
Your budget is realistic, aligns with your activities and eligible expenses, and clearly supports capacity-building outcomes.

12) Can we include shared space or a hub?
Yes—rent for shared offices/meeting spaces or collaborative hubs is eligible **if** you include a plan to sustain the space beyond the grant period.

13) Are legal, financial, or compliance supports eligible?
Yes—**when they build capacity**, such as setting up systems, policies, tools, or receiving one-time training/advice. Ongoing operations (e.g., monthly bookkeeping, routine filings) are not eligible.

14) How will funds be disbursed and what reporting is required?
Disbursements are tied to **project milestones**. At each milestone (e.g., start-up, mid-term, final), grantees share a short progress update and related cost summary. Grantees also join **monthly sharing circles** and have mid-term and final check-ins.

15) What supports are available to applicants?

- **Dec 1:** CFP launch & info session
- **Dec 1–17:** Support using/interpreting the self-assessment tool
- **Jan 8 & 13:** Online drop-in Q&A (e.g., tool results, application & budget clinic)
  Training and some networking opportunities are also available to **non-funded** organizations.

16) Can we apply with an oral submission?
Yes. Email equityequite@araisa.ca by **January 15, 2026** to request an oral option and receive instructions.

17) How should we choose our stream?
If your primary goal is to **strengthen internal capacity**, choose **Stream 1 – Grow**. If you are **ready to collaborate** and will build shared infrastructure/activities with partners (managed by one lead), choose **Stream 2 – Connect**.

18) Can organizations funded by IRCC apply?
No. Organizations currently or previously funded by IRCC are **ineligible**.

19) Can we propose direct service activities if they also build capacity?
Direct services themselves are **not** eligible. However, activities that **prepare** or **strengthen your organization** to deliver services (e.g., training, systems, partnerships, planning, evaluation) **are** eligible.

20) Who do we contact with questions?
Email equityequite@araisa.ca