Climate Ready Infrastructure Service

Le Service pour des Infrastructures adaptées au climat

Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort: Guidebook

Municipal Climate Change Action Centre

Canadian Urban Institute | Institut Urbain du Canada

Canada

Contents

Program Overview

Program Name:	Climate Ready Infrastructure Service (CRIS) - Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort
Description:	This initiative supports up to 25 local governments in Alberta to advance climate resilient infrastructure projects through expert guidance and collaborative learning.
Delivery Partners:	Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) – CRIS Program Administrator Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC) – A collaborative partnership of Alberta Municipalities, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, and the Government of Alberta
Submission Timelines	Submit by August 31, 2026 or upon cohort registration becoming fully allocated, whichever comes first
Start Date	September 21, 2026
End Date	January 31, 2027

The Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort consists of two distinct but connected components:

1. Expert support
    a. Get matched with an expert and receive up to 60 hours of support at no cost to help identify, scope, and plan climate resilience initiatives addressing priority risks such as wildfire or wildfire smoke, extreme heat, and drought.
2. Cohort participation
    a. Join your peers at expert-led webinars and collaborative working groups and benefit from shared learning, practical problem-solving, and exchange of lessons learned.

Background

The Climate Ready Infrastructure Service (CRIS) - Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort provides free access to expert support, peer learning, and tailored guidance to accelerate climate resilience projects.

CRIS is a capacity building project for local governments across Canada. The service connects local governments and communities with top climate experts to support the integration of low-carbon resilience into local infrastructure projects. By providing expert guidance and technical advice, participants gain the tools needed to better serve their communities, reduce emissions, and meet the challenges of climate change head-on.

Delivered by the Canadian Urban Institute and funded by the Government of Canada, CRIS is a national project connecting local governments with climate experts to enhance their infrastructure projects' low-carbon climate resilience. It's part of the Climate Toolkit for Housing and Infrastructure, a suite of resources supporting local governments in achieving Canada's 2030 emissions reduction goals and delivering against adaptation commitments found in the National Adaptation Strategy and the Government of Canada Adaptation Action Plan.

The Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort is offered in partnership from the Canadian Urban Institute with Municipal Climate Change Action Centre. The MCCAC is a collaborative initiative of Alberta Municipalities, Rural Municipalities of Alberta and the Government of Alberta.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this Cohort, projects must be based in Alberta and seeking to integrate climate resilience into their planning or design. Participants can receive support for Infrastructure or Housing projects that meet the criteria below.

Eligible Infrastructure Project Criteria:

1. **Ownership:** Eligible infrastructure assets must be owned and operated by a local government, municipality, band council, other indigenous local governing body, or by a non-profit organization that is delivering infrastructure services in partnership with a local government in Alberta

2. **Project Type:** The infrastructure is in one of the following asset classes:
    - Bridges, Major Culverts, and Dams
    - Coastal Shoreline Management
    - Engineered Wetlands and Marshes
    - Fire and Emergency Facilities
    - Fleets
    - Green Infrastructure and Nature Based Solutions
    - Heavy Equipment
    - Housing
    - Municipal Buildings and Facilities
    - Parks and Trails
    - Potable Water Treatment and Distribution Systems
    - Roads, Sidewalks, and Active Transportation
    - Solid Waste, Landfills, and Incinerators
    - Sports Facilities
    - Stormwater Management Systems
    - Transit (including buses)
    - Wastewater Treatment Facilities

3. **Population:** The project serves a population of approximately 30,000 or less.

4. **Project Stage:** The infrastructure project should be planned or in progress, beyond just an idea stage. To show that the project is a demonstrated priority for the local government or band council, it should be included in an official strategic document (e.g., capital plan, asset management plan, OCP) or have formal acknowledgement as a priority from a senior authority from your community (e.g., Chief Administrative Officer, band council, housing board of directors).

Eligible Housing Project and Portfolio Criteria:

1. **Ownership:** Eligible Housing Projects and Portfolios must be owned and operated by either:
    - a local government, municipality, band council, other indigenous local governing body
    - a non-profit, co-operative, and municipal housing organization or a non-profit organization delivering community housing services
2. **Population:** The Housing Project or Portfolio may serve a community of any size in Canada.
3. **Project Type:** Projects may be a Housing Portfolio, or a single building project.
4. **Project Stage:** The housing project should be planned or in progress, beyond just an idea stage.

Climate Risk

Projects supported through the Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort must focus on one or more of the **following priority climate risks:**

- **Wildfire or Wildfire Smoke**
- **Extreme Heat**
- **Drought**

Participants will be supported to assess how these climate risks may impact the performance, safety, and long term viability of their infrastructure assets, and to identify practical adaptation measures that can be advanced through planning, design, or future investment.

Projects may address a single priority climate risk or explore the interaction of multiple risks where relevant to the local context.

Asset Classification

While a range of infrastructure asset classes are eligible, all projects must demonstrate a clear and direct connection to one or more of the priority climate risks identified above.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Municipal buildings affected by wildfire smoke or extreme heat
- Housing or community facilities facing increasing cooling demand
- Water, wastewater, or green infrastructure assets impacted by drought conditions
- Parks, trails, or public spaces requiring heat mitigation strategies

Projects that do not clearly align with wildfire, extreme heat, or drought will not be prioritized for this cohort, but may be eligible for general service requests through CRIS.

Support Details

Program Design

Participation in the CRIS Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort is fully funded through the Climate Ready Infrastructure Service (CRIS), which is administered by the Canadian Urban Institute and funded by the Government of Canada. There is no cost to local governments.

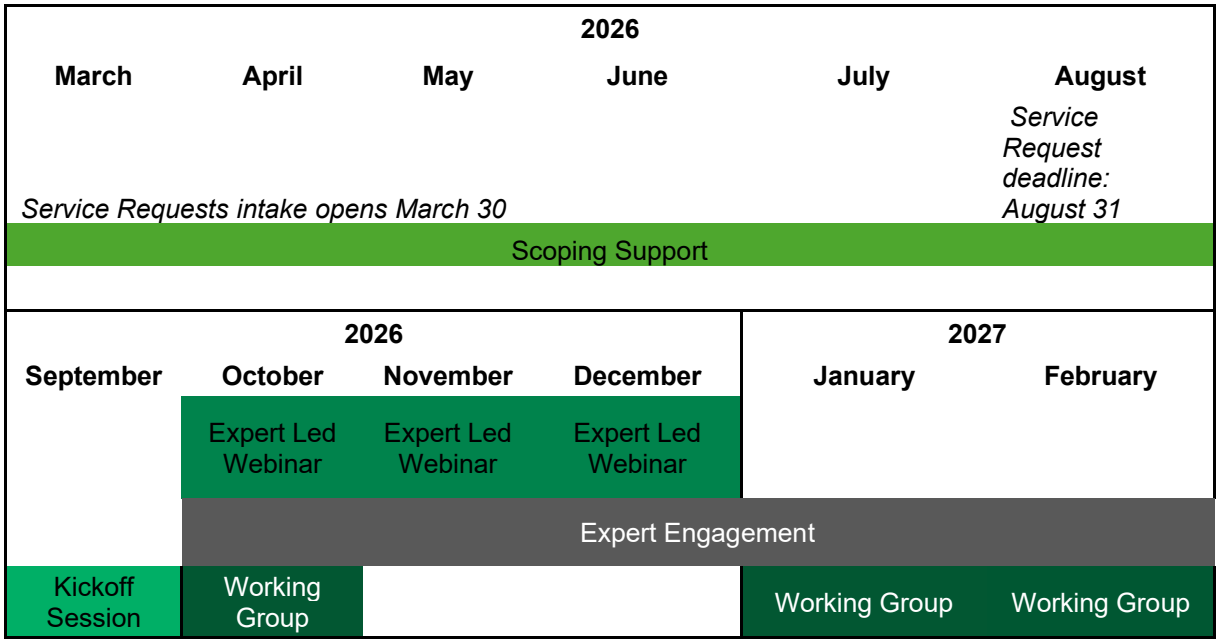
At minimum, cohort participants should be prepared to:

- Attend a kickoff session (virtual, approx. 90 minutes)
- Attend 3 webinars (virtual, approx. 180 minutes in total)
- Engage in one-on-one expert meetings (meet twice virtually with expert to support expert technical analysis, approx. 120 minutes in total)
- Join 3 working group sessions, designed to support project management and capacity building (virtual, approx. 270 minutes in total)

All other work and additional time commitments are coordinated directly between the municipality and their assigned expert.

Calendar

Note: Activity dates are tentative but are outlined in the guidebook to visualize the duration of program activities and support scheduling.



Deliverables

1. Tailored Expert Support

Receive up to 60 hours of expert support to help identify, scope, and plan climate resilience initiatives addressing priority risks such as wildfire or wildfire smoke, extreme heat, and drought. Support is tailored to each community's infrastructure context and project readiness.

2. Technical Options Report

   Receive a final project summary that could include:
   - An asset-specific/corporate climate hazard assessment focused on the selected priority climate hazard(s)
   - Identification of key vulnerabilities and impacts to the selected infrastructure asset(s)
   - High-level adaptation options and next steps to inform decision-making

   Examples of Technical Options Reports may include, but are not limited to:

   - Municipal Building Climate Resilience Assessment
   - Cooling Demand and Thermal Comfort Analysis for Housing or Community Facilities
   - Water, Wastewater, or Green Infrastructure Drought Resilience Assessment
   - Heat Mitigation Options for Parks, Trails, and Public Spaces

3. Peer Learning and Knowledge Exchange

   Participate in virtual peer learning sessions with Alberta communities facing similar climate risks, supporting shared learning, practical problem-solving, and exchange of lessons learned.

4. Funding Readiness and Strategic Alignment

   Receive guidance to support alignment of proposed resilience initiatives with future funding opportunities, capital planning processes, and organizational priorities.

Program Components

Scoping Supports

Some communities may require additional support to define a project scope or determine whether their proposed project is eligible.

To support equitable access and strong Service Requests, the MCCAC offers pre--Service Request scoping support to eligible communities that are interested in submitting a CRIS Service Request.

Scoping support is intended to help communities:

- Clarify their infrastructure challenge and priority climate risk
- Identify a realistic and appropriate project scope for CRIS support
- Understand what CRIS can and cannot provide
- Prepare a clear and complete Service Request

This support is designed to reduce barriers for communities with limited internal capacity, improve alignment between community needs and CRIS program objectives, and better match projects to experts.

Expert Engagement

Each participating community will be matched with a CRIS roster expert aligned with their infrastructure asset and priority climate risk(s).

Up to 60 hours of expert support per community is available.

Expert support may include:

- Climate risk and vulnerability assessment for selected infrastructure
- Identification of adaptation options and resilience measures
- High-level feasibility considerations and implementation pathways

Expert output will be scoped collaboratively with the participant.

Working Groups

Working group sessions will provide structured peer learning and facilitated discussion to support project management, expert engagement, and implementation progression. Working groups will include project updates, guided discussion, and collaborative problem-solving.

Sessions will be designed to:

- Share lessons learned across communities
- Address common challenges related to wildfire, heat, and drought
- Support alignment with future funding and capital planning processes

Webinars

This cohort offers three expert-led webinars, designed as a progressive learning series that builds from foundational concepts to applied project development.

1. Foundations of Climate-Resilient Infrastructure
    a. An introductory session covering priority climate hazards, infrastructure vulnerability, and climate resilience concepts.
    b. Establish a shared baseline for understanding wildfire or wildfire smoke, extreme heat, and drought impacts on infrastructure.
2. Asset-Specific or Hazard-Specific Deep Dive
    a. A focused session tailored to participant needs, such as municipal buildings, housing, or infrastructure exposed to extreme heat, wildfire smoke, or drought.
    b. Explore practical considerations, examples, and approaches relevant to participant projects.
3. From Analysis to Action
    a. A practical session focused on applying resilience insights to project scoping, prioritization, business case development, and funding readiness.
    b. Explore how to translate report findings into actionable next steps

How to Submit a Project

Step 1: Submit a Project Online

Submit a simple service request form by **August 31, 2026**. Submit here

Please note that there is a maximum of 25 spots in this cohort and submission will be reviewed, first come, first serve.

To inform content in the webinars and working groups, the submission form also invites participants to share details about their project.

A submission does not guarantee acceptance into the program.

Step 2: Program Acceptance

Each submission will be reviewed, and each applicant will be informed of their acceptance into the program within 10 working days.

Step 3: Terms of Reference

Participation in the Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort is governed by the Terms of Reference (see Appendix).

By taking part in program activities, participants acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agreed to these Terms of Reference.

Step 4: Participant Onboarding

Upon program acceptance, all participants are asked to attend a virtual onboarding and cohort kick-off session hosted by the MCCAC and CUI. At this point experts are matched to projects and participants will beginning working with their expert and participating in cohort activities

Step 5: Cohort Participation and Completion

Cohort participants are expected to attend a virtual kickoff session, participate in three webinars, engage in two one-on-one meetings with an expert, and join three virtual peer learning sessions. Overall, these activities are designed to provide technical guidance and peer support throughout the program.

Assigned experts will work with participants to produce technical reports, as scoped by the participant. Additional time commitments with the expert will range from project to project.

CRIS will match participating local governments with pre-approved roster experts for the Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort. Experts will be selected for the cohort and matched to local governments based on their expertise and geographic location, with preference given to experts who are geographically close to the participating local governments.

The CRIS will contract directly with the roster experts and pay them to provide 60 hours of free consulting services to the participating local governments.

Step 6: Evaluation

The final working group session will be held once all projects are complete, to close the cohort.

Participants will be asked to complete a program Evaluation Survey to determine to what extent the program's intended outcomes and objectives were achieved and identify opportunities for future enhancements. Participants may be selected for a program Evaluation Interview as well.

Additional reporting & feedback requests may be made to support reporting to Infrastructure Canada and continuous improvement.

Contact Us

Submit a Project: Link to submit online

Learn more:

Cohorts - Climate Ready Infrastructure Service

Contacts:

Kiera Tsakonas, Portfolio Manager/Western Canada
Climate Ready Infrastructure Service
ktsakonas@canurb.org

Alberta Municipalities / MCCAC:
8616 51 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6E 6E6
780.433.4431
contact@mccac.ca

APPENDIX 1. Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort – Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference govern participation in the Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort.

WHEREAS

A. The Climate Ready Infrastructure Service (CRIS) – Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort supports up to 20 local governments in Alberta to advance climate resilient infrastructure projects through expert guidance and collaborative learning.

B. The Climate Ready Infrastructure Service is delivered by the Canadian Urban Institute and funded by the Government of Canada.

C. The Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort is offered in partnership between the Canadian Urban Institute and the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC). The MCCAC is a collaborative initiative of Alberta Municipalities, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, and the Government of Alberta.

D. Participation in the Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort is governed by these Terms of Reference. By continuing to participate in program activities, participants acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to these Terms of Reference.

E. The participant will be engaged in the Alberta Climate Resilience Cohort from September 2026 to February 2027

Cohort Facilitator Commitments

The cohort facilitators commit to:

- Delivering program activities over a 12 to 16 week period in a flexible, virtual cohort format
- Providing information, training, and technical support to advance climate resilience planning and decision making
- Supporting participants in progressing toward clearly defined project outcomes
- Seeking participant feedback to support continuous program improvement
- Acknowledging participant contributions and engagement
- Recognizing the Government of Canada as the program funder

Participant Commitments. Participants are expected to:

- Designate a primary point of contact for the duration of the cohort

- Participate in required cohort activities, including webinars, working groups, and expert meetings
- Engage respectfully and constructively with cohort facilitators, experts, and fellow participants
- Provide information and feedback required to support program delivery and evaluation
- Notify MCCAC if the designated participant is no longer able to participate and, where possible, identify an alternate contact

Code of Conduct. All participants agree to:

- Participate in a respectful, inclusive, and professional manner
- Contribute to a safe and collaborative learning environment
- Respect differing perspectives and lived experiences
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive information shared by other participants, unless explicit permission is provided

MCCAC reserves the right to address conduct concerns and, where necessary, limit or suspend participation to maintain a respectful and productive cohort environment.

Participation and Withdrawal. Participants may withdraw from the program at any time by notifying MCCAC.

MCCAC may discontinue a participant's involvement if participation requirements are not met or if continued participation is no longer aligned with program objectives.

Participants who do not fulfill program commitments may be removed from program participation.

Acknowledgement of Support. Participants acknowledge that:

- The program provides planning level guidance and recommendations only
- Final decisions related to project design, implementation, procurement, and investment remain the responsibility of the participating organization
- MCCAC, the Canadian Urban Institute, and program funders are not responsible for outcomes resulting from the use of recommendations