Not-for-Profit
Sector Briefing

Federal Funding | Infrastructure | AI and Innovation | Community Development

Prepared by

NORTHERN ARC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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CONFIDENTIAL

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> *"Investing in our communities is not just about building things. It is about building Canada strong, today and for generations to come."*
>
> **The Rt. Hon. Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada**
>
> Build Communities Strong Fund Launch, Brampton | April 7, 2026

$51B	$755M	$200M	$10M
Build Communities Strong Fund	Social Finance Fund	Regional AI Initiative	IRAP AI Assist (Per Project, NFP Only)

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Executive Summary

The federal government has committed tens of billions of dollars through programs where not-for-profit organizations are eligible recipients, preferred applicants, or in some cases the only eligible applicants. From IRAP AI Assist ($10 million per project, exclusively for NFPs) to the Build Communities Strong Fund ($51 billion over ten years) to the Social Finance Fund ($755 million in affordable capital for social purpose organizations), the scale of available federal support for not-for-profit organizations has never been larger.

Most NFPs do not know these programs exist. The organizations that do know about them are engaging at the program administrator level: submitting applications, completing portal checklists, and waiting. They are not positioned at the ministerial, Deputy Minister, or PMO level where funding decisions are actually shaped. The result is that technically eligible organizations lose to applicants who have done the political groundwork before their file reaches a decision point.

This briefing maps the federal funding and positioning landscape for Canadian not-for-profit organizations. It outlines a strategic roadmap to capture $2 to $15 million in federal support over 6 to 12 months, spanning non-repayable contributions, infrastructure funding, affordable capital, workforce program delivery, and tax credits.

Northern Arc's value is not paperwork. It is the political positioning at the ministerial, Deputy Minister, and PMO level that determines which applications succeed and which organizations become the ones Ottawa points to when it needs to demonstrate community impact.

WHAT MAKES NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS DIFFERENT IN THE FEDERAL LANDSCAPE

Preferred or Exclusive Eligibility. Several major federal programs are either exclusively available to NFPs (IRAP AI Assist) or provide materially better terms to NFP applicants (75% cost-share versus 50% for the Agricultural Clean Technology program, non-repayable versus repayable for RDA ecosystem streams). NFPs are not competing for the same pool as for-profit companies. They have their own lanes.

Infrastructure Access. The Build Communities Strong Fund's Direct Delivery stream ($6 billion) is open to community organizations, Indigenous groups, and municipalities. NFPs delivering community services, operating facilities, or anchoring local infrastructure have direct access to the largest infrastructure program in Canadian history.

Mission Alignment with Government Priorities. NFPs solving workforce development, accessibility, housing, food security, Indigenous economic development, and community resilience challenges are delivering on the government's stated mandate. Federal Ministers need success stories. NFPs with demonstrated community impact are exactly the organizations Ministers want to announce funding for.

CANADA'S COMMUNITY INVESTMENT COMMITMENT: THE NATIONAL ARGUMENT

Prime Minister Carney has made community infrastructure and social resilience centrepieces of his mandate. The Build Communities Strong Fund, the Social Finance Fund, workforce development programs, and expanded accessibility funding all reflect a recognition that strong communities are the foundation of a strong economy. For NFPs, the policy environment has never been more favourable.

On April 7, 2026, the Prime Minister personally launched the Build Communities Strong Fund in Brampton, committing $51 billion over ten years to community infrastructure. The first tranche of 13 projects included a $64 million community centre. The government is actively seeking NFP partners who can deliver visible, impactful projects across the country.

THE COMPETITIVE GAP: WHY URGENCY MATTERS

Not-for-profit organizations that have established government relationships, demonstrated community impact, and built organizational capacity are precisely the profile these programs were designed to support. But impact alone does not capture funding. Most NFPs submit applications through portals and wait.

Comparable Canadian organizations are securing $2 to $15 million through IRAP AI Assist, RDA ecosystem streams, the Build Communities Strong Fund, and the Social Finance Fund. The Build Communities Strong Fund announced its first 13 projects within weeks of launch. The Social Finance Fund's three wholesalers are actively deploying $400 million in the first five years. IRAP AI Assist has a rolling intake with $10 million available per project. These are not hypothetical programs. They are active, funded, and moving.

The question is not whether your organization deserves this support. The question is whether your organization will capture it before allocations are committed.

How Federal Decisions Are Actually Made

Before examining specific funding programs, it is essential to understand how federal decisions actually happen. Program guidelines describe eligibility criteria and application processes. They do not describe how decisions are made. The gap between formal process and actual decision-making is where opportunities are won or lost.

The Three Levels of Federal Decision-Making

Political Level: Ministers and Ministerial Staff. Ministers set strategic priorities for their departments. Minister Joly at Industry determines which organizations represent national innovation priorities. Minister Hajdu at Jobs and Families shapes workforce and community investment strategy. Minister Robertson at Housing and Infrastructure decides which community projects receive Build Communities Strong Fund support. Ministerial staff filter what reaches the Minister and shape how issues are framed. When a Minister's office understands that a particular organization represents strategic community value, that understanding flows through the department.

Bureaucratic Level: Deputy Ministers and ADMs. Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers manage departmental operations and evaluate technical merit. They assess whether applications meet criteria and make recommendations to Ministers. A technically sound application that aligns with departmental priorities receives favourable evaluation.

Central Agency Level: The Prime Minister's Office. The PMO coordinates across departments and ensures alignment with the government's community development and economic strategy. When the PMO understands that a particular organization is essential to workforce resilience, community infrastructure, or Indigenous economic partnership, that understanding shapes how multiple departments approach the file.

Why Alignment Matters

These three levels must be aligned for significant outcomes. A Minister may express interest, but if Deputy Ministers do not see technical merit, the file stalls. Both may be aligned, but if the PMO has different priorities, interdepartmental coordination fails.

Most organizations engage only with program administrators who process applications. They submit paperwork and hope. Northern Arc ensures that when applications reach decision points, the political level has already identified the organization as strategically important, the bureaucratic level has assessed the file favourably, and the PMO already understands how supporting this organization advances national priorities.

Part One: Federal Funding Programs

The federal government has committed billions to community development, innovation, infrastructure, and social purpose capital. The following programs represent the highest-value opportunities for Canadian not-for-profit organizations, with a combined target of $2 to $15 million over 6 to 12 months.

Program	Type	Target Amount	Timeline
IRAP AI Assist ($10M/project)	Non-repayable	$1M – $10M	Rolling intake
RAII (Ecosystem streams)	Non-repayable	$250K – $2M	To Dec 2028
Build Communities Strong Fund	Non-repayable	$1M – $5M	From 2026-27
Social Finance Fund	Repayable (patient)	$500K – $5M	Ongoing
Enabling Accessibility Fund	Non-repayable	$500K – $1M	Annual intake
Workforce Alliances	Non-repayable	$500K – $2M	From 2026
New Horizons for Seniors	Non-repayable	Up to $25K	Annual intake
Canada Summer Jobs	Non-repayable	100% wage subsidy	Annual intake
Ag Clean Tech (R&I Stream)	Non-repayable	75% cost-share	Continuous
Canada Infrastructure Bank	Loan / equity	$10M+	Ongoing
Innovative Solutions Canada	Non-repayable	$150K – $1M	Challenge-based
SR&ED + Provincial Credits	Tax Credit	$100K – $300K/yr	Ongoing
COMBINED FUNDING TARGET		**$2 – $15 MILLION**	

IRAP AI Assist

IRAP AI ASSIST: UP TO $10 MILLION PER PROJECT, NFP ONLY

The IRAP AI Assist stream is a dedicated funding pathway within the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program. It provides non-repayable contributions up to

$10 million per project for AI-related research and development. Unlike core IRAP, which serves for-profit SMEs, AI Assist is available exclusively to not-for-profit organizations. For NFPs developing AI-enabled service delivery, data platforms, workforce tools, or community technology infrastructure, this is the single highest-value non-repayable program in the current federal landscape.

Why NFPs Qualify: Not-for-profit organizations developing AI applications for healthcare delivery, social services, workforce matching, environmental monitoring, Indigenous language preservation, accessibility technology, or community data infrastructure match the program's eligibility profile.

What Northern Arc Does: Engage with IRAP's Industrial Technology Advisors and Minister Joly's office to ensure political awareness accompanies AI Assist applications. Position the organization's AI work within the government's sovereign AI narrative.

Target: $1 to $10 million. **Timeline:** Rolling intake.

Regional AI Initiative (RAII)

The RAII is a $200 million federal program delivered through Regional Development Agencies for AI productization, commercialization, and adoption. For-profit recipients receive repayable contributions. Not-for-profit and ecosystem organizations can access non-repayable funding through RDA ecosystem streams: PrairiesCan's Ecosystem and Regional Priorities (ERP) program, FedDev Ontario's Regional Innovation Ecosystems (RIE) stream, and equivalent programs at other RDAs.

Why NFPs Qualify: NFPs developing or deploying AI for community benefit, workforce development, or sector-wide technology adoption qualify through the ecosystem delivery channel. This includes organizations serving as AI capacity-building hubs for their sectors.

What Northern Arc Does: Engage with the relevant RDA's regional team to position the application within the AI ecosystem mandate. Ensure ministerial awareness through the RDA Minister's office.

Target: $250K to $2 million. **Timeline:** Continuous intake to December 31, 2028.

Build Communities Strong Fund

BUILD COMMUNITIES STRONG FUND: $51 BILLION OVER TEN YEARS

Launched by Prime Minister Carney on April 7, 2026, the Build Communities Strong Fund is the largest community infrastructure investment in Canadian history. Three streams: the Provincial/Territorial stream ($17.2 billion), the Direct Delivery stream ($6 billion for municipalities, Indigenous organizations, and eligible community organizations), and the Community stream ($27.8 billion, formerly the Canada Community-Building Fund). NFPs delivering community services from physical facilities, operating community centres, running training facilities, or anchoring local social infrastructure are eligible for the Direct Delivery stream.

Why NFPs Qualify: Community organizations with infrastructure needs including facility construction, renovation, climate adaptation, accessibility upgrades, and equipment are eligible through the Direct Delivery stream. The first tranche included a $64 million community centre in Brampton.

What Northern Arc Does: Position the organization’s infrastructure project with Minister Robertson’s office. Ensure the file is flagged in federal regional allocations. Engage with the provincial government for Provincial/Territorial stream inclusion where relevant.

Target: $1 to $5 million. **Timeline:** From fiscal year 2026-27, rolling.

Social Finance Fund

The Social Finance Fund is a $755 million federal initiative deploying affordable, patient capital to charities, non-profits, social enterprises, and co-operatives through three selected fund managers: Boann Social Impact, Realize Capital Partners, and Fonds de Finance Social CAP Finance. The first $400 million is being deployed over five years (2023-2027), with an additional $282.5 million available for 2026-2030.

Important: This is repayable capital, not a grant. But it is patient, affordable financing with social equity targets, designed specifically for organizations that cannot access conventional lending. $50 million is allocated for Indigenous-led investment.

What Northern Arc Does: Advise on positioning with the relevant fund manager. Ensure the organization’s social impact narrative aligns with SFF social equity targets. Coordinate SFF engagement with complementary federal applications.

Target: $500K to $5 million. **Timeline:** Ongoing deployment.

Enabling Accessibility Fund

The 2026 Call for Proposals increased the Enabling Accessibility Fund ceiling to $500,000 to $1,000,000 for mid-sized and major accessibility projects. The program funds physical accessibility improvements in workplaces and community facilities, with NFPs as primary applicants. For organizations operating community facilities, training centres, or service delivery locations, this is a significant capital improvement pathway.

Target: $500K to $1 million. **Timeline:** Annual intake cycles.

Workforce Alliances and Skills Programs

Budget 2025 committed $382.9 million over five years to Workforce Alliances bringing employers, unions, community organizations, and industry groups together for coordinated skills development. NFPs delivering workforce training, employment services, or labour market programming are the primary delivery channel for these funds.

New Horizons for Seniors ($25K per project, approximately 2,900 projects funded annually) is exclusively for NFP applicants. Canada Summer Jobs provides 100% wage subsidy for NFPs, compared to lower rates for the private sector.

Labour Market Development Agreements ($570 million over three years) support workers affected by tariffs and global market changes. NFP employment service providers are the primary delivery mechanism for these provincial transfers.

Agricultural Clean Technology

The Agricultural Clean Technology Program’s Research and Innovation Stream provides a 75% cost-share for not-for-profit applicants (versus 50% for for-profit), with continuous intake and three priority areas: green energy and energy efficiency, precision agriculture, and bioeconomy. For NFPs working in agricultural technology, food systems innovation, or rural sustainability, this is a materially advantaged funding pathway.

Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB)

The Canada Infrastructure Bank invests in large-scale infrastructure projects exceeding $10 million across five priority sectors: green infrastructure, public transit, broadband, trade and transportation corridors, and clean power. CIB uses loans, equity, and structured finance to attract private and institutional co-investment alongside federal capital. For NFPs operating major community infrastructure, health facilities, broadband networks, or clean energy systems, CIB provides patient infrastructure capital at a scale that contribution programs cannot match.

Why NFPs Qualify: NFPs with large-scale infrastructure needs, particularly in broadband, clean energy, or community health facilities, can access CIB as a project proponent or as part of a consortium with municipalities or Indigenous partners. CIB explicitly targets projects that serve communities underserved by conventional infrastructure financing.

What Northern Arc Does: Position the organization’s infrastructure project with CIB’s sector teams. Ensure the project is framed within federal infrastructure priorities and aligned with BCSF and provincial infrastructure planning.

Target: $10 million and above. **Timeline:** Ongoing.

Innovative Solutions Canada (ISC)

Innovative Solutions Canada is the federal government’s program for purchasing innovative solutions from Canadian organizations, including not-for-profits. ISC operates through challenge-based procurement: federal departments post specific problems, and Canadian organizations propose solutions. Phase 1 provides up to $150,000 for proof of concept. Phase 2 provides up to $1 million for prototype development. Phase 3 leads to federal procurement contracts.

Why NFPs Qualify: NFPs with innovative solutions addressing federal departmental challenges, from accessibility technology to workforce tools to environmental monitoring systems, are eligible applicants. ISC explicitly seeks solutions from organizations that may not traditionally engage with federal procurement.

What Northern Arc Does: Monitor ISC challenge postings for alignment with the organization’s capabilities. Engage with departmental ADMs to ensure ISC challenges are framed in ways that recognize the organization’s solution. Position for Phase 1 applications as they arise.

Target: $150K to $1 million. **Timeline:** Challenge-based, ongoing.

SR&ED Tax Credits

As an organization with R&D activities, your organization may already be claiming SR&ED credits. The federal program provides a 35% refundable credit on the first $6 million in qualifying expenditures (Budget 2025 doubled the threshold from $3 million). Provincial credits stack: Alberta provides an Innovation Employment Grant of 20%; Ontario provides the OTC (8%) and ORDTC (3.5%). We include this for completeness and to ensure these claims are coordinated with the broader federal funding strategy.

Target: $100K to $300K annually. **Timeline:** Ongoing.

Key Dates and Deadlines

Program	Timeline
IRAP AI Assist	Rolling applications, ongoing
RAII (ecosystem)	Continuous intake to Dec 2028

BCSF Direct Delivery	Applications expected 2026-27
Social Finance Fund	Active deployment, ongoing
New Horizons / CSJ	Annual intake, check dates
Ag Clean Tech R&I	Continuous intake, ongoing
SR&ED claims	18 months after FY, ongoing

Part Two: Federal Departments and Positioning

Understanding which federal ministries have mandates aligned with your organization's mission is essential for strategic positioning. The goal is not just to apply for programs, but to ensure that when applications arrive, decision-makers already understand why your organization matters.

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)

PRIORITY: HIGH | Minister: Hon. Mélanie Joly | Mandate: IRAP, AI programs, innovation ecosystem

Why They Care: ISED oversees IRAP (including AI Assist), the IP programs, and the broader innovation ecosystem. Minister Joly has publicly prioritized scaling Canadian technology and ensuring AI benefits translate into economic and social outcomes. NFPs developing AI applications, technology platforms, or innovation infrastructure are a priority profile.

What Northern Arc Does: Position the file with Minister Joly's office. Engage with IRAP's regional team. Ensure the organization is flagged in ISED's AI and innovation briefing materials.

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)

PRIORITY: HIGH | Minister: Hon. Patty Hajdu | Mandate: Workforce, accessibility, community investment

Why They Care: ESDC administers the Social Finance Fund, the Enabling Accessibility Fund, Workforce Alliances, New Horizons for Seniors, Canada Summer Jobs, and the Investment Readiness Program. ESDC's mandate centres on social inclusion, workforce development, and community capacity building. NFPs are the primary delivery channel for ESDC's community-facing programming.

What Northern Arc Does: Engage with Minister Hajdu's office to position the organization within ESDC's workforce and community investment priorities. Ensure awareness across the Enabling Accessibility Fund, Workforce Alliances, and SFF streams.

Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada

PRIORITY: HIGH | Minister: Hon. Gregor Robertson | Mandate: BCSF, community infrastructure

Why They Care: Minister Robertson launched the Build Communities Strong Fund and oversees the largest community infrastructure investment in Canadian history. The Direct Delivery stream ($6 billion) explicitly includes community organizations as eligible applicants. NFPs with infrastructure needs, from facility construction to climate adaptation to accessibility upgrades, are exactly the profile this stream was designed to support.

What Northern Arc Does: Position the organization's infrastructure project with Minister Robertson's office. Ensure the file is included in the regional project pipeline. Engage with provincial governments for Provincial/Territorial stream inclusion.

Regional Development Agencies

PRIORITY: HIGH | Each RDA delivers ecosystem and regional programs with NFP-specific streams

PrairiesCan (AB, SK, MB) delivers Ecosystem and Regional Priorities (ERP), non-repayable for ecosystem organizations. FedDev Ontario delivers Regional Innovation Ecosystems (RIE), also non-repayable for ecosystem organizations. ACOA delivers the Atlantic Innovation Fund and REGI streams. CED delivers REGI for Quebec. PacifiCan delivers BSP and RIE for British Columbia. Each RDA has regional staff who evaluate applications and regional Ministers who set priorities.

What Northern Arc Does: Introduce the organization to the relevant RDA's regional leadership. Position the file with the RDA Minister's office. Ensure the application aligns with regional economic development priorities.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

PRIORITY: MEDIUM | Minister: Hon. Heath MacDonald | Mandate: Sustainable agriculture, food systems

Relevant for NFPs working in agricultural technology, food security, rural community development, or environmental sustainability in the agriculture sector. The Agricultural Clean Technology Research and Innovation Stream provides a 75% cost-share for NFPs. The Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program supports sector-wide strategic initiatives, which is inherently an NFP and industry association mandate.

Public Safety Canada

PRIORITY: MEDIUM | Security Infrastructure Program for community facilities at risk

The Security Infrastructure Program (SIP) funds security upgrades for places of worship, private schools, and community centres at risk of hate-motivated crimes. For NFPs operating community-facing facilities, SIP provides targeted infrastructure funding outside the larger BCSF framework.

Federal Engagement Summary

Department	Priority	Minister	Key Opportunity
ISED	**HIGH**	Mélanie Joly	IRAP AI Assist, innovation
ESDC	**HIGH**	Patty Hajdu	SFF, EAF, Workforce Alliances
Housing/Infra	**HIGH**	Gregor Robertson	BCSF Direct Delivery
RDAs	**HIGH**	Various	ERP, RIE, RAII ecosystem
AAFC	**MEDIUM**	Heath MacDonald	Ag Clean Tech, CASP
Public Safety	**MEDIUM**	Various	Security Infrastructure

Part Three: Provincial Markets and Capacity Building

Provincial programs stack with federal funding and strengthen positioning across multiple streams.

Alberta. Alberta Innovates provides named streams including Community and Social Innovation. The Innovation Employment Grant provides 20% on qualifying R&D expenditures, stacking with federal SR&ED. Alberta's Community and Regional Economic Support (CARES) program supports community development organizations.

Ontario. Ontario Trillium Foundation delivers federal Investment Readiness Program funding to social purpose organizations. Ontario's Community Infrastructure Fund ($400 million in 2026) supports small, rural, and northern community infrastructure. Provincial R&D credits stack with federal SR&ED for technology-focused NFPs.

British Columbia. Innovate BC supports technology company growth with programs that include social enterprise streams. The BC Manufacturing Jobs Fund stacks with federal programs for NFPs with manufacturing or production operations.

Quebec. CED's 2025-26 Departmental Plan names community economic development as a priority. Quebec's social economy ecosystem, including the Chantier de l'économie sociale, creates additional funding pathways for NFPs that stack with federal SFF and REGI streams.

CAPACITY BUILDING: THE INVESTMENT READINESS PROGRAM

ESDC's Investment Readiness Program ($50 million) provides tools, resources, and skills building to help social purpose organizations prepare for social finance opportunities. For NFPs that are not yet ready to access the Social Finance Fund directly, the IRP is the on-ramp. Northern Arc advises on how to position for IRP support as a stepping stone to larger SFF engagement.

Why Not-for-Profit Organizations Are Positioned to Succeed

Mission Alignment Creates Political Resonance. NFPs solving workforce development, accessibility, housing, food security, and community resilience challenges are delivering on the government's stated mandate. Every dollar invested in an NFP checks multiple political boxes: community impact, social inclusion, regional development, and visible results that Ministers can announce.

Preferred Terms Across Multiple Programs. NFPs receive non-repayable funding where for-profit recipients receive repayable contributions. They receive higher cost-share ratios. They have exclusive access to programs like IRAP AI Assist. The federal funding architecture is structurally designed to favour NFP applicants.

Community Trust as Competitive Advantage. NFPs with deep community relationships, Indigenous partnerships, and demonstrated local impact carry a credibility advantage that no for-profit company can replicate. Federal evaluators increasingly weight community embeddedness as a meaningful positive indicator.

The Funding Ecosystem Has Never Been Better Aligned. IRAP AI Assist, the Build Communities Strong Fund, the Social Finance Fund, the Enabling Accessibility Fund, Workforce Alliances, and RDA ecosystem streams all opened or expanded within the last twelve months. The combined federal investment in community-facing programming has no modern precedent.

POLITICAL VALUE: WHY SUPPORTING NFPs IS A WIN FOR GOVERNMENT

PM Carney has committed to building strong communities and investing in infrastructure that serves Canadians. Ministers need success stories that demonstrate community impact, regional economic development, and social inclusion. NFPs that Northern Arc positions are the organizations all Ministers should be pointing to when they need to demonstrate results. Community jobs, accessibility improvements, Indigenous partnership, workforce resilience: these are low-risk, high-reward announcements for every ministerial office.

What Northern Arc Public Affairs Brings

Northern Arc exists to align political will with bureaucratic process. We ensure that when federal decisions are made, our clients are the answer that Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and the PMO have already agreed upon.

Hon. Kent Hehr, P.C., LL.B., Principal. Kent served as a Cabinet Minister in the Government of Canada, including as Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities and Minister of Veterans Affairs. He sat at the Cabinet table where funding decisions are approved. He understands how Ministers think, what they respond to, and how to frame issues for political support.

Abed Harb, Managing Partner. Abed served in the Prime Minister’s Office and as Senior Advisor to multiple Ministers. He understands how the PMO coordinates national strategy, how ministerial offices evaluate requests, and how to ensure alignment across departments.

What We Do

Ministerial Engagement. We engage directly with the Ministers responsible for files that matter to our clients: Joly (ISED), Hajdu (Jobs and Families), Robertson (Housing/Infrastructure), and the relevant RDA Minister. We ensure ministerial offices understand why each organization represents strategic community value.

Deputy Minister and ADM Engagement. We engage with senior bureaucrats who evaluate technical merit and make recommendations. We ensure they understand each organization’s capabilities, community impact, and strategic positioning within federal priorities.

PMO Engagement. We maintain dialogue with the Prime Minister’s Office to frame our clients’ work as essential to national priorities: community resilience, workforce development, social inclusion, and Indigenous economic partnership.

Application Positioning. We advise on timing and narrative across multiple applications to present each organization consistently to federal decision-makers. Applications to IRAP AI Assist, RDA ecosystem streams, BCSF, and ESDC programs reinforce the same story: community impact, proven delivery, ready to scale.

THE NARRATIVE WE WILL ADVANCE

“This is a Canadian not-for-profit organization delivering measurable community impact in areas the federal government has identified as national priorities. It has the organizational capacity, the community trust, and the track record to absorb significant federal investment and turn it into

visible results. When the Prime Minister says Canada is investing in its communities, this organization is building the programs and the infrastructure that make that real.”

Engagement Timeline and Deliverables

Months 1-2: Foundation and Immediate Priorities

Federal Opportunities Briefing. Deliver a tailored 15 to 20 page briefing identifying every federal program the organization qualifies for, with a sequenced engagement strategy and combined funding target.

Immediate Applications. Position for IRAP AI Assist (if AI-related), RAII through the relevant RDA, and any open ESDC intake windows. Initiate ministerial contact across priority portfolios.

Initial Ministerial Contact. Introduce the organization to relevant ministerial offices and RDA regional leadership.

Months 3-4: Building Momentum

Deepening Ministerial Relationships. Advance from introduction to substantive engagement with ministerial offices. Pursue capability briefings or site visits for officials visiting the organization’s region.

Infrastructure Positioning. Position for Build Communities Strong Fund Direct Delivery stream applications. Engage with provincial government for P/T stream inclusion if relevant.

Months 5-6: Consolidation

Cross-Departmental Awareness. Ensure the organization’s file is understood across all relevant departments, not just the primary funding department. Build PMO-level understanding of strategic community value.

Ongoing Program Monitoring. Monitor for new intake windows, program launches, and Budget 2027 commitments that may create additional opportunities.

Investment and Expected Return

Northern Arc Public Affairs offers a dedicated NFP engagement at $5,000 per month plus applicable taxes. The initial engagement period is six months, providing sufficient time to deliver a tailored Federal Opportunities Briefing, position for priority funding applications, establish ministerial relationships across all relevant portfolios, and begin PMO awareness building.

The agreement includes a 30-day termination clause, meaning either party may cancel at any time with 30 days notice. After six months, the agreement continues month-to-month. New programs and projects are announced continuously. Community infrastructure funding cycles are long-lead. The Build Communities Strong Fund runs for ten years. RAII runs to December 2028. Ongoing engagement ensures organizations capture emerging opportunities as they arise.

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

Federal engagement is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing relationship. Maintaining ministerial awareness as staff turn over, reinforcing positioning as new program intakes open, adapting to policy changes, and ensuring alignment with Budget 2027 priorities all require sustained presence. The foundational work of the first six months creates relationships. Ongoing engagement maintains and leverages them as funding opportunities crystallize.

Expected Return

A six-month initial engagement totaling $30,000 targets $2 to $15 million in federal support across non-repayable contributions, infrastructure funding, affordable capital, and workforce program delivery. Even at the conservative end of this range, the return on engagement exceeds 60:1.

Beyond direct financial return, federal recognition provides strategic advantages: enhanced credibility with funders and partners, easier private and philanthropic capital attraction (federal engagement signals government confidence), reputational validation that strengthens grant applications to foundations and provincial programs, and access to opportunities that never reach formal application processes.

Conclusion

The federal government has deployed unprecedented resources through programs where not-for-profit organizations are eligible, preferred, or exclusively targeted. IRAP AI Assist provides up to $10 million per project exclusively for NFPs. The Build Communities Strong Fund is investing $51 billion in community infrastructure over ten years. The Social Finance Fund is deploying $755 million in affordable capital for social purpose organizations. The Enabling Accessibility Fund has increased its ceiling to $1 million per project. Workforce Alliances are deploying $382.9 million for skills development partnerships.

The gap is not eligibility. Most Canadian NFPs qualify for multiple programs simultaneously. The gap is positioning. Organizations that submit applications through online portals and wait are competing against organizations that have already built ministerial awareness, aligned their narrative with departmental priorities, and established the political groundwork that transforms a technically sound application into a funded one.

Northern Arc provides the political positioning that closes that gap. The six-month engagement delivers comprehensive positioning across ministerial offices, RDAs, ESDC, and the PMO. The target is $2 to $15 million in federal support over 6 to 12 months. The opportunity is now.

Northern Arc Public Affairs looks forward to partnering with your organization to capture the federal opportunities that your community impact and organizational capacity deserve.

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