

# Access to Child Care Fund (ACCF) Application Guide

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## Introduction

The ACCF funding application package requires applicants to present a fully operationalized business case that includes a 4-year strategic proposal (Part 1, Form 1), a year-by-year implementation plan (Part 1, Form 2), and financial requirements (Part 3).

The structured intake process is designed as a business case development tool. Through the three connected parts, applicants progressively develop their proposal, from problem/gap identification, strategic response, implementation design, to financial planning, and long-term sustainability. This results into a clear, executable, and costed proposal suitable for funding consideration.

Applications must be developed in alignment with the ACCF objectives, funding principles, and merit criteria. These elements should not be treated as separate requirements, but as an integrated framework that guides how applicants define needs, design responses, and demonstrate impact. Strong proposals consistently reflect:

- ✓ Clear alignment with ACCF objectives
- ✓ Evidence-based identification of needs and service gaps
- ✓ Integration with existing services and avoidance of duplication
- ✓ A strong focus on equity and accessibility for families with the greatest need
- ✓ A results-based approach that links activities, resources, and expected outcomes
- ✓ Demonstrated organizational capacity and feasibility of implementation
- ✓ Innovation that improves access or quality while remaining aligned with Fund priorities

Applicants are encouraged to develop their application thoughtfully and, where possible, in collaboration with relevant team members. The application must accurately reflect the organization's context and demonstrate a clear, realistic capacity to deliver the proposed initiative(s).

## Overview of the Application Components

The ACCF application workflow consists of three sequential components that build on one another, which together form an integrated and fully costed proposal for funding consideration.

<b>Part 1, Form 1: 4-year strategic plan narrative (MS Forms)</b>	Strategic narrative section where applicants develop a four-year, evidence-based plan outlining the needs addressed, strategic approach, organizational capacity, and sustainability of the proposed initiative.
<b>Part 2, Form 2: Year-by-year implementation plan (MS Forms)</b>	Collects more detailed information on the year-by-year implementation plan. Applicants translate their strategic vision into a sequenced, operational roadmap over the four-year period, outlining projects, activities, and expected progression over time.
<b>Part 3: Financial Workbook (Excel)</b>	Financial Workbook (Excel), where applicants convert the implementation plan into a detailed costed framework by linking expenses to activities and expected results, ensuring alignment across all three components.

## Part 1 – Proposal narrative (Form 1)

Form 1 is the first of three components of the ACCF application process. It prompts the development of the proposal. Form 1 is the foundational step in developing a structured business case for funding consideration.

In addition to collecting key organizational information, Form 1 invites applicants to develop the **narrative foundation** of their four-year proposal, establishing the **strategic direction** of the proposal and setting the foundation for the Implementation Plan (Form 2) and the Financial Workbook (Part 3).

Through this form, applicants are prompted to describe the context for their proposed initiative(s), including childcare needs or service gaps they aim to address, their vision and strategies and the overall 4-year approach to increasing access to meaningful child care support to military families.

### Form 1 - Structure

Form 1 is organized into five sections:

#### 1. Application guidelines and instructions attestation

Request that applicants attest that they understand all framework requirements relating to the ACCF.

#### 2. Baseline funding conditions attestation

Section 2 requires applicants to confirm that all baseline funding conditions outlined in the ACCF Framework are in place and available for audit or verification at any time.

### 3. Applicant organization information

Section 3 collects key information about the applicant organization, including relevant registration details.

Organization's legal name
Organization's operating (common) name, if different from legal name
Street Address
City or Town
Province or Territory
Postal Code
Organization Phone Number
Organization Email Address
Mailing Address (if different from above)
Closest associated CF Base
Organization type
Charitable Registration Number (if applicable)
Incorporation Number (if applicable)
CRA Business Number (if applicable)

### 4. Primary contact information

Section 4 collects the primary contact details of the individual responsible for the application, including name and contact information.

Name and Surname of the Primary Contact for this application
Position / role
Preferred language of communication
Phone Number of the Primary Contact for this application
E-mail address for the Primary Contact for this application

Important – please make note of which address is submitted in this section; the identical email address will be required when submitting Form 2.

## 5. Access to child care – Project Narrative

Section 5 is where the project narrative is developed: this section asks applicants to describe the strategic foundation of your 4-year proposal and explain how their organization plans to address identified child care needs and increase access to child care services.

Through five structured open-ended questions, applicants are invited to reflect and develop on:

### 1. What childcare needs or service gaps does your four-year proposal address?

This question asks you to describe the specific gaps or unmet needs your proposal is designed to address. Your response helps reviewers understand the context and urgency for your proposed initiatives, and why your organization is well-positioned to respond.

### 2. How will your organization address the identified needs or service gaps?

Describe how your organization plans to respond to the gaps and pressures identified in Question 1. Focus on your proposed strategies, collaborations, and any innovative approaches that will help deliver meaningful childcare support to military families.

### 3. Please explain your overarching strategy for the multi-year funding period.

This question asks you to describe your organization's **broad strategy** for the entire four-year funding period. Focus should be on how your plan will develop over time, support fund priorities, and achieve sustainable, meaningful outcomes for military families.

### 4. Please explain who will deliver the proposed activities and how your team and organizational structure will support successful implementation.

Describe the people and organizational structure behind your proposal. The focus should be on who will deliver the activities, their skills and experience, and how your organization is structured to ensure successful, sustainable delivery.

### 5. How could your organization creatively maintain or expand the proposed activities in the long term?

This question asks you to reflect on how your initiative could continue or evolve once the funding period ends. Consider strategies that ensure lasting impact, creative approaches to sustainability, and opportunities to grow or replicate services for military families.

#### What it articulates:

- ✓ Why funding is being sought (problem/opportunity)
- ✓ What the requested funds will be used for (proposed initiative)

- ✓ The overarching intended results (impact for children and families and alignment with ACCF objectives).

**Guidance:**

1. Be developed and sufficiently detailed to demonstrate clear strategic thinking but remain at an overarching level.
2. Demonstrate that the strategic plan will support meaningful, sustainable outcomes for military families.
3. Define clear outcomes rather than vague intentions.
4. Show clear thinking, alignment with the strategy, and use of evidence.
5. Not include detailed operational planning, which is covered in later sections of the application.

Additional business planning suggestions can be found in [ANNEX A: Golden Rules for Strong Business Planning](#).

## Part 2 – Year-by-year implementation plan (Form 2)

Form 1 defines the strategy, while Form 2 translates it into a structured four-year implementation plan. In this section, applicants define each project they intend to carry out, along with its associated activities, timelines, and expected results.

All information provided in this section will be used to populate the Financial Workbook (Part 3). For this reason, it is important that projects and activities are clearly defined, as they will form the basis for costing and financial planning in Excel.

### Building a Strong Implementation Plan

A strong implementation plan is not a description of intentions—it is a structured blueprint that can be executed, monitored, and costed.

It defines:

- The measurable objectives associated with each activity
- A description of how success will be measured.

A strong implementation plan turns your strategy into clear, practical steps. For each project, clearly explain what will be done, when it will happen, and how it will unfold over the four-year period. Avoid general statements—be specific enough that someone could understand how the work will be carried out.

1. Realistic and achievable within your organization’s resources and capacity
2. Described in a way that allows them to be directly translated into costs and funding requirements

## Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Describing activities in vague or general terms (e.g., “improve services” without explaining how)
- Front-loading or concentrating all activities in one year without a clear rationale
- Treating each year as disconnected instead of part of a sequenced plan
- Listing activities that cannot realistically be delivered within available capacity or timelines
- Including activities that cannot be clearly linked to future costing in the Financial Workbook

## Form 2 - Structure

Form 2 is composed of a series of guided questions. While it may appear simple, it is designed to prompt a thorough reflection, leading to a realistic, coherent, and implementation-ready plan.

It guides applicants in identifying the **projects** they will carry out to expand access to child care, and the **objectives** those projects are intended to achieve. It also asks applicants to describe how these objectives will be met through **specific activities** and their specific **timelines** over the four-year funding period.

Before you start your entries, it is recommended that you refer to the Eligibility section of the ACCF Framework.

### Contact Information

1. Please enter the email address of the primary contact for this application that was submitted in Form 1,
2. Please enter the legal name of your organization.

The contact information in Form 2 *must* match the primary contact information previously submitted in Form 1. If these details do not align, the Form 2 submission may become lost.

### Proposed Project(s)

For *each* proposed project, applicants are required to complete and submit the following information:

#### 3. Project Name

This question asks applicants to provide a short, clear name for the project.

**TIP:** Choosing a strong project name

Choose a short and meaningful name that clearly reflects the essence of the project. A good project name is easy to remember, describes the main focus of the work, and helps distinguish it from other projects in your proposal.

#### **4. Project Description**

Provide a clear description of the project, including its purpose, scope, and the need or gap it is intended to address. Where applicable, explain how this project relates to or complements other projects within your overall four-year proposal.

A strong project description explains what the project is and why it is needed. It should describe the problem or opportunity it responds to and the overall change it is intended to achieve.

If your organization is proposing multiple projects, briefly explain how this project fits within the broader set of projects (for example, whether it is part of a phased approach, builds on another project, or supports a complementary area of service delivery).

#### **WHAT IS A PROJECT?**

A project is the practical building block of your strategic plan, translating the broader vision set out in Form 1 into concrete, deliverable pieces of work over time. It is a set of related activities designed to achieve a specific objective within the four-year plan, grouping multiple actions under one clear purpose.

For example, a project might focus on expanding services for children with disabilities, while activities could include recruiting inclusion or special needs staff, or purchasing sensory room and inclusive materials.

Applicants may propose multiple projects over the four-year funding period. Some projects may start in Year 1, while others may begin in later years, depending on implementation needs and capacity.

**TIP 1:** When defining and describing a project, consider:

- How the project connects to your broader strategic plan in Form 1
- The need or service gap it is addressing (why it is required)
- Its purpose, scope, and what it aims to achieve
- Who it will benefit (target population or users)
- How it relates to other projects, if applicable
- The expected results at a high level (what will change or improve as a result)

**TIP 2:** Do not include detailed implementation steps or activity listings in this section, as these are captured later through structured activity selection and the implementation plan.

**5. Select the primary ACCF objective(s) that this project will support.**

Select only the objective(s) that your project directly contributes to. Ensure your selection reflects the main purpose of the project.

Multiple selections are permitted.

Applicants should refer to the ACCF Framework for a clear description of each objective before making their selection.

**6. Please indicate which fiscal year this project will start in.**

Select the applicable year in which the project is intended to commence.

Multiple selections are permitted.

**7. Activity/ies Type(s) by Stream**

Select one or more activity types that will be delivered through this project. These options describe the eligible activities and types of services or supports funded under the ACCF. Applicants must select a minimum of 1 activity, to a maximum of 8 activities per project.

Choose only the activity types that are essential to delivering this project. Selections should reflect what will be implemented, not general areas of interest. If the project includes multiple components, select all that apply, provided each one is a direct part of project delivery.

**IMPORTANT:** The activities selected in this question form the **backbone of the Financial Workbook** and establish the basis for budget development and funding allocation decisions. Funding allocations are determined based on the activities selected and costed in Part 3, in combination with other elements of the application.

Activities that are not relevant to the project, not integrated into the implementation plan, or not fully developed in terms of costing and feasibility may not be considered eligible for funding.

- Stream 1 - In-person child care navigators
- Stream 1 - Babysitting courses
- Stream 1 - Emergency child care options
- Stream 2 - Playcare childminding to support CAF member fitness training
- Stream 2 - Occasional Care

- Stream 2 - Professional activity (PA) day care
- Stream 2 - Care during deployments or other military related absences
- Stream 3 - Temporary child care and alternatives for new postings to support family attendance at appointments with the MFRC
- Stream 3 - Career Support
- Stream 3 - Mental health counselling
- Stream 3 - Navigation services
- Stream 3 - Resettling in new home
- Stream 3 - Gap care until full-time care secured
- Stream 4 - Contracts for retainer staff
- Stream 5 - Increasing programming in underserved communities
- Stream 5 - Before and after school programs
- Stream 5 - Youth centre programming for child under age 12 as a form of out-of-school care
- Stream 5 - Summer/day camps
- Stream 5 - Language of choice support
- Stream 6 - Recruitment of inclusion or special needs staff including navigators, ECE-licensed or unlicensed programming
- Stream 6 - Sensory rooms/inclusive materials

## WHAT IS AN ACTIVITY?

In the context of business planning, an activity is a specific service, action, or support that is delivered as part of a project. It is a building block of implementation and represents what is actually done to deliver the project.

Unlike a project, which is broader and outcome-focused, an activity is operational and concrete. Multiple activities combine to deliver one project over time.

For example, a project focused on expanding access to child care may include activities such as recruiting staff, delivering programming, or providing specialized supports.

**TIP 1:** Activities should be organized in a logical order and reflect any dependencies between them, where one activity may need to occur before another can be implemented.

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Applicants will be required to determine which KPIs are relevant to each project, in alignment with the ACCF KPIs outlined in the funding framework.

Important – In Part 3 (the Financial Workbook), applicants will also be required to specify the total projected annual amount for each related KPI.

**8. Will this project increase access to child care?**

**9. Will this project increase child care service delivery?**

### **10. Do you want to add another project?**

Applicants can continue to add subsequent projects for the duration of the multi-year application.

If 'Yes' is selected, the applicant will be provided with the same set of above questions required for each new project.

If 'No' is selected, the submission will conclude and the applicant will be prompted to submit the information provided.

Before moving to Part 3, applicants should ensure that all projects are clearly defined, activities are accurately selected, and timelines are realistic and consistent across the full four-year period, as this information forms the basis of the funding request.

### **Next Step After Submission (Forms 1 & 2)**

Once Forms 1 and 2 are submitted, the review committee will assess both the strategic narrative and the implementation plan. A Financial Workbook (Part 3) will then be prepared based on the information provided and shared with applicants for costing. Applicants will receive their tailored Financial Workbook via email to the primary contact email address provided in Forms 1 and 2.

If applicants have questions, require clarification, or wish to discuss adjustments or additional information that may not have been captured in the forms, they are encouraged to consult the ACCF website or contact the program team before final costing is completed.

# ANNEX A: Golden Rules for Strong Business Planning

## **Start with a clearly defined issue / gap**

A strong proposal begins with a precise, evidence-based understanding of the need or service gap. The problem must be clearly articulated before any solution is described.

## **Ground everything in evidence**

Claims must be supported by data, context, or credible insight (e.g., demand, demographics, waitlists, service gaps). Assumptions alone are not sufficient.

## **Maintain strategic focus (not operational detail)**

Form 1 is about what and why, not how day-to-day delivery happens. Avoid detailed implementation planning, which belongs in Form 2.

## **Ensure clear alignment from need to response**

There must be a direct and logical connection between:  
problem → strategy → proposed response → intended results.

## **Demonstrate relevance to fund objectives**

The proposal must clearly show how it advances ACCF priorities (access, equity, CAF family well-being, workforce strengthening).

## **Show capacity and credibility**

Applicants must demonstrate they are realistically positioned to deliver the proposed vision, without overclaiming or assuming capacity that is not evidenced.

Plans must reflect what is realistically achievable within the organization's capacity, timeframes, and operational environment. Over-optimistic or under-specified plans reduce credibility.

## **Present a coherent strategic narrative**

The proposal should read as one connected story, not separate answers—each section should reinforce the overall direction.

## **Think in outcomes, not (yet) activities**

Focus on intended results and impact, not lists of actions. Activities are for Form 2; outcomes belong in Form 1.