

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Project – Innovation Challenge

The Project: The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Project aims to develop and trial innovative cross-sector solutions for the prevention, early detection, and management of chronic diseases, with an initial focus on obesity, with the potential to scale these solutions nationally and internationally. One of the key target populations for the project will be children and youth. Inspired by the Danish Lighthouse Partnership, this project aligns with the MOU signed between Nova Scotia and Denmark in 2023, which focuses on finding common solutions to chronic diseases.

The Situation: Nova Scotia's high rates of obesity and associated chronic diseases significantly impact quality of life and strain the healthcare system. While many risk factors for obesity and chronic diseases are modifiable, they're not simply matters of personal choice. The root causes are complex, deeply influenced by "obesogenic" environments that make it challenging for people, especially children and youth, to maintain healthy lifestyles.

These environments, characterized by readily available unhealthy foods, community designs that discourage physical activity, and increased screen time, create barriers to quality nutrition, adequate sleep, and regular physical activity. Addressing these issues requires understanding that behaviour is a result of capability, opportunity, and motivation. Focusing solely on motivation is insufficient and can lead to stigmatization.

The Challenge: For the first challenge, the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Project is focused on addressing the root causes of obesity and associated chronic diseases for children and youth in Nova Scotia through innovative, community-driven approaches. This challenge aims to attract innovators to develop and implement co-designed solutions that address the barriers and determinants of health contributing to obesity for children and youth.

This challenge and the project are rooted in the following foundational principles:

- Innovation
- Economic Development
- Focus on Root Causes
- Mental Health Support
- Equity
- Evidence-informed
- Scalability
- Empowerment
- Sustainability
- Collaboration

The full description of principles is available on the NS Lighthouse website under **The Challenge**.

To focus efforts to address these issues, the project has developed a series of opportunity statements to guide applications, which is available on the NS Lighthouse website under **The Challenge**.

Goals of the Challenge: Through this challenge, the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Project seeks concepts that leverage community strengths and resources from intersectoral partnerships to overcome the barriers to the prevention of obesity for children and youth in Nova Scotia. By expanding on the knowledge and skills held by communities, we aim to find approaches and models that are meaningful to community members and can be adapted for diverse communities across the province. The challenge aims to drive improved health outcomes by addressing the root causes of obesity and associated chronic diseases, including healthy food and increased play and physical activity, leading to healthier lives for Nova Scotians.

Furthermore, the challenge seeks to create economic development opportunities. By fostering innovation in health and wellness, we can stimulate local economies, create jobs, and reduce the economic burden of chronic diseases on the healthcare system. This dual focus on health and economic development ensures the challenge will address immediate health issues while also contributing to the long-term prosperity of communities across Nova Scotia.

The Challenge Seeks To Do the Following

- **Spur Community Innovation:** Attract a broad cohort of innovators who can implement new concepts that address the determinants of health and modifiable risk factors leading to obesity for children and youth in ways that current methods cannot or where practices have not been adapted for children and youth obesity prevention.
- **Generate New Partnership Models:** Develop innovative approaches to obesity prevention that build on a community's existing knowledge, tools, and services, serving as templates for other communities.
- **Support the Development of Solutions To Address the Factors Contributing to Obesity in Children and Youth:** Fund multiple initiatives to address the barriers and risk factors leading to youth obesity from various geographic, cultural, and social settings in Nova Scotia, adaptable across diverse settings.
- **Create Economic Development and Scalable Innovation:** Foster regional economic development and enable companies to expand their impact beyond Nova Scotia and Canada. Support innovations that enhance the local healthcare landscape and serve as a model within a global network.

Challenge Structure

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Project invites interested applicants to participate in a two-step application process as part of the Innovation Challenge. This challenge seeks innovative, community-driven solutions to prevent obesity among children and youth in Nova Scotia while supporting economic development within the province.

- **Step 1:** Letter of Intent (LOI) Phase: In the first step, applicants are required to submit an LOI. This initial submission should provide an overview of the proposed project, including its objectives, alignment with the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Principles, and anticipated impact.
- **Step 2:** Full Proposal/Application Phase: Applicants with successful LOIs will be invited to submit a full proposal. This full application will require a detailed project plan, budget, timeline, and additional supporting information. Successful LOI applicants will have until December 13, 2024

Funding and Application Timeline

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Project offers a total funding pool of \$1 million, with individual projects eligible for up to \$400,000 for this Innovation Challenge.

Funding will be disbursed based on the achievement of key milestones, which will be established with successful applicants.

- **LOI Submission Deadline:** October 18, 2024. (Successful applicants will be notified by October 25, 2024.)
- **Full Proposal Submission Deadline:** December 13, 2024. (Successful applicants will be notified in January 2025.)

Further rounds of funding may be available in future months to support new projects or support expansion of promising projects from the initial round.

Who Can Apply to the Challenge? The Innovation Challenge is open to for-profit or not-for-profit organizations registered to do business in Canada. Specifically

- not-for-profit or charitable organizations;
- for-profit or private businesses;
- Indigenous and African Nova Scotian organizations;
- government agencies; and
- academic institutions.

To receive funding, projects must be based in Nova Scotia and applicants must be a Canadian legal entity (such as a company, corporation, or not-for-profit organization) capable of entering into binding agreements in Canada or establishing one. International organizations may apply if these requirements are met. We recommend international organizations begin this process upon submitting an application if it is required.

The applicant must demonstrate that a lead/co-lead for the design, implementation, and direction of the concept is an organization whose mission represents a community within Canada (attestation and details of the community organization as a legal entity required on application).

Assessment Criteria: Applications will be assessed by a project selection committee with expertise in health, innovation, and economic development. Each section of the application will be scored independently and proposals ranked based on their overall score. Final decisions will be made by the lead consortium to ensure selected projects maximize the funds available.

How To Apply: Innovation Challenge materials can be found on the NS Lighthouse website under **The Challenge**. Completed LOIs can be sent to Info@LighthouseNS.ca by October 18, 2024. LOIs received after that date will not be considered.

Guidelines: Letter of Intent Submission Requirements

Submission Deadline: October 18, 2024

Format: Submissions should be in PDF format, not exceeding two pages.

Submission: Please send emails to Info@LighthouseNS.ca

LOI Components

Project Title: Provide a concise title for the proposed project.

Summary: Briefly describe the proposed project, including its primary objectives, target population, and anticipated outcomes. Emphasize alignment with the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Project's focus on child and youth obesity, related mental health impacts, and economic development.

Alignment with Opportunity Areas: Clearly outline how the project addresses one or more of the defined opportunity areas (e.g., increasing healthy food consumption, promoting physical activity, reducing screen time) and targets specific levels of influence (individual, interpersonal, community, society).

Impact Statements:

- **Health Impact:** Describe how the project will positively impact the health outcomes of children and youth in Nova Scotia, particularly in reducing obesity and improving mental health.
- **Economic Impact:** Outline the anticipated economic benefits of the project, including job creation, local economic growth, and potential for attracting further investment.

Budget Overview: Provide a high-level estimate of the total budget required for the project, including anticipated sources of matching funds and any in-kind contributions.

Timeline: Outline the proposed timeline for the project, including major milestones and deliverables within the 12-month funding period.

Evaluation Criteria:

LOIs will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with Nova Scotia Lighthouse Principles
- Relevance to Nova Scotia Lighthouse Opportunity Areas
- Project is based in Nova Scotia and is designed to impact Nova Scotians
- The project integrates equity-focused approaches, ensuring inclusion and addressing health disparities across diverse populations in Nova Scotia (link to health equity framework)