



Audit at a glance

Why we did this audit

- The B.C. government introduced the \$1.5 billion StrongerBC economic recovery strategy in 2020 to offset the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Part of the strategy – the \$30-million Community Economic Resilience grant stream – provided emergency funding for 63 small-scale infrastructure projects, including new cycling infrastructure, community amenities and park improvements throughout B.C.
- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs administered the grants on an expedited basis, increasing the potential risk of funds reaching projects that didn't meet program objectives.
- Findings from this audit can help in the design of grant programs that need to respond to future public health, economic or environmental emergencies.

Objective

To determine whether the Ministry of Municipal Affairs administered the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program – Community Economic Resilience (CERIP-CER) grant stream according to government transfer payment policies and program guidelines.

Audit period

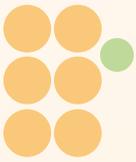
September 2020 to March 2022

Conclusion

We concluded that the ministry administered the Community Economic Resilience grant stream according to most government transfer payment policies and program guidelines. However, the ministry did not meet all expectations for evaluating project proposals and monitoring funding.

We made one recommendation focussing on applying lessons learned from the development and implementation of the Community Economic Resilience stream to future emergency grant programs.

The ministry has accepted the recommendation.



Audit at a glance *(continued)*

What we found

The ministry followed guidelines when establishing the grant stream

- Received necessary approvals to establish the program.
- Established eligibility criteria and funding requirements.
- Developed contribution agreements for recipients.

No recommendation

The ministry applied its evaluation process for selecting projects, with some gaps in its design

- Developed a competitive evaluation process for selecting funding recipients.
- Consistently followed this process and approved 63 applications for funding.
- Guidance for assessing technical scores and risks was underdeveloped.
- Process relied on information provided by applicants, which ministry did not verify when confirming applicants had capacity to complete the work.

Recommendation 1

The ministry developed a monitoring strategy and received most reports

- Established a monitoring strategy that covered all but one of the funding requirements.
- Received most of the required reporting from applicants.

Recommendation 1

After reading the report, you may want to ask the following questions of government:

1. How will the audit findings apply to similar emergency grant programs in the future?
2. What steps are being taken to ensure all projects are completed before the March 31, 2023, deadline?
3. How will the ministry assess the overall economic impact of these projects?