

## **MEC Avalanche Safety Grant**

### **Background:**

Avalanche Canada seeks to inspire, engage, and empower recreationists to enjoy Canada's winter backcountry safely by developing, coordinating, promoting, and delivering world-class public avalanche safety programs and services in Canada. Avalanche Canada recognizes that racialized communities, namely Indigenous, Black, people of colour (IBPOC) and organizations serving these communities, face disproportionate barriers in accessing winter backcountry pursuits in Canada. Avalanche Canada and MEC are partnering to reduce some of these barriers by offering Avalanche Skills Training (AST) grants for IBPOC-serving organizations, enabling them to pursue outdoor adventures safely.

The MEC Avalanche Safety Grant aims to increase accessibility to winter backcountry adventures for non-profit organizations serving marginalized communities. The MEC Avalanche Safety grant provides operating funds for IBPOC-led and serving organizations to cover the costs of Avalanche Skills Training (AST 1) courses.

The financial support covers operational costs for up to four AST 1 courses in British Columbia and Alberta, with a total funding of \$2500 per course (covering eight participants per course). These courses will be scheduled to take place between November 30, 2023, and April 8, 2024. Additional grant details are outlined below:

### **What Avalanche Canada will fund/provide access to:**

- Funding for AST instructor wages and travel costs.
- Assistance with vetting AST providers if necessary.
- Printed resources for eight participants.
- Avalanche safety equipment (transceiver, shovel, probe) for use during the course.
- Classroom venue and AV costs if not covered under instructor fees.

### **What your organization will be responsible for:**

- Administration of the course, including:
  - Scheduling course dates.
  - Hiring and communication with a licensed AST Provider\*.
  - Vetting of the appropriate students for this course (eight skiers/snowboarders OR eight snowshoers OR eight snowmobilers, groups should not be mixed discipline).
  - Assigning a point person for all communication regarding the course (e.g., instructor to students and Avalanche Canada to your organization).
  - Being responsible for the "Tool Box" (which includes the necessary avalanche safety equipment for eight students) throughout the course, including receiving the shipment and arranging its shipment to the next location.
  - Submitting a final report to Avalanche Canada after the course.
- Securing a classroom space necessary for one day. Coordinate with the AST instructor to ensure there is a meeting space that will accommodate nine people (eight participants and one instructor) with a screen (or white wall) and an LCD projector.

- Maintaining the timeline: The AST 1 course will be delivered between November 30, 2023, and April 8, 2024.  
Exercising discretion regarding participant gear: Students require skis/skins/poles (or snowshoes if a snowshoe course), clothing, a backpack, personal protective equipment, and personal items for the field day. Your organization can decide whether to use some of the grant funds to assist with equipment rentals for students.
- Ensuring the funds received are used for the following:
  - Instructor wages.
  - Classroom rental (if not included in instructor fees).
  - Equipment rental (skis, skins, boots, snowshoes) for students.

**\*Note:** Avalanche Canada can assist with vetting AST providers

### **About the Avalanche Skills Training (AST) 1 course:**

If you venture out of bounds, off the trails, or into the backcountry, an AST 1 is the starting point. You don't require any prior experience to enroll in this course; it is essential for anyone recreating in the backcountry.

During this course, you will learn how to recognize avalanche terrain and essential skills for companion rescue. The AST 1 course is a minimum of two days, incorporating both classroom and field components. It is crucial to start your avalanche education with this course, and the same applies to your friends because having just one person trained in a group is not enough. Everyone in your group should complete an AST 1. It's important to note that an AST 1 course is only the beginning of your avalanche safety journey, as professionals will tell you—avalanche education is a lifelong process.

### **What you will learn:**

- Avalanche formation and release.
- How to identify avalanche terrain.
- The basics of trip planning.
- Optimal use of tools and resources like the avalanche forecasts to mitigate your avalanche risk.
- How to use appropriate travel techniques in avalanche terrain.
- Intro to companion rescue.

### **Organization Eligibility:**

#### **We provide AST Grants for organizations that meet the following criteria:**

- IBPOC led (defined as organizations where at least two-thirds of senior leadership self-identify as Indigenous, Black, or People of Colour) **or** organizations dedicating to promoting diversity in the outdoors.
- Based in and serving IBPOC/racialized and/or marginalized communities in British Columbia and/or Alberta.
- Eligible organizations include non-profit, charities, and community groups. (While being registered as a non-profit preferred, it is not mandatory.)

- Organizations that support programs aimed at removing barriers for IBPOC/racialized/marginalized communities to engage in outdoor pursuits are encouraged to apply.

**We do not fund AST grants for:**

- Sports teams
- Political organizations
- Commercial or incorporated enterprises
- Professional organizations or trade groups

**Key dates:**

Applications open from **September 25, 2023, to November 6, 2023**

Final decisions will be made **by November 13, 2023**

AST courses to be run between **November 30, 2023, and April 8, 2024**

Final report due **April 30, 2024**

## Grant Application

Applicant Organization:

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Qualified Donee Type:

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BN/Registration Number/Society number (if available):

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Legal Name:

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Operating Name (if different from legal name):

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Mailing Address:

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Twitter: \_\_\_\_\_

Facebook: \_\_\_\_\_

Instagram: \_\_\_\_\_

LinkedIn: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Profile:

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Project Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Executive Director or senior staff person

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your organization's mission and goal(s)?

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2. Please share how your organization is committed to working on creating equitable access to outdoor experiences for IBPOC/racialized/marginalized community members

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3. What services do you provide?

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4. What populations do you serve?

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5. What percentage of your membership are Indigenous, Black, People of Colour (IBPOC)?

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6. How many active members are in your organization? (“Active” meaning they are involved in your organization’s mission and goals.)

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7. Do you collect membership dues?

Yes       No

8. Are you a not-for-profit organization?

Yes       No

9. Are you a registered charity?

Yes       No

If yes, please provide your registration number: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Check any of the following that apply. Are you:

- A political organization
- Religious-based
- Membership is limited
- Board is volunteer based

11. What percentage of your members recreate in the winter backcountry? \_\_\_\_\_%

12. Do your members have access to avalanche training?

Yes       No

13. Do you have at minimum 8 members who would be interested in this opportunity? (Note: 8 skiers OR 8 snowshoers OR snowmobilers, cannot be mixed).

Yes       No

14. Do you have a classroom space available?

Yes       No

15. Do you have access to an LCD projector?

Yes       No

**Please see sample budget template below. Submit your budget with application:**

- Please show both revenue and expenses, description, amount, etc. Revenue must equal expenses.
- Revenue or in-kind: e.g. donations from other sources to assist the course as in rentals or lift passes.
- Expense type examples are administration, wages, travel, small equipment, advertising/promotion, office supplies, etc. Please include a description for each type of expense.

**Sample Project Budget**

Revenue		Unconfirmed Revenue	Confirmed Y/N
	AvCan Avalanche Safety Grant	\$ 2500.00	N
	(List other sources of funds)		
<b>Total Revenue</b>			
Expense Type	Description	Expense Amount	Grant Funds Applied
Administration	5% of total projected expenses		
Wages	AST Instructor Wages		
<b>Total Expenses</b>			

If you have questions please contact: Nancy Geismar, [ngeismar@avalanche.ca](mailto:ngeismar@avalanche.ca)

**Send the completed application and budget template to: Nancy Geismar, [ngeismar@avalanche.ca](mailto:ngeismar@avalanche.ca)**

**Ways to support:**

We welcome support from those who would like to contribute to this grant to enable more IBPOC/racialized/marginalized folks to safely learn about and access the winter backcountry. If you would like to contribute, please contact: Nancy Geismar, [ngeismar@avalanche.ca](mailto:ngeismar@avalanche.ca).

**Our supporters:**

MEC is the title sponsor for this grant and Backcountry Access (BCA) has contributed significantly by providing two Tool Boxes (each with eight sets of avalanche transceivers, shovels and probes). We thank these organizations for their support of this important initiative.

