

Frequently Asked Questions

National Social Purpose Real Estate (SPRE) Organizational Readiness, 2026

About the application

How can I apply to the program?

Applications are submitted online through the [National SPRE Organizational Readiness Google Form](#). A [PDF containing the application questions](#) is available to help applicants prepare their responses.

The PDF is for reference and drafting purposes only. Please do not submit the PDF as your application. Only applications submitted through the Google Form will be considered.

What is the application deadline?

Applications are due by **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 4, 2026**.

When will applicants be notified about their application status?

All applicants will receive notification of their application status by or before **September 18, 2026**.

Who can I contact with questions?

Please contact Raisa Masud, Project Lead, SPRE Programs, at raisa.masud@mail.utoronto.ca with questions about eligibility, the application, project fit, or participation.

Eligibility and project fit

Who can apply to the National SPRE Organizational Readiness Program?

The program is open to mission-driven organizations that:

- Are registered Canadian charities, nonprofits, or faith-based organizations.
- Are based in Canada. Organizations from all provinces and territories are eligible.
- Can commit to participating in the six-week program.
- Have a project concept or a confirmed project site to assess through the program. A confirmed site is not required if the organization has an early-stage concept.

The program will be delivered entirely in English. Francophone applicants are encouraged to consider their comfort participating in an English-language learning environment.

Applicants are also encouraged to complete the Infrastructure Institute's [SPRE 101 video modules](#) before participating.

What is Social Purpose Real Estate?

Social Purpose Real Estate (SPRE) is a term used in the planning and development sector to describe spaces developed, owned, or operated by mission-driven organizations to deliver social value and advance community well-being.

Examples include:

- Affordable or transitional housing.
- Shelters.
- Childcare facilities.
- Community spaces.
- Cultural spaces.
- Arts and creative hubs.
- Mixed-use projects that combine community-serving uses.
- The redevelopment, repurposing, or preservation of existing community facilities.

Learn more through the [SPRE 101 video series](#).

What kinds of projects are eligible? Are only housing projects eligible?

No. Housing-focused projects are eligible, but housing is not a requirement.

Any project being considered by a mission-driven organization to deliver social value or advance its mission may be eligible.

Previous projects have included childcare centres, arts spaces, community centres, cultural spaces, youth-serving facilities, disability justice initiatives, affordable housing, and community land trusts.

Examples of previous projects are available on the [Infrastructure Institute website](#).

What types of organizations have participated previously?

Participants have included nonprofit, faith-based, and charitable organizations of different sizes, missions, and geographic contexts.

Examples include youth social service organizations, nonprofit arts hubs, cultural hubs, disability justice organizations, rural affordable housing societies, and community land trusts.

Since 2022, 167 projects have participated through the Infrastructure Institute's Organizational Readiness and Accelerator programs, including 97 projects through Organizational Readiness.

Is the program open to rural communities?

Yes. The National SPRE Organizational Readiness Program is open to organizations in both rural and urban communities across Canada.

Can a small or volunteer-led organization participate?

Yes. Organizations of all sizes are encouraged to apply.

Ideally, at least two representatives including one staff member and one board member, where applicable will be able to attend the program sessions. This allows the organization to share knowledge internally and maintain continuity if one participant is unavailable.

Can a private individual apply without an associated organization?

Organizational Readiness is designed to support mission-driven organizations through the pre-development process of a specific project.

Individuals who are interested in the program but do not currently represent a formal organization and have a project concept in mind should contact the project team to discuss their circumstances.

Do I need to have a confirmed project site?

No. A confirmed site is not required. Organizations should have a basic idea of what they are considering developing, redeveloping, repurposing, or preserving. The program is designed to help organizations advance an early-stage idea, assess options, and determine next steps.

Do I need secured funding or project partners?

No. Organizations do not need secured funding, a finalized partnership, or a complete project team to apply.

If you already work with architects, developers, consultants, nonprofit organizations, or other partners, you can describe those relationships in the application.

Are organizations repurposing or redeveloping an existing building eligible?

Yes. The program welcomes organizations considering new development, renovation, redevelopment, repurposing, reconstruction, or preservation of an existing building or site.

Is the program appropriate for organizations that are not planning to become landlords, developers, or housing operators?

It depends on the organization's role and the proposed initiative. The program is primarily focused on organizations developing or redeveloping a specific real estate project.

An organization creating a platform or service to support other groups, for example, by arranging financing or partnerships to preserve community-serving properties, may be less aligned if its work is not connected to a specific development or redevelopment project.

Organizations with questions about fit are encouraged to contact the program team before applying.

About the program

What is the National SPRE Organizational Readiness Program?

The National SPRE Organizational Readiness Program is a free, public, six-week virtual program for Canadian nonprofit organizations seeking to assess project feasibility and organizational capacity to develop a Social Purpose Real Estate project.

The program is designed to bridge the gap between an early project idea and the initiation of real estate development. It focuses on the pre-development stage, including project vision, organizational readiness, governance, planning context, partnerships, funding, financing, and long-term sustainability.

Learn more on the [Organizational Readiness program webpage](#).

What inspired the program?

The program was created in 2022 to help close the gap between idea and action for mission-driven organizations seeking to develop or improve spaces that serve their communities. Social infrastructure including affordable housing, community facilities, and cultural spaces can be challenging, expensive, and risky to develop.

Organizational Readiness helps organizations navigate the pre-development stage by clarifying their project vision, assessing organizational and financial feasibility, identifying partnerships and funding opportunities, and planning for long-term operations.

The program is intended for organizations that may not see real estate development as their primary purpose but view real estate as a way to advance their mission and better serve their communities.

When does the program take place?

The program includes six interactive virtual sessions:

- **Dates:** October 1 to November 5, 2026.
- **Day:** Thursdays.
- **Time:** 1:00–3:00 p.m. Eastern Time.
- **Format:** Synchronous and virtual.

What is the time commitment?

Participants should expect to dedicate approximately **three to four hours per week** to Organizational Readiness activities throughout the six-week program.

This includes:

- One two-hour live session each week.
- Optional workbook activities and preparation between sessions.
- Additional meetings if the organization participates in the student collaboration.

How many representatives from each organization can participate?

One to three representatives from each organization may participate. Two to three representatives are encouraged where possible so that knowledge can be shared internally and the organization can maintain continuity if one participant is unavailable. Organizations may wish to include a combination of staff, board members, volunteers, or other key project representatives.

Does one person need to attend every session?

At least one representative from each organization should be able to attend all or nearly all of the sessions. The program is interactive, and participants benefit from engaging with facilitators, guest speakers, and other organizations in real time.

If a participant must miss one or two sessions because of illness or an unavoidable conflict, recordings and materials will be available. Organizations that cannot attend any live sessions may miss an important part of the program and should consider whether this is the right opportunity for them.

How many organizations will participate?

Approximately **30 to 40 organizations** will be accepted for this national cohort.

Is the program available in French?

All programming will be delivered in English. Applicants who have questions about participating in an English-language learning environment are encouraged to contact Raisa Masud at raisa.masud@mail.utoronto.ca.

Curriculum and outcomes

What topics are covered in the curriculum?

The curriculum explores key concepts across the pre-development stage, from project ideation and organizational planning to funding, partnerships, feasibility, and long-term sustainability. Sessions are as follows:

1. Mission, Community, and Project Fit
2. Processes, Governance, and Organizational Capacity
3. Planning, Policy, and Process
4. Costs, Early-Stage Funding, and Financing SPRE Construction
5. Feasibility and Long-Term Sustainability
6. Program Wrap-Up

Sessions are led by the interdisciplinary Infrastructure Institute team—including urban planners, designers, project managers, and researchers—in partnership with industry leaders who have experience taking SPRE projects from ideation through operation. The session descriptions are available in the [Program Package](#).

What resources and support are included?

Participants will have access to:

- Six facilitated learning sessions.
- Expert-led presentations and discussions.
- Presentation slides and curriculum materials.
- Session recordings.
- A dedicated program wiki, updated weekly.
- Additional resources for ongoing reference.
- Program workbooks to guide project planning between sessions.
- Practical tools for assessing organizational and project readiness.
- An opportunity to collaborate with University of Toronto Master of Science in Planning students.

What is the student collaboration opportunity?

Interested organizations may have the opportunity to collaborate with University of Toronto Master of Science in Planning students on a preliminary planning assessment or land use planning report.

Depending on the organization's project and needs, the work may address:

- Land use planning regulations and context for the site.
- Development approvals and planning processes.
- High-level heritage and environmental considerations.
- Nearby community facilities and amenities.
- Recommendations for next steps.
- Specific planning questions and priorities identified by the organization.

The collaboration begins with a meeting to discuss the organization's goals and project context. The partnership can be tailored to address key questions and priorities.

Is student collaboration mandatory?

No. The student collaboration is optional.

Indicating interest in the application does not guarantee a match. The program team will assess the needs and capacity of participating organizations and students before confirming collaborations.

What additional commitment is required for the student collaboration?

Organizations matched with students should expect additional time beyond the regular program commitment. This may include an initial meeting, follow-up meetings, responding to questions, sharing project information, and reviewing draft work.

The SPRE team will assist with coordinating meetings.

Should we participate if we already have architects, developers, or other professionals involved?

Not necessarily.

Organizations that already have a project team or professional partners should consider whether a student collaboration would add value or duplicate existing work. The program team can help clarify expectations and determine whether the student partnership is appropriate.

What is the main outcome or deliverable?

By the end of the six-week program, participating organizations should have:

- A clearer vision and purpose for their SPRE project.
- A better understanding of their organizational strengths and capacity gaps.
- An improved understanding of planning, policy, and development approvals.
- Potential funding, financing, and partnership strategies.
- A clearer governance and internal decision-making structure.
- An understanding of opportunities and risks related to long-term operational and financial sustainability.
- A practical action plan outlining next steps and areas requiring further development.

Organizations that want to continue developing their project are highly encouraged to consider applying to the Infrastructure Institute's National Accelerator Program.

Professional and technical support

Will the program provide one-on-one support from architects, engineers, or other professionals?

The Organizational Readiness Program provides opportunities to learn from planners, developers, designers, project managers, researchers, and other practitioners. It does not provide one-on-one professional consulting or direct project services from architects, engineers, lawyers, or other experts.

The program does not replace the need to hire qualified consultants for legal, planning, architectural, engineering, financial, or other professional advice.

Does the Accelerator Program provide more individualized support?

The Accelerator Program is designed for organizations with a more clearly defined project and provides a longer, project-based experience. It may include mentorship and additional opportunities to engage with experts.

Mentors can provide general guidance, resources, and connections, but they cannot act as contracted project consultants or provide formal legal, planning, architectural, engineering, or other professional advice.

Application and participation logistics

Do I need a Google account to apply?

Applicants should be prepared to sign in with a Google account to submit the Google Form. Applications are submitted online through the [National SPRE Organizational Readiness Google Form](#)

A [PDF version of the application is available here](#) to help applicants prepare their responses in advance, but only the Google Form submission will be considered.

Can I save the application and return to it later?

Applicants using a Google account may be able to save their progress and return to the form later. Please confirm that your responses have been saved before closing the form.

If you have trouble accessing or submitting the application, contact the program team.

How long does the application take to complete?

The application should take approximately **15 to 30 minutes** to complete.

What information is requested in the application?

The application includes four main areas:

- Organization and primary contact information.
- Project details, if a project or site has been identified.
- Project partners and interest in student collaboration.
- The organization's ability to participate in the six-week program.

If two organizations are working together on one project, should they submit separate applications?

No. Partner organizations working together on a joint project may submit one shared application. The application should identify the partner organization, explain the nature of the collaboration, and indicate which representatives from each organization would participate.

Organizational Readiness and Accelerator

Can an organization apply to both programs?

Yes. Organizations may apply to both programs if they meet the respective eligibility requirements.

Organizational Readiness is intended for organizations that are exploring a concept or assessing their readiness. The Accelerator is intended for organizations with a more clearly defined project that are ready to advance project details, partnerships, financing, and implementation strategies.

What is the difference between Organizational Readiness and the Accelerator Program?

The Organizational Readiness Program is a six-week program focused on organizational capacity and early project feasibility. A project concept is sufficient, and a confirmed site is not required. It helps organizations understand their options, assess their readiness, and identify next steps through facilitated learning, workbooks, recordings, and other resources.

The Accelerator Program is a six-month, project-based program focused on advancing a specific project. A project concept and confirmed site are required. The program helps organizations develop project details and pursue partnerships, financing, and support from funders, investors, and government agencies. It may also include mentorship and other pre-development support.

When will applications open for the Accelerator Program?

Applications for the next Accelerator cohort are expected to launch in **Fall 2026**, with the program beginning in **January 2027**. At this time, one Accelerator cohort is planned for 2027. Future cohorts will depend on available funding and program resources.

Can an organization participate in Organizational Readiness more than once?

The current program is not structured as a series of repeatable modules that organizations can take annually for different aspects of a project. Future opportunities may include focused programs on topics such as capital stacking or procurement, but these offerings are not currently confirmed. Organizations should monitor future announcements from the Infrastructure Institute.

Funding and changing government programs

Will the program provide information about funding opportunities?

Yes. The program will help participants identify potential funding strategies and opportunities as part of their broader project planning.

Because government programs, eligibility requirements, and available funding can change, the program team cannot guarantee that a specific funding opportunity will be available or that an organization will qualify.

Will the program provide up-to-date information about government funding?

The team does its best to monitor changes and will bring in knowledgeable representatives and practitioners where possible. However, the Infrastructure Institute cannot speak on behalf of governments or guarantee the accuracy or continuation of any funding program.

Participants should verify current requirements directly with funders before making financial or project decisions.

Can the program help organizations navigate funding challenges affecting churches and other faith-based organizations?

The program does not provide partisan political advice or make funding decisions on behalf of governments. It can share general information, examples, and strategies that may help organizations understand a changing funding environment. This may include discussion of partnerships, organizational structures, portfolios, and approaches used by other mission-driven organizations. Organizations should obtain independent legal, financial, and tax advice before restructuring assets or creating a related organization.

Materials and follow-up

Will the presentation slides and recording be available after the information session?

Yes. The presentation portion of the information session will be recorded. The slide deck, recording, and FAQ document will be shared with participants and made available through the Infrastructure Institute's website. The Q&A portion was not recorded; key questions and responses are reflected in this FAQ.

Where can I find more information?

More information about the program, application process, curriculum, and related opportunities is available through the [Infrastructure Institute website](#).

You can also review the [SPRE 101 video modules](#) and examples of previous projects on the [2025 cohort webpage](#).

For questions, contact Raisa Masud, Project Lead, SPRE Programs, at raisa.masud@mail.utoronto.ca.

Who supports the program?

The program is made possible through support from:

- Community Housing Transformation Centre. [Learn more](#)
- United Way Greater Toronto. [Learn more](#)
- The Catherine Donnelly Foundation. [Learn more](#)