



# How to Participate in Communities in Bloom

[www.communitiesinbloom.ca](http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca)

*Growing Great Places Together*

## THE PROGRAM

**Communities in Bloom** is a volunteer and partnership-driven charitable organization that uses a multi-tiered competitive evaluation process to foster community strength, involvement and continuous improvement. This is accomplished by nurturing environmental sustainability, enhancements of green spaces, and heritage conservation, in cultural and natural environments encompassing municipal, residential, commercial, and institutional spaces. National beautification programs have flourished in Europe – including Great Britain, France and Ireland – for decades, and were the inspiration for Communities in Bloom.

The program began in 1995 with 29 Canadian communities and has grown to improve the quality of life in hundreds of participating communities in the provincial, national and international editions.

**All communities are invited to participate in the provincial or national editions, within their population category.** Trained volunteer judges travel across Canada during the summer to evaluate communities and the overall contributions of municipality, businesses & institutions and residents, including volunteer efforts in regards to the following criteria:

**Community Appearance** reflects an overall effort by the municipality, businesses, institutions and the residents throughout the community to create great first impressions and a sense that there is continuous attention and upkeep to critical elements of a community that benefit quality of life and economic vitality. Elements for evaluation are: parks and green spaces, medians, boulevards, sidewalks, streets; municipal, commercial, institutional and residential properties; ditches, road shoulders, vacant lots, signs and buildings; weed control, litter clean-up, graffiti prevention/removal and vandalism deterrent programs..



*Tignish, PE*

**Environmental Action** pertains to the impact of human activities on the environment and the subsequent efforts and achievements of the community with respect to: environmental stewardship, policies, by-laws, programs and best practices for waste reduction and landfill diversion, composting sites, landfill sites, hazardous waste collections, water conservation, energy conservation, and activities under the guiding principles of sustainable development pertaining to green spaces.



*Grand-Falls Windsor, NL*

**Landscape** includes planning, design, construction and maintenance of parks, green spaces and cemeteries suitable for the intended use and location on a year-round basis. Elements for evaluation include native and introduced materials; biodiversity, materials and constructed elements; appropriate integration of hard surfaces and art elements, use of turf and groundcovers. Landscape design should harmonize the interests of all sectors of the community and provide safe and secure public spaces. Standards of execution and maintenance should demonstrate best practices, including quality of naturalization, use of groundcovers and wildflowers along with turf management.

**Heritage Conservation** includes efforts to preserve and protect both natural and cultural heritage within the community. Preservation of natural heritage pertains to policies, plans and actions concerning all elements of biodiversity including flora and fauna ecosystems and associated geological structures and formations. Cultural conservation represents the “persona” of a community and refers to the heritage that helps define the community including the legacy of tangible elements such as heritage buildings, monuments, memorials, cemeteries, artifacts, museums and intangible elements such as traditions, customs, festivals and celebrations.



*Chipman, NB*

**Tree Management** Woodlands, Canopy Management, Urban and Rural Forestry includes the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents with regards to written policies, by-laws, standards for tree management protection (selection, planting, and maintenance), long and short-term management plans, tree replacement policies, pollinator-friendly tree selection, tree inventory including heritage, memorial, and commemorative trees, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs.

**Plant and Floral Displays** evaluates the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents to design, plan, execute, and maintain plant and floral displays of high-quality standards. Evaluation includes the design and arrangements of flowers and plants (annuals, perennials, bulbs, ornamental grasses, edible plants, water efficient and pollinator friendly plants) in the context of originality, distribution, location, diversity and balance, colour, and harmony. It also pertains to flowerbeds, carpet bedding, containers, baskets and window boxes.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

*Communities in Bloom is designed to be a continuous community improvement program. It is divided into three phases: Provincial, National and International.*

### Provincial Editions

Communities participate in their population category within their province and are awarded a bloom rating of 1 to 5 blooms at a provincial awards ceremony in the fall. Based on provincial guidelines, success in a provincially evaluated category leads to the community being invited to the national program.

Any community is allowed to participate in a non-competitive provincial category either to learn about the program or, if they are past participants, to maintain their initiatives, program and committees. Both evaluated and non-evaluated options are available in Atlantic provinces.

### Participant Type

Communities in Bloom welcomes participation from all types of community-based groups across Atlantic Canada.

**Urban Municipalities** – This category includes cities, towns, villages, and other recognized urban centers.

**Communities** – Includes organized and unorganized hamlets, settlements, resort communities, First Nations and Métis communities, special service areas, and other community areas beyond formal municipal boundaries.

**Rural Municipalities (R.M.)** – Designed for rural municipalities that wish to participate with their entire municipal area, including all communities governed by the R.M., but excluding urban municipalities located within the R.M. boundaries.

**Communities in Bloom Places and Spaces** – Intended for non-municipal participants that are interested in Communities in Bloom's values and support. This non-competitive category may be evaluated or non-evaluated and includes a unique evaluation specifically developed for this category. Participants may include Senior/Long Term Care Facilities, Park Authorities, Residential Complexes, Private Subdivisions, and other non-municipal groups. Evaluated Participants are recognized for Bloom Achievement.

### Category Selection

#### EVALUATED

**Novice** – For new participants, a non-competitive evaluation in three (3) criteria areas of the participant's choosing is completed and a Bloom Rating is awarded. This includes a program consult at the participant's request. This category is intended for a single year of participation and registrants are encouraged to enter another evaluated CiB category in future years.

**Friends - Evaluated** – Communities experience a non-competitive evaluation in six (6) criteria areas of an effort to build community pride, gain knowledge, track community progress. Participants are recognized for Bloom Achievement.

**Tourist's Takeaway** – What would a tourist see when visiting your community? Using a customized evaluation grid, Communities in Bloom judges will visit the community unannounced in July or August. There will be no in-person contact with the judges. Participants are recognized for Bloom Achievement.

#### NON-EVALUATED

**Friends - Non-evaluated** – Recognized for their participation, participants do not receive a Bloom Rating and are not visited by the judges. This category is recognized for participation only.

## PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATION

### Registrations

Please note that the Atlantic Provincial Edition is administered by the CiB National office, you can contact the National organization by visiting:

<http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca>

You can access the on-line registration form by following this link:

[2026 CiB Atlantic Edition Registration](#)

### Cost

Evaluated category (by population)	Places and Spaces Evaluated
Up to 1,000 population: \$445 CAD	\$525 CAD
1,001- 5,000 population: \$525 CAD	
5,001 - 10,000 population: \$625 CAD	<b>Places and Spaces Non-Evaluated</b>
10,000 + population: \$815 CAD	\$270 CAD
Friends non-evaluated category	
Networking (non-evaluated): \$270 CAD	

### Your Local Committee

The committee is usually composed of local citizens, including one member of council and members of associations, businesses and organizations interested in horticulture, heritage and improving community life.

The committee's objectives are:

- To involve the community by means of local contests, which increase awareness about the program, its benefits and opportunities.
- To act as a liaison with the municipal authorities and Communities in Bloom.

### Budget

While participation in the program does not require considerable financial resources, obtaining funds to promote the program, involve the community, honour participants and volunteers, attend the award ceremonies, etc. is recommended.

It is suggested for the community to prepare an estimated budget and to find sources of funding, such as fundraising programs, community events, etc. Communities in Bloom can provide fundraising ideas and examples from other communities.

### Bloom Ratings

Communities are rated from 1 to 5 Blooms

Up to 55 points:	1 Bloom
56-63 points:	2 Blooms
64-72 points:	3 Blooms
73-81 points:	4 Blooms
82 points and more:	5 Blooms

### Are you NEW to Communities in Bloom?

#### Are you an Indigenous community looking to join in 2026?

We're excited to announce a new two-year grant program, sponsored by RBC, designed to help cover participation costs!



This opportunity offers:

- Affordable consultation for communities NEW to CiB
- Targeted outreach to Indigenous communities across Canada
- Support to balance environmental goals with financial realities

Through this program, CiB and RBC are helping to:

- Improve natural ecosystems and urban green spaces
- Advance Indigenous-led conservation projects
- Foster sustainable, equitable, and healthy communities

**Impact:** By enhancing plants and green spaces in your community, you can boost residents' wellbeing and create spaces everyone can enjoy.

**Limited spots available!** Up to 40 new communities will be eligible in 2026.

**Contact Communities in Bloom** to learn more and register for 2026!

## PROGRAM BENEFITS

*Communities have recognized numerous benefits from participating in the program:*

- Increased civic pride and community involvement
- Environmental stewardship through the enhancement of green spaces
- Mobilization of citizens, groups, organizations, businesses and the municipality
- Best practices and Information exchange
- Valuable information and feedback from the judges
- Economic development and increased property values
- Marketing and promotional opportunities
- Positive benefits for the tourism, hospitality and retail industries
- Improved quality of life
- Participation from all ages and walks of life of the community

## PROGRAM COMMITMENT

*The participating communities have a responsibility to:*

- Involve the entire community to participate (with the support of municipal council)
- Prepare for the judging during the summer
- Provide lodging and meals for 1 or 2 nights for 2 judges
- Provide transportation for the judges to and from the nearest airport/train station
- Attend the Provincial and/or National awards ceremonies if budget permits it
- Pay a registration fee, based on population categories and level of competition

## THE JUDGES' VISIT – USEFUL TIPS

- Prepare information that addresses all criteria in the evaluation form
- Make good use of the time spent by the judges in your community, to benefit from their expertise
- The judges' itinerary should include all the criteria
- Provide the judges with the opportunity to interact with key individuals and network in your community
- Let them see that you are proud of your achievements

## PROMOTIONS

**www.communitiesinbloom.ca:** CiB's website gives visibility to our participants in the NewsComm and Explore our Communities section of our website. The website also includes a resource centre featuring information from sponsors and communities along with electronic copies of our e-newsletters.

**Social Networks:** CiB participants are welcomed to send us updates, news and photos to post on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages

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*Within the context of climate change and environmental concerns, all communities involved in the program can be proud of their efforts, which benefit all of society.*

