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PROSPECTORS ASSISTANCE OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

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SECTION 1: PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Prospectors Assistance (PA) funding is designed to encourage prospecting activities in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to reimburse some of the costs associated with such activities. The operational guidelines presented here, govern the application and reimbursement process for PA Grants.

All self-employed individuals must carry out their work according to Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.

SECTION 2: ELIGIBILITY

- a) Applicants for a PA Grant (grant) must be a resident of Newfoundland and Labrador, and be at least 19 years of age.
- b) PA applications will be accepted starting April 1, 2026, with PA Final Reports due by December 31, 2026. All Prospectors are encouraged to conclude their programs in time to have samples analysed to enable submission of final reports by December 31, 2026.
- c) All relevant sections of the [PA 2026 Application Form](#) must be completed, and the declaration must be signed and dated.
- d) Subject to available funding, applicants may apply for an additional grant after the PA Final Report has been approved for the preceding grant.
- e) One grant application is limited to a maximum of five mineral properties and/or areas of Crown Land or land open for staking. Applicants whose grant will cover multiple areas should refer to Section I of the [PA 2026 Final Report Form Guide](#). Advanced grants will only be awarded for advanced exploration activities on mineral licences.
- f) All applications for PA funding are reviewed by a Selection Committee (committee) comprised of three members of the Mining and Mineral Development Branch.
- g) The committee reserves the right to limit funding to specific properties and/or prospecting activities. The committee also reserves the right to limit funding for the same property and/or piece of Crown Land or land open for staking to one applicant.
- h) Any proposed changes to an approved exploration program/area(s) must be submitted and approved in writing in the form of an **Amended Agreement** prior to prospecting start-up. Proposed changes must be accompanied by all necessary documentation (i.e., rationale, summary of activities, map(s), etc.).
- i) Prospecting is not permitted on third-party mineral licences or private property unless permission is first obtained from the property owner. Prospecting cannot be conducted in Wilderness and Ecological Reserves, National/Provincial Parks, or areas designated as Exempt Mineral Lands in Schedule A of the **Mineral Regulations**.
- j) Directors and/or principals of publicly listed exploration companies are not eligible for PA funding.

SECTION 3: PLANNED EXPLORATION WORK/EXPLORATION APPROVAL

- a) In accordance with Subsection 5(4) of the **Mineral Act**, prospectors carrying out work on mineral licences are required to submit a description of the planned exploration work via the [Planned Exploration Work for Prospecting, Geochemical Sampling and/or Ground-based Geophysical Surveying Form](#). Once this is processed, the Mineral Lands Division may issue a Letter of Acceptance (LoA). If the work scope triggers the requirement to obtain Exploration

Approval, then an [Application for Exploration Approval](#) must be submitted to the Mineral Lands Division prior to commencing the planned work. Once this application is processed the Mineral Lands Division may issue an Exploration Approval (ExA).

- b) Work completed without a (LoA) or (ExA), as appropriate, is in contravention of Subsection 5(5) of the **Mineral Act** and is not eligible for funding.
- c) Prospectors engaging in traditional prospecting on Crown Land or land open for staking are not required to submit a Planned Exploration Work for Prospecting, Geochemical Sampling and/or Ground-Based Geophysical Surveying Form. However, should the prospector stake any area(s) of Crown Land or land open for staking that was previously approved for funding, a LoA or ExA issued by the Mineral Lands Division is required prior to the continuation of work. Work carried out on such licences without a LoA or ExA will NOT be eligible for funding as per Clause 3(b).
- d) LoAs/ExAs can be acquired for work on Crown Land or land open for staking. This practice is encouraged as it could provide applicants with valuable information on their areas of interest such as (but is not limited to): other permits that may be required (e.g., operating permits are required during forest fire season); other land uses (i.e., timber rights, sensitive wildlife areas, public water supply areas; and third-party interests such as outfitting operations, cottage developments, etc.). **Note: any work that may result in ground disturbance, water quality impairments or disruption to wildlife requires an ExA in accordance with Section 41(2) of the Mineral Regulations, even on Crown Land and land open for staking.**
- e) PA applications MUST include only properties that meet the above eligibility to receive approval. However, properties can be added to a grant later as per Section 2, Clause 2(h) above.

SECTION 4: PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AGREEMENT

When exploration is to be completed on one or more mineral licences not registered directly in the applicant's name, a [Property Ownership Agreement](#) must be registered with the Mineral Claims Recorders Office (Mineral Lands Division). This documentation, in addition to having a LoA or ExA, as applicable, must be submitted prior to the start of exploration work under a PA grant.

SECTION 5: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

a) Regular Grant

Applicants may apply for up to **\$6,000** to assist with traditional grassroots exploration on Crown Land, open for staking and/or claims staked in the applicant's name. This includes claims registered with the Claims Recorders Office as being jointly owned between two or more individuals. Prospectors may also apply for additional funding towards air support, up to a **maximum of \$6,000**, to access remote properties.

An exploration work plan must be included with the PA 2026 Application Form and consist of:

- A summary of the underlying geology of the mineral licence(s) and/or area(s) of Crown Land.
- Previous work completed by the applicant, including promising assay results with accompanying assay certificates, and a summary of historical exploration (e.g., third-party exploration) in the area.
- Description of the planned exploration program(s) for the upcoming field season.
- Rationale for continued work on each mineral licence(s) and/or area(s) of Crown Land.
- Location map(s) outlining the proposed sampling plan must be submitted for each mineral licence(s) and/or area(s) of Crown Land included in the application. A digital option, Google Earth Pro (other software programs such as QGIS, MapInfo, etc. are acceptable as well), has the capacity to create basic exploration maps. Maps

created using Google Earth Pro can outline sampling area(s) and grids, geophysical surveys, etc. and are satisfactory for the purposes of application.

Please refer to the [Sample Exploration Work Plan – Regular Grant](#) that outlines the format all applicants must follow.

b) **Advanced Grant**

Applicants may apply for up to **\$12,000** to assist with exploration on an advanced property that has been staked in the applicant's name (including claims registered with the Claims Recorders Office as being jointly owned between two or more individuals). Prospectors may also apply for additional funding towards air support, up to a **maximum of \$6,000**, to access remote properties.

An exploration work plan must be included with the PA 2026 Application Form and consist of:

- Previous work completed on the property by the applicant, including promising assay results with accompanying assay certificates, and a summary of historical exploration (e.g., third-party exploration) in the area.
- The type of advanced exploration work to be supported by the grant.
- Rationale for performing the requested work.
- Location map(s) outlining the proposed sampling plan must be submitted for each mineral licence(s) included in the application. A digital option, Google Earth Pro (other software programs such as QGIS, MapInfo, etc. are acceptable as well), has the capacity to create basic exploration maps. Maps created using Google Earth Pro can outline sampling area(s) and grids, geochemical/geophysical surveys, trenching program(s), etc. and are satisfactory for the purposes of application.

The committee reserves the right to determine if a property and/or activity should be considered advanced. Criteria used to evaluate whether a project is advanced include (but are not limited to):

- Historical exploration and previous results.
- Active exploration by the applicant including type (i.e., prospecting, surficial geochemical survey(s), trenching, etc.).
- Successive advancement of previous exploration activities.

Please refer to the [Sample Exploration Work Plan – Advanced Grant](#) that outlines the format all applicants must follow.

SECTION 6: EXPLORATION EXPENSES

All expenditures incurred prior to the Effective Date and/or on locations not approved in Schedule A of the Prospectors Reimbursement Agreement and/or an Amended Agreement will **NOT** be funded.

The **Effective Date** of the Prospectors Reimbursement Agreement is the date the complete application is received by the Mineral Incentive Program (MIP) and can be dated no earlier than April 1, 2026. If the initial application is declined, the applicant will have to resubmit the application with all the required information and supporting documentation included. The Effective Date will become the date the new, fully completed application is received by the MIP. Note: the **Effective Date** can be found on the top of page 1 of the Prospectors Reimbursement Agreement.

In the final report for a regular grant, the total of all other eligible expenses (i.e., meals, accommodations, fuel, etc.), excluding air support, can total a maximum of 50% of the grant total. Eligible expenses for sampling and analysis funding must comprise a minimum 50% of the grant total. For example, if eligible grant expenses total \$4,000, sampling and analysis expenses must form at a minimum \$2,000 of this total and all other eligible expenses combined can form a maximum of \$2,000.

In the final report for an advanced grant, the total of all other eligible expenses (i.e., meals, accommodations, fuel, etc.), excluding air support, can total a maximum of 40% of the grant total. Eligible expenses for sampling and analysis funding must comprise a minimum 60% of the grant total. For example, if eligible grant expenses total \$10,000, sampling and analysis expenses must form at a minimum \$6,000 of this total and all other eligible expenses combined can form a maximum of \$4,000.

a) **Geochemical Analysis**

- i) The applicant must identify the laboratory to be used for analysis at the time of application. The use of a local business is strongly encouraged. If applicants wish to use non-local laboratories, a written request that includes an explanation as to why they require a non-local laboratory must be included with the application. If a laboratory, other than as identified on the application and Schedule A of the Prospectors Reimbursement Agreement is used, the associated analytical expenses (and all other related expenses) will **NOT** be funded.
- ii) Geochemical analysis, excluding air support, must form at least 50% (regular grant) and at least 60% (advanced grant) of the grant total, and can comprise the full amount of either grant type. This includes the cost of sample bags and the costs associated with shipping of samples to the laboratory for analysis.
- iii) Trace element geochemistry (30+ elements) and gold analyses are required for **ALL** samples. Pre-approval from the MIP is required for select analysis (i.e., mineral indicator analysis, whole rock analysis, etc.).
- iv) Advanced grant funding towards trenching, geochemical/geophysical surveys, and drilling programs will be allocated under geochemical analysis. Approval for such funding is at the discretion of the MIP.

b) **Meals**

- i) The daily food allowance for field work is **\$30** and is only valid for grant holders. Receipts are not required, and this funding category may form a maximum of **15% (regular grant)** and **7.5% (advanced grant)** of the grant total.

c) **Supplies**

- i) A list and cost breakdown of supplies to be purchased **MUST** be included at the time of application.
- ii) Eligible supplies under a grant must be prospecting-specific and can include such equipment as gold pans, hammers, shovels, field stationary, etc.
- iii) Back-packs, clothing, footwear, and safety supplies are not eligible for funding.
- iv) Applicants are encouraged to have a soil auger to aid in sampling. A maximum of **\$150** will be provided towards this **one-time-only** purchase.
- v) Applicants must have a Global Positioning System Receiver (GPS) to aid in sampling. A maximum of **\$200** will be provided towards this **one-time-only** purchase.

d) **Fuel**

- i) Fuel costs (i.e., trucks, ATV's, snowmobiles, etc.) may form a **maximum of 25% (regular grant)** and a **maximum of 15% (advanced grant)** of the grant total.
- ii) All fuel receipts must coincide with exploration activity on the Daily Log of the PA 2026 Final Report Form. Receipts **MUST** clearly show that fuel was purchased. Handwritten receipts must have a corresponding, itemized cash register receipt for reimbursement. Modified receipts (i.e., date/amount highlighted, written over, etc.) may be ineligible for reimbursement.

- iii) Fuel receipts for vendors that are located far from an applicant's property(s) and/or residence will **NOT** be eligible for reimbursement.

e) **Rentals**

- i) Rentals such as an ATV, boat, heavy equipment, etc., must be from independent, non-related individuals or commercial dealers. Two separate quotes **MUST** be included with the application. Rentals do not cover costs associated with a motor vehicle rental such as a car, truck, etc.
- ii) In a case where two quotes cannot be obtained, written approval from the MIP is required.
- iii) Receipts from non-commercial equipment owners must include the name, address, and contact information of the owner. The rental start and end dates must also be provided. The MIP has prepared a sample [Rentals Receipt](#) that should be used in cases where non-commercial rentals are used.

f) **Accommodations**

- i) Accommodations funding of **up to \$75 per night** is available for the grant holder whose project area(s) is more than 150 kilometres from their home. The maximum amount for accommodations is **\$600** of the grant total.
- ii) Non-commercial residences must be from independent, non-related individuals and/or businesses. Receipts from non-commercial residences must include the date of stay and the name, address, and contact information (e.g., phone number and/or email address) of the residence owner. The MIP has prepared a sample [Accommodations Receipt](#) that should be used in cases when non-commercial accommodations are used.
- iii) Cabins, trailers, and motor home rentals (private and commercial) are considered "Accommodations" and as such, are subject to Clause 6(f)(i) and (ii).

g) **Specified Help**

- i) Specified help refers to casual assistance required for manual labour and must be deemed essential by the MIP. It allows for a maximum of one person to assist during exploration field activities, with a daily allowance of **\$25** for labour and **\$30** for food. A detailed explanation for the required help **MUST** be included in the application for the request to be considered.
- ii) A [Specified Help Declaration Form](#), signed by the helper and grant holder, and detailing the dates worked and amount paid, **MUST** be submitted with the final report.

h) **Mineral Resources Review (MRR) Conference**

- i) Applicants may apply for **75%** of the costs towards travel, meals (\$30 per Diem – receipts required), and accommodations, to attend the annual MRR Conference in St. John's, NL. Funding for the MRR Conference can form a **maximum of \$500 for island-based prospectors** and a **maximum of \$1,000 for Labrador-based prospectors**.
- ii) **Registration costs, including short courses, are not covered for reimbursement.**
- iii) Applicants must present a written request to attend. The purpose of this assistance is for displaying and promoting mineral properties.

i) **Professional Geoscientist**

- i) A maximum allowable daily rate for consultation from a professional geoscientist (P.Geo.) is **\$450 per day** to a maximum of **20%** (regular grant) and **10%** (advanced grant) of the grant total.

- ii) A detailed explanation for the services of a P.Geo., if required, must be provided at the time of application. The P.Geo. must be registered with Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Newfoundland and Labrador (PEGNL) and can be employed for mapping, interpretation, and related report writing. The P.Geo. will not be funded to prepare the grant holder's final report. Funding approval for this category is at the discretion of the committee.
- iii) Professional Geoscientists who apply for PA Grants are not eligible for Professional Geoscientist funding.

j) Air Support

- i) Applicants may apply for **80%** of the total costs for air support (e.g., helicopter, float plane, aviation fuel) up to a **maximum of \$6,000** to access remote properties. For charter air support, two quotes from independent, non-related businesses **MUST** be included. In a case where two quotes cannot be obtained, justification must be provided to support the request.
- ii) Air support requests must be submitted with the application and will be reviewed by the committee for approval. Approval will be based on technical merit, the location, size, and scope of the prospector's work plan. The type of aircraft to be used during the program(s) **MUST** be included with the request.
- iii) Copies of all flight manifests, invoices, and receipts are required with the final report.

k) Travel Allowance

- i) One round trip may be covered from the island portion of the Province to Labrador (or vice versa) for the grant holder to access their approved exploration area(s).
- ii) Travel allowance funding must be requested at the time of application.
- iii) Original itemized receipts are required.

SECTION 7: FINAL REPORT

Final reports must be submitted by **December 31, 2026**, unless otherwise approved in writing by the MIP. Extension requests will only be considered because of a delay in receiving analysis from the laboratory. The applicant must provide documentation from the laboratory stating samples were received by December 31, 2026, and the tentative date analysis will be completed to receive an extension.

The final report must only include details associated with a mineral property(s) and/or area(s) of Crown Land pertaining to the grant. A final report consists of a PA 2026 Final Report Form and appendices (i.e., property/sample location maps, signed assay certificates, sample information tables, consultant/contractor reports, invoices, receipts, and proof(s) of payment). The entire Final Report should be combined and submitted as one document (preferably in pdf format). Final report appendices should be combined using the sequence noted above. Final reports that are submitted in an unorganized format will be returned.

a) Prospectors Assistance 2026 Final Report Form

- i) Expenses claimed in the PA 2026 Final Report Form will only be approved for the activities and approved locations listed in Schedule A of the Prospectors Reimbursement Agreement and an Amended Agreement (if applicable).
- ii) A fully completed and signed PA 2026 Final Report Form must be submitted before the final payment of the grant is issued.

b) Appendices

- i) Sample location maps, showing all samples with corresponding sample numbers (as they appear on assay certificates and sample information tables), must be included (**refer to Section D of the PA 2026 Final Report Form Guide**). A digital option, Google Earth Pro (other software programs such as QGIS, MapInfo, etc. are acceptable as well), has the capacity to create basic exploration maps. Maps created using Google Earth Pro can outline sampling area(s) and grids, geochemical/geophysical surveys, trenching program(s), etc. and are satisfactory for the purposes of application and reporting.
- ii) Sample information tables (**refer to Section D of the PA 2026 Final Report Form Guide**), geological and geophysical consultant reports (if relevant to the project), signed assay certificates, trenching information (**refer to Section E of the PA 2026 Final Report Form Guide**), and drilling information (**refer to Section G of the PA 2026 Final Report Form Guide**).
- iii) If a contracted geophysical survey(s) formed part of the exploration program(s), a copy of the contractor’s logistics report (and all associated maps) must be submitted as an appendix(s) (**refer to Section F of the PA 2026 Final Report Form Guide**).
- iv) Receipts (proof of payment) and invoices for all expenses are required and must be submitted with the final report.
 - Receipts and invoices must be in the name of the grant holder only.
 - Receipts and invoices which pre-date the Effective Date of the Prospectors Reimbursement Agreement and an Amended Agreement (if applicable) will **NOT** be eligible for funding.
 - Receipts and invoices that have been modified and/or altered (i.e., highlighted, marked up, cut, etc.) may not be eligible for funding.
 - Receipts smaller than 8.5” x 11” **MUST** be attached to 8.5” x 11” sheets (maximum of 4 receipts per page) in an organized manner (i.e., categorized fuel receipts, shipping receipts, accommodations, etc.). These sheets can then be scanned and added to the final report document. Unorganized/illegible accounting summaries will be returned.
 - Scanned receipts and invoices **MUST** be legible.

SECTION 8: CONFIDENTIALITY

The Department of Energy and Mines will list the names, electoral districts, and final grant payment amount(s) for successful applicants on the Energy and Mines website. Technical information contained in the Prospecting Final Report will be held confidential for three years from final report submission date, unless specifically approved in writing for earlier release by the grantee.

SECTION 9: DETAILED APPLICATION/FINAL REPORT EXPENDITURE TABLE

Category	Application Details	Invoices and Receipts/Proof of Payment Required (See guidelines for details)	Documentation to be included with Final Report Form
Sampling and Analysis	must be at least 50% (regular grant) or 60% (advanced grant) of grant total	Yes	Analytical certificates, sample location maps, trench maps, drill logs

Category	Application Details	Invoices and Receipts/Proof of Payment Required (See guidelines for details)	Documentation to be included with Final Report Form
Meals	\$30 per Diem; maximum 15% (regular grant) or 7.5% (advanced grant) of grant total	No	Completed Daily Log
Supplies	must include list and cost breakdown	Yes	Organized invoices and proof of payment/receipts as per Section 7(b)(iv)
Fuel	fuel purchases (e.g., truck, ATV, etc.); maximum 25% (regular grant) or 15% (advanced grant) of grant total	Yes	Organized receipts as per Section 7(b)(iv)
Rentals	two quotes required or written approval from the Mineral Incentive Program	Yes	Organized invoices and proof of payment/receipts as per Section 7(b)(iv)
Accommodations	up to \$75 per night; >150 km from home (maximum of \$600 of grant total)	Yes	Organized invoices and proof of payment/receipts as per Section 7(b)(iv)
Specified Help	\$25 per Diem (labour); \$30 per Diem (food)	Yes	Signed and dated Specified Help Declaration Form or equivalent
MRR Conference	75% of eligible expenses; up to \$500 (Newfoundland); \$1000 (Labrador)	Yes	Organized invoices and proof of payment/receipts as per Section 7(b)(iv); expenses related to virtual conferences are ineligible for funding
Professional Geoscientist	up to \$450 per day; maximum of 20% (regular grant) or 10% (advanced grant) of grant total;	Yes	Reports, maps, drill logs/sections (dependent on work to be performed); organized invoices and proof of payment/receipts as per Section 7(b)(iv)
Air Support	80% of eligible expenses; up to \$6,000 to access remote properties	Yes	Organized invoices, proof of payment/receipts as per Section 7(b)(iv); a copy of all related flight manifests
Travel Allowance	one round trip between island portion of the Province to the Labrador (or vice versa)	Yes	Organized invoices and proof of payment/receipts as per Section 7(b)(iv)