

BUDGET 2026: IMPACTS TO OPENCIRCLE MEMBERS

Below is OpenCircle's breakdown of Budget 2026. The information below highlights what is of interest to OpenCircle members, with an emphasis on skills development, training capacity, post-secondary programs and infrastructure, and related capital investments.

Page references are to [Budget 2026's Fiscal Plan 2026–29](#).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Capital Plan Overview

- over three years (increase of \$2.2B) focused on health, education, municipal infrastructure and transportation.
- Supports approximately 31,000 direct and 14,500 indirect jobs annually through 2028-29.
- \$3.3B for K–12 infrastructure; \$4.9B for health facilities.
- \$7.1B for municipal infrastructure support.
- \$4.2B in Capital Maintenance Renewal (increase of \$454M).
- \$1.1B for social infrastructure supports, including affordable housing, lodges, and Indigenous housing.
- \$2.7B, an increase of \$180M, for highway twinning, expansion, and other projects.
- \$785M for development, expansion, and modernization of post-secondary institutions (PSIs) that facilitate skills development.

Post-Secondary & Skills Investments

- \$148M (3 years) for TEE initiatives adding 4,000+ new seats.
- **\$96M for Apprenticeship Learning Grant (2026-2027)** to support demand for apprenticeship seat capacity.

Training & Applied Learning Infrastructure

- \$35M – University of Lethbridge Rural Medical Teaching School.
- \$7M – Lakeland College agricultural training expansion.
- \$5M – Bow Valley College health program expansion planning.
- \$2M – Medicine Hat College Centre for Community Wellness planning.
- \$39M – Innovation Park (Beaumont) including AMTA training facility.

Municipal & Transportation Spending

- \$7.1B Municipal Infrastructure Support envelope.
- \$2.7B for provincially owned roads and bridges.
- \$2.8B for municipal transportation projects and programs.

Strategic Implications

- Growth in demand for instructors and employer-linked training pathways.
- Procurement opportunities are tied to campus and municipal capital projects.
- Infrastructure expansion may influence labour availability and wage pressures.

Capital Summary Table (Figures in \$ Billions)

Ministry / Envelope	3-Year Total (\$B)	What It Covers	Strategic Relevance
Transportation & Economic Corridors	\$8.253B	Highways, bridges, trade corridors, twinning, rehab	Construction demand, logistics efficiency, industrial growth
Municipal Infrastructure Support	\$7.094B	Local Government Fiscal Framework, municipal roads, water/wastewater, transit	Community growth, industrial land readiness
Infrastructure (Gov't Facilities, Capital Maintenance, Public Facilities)	\$4.781B	Government buildings, maintenance, mental health facilities, accommodation	Construction pipeline, downtown impacts
Educational Infrastructure (K-12)	\$3.332B	New schools, modular classrooms, modernization	Major trades demand, labour market pressure
Advanced Education	\$1.829B	NAIT Advanced Skills Centre, UCalgary Hub, facility renewal	Workforce training capacity
Family, Social Supports & Housing	\$1.078B	Affordable housing, Indigenous housing, lodge modernization	Workforce attraction & affordability
Technology & Innovation (Capital)	\$0.570B	Digital modernization, enterprise systems, IT infrastructure	Digital economy enablement
Agriculture & Irrigation	\$0.201B	Irrigation expansion & rehabilitation	Ag growth, water security

Changes to Fees

Schedule 21: Changes to Fees

	2025-26	2026-27
Advanced Education		
Apprenticeship Education Program	\$35	\$150
Trade Qualifier	\$60	\$150
Blue Seal	\$50	\$150
Red Seal	-	\$150
Entrance Exam	-	\$150

Skills development and workforce training

Targeted post-secondary expansion (TEE)

- Budget 2026 invests \$148M over three years in new TEE initiatives, including new seats in graduate and undergraduate engineering and programs supporting critical workforce needs in health care and education. (p. 81)
- At full implementation, these TEE initiatives are expected to add more than 4,000 new spaces in post-secondary institutions. (p. 81)

Capital investments relevant to OpenCircle members

Capital Plan context

- Capital Plan (3-year): \$28.3B, supporting public infrastructure capacity pressures and jobs (over 31,000 direct and 14,500 indirect jobs annually through 2028-29). (p. 101)
- Education infrastructure (K–12): \$3.3B over three years (up \$712M from Budget 2025), including planning, design and construction of ~160 school projects. (p. 101)
- Municipal Infrastructure Support: \$7.1B over three years (25% of the Capital Plan), including funding for municipal community infrastructure and transportation programs. (p. 104–105)