

The Corporation of the City of Stratford

Policy Manual

F.1 Financial and Fiscal

Dept: Corporate Services

Committee: Finance and Labour Relations

F.1.1 Community Grants Program

Adopted: March 27, 1972
Amended: February 12, 2001; January 27, 2003; June 24, 2019
Reaffirmed:
Related Documents:
 Council Policy Administrative Policy

1.0 PURPOSE:

The City of Stratford has established the Community Grants Program to:

- Improve the wellbeing of individuals, neighbourhoods and Stratford as a whole by directing City grant funding to eligible organizations that can demonstrate the greatest need in the community while supporting Council's strategic priorities.
- Diversify the availability of activities available to all residents of our community.
- Contribute to enhancing the quality of life in our community.
- Through this support, it is hoped that other funding may be leveraged, and participants and volunteers can be supported, attracted and retained.
- Ensure that the process to review and allocate grant funding is transparent, consistent and achieves the optimal impact for the investment provided.

2.0 AUTHORITY

This policy is established pursuant to Section 107 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* which allows a municipality, subject to section 106, to make grants, on such terms as to security and otherwise as the Council considers appropriate, to any person, group or body, including a fund, within or outside the boundaries of the municipality for any purpose that council considers to be in the interests of the municipality.

3.0 BUDGET

On an annual basis, Council will determine the total funding envelope for Community Grants as part of the annual operating budget.

As the number of grant requests may exceed funds available and budget priorities may change from year to year, applicants are not guaranteed funding. A grant approved in any year is not considered a commitment by the City of Stratford to continue financial assistance in future years.

Requests for multi-year and ongoing support for operations must typically be submitted by 30th August for inclusion in the operating budget of the following year. Council will consider ongoing requests for support on a case-by-case basis as part of budget deliberations.

4.0 ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

The Community Grants Program will provide grants to financially support eligible community-based organizations for operations, activities, programs, services and capital initiatives.

Applications must align with one or more of the City's strategic priorities.

Both the organization and the investment sought must benefit Stratford citizens, and activities must be open to the public at minimal or no charge.

5.0 GROUP ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

In order to apply to the grant program, applicant organizations and funding requests must meet ALL of the following eligibility requirements:

- The organization must be an incorporated not-for-profit organization. This means that it is incorporated under provincial or federal legislation (with or without charitable status).
- The organization must have a volunteer board of directors (with the exception of ex-officio members).
- The organization must release annual audited financial statements, or where audited financial statements are not available, the applicant must provide financial statements that have been verified as correct by two signing officers from the organization.
- The organization must be in operation for at least one year.
- The organization must be in good standing with the City and, if applicable, its own governing bodies.

6.0 WHAT THE COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM WILL NOT FUND

Community Grants cannot be used for:

- Travel or accommodation, food, beverage or alcohol.
- Uniforms, personal equipment.

- Consultant costs.
- Debt retirement, deficit reduction, depreciation or financing charges.
- Increasing endowment funds.
- Funding activities that serve primarily the membership, or for purposes of religious or political organizations.
- Achieving an operating surplus that can be donated to a separate group or entity.
- Funds granted under this program are not transferable between projects or groups without prior Council consent, and must be used for the specific purposes outlined in Council's original approval.
- Funding requests of more than \$15,000 per organization in any single grant cycle
- Retroactive payments. These are activities or costs incurred before grants are approved.
- 100% of the budget of an activity.

7.0 WHO THE COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM WILL NOT FUND

- Individuals.
- For-profit businesses.
- Political organizations.
- Fundraising activities of Provincial/National organizations.
- Organizations who conduct the majority of their services outside of the City of Stratford.
- Organizations with surplus funds not identified for a specific purpose.
- Organizations whose activities may breach the Ontario Human Rights Code or Charter of Rights.
- Organizations who have failed to provide reports satisfactory to the City, including financial statements, as to the success of the previous year and specifically with respect to the allocation of grant funds, will not be eligible for grant funding until such time as proper documentation is submitted and evaluated.
- Any outstanding payments owing to the City from an organization must be paid in full before a grant application will be accepted.
- An organization can only apply once in a fiscal year for one City grant.

8.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

Information relevant to the grants process including application due dates and guidelines to apply will be advertised in local media and on the City website at www.stratford.ca.

The funding call will occur once per year, usually commencing in the month of September. Grants awarded will cover the period January – December of the following year.

All organizations must complete the application form in full which means that each question must be answered and all the requested supporting documentation must be submitted. Incomplete applications may not be considered. The City reserves the right to contact any organization for information which requires clarification.

Applications must be received by the City on or before 4:00pm on the advertised submission deadline. No late applications will be considered. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the City receives completed applications.

Eligible organizations can submit only one (1) application per year.

Funding requests cannot exceed \$15,000 per application.

Requests for in-kind grants such as waiving of City fees or use of Municipal facilities should be accompanied with a dollar value estimate that has been confirmed with the applicable City Department

Applications will be screened for their eligibility by staff and provided to the Community Grants Evaluation Team for review.

The Community Grants Evaluation Team will review each eligible application using the 'application assessment criteria' outlined in this policy.

Following these deliberations, Evaluation Team members will compile a list of approved grant applications and their respective funding allocations.

All applicants will receive notification via mail of Council's decision of whether or not their application was successful.

Following annual Council budget approval, the Finance Department will issue grant payments to the successful applicants.

The Community Grants Program has an appeal process for all applicants through the Finance & Labour Relations Sub-committee.

9.0 EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

The Community Grants Evaluation Team, consisting of three Council representatives and five staff representatives, will meet to review all qualified applications, and make recommendations to Council based on the established criteria in this policy and the financial parameters set within the annual budget.

The Evaluation Team does not hear delegations. Applications must be clear, concise and complete on their own to facilitate the Evaluation Team's review.

The Evaluation Team will typically report its recommendations to Council through the Finance and Labour Relations Committee.

Eligible applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- How the activity or event will support the City's strategic priorities;
- Contribution to the community and impact to Stratford citizens by strengthening our community and growing our economy;
- Evidence of support from other partners, volunteers and other sources of funding to enable the organization or event to be sustainable;
- Additional financial and non-financial resources being leveraged from other sources;
- Evidence that the organization needs the funding. Organizations that have budgets or financial statements indicating a surplus will be required to provide explanations of the surplus and how the organization intends to use it. The level of organizational reserves may be considered;
- Sound organizational track record. This considers if the organization has the ability, skills and capacity to undertake the work;
- That the activities do not unnecessarily duplicate successful efforts that already exist in the community;
- Sustainability of the organization and activity as applicable; and
- The amount of funding requested by applicants and the funding available in the program.

10.0 FINAL REPORTING:

A summary of grants awarded will be published at least annually by the City.

Successful applicants who receive funding from the program must report on how the funding was spent and the impact the funding achieved.

Reports must be submitted to the City by November 30th of the same year for which the grant is awarded. For example, if a grant is awarded in January 2020, the grant recipient must provide a completed report by November 30, 2020.

If the grant recipient fails to fully complete and submit the report to the City within the stated time, that organization will not be eligible for future grant funding until such a time that the City is satisfied that the report has been submitted in full.

Reports will be forwarded to City Council for its review, typically through the Finance & Labour Relations Committee.

11.0 POLICY REVIEW

The Community Grants Policy will be reviewed annually by the Community Grants Evaluation Team.

12.0 DEFINITIONS

“Activities” means what the applicant has requested grant funding for (e.g. programs and services of an organization).

“Benefit to Stratford Residents” Organization’s service boundaries include Stratford or portion of Stratford, and at least one service, program, or activity location is in the City, or 50% or more of individuals served reside in the City.

“City” means the City of Stratford.

“Event” means a civic event, such as Canada Day, or festival undertaken in the City of Stratford.

“Grant” means a one-time sum of money provided to a not-for-profit organization.

“Incorporated Not-for-Profit Organization” means an entity incorporated under either federal or provincial not-for-profit legislation. These organizations may or may not have charitable status. Registered charities are included.

“In Good Standing” means that the organization is not in litigation with the City. The organization must be current on accounts receivable. The organization must have all relevant City taxes paid.

“Ontario Human Right’s Code” The Ontario Human Rights Code (Code) is a provincial law that gives everybody equal rights and opportunities without discrimination in the social areas of:

- Employment
- Accommodation
- goods, services and facilities
- contracts
- membership in vocational associations and trade unions