

Wellbeing Grant Allocation Panel

Background

The City of Guelph believes that community benefit organizations play an essential role in improving the wellbeing of Guelph residents. The City developed the Community Investment Strategy (CIS) to improve the way it supports, partners with and funds these important organizations.

The overarching vision for the CIS is to ***provide a transparent and responsive decision-making framework to guide the full range of mutually beneficial relationships between the City and Guelph's community benefit sector, in pursuit of community wellbeing and responsible stewardship.***

The Wellbeing Grant Program is one of the key mechanisms which support this vision by providing funding to organizations in a transparent, accountable and consistent way. An important feature of this new program is that it empowers local residents to decide how the grant funding budget is allocated. This feature is central to the program and directly supports the City's goal of increasing community participation in municipal decision making.

The Wellbeing Grant Program aligns closely with the Community Wellbeing Initiative. The grant program aims to draw from this work and use the wellbeing goals developed by the community during this process to guide its funding decisions.

This Wellbeing Grant Allocation Panel has received Council delegated authority to allocate annual Wellbeing Grant Program funding to eligible community benefit organizations whose work positively impacts on the wellbeing of Guelph as a whole, its neighbourhoods and individuals.

Responsibilities

Guided by the Corporation's mission, vision and values, and those set out in the Community Investment Strategy, the Panel will:

- On behalf of the City, allocate City funds to eligible organizations that will contribute to the achievement of the community's wellbeing goals
- Provide objective, consistent and transparent assessment of all applications submitted to the City's Wellbeing Grant Program
- Support the City to effectively assess and communicate the community impact of the City's grant program

Standing Committee to Which It Reports

Public Services Committee

Members / Composition

The Panel will be composed of 8, up to a maximum of 12, members who are Guelph residents appointed by Council. Resident refers to all persons who reside in Guelph and includes permanent residents, refugees, refugee claimants and residents without homes and who are at least 18 years of age (unless otherwise specified and approved in the terms of reference). For the purpose of this panel, resident also includes any person who owns property in the City of Guelph.

Membership should strive to reflect the diversity of Guelph residents as defined by the City's Diversity Strategy. The Panel should strive to have knowledge, skills and expertise in the areas of:

- Municipal granting to community benefit organizations
- The community benefit sector in Guelph
- The local community, its needs and aspirations
- Social services, arts and culture, special events, community recreation and sports. Membership should reflect, as much as possible, a balanced representation from each of these sectors
- The eight domains of community wellbeing as defined by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing ([Canadian Index of Wellbeing](#))
 - Community Vitality
 - Democratic Engagement
 - Healthy populations
 - Time use
 - Environment
 - Education
 - Leisure and Culture
 - Living Standards
- Financial expertise
- Community programming and evaluation techniques

Term of Membership

Panel appointments shall be for one year for the first term. In order to maintain balance between experienced and new panel members, subsequent re-appointments will be for a period of one to three years as recommended by the staff liaison. Appointments will be for the period of June to June. Panel members may serve on the Panel for a maximum of 8 years.

If a Panel member misses two consecutive meetings, that member will be deemed to have forfeited their panel position. An opportunity will be allowed for the member to address the Panel, via the Chair in writing or via email regarding their absenteeism.

The staff liaison will advise the standing committee and notify the Clerks Department of any change of membership.

Council retains the right to make the final decision to make appointments and end appointments.

Budget

The Panel will allocate the annual Council approved budget for the Wellbeing Grant Program.

The annual budget will be set as part of the City's annual operating budget setting process.

The maximum funding allocation to any single organization cannot exceed \$15,000, or an amount as determined by Council, in any grant cycle.

Staff Support

The Panel will be supported by the Community and Social Services Program and Policy Liaison (Grants Coordinator). This staff member will:-

1. Work with the Panel Chair to set meeting agendas and agree upon proceedings
2. Provide orientation to the Panel at the first meeting of each granting cycle to include information about relevant goals and objectives, policies and processes
3. Work with the Chair to schedule meetings and coordinate meeting logistics and support
4. Work with the Chair, Vice Chair and Panel members to create an annual report on their behalf that satisfies the Panel's reporting obligations to Council
5. Liaise with applicant organizations to provide additional information to the Panel as requested
6. Participate in the process of recruitment and selection of new Panel members and liaise with Clerks Services as required regarding this process
7. Liaise with the Finance Department to ensure that Finance staff issue the appropriate grant amounts to successful applicants in accordance with the Panel's final allocation decisions
8. Respond to applicant inquiries regarding the application process and review of their application
9. Work with other City departments to coordinate communications about the Panel and its work

Additional staff from Public Services will participate in meetings to provide general contextual information about:

- Community needs and aspirations

- Sector specific knowledge (social services, arts and culture, special events, community recreation and sports)
- The eight domains of wellbeing
- Local services, programs and activities
- Information about relevant City initiatives, plans and strategies

Frequency of Meetings

A minimum of eight (8) meetings per year. The majority of these meetings will take place between September and February. Additional meetings may be called from time to time, as part of the grant allocation process.

Decision Making

A quorum of half plus one of the total members of the Panel is required for a Panel meeting.

The Panel will operate a consensus orientated decision making process where possible. Where decisions cannot be made by consensus a vote will be taken. Votes will be taken by a show of hands. A draw will be considered a negative vote.

Staff has no voting privileges.

Deliberation of all applications will be guided by the Wellbeing Grant Program 'eligibility criteria' and 'application assessment criteria' which are approved by Council and will be reviewed regularly by Council.

Conflict of Interest

Panel members should consider whether they have a real or perceived conflict of interest with his or her responsibilities of the Panel, including any direct or indirect pecuniary interest with the City. Panel members must declare any conflicts of interest that arise during the review process. Where a conflict of interest situation occurs, that Panel member will not participate in any discussions relating to that specific application.

For example (this list is not exhaustive), a conflict of interest may be considered:

- A financial interest in the success or failure of an applicant
- A direct involvement in the management or leadership of an applicant organization. This situation does not automatically preclude those who have been involved in a non-leadership and non-management volunteer capacity
- For the purposes of this Panel, the interests of spouses and children are also to be considered when assessing Conflicts of Interest
- Any other reason that makes a Panel member unable to review the application objectively

It will not be generally considered a conflict of interest if a Panel member has in the past or currently benefits in some way as a participant, user or client of any applicant

organization. This situation is considered lived experience. However if the benefit creates a real or perceived conflict, this benefit must be declared to the Panel.

Confidentiality and Privacy Expectations

The Panel meetings will not be open to the Public. Personal information, as defined by the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA) is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, and in accordance with the provisions of MFIPPA. Personal information contained in the applications will be used for the purpose of determining the eligibility of an applicant and suitability of their application for a Wellbeing Grant by the Panel. This information will not be shared outside of the Panel.

Questions about the collection, use and disclosure of information are directed to the City of Guelph's Access, Privacy and Records Specialist at 519-822-1260 x 2349 or privacy@guelph.ca

Reporting and Communications

The Wellbeing Grant Allocation Panel reports to the Public Services Committee.

The Panel will produce an annual report to Council following each granting cycle. This report will include:

- Grant application statistics (for example, number of applications, total amount requested from organizations, etc.)
- Details of successful applications
- Summary of the deliberation process
- Summary of any learning opportunities for the Panel, the granting program/process as a whole and for organizations making future applications
- Highlights of the positive impact of previous years grant allocations (this section of the report will be provided from 2015 onwards)

Minutes of key decisions will be taken at all meetings and circulated to Panel members. Approved meeting minutes will be made publicly available on the City website.

All communications and media releases regarding the Wellbeing Grant Program are managed by the General Manager of Culture, Tourism and Community Investment (or designate). The General Manager, or designate, will act as the Wellbeing Grant Program spokesperson. Panel members should not speak to the media. Any inquiries received by Panel members from either the media or applicant organizations should be directed to the designated City contact.