

CORPORATE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



POLICY	Guelph Community Grant Program
CATEGORY	Public Services
AUTHORITY	Public Services
RELATED POLICIES	
APPROVED BY	Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Public Services
EFFECTIVE DATE	November 2023

POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Guelph believes that community benefit organizations play an essential role in improving the quality of life of Guelph residents. The City's role in supporting these organizations is guided by the Community Investment Strategy (CIS). The Community Grant Program is part of this strategy and enables the City to proactively invest in this important work which contributes to achieving the City's Strategic Plan and goals of the City's Community Plan.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Improve the wellbeing of individuals, neighbourhoods and Guelph as a whole through directing City grant funding to eligible organizations that can demonstrate their positive contribution to the achievement of community and City goals.
- Provide eligible organizations with up to three year operating and one year project grants to support operations, activities, programs, and services.
- Ensure that the process to review and allocate grant funding is transparent, consistent and achieves the maximum impact for the investment provided.
- Involve Guelph residents in the process of allocating grant funding.
- Begin to address barriers for equity-deserving communities in accessing the grant program.

VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Community Grant Program, its policy, and procedures will be guided by the CIS values and guiding principles:

Accessible and Inclusive: Reduce barriers to access to investments for organizations, neighbourhoods, and individuals.

Collaborative: Build connection and a culture of collaboration and partnership between organizations and the City. A system that leverages resources across the community and across sectors.

Community Driven: Invest in our shared community and City goals through organizations and in individuals. Ensure that community groups and residents have a voice in the implementation of the strategy.

Holistic: Holistic view that community, arts, services, recreation and other sectors are all important to the quality of life for Guelph residents. Ensure that investments impact the community in measurable ways.

Resilient: Build the capacity and resilience of community benefit sector to be more financially sustainable and to continue producing results and achieving goals.

Responsive: Adapt to changing circumstances and community needs. The City's investments are flexible and innovative to match the community.

Transparent: A transparent, consistent, and defensible system that maintains responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources.

COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM GOALS

The Community Grant program is designed to support community goals. These community goals are based on extensive consultation with residents and stakeholder in Guelph as part of the City's Community Plan in 2019. The process followed in the community plan ensures that the goals are responsive to the community, the CIS and the Community Grant Program.

The Grant Allocation Working Group will use this information to help assess applications and to align organizational work with the work of the City. Organizations must indicate in their application how their work supports one of the following goals (note that a full list of goals and descriptions can be found at <https://Guelph.ca/plans-and-strategies/community-plan/>):

We Are Home

This includes community goals such as:

- Affordable housing choices across the city are available for different household types and needs.
- People are safe and feel safe too—the city has low crime rates, and its roads and trails feel safe for residents and visitors.

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- Social connections in neighbourhoods are strong, with many activities and community assets

We Create Value

This includes community goals such as:

- We recognize and support the value of our arts and cultural sector, attracting more visitors and artistic talent.
- There are decent jobs that allow people to live full lives.
- Everyone who wants to work—including youth, seniors, those with differing abilities, and new immigrants—can meaningfully participate in the workforce.

We Are Community

This includes community goals such as:

- Build and sustain strong, meaningful and reciprocal relationships
- Make Truth and Reconciliation a reality in Guelph
- Work within and across systems to eliminate discrimination and barriers
- Respect, pace, and urgency
- Create and hold safe, inclusive spaces
- Stories and information belong to the people who share them

We Feel Well

This includes community goals such as:

- The needs of children and youth are met (socially, physically, nutritionally, spiritually, culturally and safety-wise).
- There is a strong sense of community across the city, and people feel that everyone matters.
- We celebrate diversity.
- People feel they have good mental health.
- Guelph is full of amenities to support health and well-being—amenities that grow as the community grows.

We Move Around Freely

This includes community goals such as:

- It is easy for everyone to get around our city year-round to work, play and contribute to our community (inclusive of ability and exceptionality).
- There are viable transportation options that suit tight budgets and other needs, such as convenience and accessibility.
- Abundant trail corridors connect neighbourhoods seamlessly, making it easy to get around the city by active modes of transportation.

We Play and Explore

This includes community goals such as:

- Free opportunities for play are plentiful.
- The city offers inclusive opportunities that reflect our diversity and new trends in recreational, sport and cultural participation.
- Festivals, events and other opportunities take place across the city, helping us celebrate our diversity, build empathy, make sense of our past and build our future together.
- Arts, cultural, sport and recreational infrastructure supports the needs of the community across the city.
- We grow and retain artistic, sporting and musical talent.

We Protect Our Environment

This includes community goals such as:

- Our food system is sustainable.
- Our rivers, parks and green spaces are preserved, and the tree canopy is abundant.
- People understand the importance and value of the land we share and are connected to it.
- Climate change infrastructure is in place to create a resilient city.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

1. Both the organization and the funding must benefit Guelph residents.
2. The organization must be an incorporated not-for-profit organization, or be partnered with an incorporated not-for-profit.
3. The organization must have a volunteer board of directors.
4. The organization has been in operation for at least one year.
5. The organization must have either a location in Guelph or over half of the participants be from Guelph
6. The organization and the activities are in good standing with the City and, if applicable, its own governing bodies.

WHO THE GRANT PROGRAM WILL NOT FUND

The Community Grant Program will not fund the following:

1. For profit organizations and initiatives
2. Organizations and initiatives that overlap or duplicate work under a current signed agreement with the City
3. Other levels of government
4. Political organizations

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5. Organizations whose activities may breach the Ontario Human Rights Code or Charter of Rights

WHAT THE COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM WILL NOT FUND

1. Programs that other levels of government have legislated responsibility for funding. This includes funds to 'top up' shortfalls for government mandated programs. Some examples would include school board educational programs, public health programs, provincially mandated child care/services or social assistance programs and health care services.
2. Funding requests of more than \$15,000 per organization in any single grant cycle
3. Debt retirement, deficit reduction, depreciation or financing charges
4. Retroactive payments. These are activities or costs incurred before grants are approved
5. 100% of the budget of an activity
6. Secondary allocations. "Secondary allocations" refers to the process where funds received through the Community Grant Program are allocated to another organization by the applicant or a third party via a funding allocation process such as a grant program. In addition, the Community that have the primary purpose of raising funds for a secondary allocation process. This includes fundraising activities carried out on behalf of or in support of a provincial or national organization/campaign that will then reallocate the raised funds to others.

APPLICATION ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

All applications that are submitted by eligible organizations will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Anticipated positive community impact aligned to the Community Grant Program goals. Organizations must demonstrate how their application positively contributes to the quality of life of residents and what is different as a result of their work.
2. Evidence of community support. This support could include:
 - Additional financial and non-financial resources being leveraged from other sources;
 - details of the number of volunteers that will be involved in the work, and the number of hours they will bring; and
 - collaboration or partnership with other organizations
 - the activities do not unnecessarily duplicate successful efforts that already exist in the community.
3. Sound organizational track record. This considers if the organization has the ability, skills and capacity to undertake the work and has undertaken similar work in the past, and the sustainability of the organization and activity.
4. Evidence that the organization needs the funding. Organizations that have budgets or financial statements indicating a significant 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.

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5. Evidence that the organization and its activities advance the work of equity and equity-deserving communities in Guelph.
 6. The amount of funding requested by applicants and the funding available in the program.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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 December 15th** of the same year for which the grant is awarded. For example, if a grant is awarded in February 2024, the grant recipient must provide a completed report by December 15, 2024.

Report forms will be available at guelph.ca/grants. Alternate formats for reporting, including oral reporting, are available on request.

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.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF GRANT AWARDS

Successful grant recipients (Grantees) will be subject to terms and conditions relating to the grant. All applicants will be expected to acknowledge their agreement to be bound by the following terms and conditions at the time of application.

1. Confirmation by the Grantee that the information contained in the Grant Application and supporting documentation is true and correct in every respect.
2. Confirmation that the Grant shall be used by the Grantee for the activities set out in the Grant Application (Part 2 and 3 of the Community Grant Program Application Form).
3. The Grantee shall immediately notify the City, if the funds cannot be used for the approved activities, or if all or part of the Grant funds has not been spent after completion of the activities. The City may, at its sole discretion, permit the Grantee to use the remaining Grant funds for a different, related purpose, or may require their immediate return.
4. The Grant shall comply with all laws, regulations, by-laws and other governmental directives or orders in the course of spending the Grant.
5. The Grantee shall indemnify and hold harmless the City against any claims, costs, causes of action, fines, or any other losses or other penalties the Grantee or City suffers relating to the giving of the Grant to the Grantee.
6. The Grantee shall notify the City immediately, in writing, of its impending or actual bankruptcy, insolvency, appointment of a receiver, dissolution, cessation of carrying on business or bulk sale of assets.
7. The Grantee shall acknowledge the financial support of the City in all publicity material related to the services and the Grant.
8. The Grantee shall immediately notify the City, in writing, if any of the information provided by the grantee to the City is determined to be

inaccurate in any material respect, or if there has been any material adverse change in any of the information provided.

9. The Grantee must comply with all the reporting requirements as outlined on pages 6 and 7 of the Community Grant Program Policy.
10. The Grantee consents to the City using information regarding the details of the grant awarded, including the name of the Grantee, the activities carried out and the community impact of the activities in reports and on the City's website and other relevant media, provided that the City shall not release any information, including financial information and personal information of members or Board members, which is confidential pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

GRANTS PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

1. The City will advertise an annual call for funding on the City website (guelph.ca) and other relevant media. The funding call will occur once per year, usually commencing between September and November. Grants awarded will cover the period January – December of the following year
2. Organizations are advised to read the full Community Grant Policy and attend any information sessions provided by the City
3. Organizations must download the Community Grant policy and other Application Guide by accessing guelph.ca/grants
4. 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. The application form is online but alternative formats are available on request. Incomplete applications may not be considered. The City reserves the right to contact any organization for information which requires clarification
5. 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. An email notice will be sent to the applicant on completion of the application.
6. Eligible organizations can submit only one (1) application per year. Exceptions are made for organizations submitting applications in partnership and on behalf of unincorporated groups
7. Organizations receiving multi-year funding are not able to reapply in a year for which they have been approved for funding
8. It is the sole responsibility of the organizations receiving multi-year funding to know when their multi-year funding expires, and when to reapply
9. Funding requests cannot exceed \$15,000 per application per year
10. Applications will be screened for their eligibility by staff and provided to the Grant Allocation Working Group for review
11. The Manager of Community Investment, or equivalent staff, will convene the required series meetings of the Grant Allocation Working Group who will review each eligible application using the 'application assessment criteria' outlined in this policy

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12. Following these deliberations Working Group members will compile a list of recommended grant applications and their respective funding allocations
 13. Final funding decisions are made by the Deputy CAO of Public Services based on the information and recommendations provided
 14. All applicants will receive notification via email of whether or not their application was successful
 15. Following annual Council budget approval, the Finance Department will issue grant cheques to successful applicants
 16. The Community Grant Program does not have an appeals process for unsuccessful applications
 17. Feedback on unsuccessful applications can be provided by staff upon request
 18. All grant cheques must be cashed within three (3) months of the date of issue. Cheques that are not cashed within three (3) months of the date of issue will be cancelled, stopped and will not be replaced. Failure to cash cheques may impact the review of an organization's future grant application

POLICY REVIEW

The Grant Allocation Policy and Procedure will be reviewed annually by Community Investment Staff.

DEFINITIONS

Activities

Specifically what the applicant has requested grant funding for (e.g. programs and services of an organization).

Benefit to Guelph Residents

Organization's service boundaries include Guelph or portion of Guelph, and at least one service, program, or activity location is in the City, or 50% or more of individuals served reside in the City. Grant requests must be able to demonstrate that they will positively impact Guelph residents.

Community Benefit Organization

Community Benefit Organizations possess five defining features; they are:

1. Organized - they have some structure and regularity to their operations, as reflected in regular meetings, a membership, and procedures for making decisions that participants recognize as legitimate, whether they are formally constituted or legally registered or not. This includes informal groups as well as legally incorporated ones.
2. Private - they are institutionally separate from government, even though they may receive financial support from government
3. Not profit distributing - they do not distribute profits to individuals
4. Self-governing - they have their own mechanisms for internal governance and are able to cease operations on their own authority
5. Voluntary - membership or participation is not compulsory or coerced. The term community benefit sector used in this study refers to all groups and organizations that meet this description.

Community Investment Strategy

The Community Investment Strategy lets people know how the City will support and work with Community Benefit Organizations. It aims to ensure the City makes clear, consistent and open decisions.

Equity-Deserving

The term equity-deserving is used to refer to groups who are marginalized by social structures and experience social and financial disadvantages. These groups experience oppression that can take many forms including racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other forms of oppression.

Incorporated Not-for-profit Organization

Incorporated not-for-profit organization refers to entities 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

This 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.

In operation for at least one year

An organization declares the date on which their organization began operating as a Community Benefit Organization.

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

The *Code's* goal is to prevent discrimination and harassment because of:

- race
- ancestry
- place of origin
- colour
- ethnic origin
- citizenship
- creed (religion)
- sex (including pregnancy and gender identity)
- sexual orientation
- disability
- age (18 and over, 16 and over in occupancy of accommodation)
- marital status (including same sex partners)
- family status
- receipt of public assistance (in accommodation only)
- record of offences (in employment only)

Operating Grant

A financial grant provided to support part of an organization's operating expenses or on-going program/service costs (e.g. day-to-day costs, staffing, overhead)

Other Levels of Government

Other levels of government including:

- Crown Agencies and Corporations (Federal and Provincial)
- Hospitals
- School Boards
- Universities, Colleges of Applied Arts and technology and Post Secondary institutions
- Approved agency designated as a Children's Aid Society
- Community Care Access Centres
- Local Boards
- Boards of Health

Political organization

An organization that formed for a political purpose or engages in partisan political activity (activities which support or oppose specific political parties, candidates, or elected officials).