

	Corporate Policy
	Section: Community Services
	CSXX
Revision Date:	Issue Date:
Approved by:	Review Date:
Owner:	

PURPOSE

The Township of Wilmot has established the Community Grants Program to:

- Improve the wellbeing of individuals, neighbourhoods and Wilmot as a whole by directing Township 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.

RATIONALE AND NEED

Community organizations are of great benefit to the residents of Wilmot as they provide recreation, leisure and wellness programs and services the Township might not otherwise be able to offer. The Township of Wilmot recognizes the fundamental importance of working side by side with these groups and organizations, continually reaffirming the appropriate roles for all parties. Sometimes the municipality is best able to lead and deliver community wide services. In other circumstances community groups and organizations are much closer to understanding the evolving needs and interests of residents, and hence better able to provide services specifically tailored to those needs.

The goal of the Policy is to help support not for profit organizations in capacity building for the delivery of high quality, inclusive, and well-organized programs. With this in mind, the Township’s goal is to balance the needs of not-for-profit organizations with good governance principles of affordability, accountability, accessibility, and transparency.

SCOPE

This policy establishes eligibility requirements, funding categories, evaluation metrics (including Township priority for providing assistance), conditions of funding and the application process.

AUTHORITY

Despite any special provision of this or any other Act relating to the giving of grants or aid by a

municipality, subject to Section 106 (Granting of bonuses for commercial and industrial businesses), a municipality may make grants on such terms as to security and otherwise as the council consider 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 (Section 107, Municipal Act, 2001).

It is the policy of the Township to consider, within its financial capacity, modest financial support to nonprofit organizations within the municipality. This support is provided in recognition of the value these organizations provide to the well being and growth of the community. The Township recognizes that supporting community groups and voluntary organizations is often fundamental to maintaining our quality of life.

DEFINITIONS

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

Benefit to Wilmot Residents: Organization's service boundaries include Wilmot or portion of and at least one service, program, or activity location is in the Township, or 60% or more of individuals served reside in the Township.

Community Groups: is an organized group formed for the purpose of providing services, activities, programs, and opportunities that improve or benefit members of the community. These organizations often have recognized governing bodies i.e., Scouts / 4-H Clubs, but may also be locally organized groups i.e., Wilmot Horticultural Society.

Community Service Organization: is a not-for-profit organization such as Wilmot Family Resource Centre and Community Care Concepts, who provide free or low-cost recreation, leisure or wellness programs and services for marginalized or underserved populations.

Event: a civic event, such as Canada Day, or festival undertaken in the Township of Wilmot.

Grant: a one-time sum of money provided to a not-for-profit organization.

Not-for-Profit Organization: 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: that the organization is not in litigation with the Township. The organization must be current on accounts receivable. The organization must have all relevant Township taxes paid.

In-kind Services: a Township of Wilmot service or benefit such as a facility rental discount, administrative service, and/or staff resources.

Minor Sport Associations: a group that delivers league-based recreational sport programming and/or services that directly benefit local youth. Minor Sport programs rely on and are run by local volunteers and operate under a recognized governing body i.e., Skate Canada.

Service Club is a voluntary not-for-profit organization where members meet regularly to perform charitable works for local residents that aligns with the intent of this Policy. A service club is defined by its mission statement and its membership benefits and often has a recognized governing body i.e., Optimist Clubs.

Township: Township of Wilmot.

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 Township of Wilmot to continue financial assistance in future years.

Council will consider ongoing requests for support on a case-by-case basis as part of budget deliberations.

TYPES OF COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Township provides two types of community grants under this policy:

Operating Grant – The operating grant supports enhancing the quality of life in the Township of Wilmot by fostering, strengthening and stimulating wider community appreciation and participation in the community. A request to this stream can be for a project or programming already making a proven impact in the community or to support growth by building capacity, resilience and sustainability.

Capital Grant - A capital grant is defined as a one-time grant to an organization for the purpose(s) of acquiring a physical asset for use by the organization to carry out its programs within the Township. Whether it's purchasing equipment, building new space, or completing renovations, retrofits, repairs, Capital grants support projects that will have a positive impact for the community.

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 Township's strategic priorities.

Both the organization and the investment sought must benefit Wilmot residents, and activities must be open to all Wilmot residents at minimal or no charge.

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 not-for-profit organizations or charitable organizations (operating for at least 1 year) with a volunteer board of directors.
 - Organizations must offer activities within the Township of Wilmot that serve the needs of Wilmot residents.
 - Serving clearly identified community needs not already addressed through another organization or the Township AND/OR demonstrate evidence the community has shown a commitment to their programs (participation/attendance at functions)
 - 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 good standing with the Township and, if applicable, its own governing bodies.
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INELIGIBLE FUNDING

What the Community Grants Program will not fund:

- Staff travel, accommodation, food, beverage or alcohol
- Conferences, workshops or seminars
- Uniforms, personal equipment
- Administration payroll costs
- 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 in any single grant cycle. Organizations requesting more than this amount shall be explicit in their reasoning for requesting a larger grant.
- Retroactive payments. These are activities or costs incurred before grants are approved.

Who the Community Grants Program will not fund:

- Organizations For-Profit
- Political/Religious organizations
- Fundraising activities of Provincial/National organizations
- Organizations who conduct majority of services outside of the Township of Wilmot
- 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 Township, 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.

*Note: Council may grant special consideration to entities that do not meet eligibility but are unique in nature and fulfill a specific need in the community.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Information relevant to the grants process including application due dates and guidelines to apply will be communicated to local organizations, advertised in local media and on the Township website at www.wilmot.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 Township reserves the right to contact any organization for information which requires clarification.

Applications must be received by the Township 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 Township receives completed applications.

Funding requests cannot exceed \$15,000 in a single grant cycle.

Requests for in-kind grants such as waiving of Township fees or use of Municipal facilities (That does not apply under the Township Affiliation Policy) should be accompanied with a dollar value estimate that has been confirmed with the applicable Township Department.

The Community Grants Evaluation Team will review each eligible application using 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 of Council's decision of whether or not their application was successful.

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

EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

The Community Grants Evaluation Team, will consist of staff representatives from Community Services, Corporate Services and Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, 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 following criteria will serve as a guide for the review of eligible applications for financial assistance from the Township in the form a Community Grant:

- Program/Service Obligation – supports a service delivered by the Township.
- Public Need/Benefit – contribution to the community is broad based and impact to all Wilmot residents by strengthening our community and growing our economy.
- Financial Need - Evidence that the organization needs the funding and identifies all other grant and fundraising activities. 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.
- Quality of Life – Service of program enhances the quality of residents and supports the Township's strategic priorities.
- 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.
- That the activities do not unnecessarily duplicate successful efforts that already exist in the community.
- Sound organizational track record. This considers if the organization has the ability, skills and capacity to undertake the work.
- Sustainability of the organization and activity as applicable; and
- The amount of funding requested by applicants and the funding available in the program.

Each of these criteria will be given specific weighting, based on their relative importance, and assigned values by the Community Grants Evaluation Team. Based on this evaluation, staff will generate recommendations for approval by Council.

REPORTING

A summary of community grants awarded will be published at least annually by the Township. 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 Township by November 30th of the same year for which the community grant is awarded. For example, if a grant is awarded in February 2025, the community grant recipient must provide a completed report by November 30, 2025.

If the community grant recipient fails to fully complete and submit the report to the Township within the stated time, that organization will not be eligible for future grant funding until such a time that the Township is satisfied that the report has been submitted in full. Reports will be forwarded to Council for review through the Community Services department.