



## Community Services Staff Report

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REPORT NO: CS-2026-09  
TO: Committee of the Whole, May 4, 2026  
SUBMITTED BY: Chris Catania, Director of Community Services  
PREPARED BY: Manny O’Krafka, Manager of Community Services  
REVIEWED BY: Jeff Willmer, Chief Administrative Officer  
DATE: April 24, 2026  
SUBJECT: Community Grants Program – Approval of 2026 Recipients

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CS-2026-09 Community Grants Program – Approval of 2026 Recipients be received for information; and,

THAT Council approve the recommended 2026 Community Grants listed in Appendix A for payment

### SUMMARY:

This report makes recommendations to Council for the award of Community Grants under the 2026 Community Grants Program.

### BACKGROUND:

Each year, the Township budgets an amount for the Community Grants Program. Staff prepare and advertise the program, receive applications, review and make recommendations to Council for the award of grants to various community groups. The process for the Community Grants applications is made available online each year and as well giving previous applicants and affiliated groups notification by email of the timing when grant window is open.

Community Services is the lead department. Strategically, Community Services works with many of the applicants, supporting their efforts in delivering of services, events, and programs within the township. The criteria for the program including policy for Community Grants was approved by Council in 2024 and attached to this report.

### REPORT:

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 Community Grants program is to help support not-for-profit organizations in building capacity 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.

With the approval of the Township of Wilmot's 2026 Operating Budget, the 2026 Community Grants applications were made available online and were due by April 15, 2026. All applicants from prior years and affiliated groups were notified by email of the availability of the applications and the deadline for submission.

The criteria that guide the review of eligible applications for the Community Grants program include:

- 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
- Quality of Life – Service of program enhances the quality of life for 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
- Activities do not unnecessarily duplicate successful efforts that already exist in the community
- Sound organizational track record. The ability of the organization, skills and capacity to undertake the work
- The sustainability of the organization and activity as applicable
- The amount of funding requested by applicants and funding available in the program

All criteria are given specific weighting, based on their relative importance, and assigned values by the Community Grants Evaluation Team. In 2026, the team included management representation from Community Services and Corporate Services ensuring existing subsidies and programs were considered in evaluating the applications. Staff attempted to balance the requests from the groups, with the existing subsidies provided, and services received, while working to approve grants to as many organizations as possible within the scope of the program.

The Township received 27 community grant applications for 2026, requesting total support of \$140,456.79. The approved budget for the 2026 Community Grant program is \$55,000.

Appendix A outlines the applicants, their requested grant amount, a summary of the purpose of their request, and a recommended grant amount for each applicant ensuring the funding envelope of \$55,000 was not exceeded. Staff have provided recommendations for funding based on the criteria established setting out \$52,000 for approval. Council may amend the proposed recommendations as staff has provided a buffer of \$3,000 to allow for minor refinements of Council's choosing.

With final Council approval, a summary of community grants awarded will be published by the Township. Furthermore, successful applicants who receive funding from the Community Grants program are required to report by November 30, 2026, how the funding was spent and the impact the funding achieved. This reporting will be compiled by staff to inform Council of the successes made in the community from 2026. If any recipients fail to report to report back to the Township, that organization would not be eligible for future funding until a report is submitted in full.

#### ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Healthy Community

#### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The approved 2026 budget for the Community Grants Program is \$55,000 included in Community Services branch of the Operating Budget. The list of proposed grants from staff set out in Appendix "A" total \$52,000 leaving a balance of \$3,000 for minor refinements if required.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

1. Appendix A - List of Recommended 2026 Community Grants for Council Approval
2. Community Grants Policy