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Grants Program Policy

PURPOSE

To establish a governance framework for disbursement of grant funds requests from local non-profit organizations and Area Municipal Economic Development Offices.

POLICY

1.0 Policy

- 1.1 The County of Oxford recognizes that non-profit organizations and Area Municipal Economic Development Offices offer important community services that align with the County's Strategic Plan. To encourage eligible non-profit and Area Municipal Economic Development Offices to support the County's Strategic Plan, the County may offer financial assistance in the form of a Grant to assist with operating costs, event costs, and/or incremental staffing.
- 1.2 Subject to budget approval, the County may provide direct Grants to non-profit organizations and Area Municipal Economic Development Offices that include:
 - a) Promoting Community Vitality – community health, safety and wellbeing;
 - b) Enhancing Environmental Sustainability – initiatives that support community members and stakeholders in embracing sustainable options, including education and awareness initiatives;
 - c) Fostering Progressive Government – assess and continually explore opportunities to establish effective and efficient service delivery levels and models, considering expected growth and community needs.

2.0 Definitions

“Area Municipal or Area Municipalities’ Economic Development Offices” – refers to the City of Woodstock, Town of Tillsonburg, Town of Ingersoll and the Rural Oxford Economic Development Corporation (ROEDC).

“Application Process” – refers to the application based process managed by the County and reviewed by the County's Grant Approval Committee to determine and recommend Grant funding to Eligible Organizations.

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“Community Event” – means a no cost or low cost event primarily designed and delivered for the general population or that promotes the development of a stronger community in Oxford County.

“Conflict of Interest” - means a situation when an individual’s personal interests (what they or their close family members could gain financially or otherwise) conflicts or appears to conflict with their duty to administer the Grant funds in a transparent manner and in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

“County” – means the municipal corporation of the County of Oxford or Oxford County.

“County Treasurer” – means the Director of Corporate Services of the County.

“Council” – means the Warden and Councillors of the County.

“Criteria” - used to evaluate Grant applications based on how the organization's initiative will benefit the community (scale, inclusivity, direct and indirect benefits), soundness of business plan (including resources, own funds, and fundraising), the importance of the County's contribution, and how the success of the initiative will be determined.

“Eligible Organizations” – means a non-profit organization or Area Municipal Economic Development Offices with operations in Oxford County.

“Essential Services” – means a service considered critical to preserving life, health, public safety and basic societal functioning.

“Final Report” – means the summary report of the project or program of the organization, which received Grant funding from the County.

“Financial Statements” – means financial reports prepared in accordance with Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), or in a format otherwise specified by the County.

“Funding Agreement” - means a written document constituting an agreement between the County and a grant Recipient setting out the obligations or understandings of both with respect to Grant payments.

“Grant” – means a conditional financial assistance mechanism through which money and/or direct assistance is provided to carry out approved activities.

“Grant Approval Committee” – means the committee with the authority to evaluate and approve Grant allocations based on Council’s Grant funding approval in accordance with this Policy. Members of the Committee include the Chief Administrator Officer (CAO), Treasurer and may include additional staff resources, as required.

“Non-Profit” – means that the organization uses its revenues to achieve the goals of the organization and to not profit from or have excess revenues.

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“Project”– a new program, initiative or event put forward by an Eligible Organization for consideration of Grant funding.

“Recipient” – means a Non-Profit organization or an Area Municipal Economic Development Office that will receive Grant funding.

“Treasurer’s Report” – means a report by the treasurer of the Non-Profit organization or treasurer of the Area Municipal Development Office that accounts for all of the financial transactions of that organization.

3.0 Responsibilities

3.1 Council

- As per Section 107 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, Council has the authority to provide grants for any purpose considered to be in the interest of the municipality;
- Council may provide annual or multi-year funding by way of Grants;
- Council may approve Grant funding as part of the annual budget process.

3.2 Corporate Services

- Responsible for establishing procedures for the implementation of this Policy, which are consistent with the guiding principles for ensuring compliance with this Policy and related Funding Agreements.
- Responsible to prepare, communicate, distribute and facilitate the annual Application Process;
- Responsible to accept and review applications for Grants on an annual basis, determine completeness and forward the applications to Grant Approval Committee for review, deliberation and decision.
- Responsible to ensure the terms and conditions of Funding Agreements are met.

3.3 Applicant

- Responsible for the accurate completion of the application form within the application deadline and submitting any supplementary information, if required.
- Successful applicants who receive Grant funding from the program must report on how the funding was spent and the impact the funding achieved.

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3.4 Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee

- a) May review applications for alignment with goals and objectives as set out in the [Safe and Well Oxford Plan](#) for consideration of Grand Funding.

4.0 Guiding Principles

- 4.1 The Grants Program Policy is guided by the County's Strategic Plan to inform decision-making and administration of the Grant program with a Vision of "*working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future*"¹, with a Mission to "*deliver responsible and responsive services that improve the community's social, environmental, and economic wellbeing*"¹.
- 4.2 Grants are available to Eligible Organizations based in Oxford County.
- 4.3 Non-resident, Eligible Organizations may be considered for Grant funding, but only if it directly benefits the residents of Oxford County.
- 4.4 The amount of Grant funding available to Eligible Organizations is subject to Council's annual budget approval.
- 4.5 The Grant shall pertain only to the calendar year for which it was approved, unless a multi-year agreement is specified by the Grant Approval Committee.
- 4.6 Multi-year agreements, up to three year terms, are considered for organizations delivering a strategic service for residents of Oxford County.
- 4.7 Grant requests that meet the established criteria are not guaranteed approval for funding. Applicants may receive full, partial or no Grant funding.
- 4.8 All Grant applications are reviewed for completeness and eligibility. Applications in compliance with this Policy will then be considered by the Grant Approval Committee.
- 4.9 Eligible Organizations shall identify their Project alignment with the Safe and Well Oxford Plan and/or the Oxford County Strategic Plan.
- 4.10 The Grant application shall provide details of the Project's sustainability to continue to serve and operate into the future independently of the County's Grants Program funding.
- 4.11 There is no appeal process for decisions of the Grant Approval Committee regarding Grant applications.
- 4.12 Grants awarded will be published on the County's annual business plan and budget

¹ Oxford County [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

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report approved by Council.

5.0 Funding Conditions

- 5.1 Annually, the County will have an intake period to receive applications for Grant funding.
- 5.2 No funding will be provided to an organization without a completed application form with proof of current registration as a Non-Profit organization, or confirmation that an Area Municipal Economic Development Office continues to be funded by the respective Area Municipality(s).
- 5.3 An application must include a copy of the most recent Financial Statements or Treasurer's Report.
- 5.4 All Eligible Organizations approved for funding will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the County prior to receiving Grant funds.
- 5.5 The Eligible Organization shall repay any Grant funded surplus.
- 5.6 Approval of funding in one year does not guarantee funding in subsequent years, unless otherwise approved. Should an Eligible Organization require additional Grant funding in the future, a new funding application would need to be submitted. The Grant Approval Committee may consider, in unique circumstances, multi-year funding approval.
- 5.7 Grant amounts of \$10,000.00 or less will be paid to the Recipient as a one-time payment.
- 5.8 Grant amounts greater than \$10,000.00 will be paid in quarterly payments, unless otherwise negotiated.
- 5.9 The Grant funding shall only be used for the purpose approved by the Grant Approval Committee. The Recipient must request written approval for any proposed material changes to the Project prior to implementation. If the change of scope is not acceptable, the Recipient will submit a cheque payable to the County for the remaining unexpended funds within thirty (30) days.
- 5.10 The Recipient of Grant funds must acknowledge the County of Oxford as a funder in any print, electronic, visual, or audio marketing related to the initiative, subject to review and approval by the County's Strategic Communications Manager.
- 5.11 The Recipient must complete a Final Report and provide supporting documents and financial statements to the satisfaction of the County.
- 5.12 Financial reporting must be completed and submitted by March 15 of the following year, unless an extension of the reporting date has been approved. Failure to meet the reporting requirements will affect future requests for Grant funding.

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6.0 Eligible Organizations and Expenses

- 6.1 The County provides Grant funding to Eligible Organizations for Projects or community events that support one or more of the following priority areas:
- a) broadly available to, and impact, a large number of people within our targeted groups as identified in the Safe and Well Oxford Plan, and within the Oxford County community;
 - b) initiatives that are not currently or sufficiently supported in the community;
 - c) enhances the quality of life by providing programs, projects, and events that address social issues;
 - d) creates equitable access to human, social, and economic resources and services;
 - e) supports community collaborations, involving multiple non-profit organizations, in addressing broader human or social issues;
 - f) improves the environment, protect and preserve natural habitats, and improve open spaces and make nature accessible;
 - g) community events that encourage social cohesion and community building; or
 - h) furthers the social, economic and environmental well-being of local residents and non-profit organizations.
- 6.2 Eligible expenses include but are not limited to the following:
- a) materials and supplies;
 - b) costs of services and equipment;
 - c) research and documentation;
 - d) outreach and engagement activities;
 - e) public program production;
 - f) advertising and promotions;
 - g) information and referral services;
 - h) salary or wage costs specifically related to the Project;
 - i) contract and professional service;
 - j) Project design and delivery;
 - k) venue and equipment rental;
 - l) facility costs where additional space is required for the initiative. The existing space of the applicant is not eligible.

7.0 Exclusions

- 7.1 The following Non-Profit organizations are not eligible for funding:
- a) non-profit organizations whose primary purpose is to:
 - (i) provide funding to other organizations, community groups, or projects;
 - (ii) provide support to professional associations or colleges; or

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- (iii) earn profits for itself, its shareholders, or its members;
- b) non-profit organizations or Area Municipality(s) that have overdue or incomplete accounting/reporting relating to any Grant previously awarded by the County;
- c) non-Profit organizations that do not have registered status;
- d) non-profit organizations that have not been operating for one full year; and
- e) individuals.

7.2 Ineligible expenses may include but are not limited to the following:

- a) expenditures incurred to support private or commercial sector projects or programs;
- b) programs with restricted or extremely limited public access;
- c) currently funded through other Oxford County programs;
- d) expenditures incurred to support definable political viewpoints and/or seek to attract only a special interest audience or recruit new members;
- e) expenditures incurred to support events whose primary function is fundraising;
- f) initiatives related to religious observance;
- g) hospitals, or medical treatment programs;
- h) expenditures related to any gaming activity;
- i) debt retirement or deficit reduction;
- j) lease and license agreements;
- k) endowment funds;
- l) capital or facility improvements, upgrades, renovations, construction;
- m) vehicles, equipment and furnishings;
- n) land or facility purchase;
- o) scholarships, gratuities and payments for individual benefit;
- p) Projects initiated and/or expenditures incurred prior to application deadline;
- q) initiatives that do not provide a community benefit;
- r) events or programs outside of the County;
- s) operational costs for ongoing or existing programs;
- t) time and labour provided towards preparation of funding applications, committee planning meetings, and fundraising;
- u) donor recognition/walls, gifts, gift cards, prizes, awards, honorariums, and alcohol;
- v) expenditures for time and labour provided towards ground breaking, opening, and other ceremonial events; or
- w) moving expenditures.

8.0 Review of Grants Program Policy

- 8.1 This Policy shall be reviewed to align with the County's Strategic Plan or sooner if required.