

# Community Grant Policy

## Policy Statement

The Town of St. Marys has adopted the “Community Grant Policy” to establish the Community Grant Program which provides limited financial assistance to eligible applicants within the Town whose programs, projects, activities and community events work to advance Council’s strategic priorities. The Community Grant Program exists to recognize the value these organizations add to the creation of a robust and vibrant community.

## Scope

Eligible applicants may apply for a Community Grant that demonstrates alignment with one of the following priority areas as identified in Council’s Strategic Plan:

**Culture and Recreation:** Council has identified creating scale appropriate recreational services and positioning culture as a key economic driver as preferred strategies. The goals of grants approved under this priority area are to:

- Support projects, programs, activities and events and other opportunities that contribute to providing a choice of active, creative and passive recreation and leisure opportunities in order to promote active, engaged, and healthy St. Marys residents.
- Support projects, programs, activities and events and other opportunities that increase patronage and revenues, and that reduce vacancies at the Pyramid Recreation Centre.
- Support projects, programs, activities and events and other opportunities that revitalize St. Marys’ Downtown as a safe, central, and culturally vibrant gathering area.
- Support projects, programs, activities and events and other opportunities that position St. Marys’ parks as a safe, and culturally vibrant gathering area.

**Balanced Growth & Economic Development:** Council has identified two specific demographic groups that will further the vibrancy and culture of the Town: Youth and Newcomers. Council has identified further priorities to position culture as a key economic driver, including focusing on a revitalized Downtown, new or re-branded signature events, and activities that provide a continuum between the Downtown and the riverfront. The goals of grants approved under this priority area are to:

- Support projects, programs, activities and events and other opportunities that assist with the attraction and retention of youth and newcomers.
- Support projects, programs, activities and events and other opportunities which promote or create the community fabric of St. Marys, and that provide more and better opportunities for interactions and involvement between members of the community to promote St. Marys as positive, pleasant place to live.

- Support projects, programs, activities and events and other opportunities that promote tourism, that celebrate and promote the Town's key amenities and unique offerings, and that tie in with the reactivation of the Downtown and riverfront.
- Support projects, programs, activities and events and other opportunities that promote and expand local arts, theatre and other cultural offerings including public art.
- Support projects and other opportunities that help to create an attractive and well-functioning streetscape and that leverage the downtown architecture to enhance the cultural experience in the Downtown.

**Housing:** In an effort to attract and retain youth and newcomers, Council has identified a priority to create the conditions that encourage housing options that are affordable and attainable, including rentals. The goal of grants approved under this priority area is to:

- Support projects, programs, activities and events and other opportunities that promote a flexible housing stock that is attractive for youth, workers, and immigrants, and persons of all abilities.

## Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Charitable organizations and foundations registered as a charity with the Canada Revenue Agency
- Organizations incorporated as not-for-profits
- Sports groups and associations where the majority of members are minors.
- Clubs, groups and associations where the majority of members are minors.
- Volunteer groups and Community Clubs/Groups providing services in the Town of St. Marys
- Service Clubs providing services in the Town of St. Marys

Eligible applicants must be located in or provide services to the St. Marys community. Eligible applicants must be able to demonstrate that any Community Grant funding received will directly support a St. Marys-based projects, programs, activities or event that will benefit the community of St. Marys.

Applicants who are located outside the Town of St. Marys will only be considered if they can demonstrate a clear benefit to the St. Marys community within their grant application.

Eligible applicants must be able to demonstrate financial need, and how denial of grant assistance would impact their ability to carry out the planned projects, programs, activity or event.

The Community Grant Program is intended to provide funding that is supplemental to the overall financial requirements to carry on a planned project, program, activity, or event. The Community Grant Program is not intended to be the sole source of funding for a project, program, activity or event.

Eligible applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have thoroughly explored grants and funding from other sources, including fundraising, sponsorships, donations, and/or Federal/Provincial grant programs. Applicants who have, or will have, funding from alternate sources must disclose this funding as a part of the budget submitted in support of the Community Grant Program Application. If no other sources of funding have been pursued, applicants are required to provide information on the reasons why other opportunities were not explored.

Special projects, programs, activities and events that are of regional significance and that the Town may wish to be a partner in shall be brought directly to Council through a staff report that outlines how such a partnership will support the strategic priorities of the Town.

## **Ineligible Applicants**

The following applicants are considered to be ineligible for a community grant:

- Previous Community Grant recipients who are in default of the grant reporting requirements. These entities are considered to be ineligible until all required documentation is submitted.
- Government organizations, including municipalities, the Federal Government, and the Provincial Government.
- Town employees, members of Council, or any Town lead project.
- Entities whose primary focus or mandate is of a political nature, including lobby groups and groups focused on special interests. Funds will not be provided to groups who are attempting to further a political agenda.
- Private clubs, groups, and organizations with exclusive membership, except in cases where the group plans to use grant funds for a community project, program, activity, or event.
- Residents Associations and Neighborhood Associations/Groups, except in cases where the group plans to use grant funds for a community project, program, activity, or event.
- Adult recreation and leisure groups, associations and teams, except in cases where the group plans to use grant funds for a community project, program, activity, or event.
- For-profit entities, individuals and commercial ventures. Organizations that provide a share or membership which may be held or disposed of for personal gain.
- Individual-specific projects (for example a single artist exhibition where art is sold for a profit)
- Religious organizations, activities or instruction\*

\* Religious organizations are permitted to apply if they can demonstrate that their proposed use of grant funds is for a non-secular community based project. Grants cannot be used for religious programming or projects focused on a religion, including renovations to a place of worship unless the facility is also used for open access community activities.

Private programs, activities and events that are not open and inclusive to the general public, including but not limited to; club member events for families & friends, club membership recruitment, etc. are not considered to be eligible for a Community Grant.

Any project, program, activity, or event that is not in compliance with all Federal and Provincial laws and regulations and all municipal by-laws is not eligible for a Community Grant unless all necessary exemptions have been received in writing from the applicable agency.

Projects, programs, activities and events that are deemed to fall under the scope or jurisdiction of another municipality, the Province, or the Federal Government do not qualify for a Community Grant. These requests will be considered by Council directly through a staff report outlining how the proposed project will support the strategic priorities of the Town.

Projects, programs, activities and events that occur outside of the Town of St. Marys are not eligible under the Community Grant program. These requests will be considered by Council directly through a staff report outlining how the proposed project will support the strategic priorities of the Town.

## **Eligible Costs**

Each year as a part of the annual budget process Council will determine the financial commitment to the Community Grant Program. Grant funding or assistance is not guaranteed, and providing financial assistance in any year is not to be regarded as a commitment by the Town to provide financial assistance in future years. The Community Grant Program is subject to funding availability and conditional upon approval of the annual operating budget by Council. Council reserves the right to cancel or alter grant programs as needed.

A successful recipient of the Community Grant program may receive a cash grant of up to \$5,000 for the planned project, programs, activity or event. Applicants must provide a budget with their application to clearly show how Community Grant funds will be used.

As a guide, Council will normally only provide grant funds up to 25% of the project budget, or \$5,000, whichever is the lesser amount. For projects where there is a demonstrated significant, unique, or exceptional financial need, and where 25% of the project budget is less than \$5,000, Council may waive the 25% granting cap and approve grant funds up to \$5,000.

Through the Community Grant Program Council may approve the provision of “in-kind” fee-waivers to a maximum of \$2,000 per applicant. For clarification, building and planning fees are not eligible to be waived under the Community Grant Program.

Approved grant funding can only be used for projects that will be open and accessible to all community members and that satisfy the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

In the event that the total approved annual grant requests exceed the budget approved by Council, the Town reserves the right to place a further cap on the individual grants that are

awarded. In this situation, all grants awarded will be reduced on a prorated basis in an effort to distribute grant funds to all approved applications.

## Ineligible Costs

The following specific costs are not eligible for a Community Grant:

- Costs that are part of the applicant's normal day to day operating costs (including but not limited to: staffing, utilities, rent, taxes, office equipment and supplies, etc.) and are not directly related to the proposed project, program, activity or event.
- Remuneration, wages, or honorariums, including consultant fees, whether paid to an individual or a professional firm.
- Attendance at conferences, workshops, and seminars.
- Accumulated deficits, annual operating losses or debt and/or debt servicing costs.
- Donations to third-parties and charitable organizations.
- Travel, accommodation, uniforms, or personal equipment.
- Expenses associated with alcohol (including expenses related to the sale of alcohol), legalized substances, or tobacco.
- Costs of political events, rallies and demonstrations.
- Scholarships and bursaries.

Costs directly related to the provision of a Town service or program are not eligible for a Community Grant, unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no duplication of services or situations where a conflict of interest may exist.

Costs associated with any project, programming, activity, or event that are located or are being held outside of the Town of St. Marys are not eligible costs.

Town building and planning fees are not eligible costs under the Community Grant program. Requests to waive building and planning fees must be submitted on a case by case and without precedent basis. These requests will be considered by Council directly through a staff report outlining how the proposed waiver of building and planning fees will support the strategic priorities of the Town.

Municipal Capital Facility grants, as defined in the *Municipal Act*, are not eligible for a Community Grant. In addition, capital expenses are not eligible for a Community Grant. This includes the construction, erection, or rehabilitation of a capital asset and the purchase of capital equipment, as defined by the Town's Public Sector accounting rules. Applicants who are requesting a Municipal Capital Facility grant or propose to construct or rehabilitate a Town asset will be referred to the appropriate Town department. These requests will be considered by Council directly through a staff report outlining how the proposed project will support the strategic priorities of the Town.

## **Application Schedule and Review Process**

Application packages are available through the Municipal Clerk's office. Applicants must use the form attached to this policy, but are not restricted from submitting supplemental information that may support their grant request. Eligible applicants are restricted to one application on an annual basis. All programs, projects, activities, and events should be consolidated under one request.

Completed applications must be received by the Municipal Clerk's office by November 30 to be considered for a Community Grant in the following fiscal year. Applications received after November 30 will be deemed ineligible for a Community Grant within the current granting year.

After the close of the application period on November 30 of each year staff will complete a preliminary scan of all applications for completeness and accuracy. If an incomplete application has been received, the applicant will be notified and will be provided a five (5) business day "grace period" to submit all missing information.

Applicants who have failed to satisfy all reporting requirements for a previously approved grant may, within the grace period, submit all required information to become eligible for a Community Grant within the current granting year.

Staff are responsible for reviewing all submitted applications against the criteria established in the Community Grant Policy. Staff are required to prepare a summary that compares each application to the eligibility criteria, program rules, and strategic priority funding areas established by this policy. Staff are required to finalize the summary document with recommendations for awarding Community Grants to those grant requests that meet all eligibility requirements.

Council is responsible for reviewing and approving the Community Grant recommendations prepared by staff. Nothing contained in this policy shall preclude Council from approving a grant application at their sole discretion.

## **Obligations of Grant Recipients**

Applicants awarded a grant will be held accountable for the expenditure of the funds in accordance with the stated objectives/plans. Grants in future years will be reviewed based on past demonstrated fiscal responsibility of the applicants.

In the case of a project's cancellation, repayment of the entire amount of the Community Grant will be required. Funds granted are not transferable between projects or groups without prior Council approval. Community Grant funds must be used for the specific purposes outlined in the application. Misuse of funds may result in the applicant being disqualified from receiving a grant for a period of two years.

Successful applicants must provide a report on the program no later than 90 days following completion of the program, or by November 30 of the granting year, whichever comes first. The final report must certify that funds were spent on activities described in the grant application and must also include:

- A complete and accurate financial report for the program, outlining the detailed project budget compared to the actual income and the actual expenses.
- The final report should clearly indicate those specific expenses that Community Grant funds were used to offset.
- The financial report must be signed and authorized by a representative with legal or financial signing authority for the organization.
- A description of the outcome of the project and an evaluation of the success of the project.

Grant funds must be spent in the year that they are awarded. Any unused funds must be returned to the Town if they are not spent. Applicants are not permitted to hold any unused funds for future use.

Grant recipients must acknowledge the Town's contribution to the program in all related public information, printed material and media coverage. The Town's logo is available through the Municipal Clerk's office.

## End of Document

Rev #	Date	Reason	Initiated	Reviewed	Approved