

<b>POLICY TITLE</b>	Community Grants Program
<b>CATEGORY</b>	Financial
<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	Leave Blank – Clerk’s team will input once finalized/approved
<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	Community Services
<b>POLICY AUTHOR</b>	Recreation and Culture
<b>POLICY TYPE</b>	City Policy
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	City Council
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	09/30/2025
<b>REVIEW DATE</b>	01/01/2030

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The City of Cambridge recognizes the value community organizations provide in improving the health, lifestyle and community wellbeing of Cambridge residents.

The objective of this policy is to outline the criteria for the City of Cambridge Community Grants program. Funding through this program will be aligned with the City of Cambridge’s Strategic Plan and will provide support to not-for-profit organizations to deliver programs and services that benefit the quality of life of Cambridge residents.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is as follows:

- to improve the wellbeing of Cambridge residents through the direction of City grant funding to eligible organizations that can demonstrate their positive contribution to the achievement of the community wellbeing goals.
- to provide municipal funds or other forms of financial assistance, in limited amounts, to community groups and/or organizations that align with the City’s strategic direction.
- the City of Cambridge recognizes that community impact is not limited to formal organizations. A total of \$10,000 from this fund will be set aside annually for the new Community Connections Grant program annually,

which will fund smaller-scale projects led by individuals or informal groups, with a maximum request of \$2,500 per application.

- to consider each grant on its own merit and to deal with it in a transparent, equitable and objective manner.
- to ensure that a proper system of accountability is developed and maintained by the community groups and /or organizations receiving funding from the City.

## DEFINITIONS

**Activity** includes programs and / or events that have general appeal, a theme of interest, a public profile and public access on a free and / or paid basis. Activities must occur on an reoccurring basis e.g. annually or seasonally and must be held in an accessible space.

**Emerging Groups** are organizations that are newly formed within the past three years and have been operating for at least one year prior to the close of the grant application period and have a minimum of five board members.

**Event** A one-off single activity, occurrence or celebration, typically taking place over a concentrated period of time, such as a few hours. Examples of events are rallies, demonstrations, single performances or other single artistic activities.

**Grant** A sum of money given by the City of Cambridge for a particular purpose.

**Grant Application** refers to the application form required to be completed in full to receive funding through the City of Cambridge Community Grants Program.

**Grant Agreement** refers to the legal agreement that is signed after an application has been deemed successful under the City of Cambridge Community Grants Program. The Grant Agreement defines the terms and conditions under which the City of Cambridge grant will be made and cannot be altered without prior approval.

**Grants Review Committee** A Council appointed committee, supported by relevant staff, with the mandate to assess applications to the Community Grants Program and allocate funding within the approved Community Grants budget.

**In Good Standing** The organization must not be in litigation with the City. The organization must be current on accounts receivable. The organization must have all relevant City taxes paid.

**Not-for-profit** An organization who:

- Is dedicated to purposes other than pursuing a profit,

- Is an organization without share capital, which means that the organization does not issue ownership shares,
- May not distribute any profits to its members, directors or officers,
- Must use any profit exclusively for its not-for-profit purposes, and,
- Includes both charitable and non-charitable organizations.

*Organizations may demonstrate their non-profit status through letters patent or a combination of organizational documents.*

**Other Levels of Government** include:

- Crown Agencies and Corporations (Federal and Provincial)
- Hospitals
- School Boards
- Universities, Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and Post-Secondary institutions
- Community Care Access Centres
- Local Boards
- Boards of Health

**Performance Measure** A performance measure quantifies the achievement of a desired result. For the purposes of this policy, applicants will be required to provide some performance measures on the application that, if they are successful, will help show what impact the funding had and what was achieved for residents. Successful grant recipients will be expected to report on the actual performance results after the grant has been spent. Measures are determined by the community grants review committee and may include but are not limited to the following:

- What was achieved (e.g. the number of participants who attended a program)
- How well was the work done (e.g. the number of participants who successfully completed a program)
- What difference the funding made (e.g. the percentage of program participants who reported that their quality of life improved as a result of the program).

**Procedural Error** in reference to the Appeals Process refers to a mistake that may have been made as a result of not following the process for the allocation of grants as outlined in this Policy.

**Strategic Plan** refers to the current City of Cambridge Strategic Plan.

**Volunteer Community Groups** is a group of individuals that provide services for nofinancial or social gain to benefit another person, group or organization.

## **AUTHORITY**

This Policy operates under Council authority.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to:

- All applicants to the Community Grants Program
- Staff responsible for the delivery of the Community Grants Program
- Members of the Grants Review Committee
- City of Cambridge Members of Council

## **POLICY**

### **1. VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The Community Grants Program, its policy and procedures will be guided by the City of Cambridge core values and the Public Conduct Policy– ADM 041.

- Integrity – The Community Grants Program will be conducted in a professional manner with good judgement and an emphasis on effective communications, accountability for actions, and a strong moral compass.
- Respect – Evaluation of applications will be conducted in an open and honest manner with mutual respect and fair understanding of the wants, needs and expectations of others.
- Inclusiveness – The Program will commit to welcoming, learning and understanding others and foster an environment of respect and sense of belonging.

- Service – The Grants Review Committee and Council will strive to provide timely, respectful and knowledgeable responses focusing on communicating information in a friendly and accessible manner to all.

## 2. FORMS OF ASSISTANCE

The City will provide financial assistance to groups through a variety of funding categories as follows:

- Start-up Funds: Funds may be provided to emerging groups or to existing groups who are launching new programs or services. Applicants are encouraged to provide a plan for how they intend to become less reliant on municipal financial assistance in future years to become self-sustaining.
- Training and Development Funds: One-time funds may be provided to support skills training, training clinics or certification programs, for coaches and trainers to develop minimum certification requirements, up to a maximum of \$200 per person.
- Special Project Funds: Partial financial assistance may be provided to support a specific event or activity which occurs on a non-recurring basis and is taking place within a defined period (usually during the calendar year in which the grant is awarded). The event or activity must have a clearly defined objective and a distinct budget. Funds are to support new or pilot initiatives outside the normal range of activity.
- Capital Funds: Partial financial assistance may be provided for the purchase of minor capital items (e.g. equipment purchases) which are external to normal operating functions of the organization, and not likely to occur on an annual basis.

Notes:

1. Organizations may request monies for more than one of the above funding options, but must consolidate all requests within one submission. Each request must be prioritized within the submission and each request will be evaluated on its own merit.
2. Training Proposals will only be accepted from organizations with a minimum of 80% Cambridge resident participation.

### **Activities not eligible for funding**

The following activities are not eligible for funding:

- Operating or capital deficits
- Programs/services not aligned with the City of Cambridge's Strategic Plan
- Programs/services that are the same as those provided by the City of Cambridge
- Invitational or discretionary travel
- Travel or training associated with team tryouts
- Uniforms for sport teams
- Beautification projects (with the exception of Horticultural Societies)
- Flow-through funding (where the intent is to directly redistribute funds)
- Debt retirement, depreciation or deficit funding
- Retroactive funding (activities or costs incurred before grant approval)
- Duplication of funding received or requested from another funding organization or level of government unless the scope of the project or service is such that multiple funding streams may be necessary and this need is displayed through the application.
- Activities that could be deemed discriminatory as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code
- Applicant organizations must certify that their proposed activities do not promote religious doctrine. This includes ensuring that no project leader or staff member involved has a primary role of promoting religious beliefs. Applicants are required to provide a clear articulation of all activities and how they align with this requirement.
- Political and/or advocacy activities

### **3. GENERAL CRITERIA**

- All organizations making grant requests from the City of Cambridge must provide detailed information on the appropriate grant forms available on the City of Cambridge website [www.cambridge.ca/grants](http://www.cambridge.ca/grants). Complete financial information is required, including audited financial statements where possible and/or requested.

- The organization must have a clearly stated purpose and function in the areas detailed in Section 4 – Categories of Organizations to be Considered of the Community Grants Program and must be responsible for planning and provision of these services.
- Each organization shall hold an annual meeting at which time their accounts and proposed budget will be presented to the membership for approval, and any financial assistance or service from the City of Cambridge would be recognized at that time. As part of the application process organizations will need to provide the date and minutes of their annual meeting and submit a copy of the Annual Report for City purposes. If an organization is not able to meet this criteria an explanation shall be provided with the request for funding for further consideration by the Grants Review Committee and/or Council.
- The proposed initiative must meet the definition of the relevant funding category as outlined in Section 2 – Forms of Assistance of this policy.
- Community need for the proposed project must be clearly demonstrated and indicate how the applicant organization is best suited to meet this need.
- The proposed initiative must be available to a broad cross-section of the Cambridge community.
- All projects must conform to all relevant legal standards and requirements and should be physically accessible to all persons.
- In making grants, the City may impose conditions as it deems fit. Specific terms and conditions will be outlined in the Grant Agreement upon award of funding.
- A grant made to an organization in any year is not to be regarded as a commitment by the City to continue the grant in future years.
- The amount of funding allocated to the Community Grants Program will be confirmed each year as part of the annual budget process.
- Only one request per organization is to be considered in a fiscal year. All programs, projects and undertakings should be consolidated in the one request.
- Grant funds must be used as per the approved grant application. Any significant changes to the original grant application must be discussed with and approved by the Community Services division of the City prior to

implementation. If the proposed changes are acceptable the grant funding may be revised to reflect the changes or, if the proposed changes are not acceptable to the City, approval may be revoked and grant funding will not be forwarded to the applicant or the applicant will be required to return any grant funding already provided. Failure to seek approval from the City for any changes from the approved grant application may result in ineligibility for future funding and/or the need to return any grant funding received.

- Grant funds will typically be awarded in one lump sum payment. At the discretion of the Grants Review Committee and/or Council, organizations may be awarded funds by installments, with a reporting requirement prior to the release of the next installment.
- Submission of a grant application does not guarantee an organization will receive full or partial funding.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to be proactive in seeking out grant application information and submission deadlines.
- Successful candidates must use the grant funding within the year it is approved. Exceptions may be considered upon request.
- Grant recipients must acknowledge the support of the City of Cambridge on all printed materials for programs/events that relate to the grant request as determined by staff.

#### **4. CATEGORIES OF ORGANIZATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

Community grants are available on an annual basis to non-profit organizations and/or volunteer community groups that provide programs and services to the residents of the City of Cambridge. Organizations seeking grants will be grouped in the following categories so that similar organizations can be compared more easily:

- Social Services
- Recreation and sport
- Arts, culture and events
- Civic & Leisure Interests
- Not-for-profit organizations that further the interests and prosperity of the City of Cambridge

## 5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for consideration to the Community Grants Program, organizations must meet all of the following criteria. If an organization is not able to meet any of these criteria an explanation shall be provided to the City with the request for funding for further consideration by the Grants Review Committee and/or Council.

- Only volunteer groups and/or non-profit organizations are eligible to be considered.
- The organization shall have a location and/or presence in Cambridge.
- The majority (80%) of participants in the program/service must be residents of the City of Cambridge.
- The organization must extend its services to the general public in Cambridge, as described in the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Applicant organizations must have an active Board of Directors (with a minimum of 5 members) that is independent from senior staff of the organization.
- Applications will only be considered from the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee of an organization and not from a “part group” of the organization.
- The organization must carry valid General Liability Coverage in the amount of \$2 million with the City named as an additional insured with a 30-day cancellation period.
- Organizations are required to keep accurate volunteer and participant records.
- The organization must carry out volunteer screening and other risk management measures to help ensure volunteer and public safety.
- Organizations must be in compliance with all applicable legislation, regulations and bylaws for the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and the City of Cambridge. (e.g. *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, *Ontario Human Rights Code*, *Occupational Health & Safety Act*).

- Completed application forms, providing all of the requested information and all supporting material must be submitted by the organization by the application deadline.
- Organizations must be in good standing with the City and submit all documentation required for any grant funding received in the previous year within the required timelines.

The Community Grants Program will not provide funding to:

- Individuals;
- For-profit organizations;
- Other levels of government;
- Political organizations;
- An organization that acts as a funding body, or makes grants or donations to another organization;
- Universities, colleges, schools and their associated/auxiliary groups or agencies;
- Organizations whose activities could be deemed discriminatory as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- Organizations that are not in good financial standing with the City of Cambridge;
- Organizations that currently have a lease with the City of Cambridge
- Organizations that meet the Regional Grant Criteria or organizations that operate within Cambridge as well as at least one other municipality in Waterloo Region unless an application for grant funding has been submitted to the Region for consideration first.

## **6. FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The following financial criteria will be taken into consideration when evaluating applications:

- The organization must demonstrate strong financial responsibility and capability in carrying out its service to the community.
- Evidence that the organization needs the funding. 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.

- The City of Cambridge, through its grants process will not contribute to outstanding deficits.
- The organization must indicate a clear financial plan and demonstrate efficient use of City funds.
- The organization must show that it has thoroughly explored all other available sources of funding and shall identify funding from at least one source other than the City of Cambridge.
- In conjunction with a comprehensive review of the proposed initiative, funding will be directed to organizations in greater need of financial support.
- Consideration may be given to the number of people being serviced by the group, and the per capita operating costs where applicable.
- The organization must indicate other City contributions that are made to the organization (eg. In-kind staff support, free or subsidized use of City facilities, programs, discount hours, promotional support, etc.).
- 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.

## **7. COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM PROCESS**

- a) No later than September 30th of each year, an information package, including the Community Grants Program policy and an application form, will be made available on the City's website ([cambridge.ca/grants](http://cambridge.ca/grants)).
- b) All organizations applying for funding of less than \$25,000 must complete the appropriate application form in full and provide all supporting documentation by the program deadline of the last business day of November. Late and/or incomplete applications may not be considered. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure the

application is complete and all supporting documentation has been provided.

- c) Except where Council has made a multi-year commitment to funding, all organizations applying for funding of \$25,000 or more must complete the appropriate application form in full and provide all supporting documentation by the program deadline of the last business day of November. Late and/or incomplete applications may not be considered. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure the application is complete and all supporting documentation has been provided.
- d) Applications will be screened by staff in Finance and Recreation and Culture to ensure they are complete and meet the eligibility criteria before being provided to the Grants Review Committee and/or Council.
- e) Interviews will be conducted by the Grants Review Committee with the applicants, where necessary, to obtain pertinent information which will assist with the review process.
- f) Following these deliberations, the Grants Review Committee will compile a list of recommended grant applications for approval. Grants under \$5,000 can be approved by the Review Committee without requiring Council approval. All recommended funding applications above \$5000 will be submitted to Council for final approval.
- g) All applicants will receive notification via e-mail or standard mail of whether or not their application was successful.
- h) Following Council approval of the Community Grants Review Committee recommendations, the Finance Department will issue grant payments to successful applicants by Electronic Funds Transfer.
- i) Grants awarded must be used in the current calendar year

## **8. COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM APPLICATION REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Grant applications less than \$25,000 will be assessed by the Grants Review Committee in accordance with the program guidelines. Grants under \$5,000 can be approved by the Review Committee without requiring Council approval. Grants above \$5000 that are recommended for funding by the Grant Review Committee will be forwarded to Council for final approval. The Grants Review Committee will be comprised of the following members:

- Mayor for the City of Cambridge
- Chair of each of the Standing Committees of Council (ie. General Committee, Budget and Audit Committee, Planning and Development Committee)
- Chief Financial Officer (non-voting)\*
- Director of Recreation & Culture (non-voting)
- Other staff liaisons as required (non-voting)

\*In the event of a tie the Chief Financial Officer will cast the deciding vote.

Grant applications of \$25,000 or more will be assessed by Council in accordance with the program guidelines. Where an organization has been granted funding by Council for a multi-year period they are not required to submit an application annually to the Community Grant Program but will be required to submit an Outcomes Reporting form to report on how annual funding was spent and what impact the funding achieved in the community.

## **9. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS**

a) Grant applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with the City of Cambridge Strategic Plan, Public Value Statement and the Public Conduct Policy – ADM 041
- Community Impact
- Merits of the funding request
- Organizational profile
- Organizations finances
- Benefit to the community

b) Grant applications will be assessed by staff for review by the Grants Review Committee or Council as appropriate.

c) Grant applications will be evaluated against a matrix to ensure transparency and an equitable process.

- d) The evaluation matrix will provide additional points for applications that are for a specific one-time request or item that is crucial to the organization's performance.

The evaluation matrix is intended to be an objective tool to assess each of the applications against the criteria outlined in the Community Grants policy. The scores determined by the use of the evaluation matrix are not to be considered the sole determining factor on which grant decisions will be made but is rather a tool to facilitate discussions about each application.

## 10. NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATION STATUS

- Applicants will be notified of the status of their application in April, unless otherwise noted.
- All grant recipients will receive written notification regarding the amount and specific uses of the funding, any funding conditions and applicable agreement requirements.
- All grant recipients will be required to sign the Letter of Agreement before funds will be released to the organization.
- Funding will be released with documentation of expected evaluation and reporting requirements.
- Grant recipients may be subject to an audit by the City of Cambridge to verify the recipient has complied with the funding conditions and agreement requirements.

## 11. GRANT APPEAL PROCESS

- All decisions related to grant applications for the Community Grants Program are open to appeal by the grant applicant.
- Applicants who wish to appeal the decision made by the Grants Review Committee and/or Council must notify the Community Services division of their intent within 30 days of receiving notice of their status.
- Applicants to the Community Grants Program may appeal a decision based on two criteria:
  - New Information: From the time the grant application was initially submitted, new information that could impact the grant

decision became available that, for good reason, was not available at the time of the initial application; or,

- A Procedural Error was made when assessing the grant application.
- The Community Services division will review all appeals to determine the criterion that is being challenged and provide a summary to Council for grants over \$5000 for further review.
- Results of the appeal will be provided within 30 days.
- Decisions of all appeals will be final.

## 12. ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING

Successful applicants who receive funding from the Community Grants Program must report on how the funding was spent and the impact the funding achieved. Reports are required to be submitted to the Community Service department by November 30<sup>th</sup> of the year the grant was awarded. Failure to do so may make the organization ineligible to receive future grants until the status report is completed and submitted.

Grants may not be used for purposes other than those approved by Council. If reports from grant recipients show that a grant was used for a purpose other than that approved by the City or was not expended in the fiscal year(s) for which it was awarded, the grant may have to be repaid in full or in part.

## POLICY COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated by means of:

- City of Cambridge website;
- City of Cambridge intranet;
- Providing a copy to all members of the Grants Review Committee;
- Providing a copy to all staff involved in the delivery of the Community Grants Program;
- Including the website location for the policy in all grant program information distributed to the public;
- Providing a copy of the policy to all organizations requesting an application for



the grant program. Applicants will be required to indicate on the grant application form that they have reviewed the policy.

## **RELATED PROCEDURES**

There are no related procedures.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS/LEGISLATION**

There are no related documents or legislation.