

## Community Grants Program

### Introduction

As our community continues to grow and becomes more diverse in its population, services and needs, the Town of Smiths Falls recognizes the valuable contributions which have and will continue to be made by local organizations, independent groups and individuals who foster quality of life and vibrancy in our community.

Through the Community Grants Program (CGP), the municipality is committed to providing financial assistance, to support a broad range of needs and opportunities which offer for greater social supports, inclusion, volunteerism and community engagement for residents and/or visitors.

The goal of projects funded by Community Grants is to provide residents with opportunities to stay active, healthy and engaged in their community as well as build on local arts and cultural and attract visitors. Organizations through this funding are able to maintain and/or build capacity to continue to serve residents and visitors through the delivery of new or existing services, programs and activities based on local needs. The program also supports the creation of new partnerships to better serve those in the community after project funding ends.

Each year the Town will provide funding to qualified projects through an annual application process. In making its grant decisions, the Town relies on the advice of an internal Grants Committee, which is made up of staff who guide policy and service delivery of local issues, activities and programs.

### Program Priorities

Building on the purpose and intent of the Smiths Falls Community Grants Program, funding will have two streams being; Organizational Capacity, and Programs, Events and Activities with a focus on the following key areas:

- Community and Social Services
- Events and Festivals
- Arts and Culture Education and Programs
- Environmental Education and Programs
- Sports and Recreation Activities and Programs

**Note:** Applications that do not support at least one program priority will be considered ineligible. Additional points will be awarded to Projects that demonstrate collaboration and/or sharing of assets and resources with other local organizations.

Priority will be placed on projects that are responsive to the needs of a diverse population with emphasis on projects that target underserved and equity seeking populations; those who are:

- Living with disabilities
- Racialized, newcomers or immigrants
- Low incomes earners (including Seniors)
- Children and/or Youth

**Note:** Additional points will be awarded for proposals which target one or more of these populations.

## Program Definitions

**“Applicant Type”** refers to the 3 different applicant profiles being; Registered Not-for-profit, Unincorporated grassroots groups, and individuals (including Businesses).

**“Building Repairs/Improvement”** refers to interior and/or exterior investments to a building structure and/or building systems.

**“Capital Grant Funding”** refers to financial support to cover costs related to the purchase of machinery and equipment related to executing programs, events or activations for all Applicant Types or the rehabilitation, repair and maintenance of existing community spaces/buildings owned and operated by Registered Not-for-profit organizations. The Town’s Tangible Capital Asset Policy note that thresholds for Building repairs/improvement are \$15,000 and under, and Machinery & Equipment is \$5,000 and under. Funding maximums for Capital Grant Funding have been determined for each Applicant Type.

**“Equipment and Machinery”** refers to tangible long-term assets that benefits or enhances a program, activity or event over years of use, and could include, digital devices, tables, chairs, tents, stages, platforms, inflatables, carnival rides, or barricades/fencing, food dispensing machines and small appliances, etc. requests will be considered and evaluated based on relevance to the project.

**“Equity-seeking Groups”** (underserved and equity seeking populations) are groups of people who have been historically disadvantaged and underrepresented in positions of power and economic influence. These groups face exclusion due to societal and systemic barriers. These groups include, but are not limited to women and girls, racialized persons, those that identify as 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, seniors and people with disabilities.

**“Grant Application”** refers to the document in which applicants request funding.

**“Grant Agreement”** refers to the legal agreement that is signed after an application for grant funding has been approved by Town Council. The Grant Agreement defines the terms and conditions under which the Town grant will be made and cannot be altered or amended.

**“Gross Expense”** refers to the total of all costs and charges, exclusive of HST, which have been estimated to organize, running and/or provide services related to the project outlined in the Grant Application.

**“Net Expenses”** (Net Costs) refers to operating expenses (Gross Expenses) reduced by an amount equal to revenues from other sources including but not limited to grants other than the Smiths Falls community grant, donations, sponsorships, service/program fees or ticket sales directly related to the specific program, event or activations being submitted for grant funds.

**“Newly-formed not-for-profit organizations”** refers to organizations that have been incorporated for less than two years.

**“Registered Not-for-profit”** is defined under the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, (2010) and includes both charitable and non-charitable organizations.

**“Strategic Plan”** refers to the current Town of Smiths Falls Strategic Plan.

**“Unincorporated grassroots group”** refers to a group of five or more individuals joined by mutual consent for a common, non-profit purpose. The group has not registered for incorporation, and is not bound to the legislative rights and responsibilities as set out in the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010.

## Program Guidelines and Criteria

The Community Grants Program has been established by Council to provide guidelines to applicants who are seeking modest financial assistance;

1. Grant funding will be provided at 50% of NET costs (gross expenses minus program or service revenues, including grants/funding from other sources and/or program/ticket sales) to a maximum amount based on applicant type as outlined in the Funding Amounts and Limitations section below.
2. One application per organization, per year, will be accepted for associated with operational or minor capital projects.
3. Multiple applications from the same applicant for programs and/or events can be submitted within the program year, being evaluated and funded on a first come first served basis, while funds are available.
4. Funding for new or existing community events or festivals that create social and cultural experiences for residents and/or attract visitors.
5. Operational funding for organizations who demonstrate substantial need to create or sustain quality of life for residents and align with strategic priorities of the Town of Smiths Falls.
6. Funding to support federal and provincial government grant applications where the project aligns with the Town of Smiths Falls Strategic Plan and the Community Grants criteria including funding applications for Capital costs related to building maintenance, repairs or improvements and or machinery and equipment.
7. Capital funding for organizations and activities which demonstrate an immediate substantial need for such funds to maintain or grow capacity for the delivery of services, programs or events. Applicants may apply for building repairs and improvements as well as equipment and machinery up to a maximum based on their applicant type. Funding will also be considered up to the maximum Applicant Type funding limit, to support other funding applications for major capital investments/or to fund a portion of a major capital repair project. All capital building maintenance, repairs or improvements projects must be either tendered or open to competitive bidding by two or more parties and quotes/proposals may be requested as part of the application review process.
8. Organization, program, service and /or events must be is located within the Town of Smiths Falls.
9. Expectations may be given to those registered not-for-profit organizations with properties bordering municipal boundaries within 10km, and if the majority of services and/or contributions directly support the Smiths Falls community.
10. Programs must provide without discrimination, a recreation, cultural or community service or experience to a significant proportion of local citizens or visitors that the municipality or other agencies do not otherwise provide.
11. Applicants receiving funding are required to acknowledge the support of the municipality through the use of the logo on any and all promotional materials and marketing campaigns.
12. Applicants must enter into a funding agreement and provide a final report which outlines total funding allocations and spending, participation/attendance of program or event, etc. Note that any unspent funds must be returned to the Town of Smiths Falls.
13. Applicants requesting funding of \$10,000 or more should make themselves available for a presentation and interview during a public meeting of the Committee of the Whole, required as part of the review and approvals process.

The Community Grants Program **will not** consider the following grant requests:

1. Services that are provided by other government agencies or not for profit organizations currently servicing the community.
2. Travel or accommodation expenses for members of an organization.
3. Sponsorship of athletic endeavors (i.e. team or individual sponsorship for tournaments, special events, regular season activities, etc.).
4. Organizations with political affiliations.
5. Organizations raising funds for third party charities.
6. Faith organizations where services/activities applied for include the promotion and/or required adherence to a faith only and not for the benefit of the community as a whole.
7. Fundraising Events.
8. School boards, primary and secondary schools, post-secondary institutions unless they are applying for funding to host a free community event or program.
9. Financing budgetary deficits.
10. Applicants who did not submit a full and complete Final Report for past funding support.
11. Applicants with outstanding litigation or balances owing the Town of Smiths Falls.

## **Who Can Apply?**

Eligible applicants are:

- ✓ Local or regional not-for-profit organization incorporated pursuant to the laws of Ontario or Canada that operate out of the Town of Smiths Falls; or
- ✓ Local individuals or unincorporated community organization or group that has proven the capacity to effectively execute programs that contribute to the well-being of local residents; or
- ✓ Local individuals or unincorporated community organization or group that can prove the capacity to effectively execute events or festivals that create social and cultural experiences for residents and/or attract visitors.

## **Not-For-Profit Organizations**

- Local or regional not-for-profit organization incorporated pursuant to the laws of Ontario or Canada that operate in the Town of Smiths Falls or operate just outside of municipal boundaries and whose services and/or contributions directly support the Smiths Falls community, including local service boards or clubs.
- Organizations that have been incorporated and in operation for at least Two (2) years.
- Organizations that have mandates to serve the Smiths Falls community, or who have an Ontario provincial mandate and are looking to establish a location in Smiths Falls.
- The organization will be responsible to the Town of Smiths Falls for the project's implementation, financial management, and reporting (including documenting all expenditures for audit purposes).

## **Unincorporated Community Groups**

- For unincorporated grassroots groups or newly incorporated not-for-profit organizations under two years that require support for an existing project or a new initiative that includes a promising early-stage idea

that needs additional support to create the capacity and conditions to be effectively sustained.

- Projects must demonstrate the capacity to effectively execute the program/activity that contributes to the well-being of local residents and/or execute cultural experiences that attracts visitors.
- The Community group will be responsible to the Town of Smiths Falls for the project's implementation, financial management, and reporting (including documenting all expenditures for audit purposes).
- The Community group must have been in existence for at least one year prior to the date of application (this can include previous establishments and non-concurrent operations).
- The Community groups must demonstrate revenue-generating capability to substantially sustain the service, program or event on its own in the future.

## Individuals

- Local individuals (including business owners) that demonstrate the capacity to effectively execute free to all community programs, events or experiences that contribute to the well-being of local residents and/or execute cultural experiences that attract visitors.
- The individual will be responsible to the Town of Smiths Falls for the project's implementation, financial management, and reporting (including documenting all expenditures for audit purposes).
- The individual can demonstrate revenue-generating capability to substantially sustain the service or event on its own in the future.
- Individuals will be required to provide their Social Insurance Number and other documents as part of the validation process to receive funding, if approved.

## Funding Amounts and Limitations

**Not-for-profit Incorporated Organizations** can apply for up to \$25,000. This includes funding related to;

- **Organizational Capacity Stream** which funds expenses including but not limited to:
  - Administrative and Operational Expenses (staffing, utilities, insurance);
  - Capital purchases to a Maximum of \$15,000 for Building Repairs and Improvements (painting, widow replacement, flooring, etc)
  - Capital funding to support other funding application or investment for a major capital repair project (New Roof, major electrical or plumbing upgrades, accessibility upgrades, etc).
- **Programs, Events and Activities Stream** which funds expenses including but not limited to:
  - Social Service or Community Program Expenses (staffing, purchased services, materials and supplies, marketing) that contribute to the well-being of a significant portion or specifically supporting identified underserved and equity seeking populations.
  - Special Events/Activity Expenses (entertainment, event insurance, rentals and service fees, marketing and promotions) that contribute to the well-being of a significant portion of residents or specifically supporting identified underserved and equity seeking populations OR attracts significant number of visitors to our community and supports economic growth and diversity.
  - Capital purchases to a Maximum of \$5,000 for Machinery and Equipment (pop up tents, tables, hotdog machine, etc)

**Unincorporated Community Groups** can apply for a maximum of \$10,000. This includes funding related to;

- **Organizational Capacity Stream** which funds expenses including but not limited to:
  - Administrative and Operational Expenses (staffing, utilities, insurance);
  - Capital purchases to a Maximum of \$10,000 for Building Repairs and Improvements (painting, widow replacement, flooring, etc) if the property is owned by the community group or newly established not-for-profit under two years.
  - Capital funding to support other funding application or investment for a major capital repair project (New Roof, major electrical or plumbing upgrades, accessibility upgrades, etc.).
  
- **Programs, Events and Activities Stream** which funds expenses including but not limited to:
  - Social Service or Community Program Expenses (staffing, purchased services, materials and supplies, marketing) that contribute to the well-being of a portion of residents or specifically supporting identified underserved and equity seeking populations.
  - Special Events/Activity Expenses (entertainment, event insurance, rentals and service fees, marketing and promotions) that contribute to the well-being of a significant portion or specifically support identified underserved and equity seeking populations OR attracts significant number of visitors to our community and supports economic growth and diversity.
  - Capital purchases to a Maximum of \$5,000 for Machinery and Equipment (pop up tents, tables, hotdog machine, etc.).

**Individuals (including businesses)** can apply for a maximum of \$2,500. This includes funding related to:

- **Programs, Events and Activities Stream** which funds expenses including but not limited to:
    - Community Events, Programs or Activity Expenses (entertainment, event insurance, rentals and service fees, marketing and promotions) that contribute to the well-being of a portion of residents or specifically support identified underserved and equity seeking populations OR attracts significant number of visitors to our community and supports economic growth and diversity.
    - Capital purchases to a Maximum of \$2,500 for Machinery and Equipment (pop up tents, tables, hotdog machine, etc.).
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- Grants will support up to 50% of the total eligible NET project costs.
  - Community Grants are not intended to be the sole source of funding; the applicant must demonstrate a reasonable effort to raise funds from sources other than the Town of Smiths Falls.
  - While cash or in-kind contributions are not required, applicants are encouraged to partner with other local community groups that will assist with the delivery of their initiatives. Having partners helps demonstrate support and increased capacity to deliver on the proposed activities.
  - Applicants must explain the project expenses that will be paid for by the Community Grant, and how other project expenses will be paid.
  - A Community Grant cannot be used to support costs that are funded by another source including by not limited to (Federal or Provincial grants, In-kind or volunteer support, fundraising or sponsorships).
  - Applications for In-Kind non-financial assistance will not be considered. Costs for municipal assets and/or

services should be costed and included in ones grant application.

- Smiths Falls Town Council, at its discretion, shall establish an annual budget for this program.
- All organizations meeting the criteria will not necessarily receive a grant or the amount for which they applied. Grant allocations are dependent on individual application review and the amount of grant funding contained within the approved municipal budget. Each application will be reviewed by the Community Grants Committee. All applicants will be notified of the results from the initial review prior to the applications being presented to the Committee of the Whole for decision.
- Unless otherwise approved by Council no grant funding will be paid until such time as the annual budget has been approved.
- Grants and donations are not given automatically from year to year. Applicants must apply annually for funding.

## **Application Submission Guidelines**

It is the responsibility of applicants to submit a complete application with clear and sufficient information. It should be noted that the Community Grants Program is competitive and has a limited budget. Incomplete or unclear applications will not be forwarded for consideration.

Applications (Appendix 'A') will be accepted between **November 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>** of each year. Should additional funds remain following the first intake allocations, application will be accepted on a first come first served basis.

Application forms are available on the Town's website at [www.smithsfalls.ca/CommunityGrants](http://www.smithsfalls.ca/CommunityGrants) or printed copies can be obtained at Town Hall.

To be considered for the Community Grants Program;

1. Complete Applications must be submitted by **November 30<sup>th</sup>** of each year.
2. Complete Applications will ensure each section of the application has been adequately filled out and includes the submission of applicable financial statements and/or a detailed project budget. An application which contains missing or limited information will be considered an incomplete application and sent back to the applicant for revision and resubmission.
3. The project meets the established program criteria and shows an expressed need for funding to execute the service, program or event.
4. Successful grants will require an authorization of council in the form of a resolution of support.
5. In making donations/grants, the municipality may impose such conditions and/or restrictions as it deems fit. The municipality's decisions regarding donations/grants are final.
6. Outside of the application submission deadline, applications will be considered if funds are available. For applications where the November date is not practical an application can be made at any time, but at least 6 weeks prior to the anticipated event. The lead time is needed to ensure effective review and recommendations can be made to Council for approval.
7. The Municipality reserves the right to request supplementary information in support of the application.

## **Application Review and Approval Process**

- The Evaluation Committee will review, and score all received applications after the November 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.
- Applications will be evaluated individually using the program criteria and evaluation matrix for each stream (Appendix 'B').
- The Evaluation Committee will present recommendations to a subsequent Committee of the Whole meeting for approval. Applications requesting \$10,000 or more must present their application to Council at a subsequent meeting, prior to a final decision being made.
- Grant applicants determined to be ineligible for funding shall be notified, in writing.
- Grants may be awarded with certain terms and conditions. The letter of award and agreement will state, if any, particular restrictions apply to the grant funding approval.

## **Funding Payments and Reporting Requirements**

- 1) Successful applications will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement between the municipality and the applicant.
- 2) Grant awards shall be paid in 2 installments, being 75% upon execution of the funding agreement and the remaining 25% upon submission of final report.
- 3) Within three (3) months of the completion of the event, project or service or at the end of the calendar year, all organizations receiving funding from the Municipality shall provide a written report provided by the municipality (Appendix 'C'). If it is determined that funds were reallocated to another project/event other than what was submitted with the Community Grants application, the Municipality may at its discretion; request funds be returned and/or disqualify an organization from any future funding under this program.
- 4) Any unspent funds must be returned to the municipality with their final report submission.
- 5) Any organizations that do not submit a full and complete report will not be considered for funding in the future.

## **Requests for Assistance Outside Scope of Policy**

Nothing in this policy prohibits Council from considering financial assistance or in-kind support outside the scope of this policy. Council will consider each case on its individual merits, and any assistance provided will be without precedent. Those seeking funding outside the scope of this program must submit an application and presentation to Council during the municipal budgeting processes which occur between September to November of the previous year.