

To: Mayor & Members of City Council

From: Woodstock Community Grants Advisory Committee

Re: Community Grants Policy GA003 Review

AIM

To advise Council of the Community Grants Advisory Committee's recommendation for revisions to the Community Grants Policy GA003.

BACKGROUND

The City of Woodstock's Community Grants Program has been in existence since 2001. The policy was last revised in 2013.

COMMENTS

Staff conducted research reviewing Community Grants policies from eight (8) area municipalities. Discussions were held with the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) to review their requirements. The draft updated policy was presented to the Community Grants Advisory Committee (the Committee) on December 18, 2024, for the Committee to consider, discuss, and provide advice on the updated policy, as seen in Attachment #1 to this report. The Committee's input has been incorporated into the draft policy.

The following are recommendations to amend the policy:

- Streamlining the Goals, General Objective, Application Procedure, and Feedback sections to Policy Statement, Purpose, Application, and Funding Conditions, respectively.
- Added "hosting fee" as per consultation with the AGCO, in which it was advised that the proceeds from the slots are received as a "hosting fee." The AGCO does not consider the slot revenue received by the municipality as lottery proceeds. The disbursement guidelines typically placed on lottery proceeds under the AGCO's Lottery Licence Policy Manual do not apply. Although the AGCO regulates the slots and casinos that the OLG runs, it does not offer guidelines on how the Community Grant Advisory Committee should determine applicant eligibility. As such, the updated policy recommends removing the requirement to meet the eligibility requirement under the AGCO's guidelines.
- Eligibility Criteria section: Changed to "Eligibility Requirements"
 - Removed the reference to the AGCO and individuals or teams who have achieved provincial, federal, or international recognition;
 - Added organization criteria related to its existence, benefit to the community, services that are open to the public, and a section that the program will not fund.
- Added "Review Process" section outlining the decision to allocate funding based on demonstrated need and financial sustainability.

- Added that an organization is allowed only one successful application per calendar year.
- Changed the requirement to provide a report outlining how the funding was spent to mandatory.

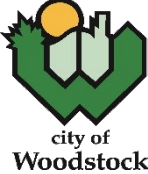
RECOMMENDATION

That Woodstock City Council adopt Community Grants Policy GA003 as amended;

And further that Staff be directed to update the Community Grants application form per the policy's amendments.

Authored by: Cynthia Hislop, Clerks Services Coordinator

Approved by: Joel Hamilton, Chairperson, Community Grants Advisory Committee

 city of Woodstock	City of Woodstock Policy Manual
Subject:	Community Grants Program
Policy Number:	GA003
Revision:	03
Approved by Council:	August 15, 2002
Amended:	January 16, 2025

Policy Statement

This policy outlines the criteria for the City of Woodstock (City) Community Grants Program. Its fundamental goal is to achieve consistency, fairness, and due diligence in allocating community grant funds and ensure accountability between the applicant and the City.

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Grants program is to provide financial assistance to local non-profit, charitable, or volunteer organizations to deliver programs, services, or special projects that benefit the community and enhance the overall well-being of the City's residents. Applications should generally relate to charitable, recreational, cultural, the arts, and environmental projects.

This policy ensures that the process for reviewing and assigning grant funding is transparent and consistent and achieves a meaningful impact on the investment. It has been established to ensure that all applications are evaluated using an established set of criteria and that each application is considered on its own merit.

Annual Program Amount Available

The maximum sum available for the grant program will be 15 percent of the "hosting fee" from the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) received by the City of Woodstock in the previous year to which the funds are granted.

Eligibility Requirements

To be considered eligible for a community grant with the City, an organization must be a local non-profit, charitable or volunteer organization that meets the following criteria:

- Be in existence for a minimum of one (1) year
- Have a goal to provide a benefit to the City's residents
- Have a location in the City, or over half of its participants reside in the City
- Provide programming or services that are open to the public
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility and sustainability
- Have a diversified revenue base which can include, but is not limited to, memberships, significant earned revenue, funding from other levels of government, and support from the private sector through fundraising activities, donations, and sponsorships; the Community Grant should not be considered the only source of funding for the organization
- Show evidence that other sources of financial support have been received or explored and programs or services cannot be provided without municipal financial assistance

Additional Eligibility Considerations:

- Grants awarded may be used to assist with operating costs
- Grants may be available for recreational endeavors for Woodstock youth under 18 years of age; applications must be filed, and grants must be distributed by registered non-profit charities or accredited minor sports associations
- Service Clubs applying for a grant will be considered only for current specific projects that benefit the community
- Foundations that hold funds to distribute to other organizations are eligible except for the purpose of flow-through funding to other organizations.

The Community Grants program will not provide funding to:

- Individuals
- Commercial businesses
- For-profit organizations
- Political organizations
- Publicly funded institutions (i.e., schools, adult learning centres, preschools, hospitals, etc.)
- Adult recreational sports groups, athletes, or teams
- Organizations that received funding in the past and failed to provide financial statements and a report on the allocation of grant funds
- Organizations requesting funding for a capital expense; being an asset or possession having value, such as facility improvements or purchases of items such as appliances, furniture, or vehicles
- Organizations for which other levels of government have legislated responsibility to fund, including but not limited to, educational programs, health care services, public health programs, childcare services, or social assistance programs; applications from these organizations may be considered under a special grant

Review Process

The Clerks Services Coordinator or designate will receive and acknowledge grant applications. City staff will screen all completed grant applications for eligibility and provide them to the Community Grants Advisory Committee (Committee) for review. If an application is deemed ineligible, the organization will be notified in a timely manner as to the reason for its ineligibility according to the policy criteria.

The Committee will assess each eligible application and provide City Council with a list of recommended grant applications and respective funding allocations.

The decision to allocate funding is based on:

- Demonstrated need for the project, program, or service in the City
- Financial sustainability
- The purpose for which the funding is to be used
- Whether another level of government or agencies is subsidizing this purpose
- The amount required to run the program, service, or event
- How the organization has managed grant funds in the past, if applicable
- The per capita benefit to the community

Grants are intended to supplement the main source of income and should not be considered the primary source of funding. A grant in any year is not to be interpreted as a commitment by the City to continue such assistance in future years.

City Council makes a final funding decision based on the information and recommendations provided. At its discretion, City Council can have the Committee revisit any funding recommendation it discussed during the Council meeting.

The Clerk Services Coordinator or designate will advise the applicant of Council's decision and forward the grant amount if approved.

Application

There are two separate application periods for the Community Grants program each year. Applications must be submitted to the Office of the City Clerk before the deadline on March 1st for the Spring intake and September 1st for the Fall intake. If March 1st or September 1st falls on a weekend or holiday, applications will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. the following business day. An organization is allowed only one successful application per calendar year. The application form and information about the grant process are available on the City's website.

Applications must include the following:

- A detailed description of the applicant's purpose, goals, and financial request
- The organization's most recent financial statement
- An approved proposed budget for the year of the grant request or the budget for a specific project/purpose for which the funding is being requested
- A list of the organization's executive

Submit completed applications:

1. Online through the City's website; or
2. By mail or drop off at City Hall:
City of Woodstock
c/o Clerks Services Coordinator
500 Dundas Street, P.O. Box 1539
Woodstock, Ontario N4S 0A7

Questions and concerns regarding the application process can be directed to the Clerks Services Coordinator at 519-539-2382 extension 2507.

Special Grants

Consideration may be given to applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria but will provide a special benefit and promote the City of Woodstock or result in a more active and healthy community life. These grants will be awarded on a "one-time" basis only. Preference will be given to applicants who demonstrate diverse sources of funding. Any subsequent request for grant funding beyond the "one-time" criteria will be considered under the general eligibility requirements.

Appeal Process

If an application has been deemed ineligible, the applicant has 20 days to appeal to the Committee in writing. Appeals received by the Committee will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Woodstock City Council approves and oversees the Community Grants program and policy. Council finalizes all funding decisions for the Community Grants program and there is no appeal process after Council has made its decision.

Funding Conditions

All recipients of Community Grants funds must meet the following post-award conditions:

- Use the funding for the project, program, or service as identified in the application; that may include direction provided by the Community Grants Advisory Committee;
- Submit a report outlining how the funding was spent and the impact the funding achieved within 6 months of receipt of the funds. If the organization fails to submit a report within the stated time, that organization will not be eligible for future funding until a report is submitted in full.

Revisions

Revision Date	Rev #	Particulars
July 12, 2012	01	Formerly T010
November 7, 2013	02	Housekeeping to streamline policy
January 16, 2025	03	Reorganization of headings, update of Eligibility Requirements and Funding Conditions