

Community Investment Program Updates

Revised Community Investment Program Policy (FIN-220):

On June 24, Council approved key updates to the Community Investment Program Policy (FIN-220) to enhance transparency, efficiency, and alignment with community needs. Highlights of the changes include:

1. New Grant Formalized

The Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant has been formally included in the policy following its successful pilot phase (2022 to 2025). This grant supports initiatives that enhance the region's cultural identity and will continue to be administered by municipal staff.

2. Clarified Grant Intentions

- The Games Legacy Grant now focuses specifically on amateur sport development and competition.
- The Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant supports arts, culture, and heritage initiatives.

Both grants are open to individuals, teams, and groups—but not to non-profit organizations.

3. Increased Funding Limits

To reflect rising program delivery costs, the Community Impact Grant maximums have increased:

- **Community Projects & Programs stream:** from \$80,000 to **\$100,000**
- **Community Events stream:** from \$20,000 to **\$25,000**

4. Elimination of Multi-Year Agreements

Multi-Year Agreements have been eliminated due to:

- Constraints under the Municipal Government Act (MGA) that Council only approves annual budget
- Misalignment with Council terms
- Evolving annual funding priorities
- Administrative burden on applicants for application and reporting

Applicants previously under Multi-Year Agreements may continue to apply for annual funding through the CIP process. Administration will continue to support applicants in leveraging other funding sources and will highlight high-performing organizations on the CIP website.



5. Community Initiative Reserve Fund

Unallocated funds by for the Community Investment Program Approval Committee (CIPAC) will be transferred into the Community Initiatives Reserve following the Committee's rendering of a final approval decision. The fund will be used exclusively for the following year's Community Investment Program.

6. Eligibility Clarifications

- The policy clearly outlines the process for how the Community Investment Program Approval Committee (CIPAC) engages with applicants. When an applicant attempts to influence or contact a Committee Member outside the established process, CIPAC may vote to deem the Applicant ineligible for funding during that funding cycle.
- Political organizations and organizations engaging in political activities (e.g., lobbying, endorsing candidates, organizing rallies) are not eligible for funding.
- Organizations requesting funding for religious activities are also ineligible.
- Applicants with unrestricted net assets exceeding their annual operating expenses are ineligible, unless those assets are under \$50,000. If any portion of the net assets are internally or externally restricted, those restrictions must be specified in the financial statements, and the organization must provide:
 - A copy of relevant board minutes
 - A written explanation detailing the nature and purpose of the restrictions.

7. Grant Sustainability Measures

Unused or surplus grant funds will be reviewed during final reporting to ensure compliance with funding limits:

- **75%** for Community Sustaining Grant and Community Impact Grant
- **50%** for Community Capital Grant

These measures promote long-term sustainability and reduce reliance on municipal funding.

8. Additional Administrative Changes

- Presentations to Council by Subsidiary Organizations and Municipal Facility Operators are required
- Presentations to CIPAC by Community Sustaining Grant applicants are no longer required.



2026 Funding Priorities

Approved by Council on July 3, the funding priorities for 2026 are:

- Partnership and collaboration
- Rural and Indigenous communities & relationships
- Social participation
- Community support services and wellness
- Value of culture, heritage, and regional pride
- Accessibility, inclusion, and belonging
- Hosting events and/or attracting new business and visitors

Notable Update:

The previous “Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility” priority has evolved into “Accessibility, Inclusion and Belonging”—a more focused and actionable approach to fostering inclusive communities.

These priorities are grounded in Council’s Strategic Plan and other approved plans, outcome data from 2024 grant reports. This evidence-based approach ensures strategic investment and continuous improvement in community impact.

These priorities were also recommended by the Approval Committee, reflecting community conversations and local expertise.

Together, these priorities reflect the voices of the community, the data from outcome reports, and the vision set by Council. They represent both continuity and alignment with Council’s strategic direction and community-identified needs.

Community Initiative Reserve Bylaw

Approved by Council on July 8, all unallocated funds by CIPAC will be transferred into the Community Initiatives Reserve. The Reserve will be used exclusively to provide funding for the Community Investment Program for the following budget year. This supports responsible financial planning and ensures that funds remain dedicated to future community investment.

