

COUNCIL POLICY



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

Document Name: Community Investment Program

Department Name: Community Services

Document Number: FIN-220

Effective Date: June 24, 2025

Next Revision Date:

June 24, 2028

STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE

Fiscal Management

Building Partnerships

Rural and Indigenous Communities and Relationships

Local Economy

Downtown Visualization

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (the “Municipality”) is committed to providing strategic investment Grants to not-for-profit organizations and communities through the Community Investment Program (the “Program”).

The Program provides Grants to:

- (a) registered non-profit organizations that positively contribute to municipal goals and strategic directions;
- (b) operators of Municipal Facilities that provide opportunities for residents to engage in recreation, leisure, events, arts, culture, and heritage; and
- (c) registered non-profit organizations, individuals, teams, and groups to support and enhance the development of athletes and artists in the region.

The purpose of the Community Investment Program Policy (the “Policy”) is to:

- (a) identify the different Grants available under the Program;
- (b) set Program Grant eligibility requirements;
- (c) set budgeting and accounting requirements for Applicants; and
- (d) set reporting requirements for Recipients.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES**1. Definitions:**

- 1.1. "Administration Team" means the employees responsible for the administration of the Community Investment Program, including Program staff and representatives from other municipal departments who provide subject matter expertise and identify duplication of services and programs across departments.
- 1.2. "Agreement" means the agreement between the Recipient and the Municipality that sets out the terms and conditions for participating in the Program.
- 1.3. "Applicant" means any group, club, individual, or organization incorporated as a non-profit, charitable, or Subsidiary Corporation, or registered as a society under the Alberta Societies Act that is in good standing under relevant legislation and submits an application.
- 1.4. "Approval Committee" means the Council Committee to approve Program Grant recommendations, which is composed of Council-appointed members at large and supported by members of the Administration Team who provide information and guidance as needed.
- 1.5. "Capital" means an enhancement, development, or renovation of public use facilities that are accessible, affordable, and inclusive and that provide broad opportunity for community members, including planning, construction, land, or equipment purchase where the capital asset will belong to the Applicant.
- 1.6. "Grant" means a transfer of monies from the Municipality to an Applicant for a project or purpose according to the requirements of the Program.
- 1.7. "Guidelines" means the document that establishes Grant eligibility, application processes, deadlines, fund distribution processes, and reporting criteria for the Program.
- 1.8. "Municipal Facility" means any building, structure, or area of land owned by or under the direction and control of the Municipality, including, but not limited to, treatment plants, fire halls, leisure centres, sports and fitness facilities, arenas, parks, park amenities, exhibition facilities, and bridges.
- 1.9. "Program Grants" means the different Grant options available under the Program.
- 1.10. "Recipient" means an Applicant that has been approved to receive a Grant and has signed an Agreement with the Municipality.
- 1.11. "Streams" means the different Grant options available under a Program Grant.

2. Responsibilities:**2.1. Council to:**

- 2.1.1. approve any amendments to this Policy;
- 2.1.2. set funding priorities in consideration of specific community needs and results of outcome measurements from preceding years;
- 2.1.3. approve the total budget for the Program during the annual budget process;

- 2.1.4. approve Municipal Facility Operating Grant and Subsidiary Grant applications during the annual budget process;
- 2.1.5. approve Grant allocations for the Community Sustaining Grant, Community Capital Grant, Community Impact Grant, Games Legacy Grant, and Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant;
- 2.1.6. approve new Program Grants, Streams, and Grant maximums;
- 2.1.7. appoint members of the Approval Committee;
- 2.1.8. delegate authority to the Approval Committee to review and approve applications for the Community Sustaining Grant, Community Capital Grant, and Community Impact Grant; and
- 2.1.9. forward inquiries from community members to the Administration Team.
- 2.2. **Chief Administrative Officer to:**
 - 2.2.1. recommend any amendments to this Policy; and
 - 2.2.2. support the implementation of this Policy.
- 2.3. **Approval Committee to:**
 - 2.3.1. review the eligible and complete applications brought forth by the Administration Team for the Community Sustaining Grant, Community Capital Grant, and Community Impact Grant;
 - 2.3.2. complete application scoring for the Program Grants covered in section 2.3.1;
 - 2.3.3. select successful Applicants and determine amounts to be awarded for the Program Grants covered in section 2.3.1; and
 - 2.3.4. report to Council on successful Applicants and amounts awarded for all Program Grants.
- 2.4. **Administration Team to:**
 - 2.4.1. complete all administrative tasks related to the opening and closing of applications as well as support services for Applicants;
 - 2.4.2. enforce the terms and conditions set out in the Policy and Agreement;
 - 2.4.3. conduct a preliminary review of applications to eliminate any not meeting the eligibility criteria;
 - 2.4.4. administer the Games Legacy Grant and Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant, including completion of application scoring, selection of successful Applicants, and determination of amounts to be awarded;
 - 2.4.5. consult with subject matter experts from municipal departments to identify duplication of services; and
 - 2.4.6. review progress reports submitted by Recipients to assess compliance and provide Council with a report summarizing outcome measurements.

3. General Procedures:

3.1. Municipal Control:

- 3.1.1. The Municipality may close the Program to new applications at any time without notice.
- 3.1.2. The Municipality may terminate the Program at any time without notice.
- 3.1.3. Recipients are bound by the terms and conditions of any Agreements.
- 3.1.4. Despite any indications to the contrary, at no point in the Application process does the Municipality accept any obligation to execute an Agreement.

3.2. Program Grants:

- 3.2.1. The Program provides the following Grants:

- 3.2.1.1. Municipal Facility Operating Grant;
- 3.2.1.2. Subsidiary Grant;
- 3.2.1.3. Community Sustaining Grant;
- 3.2.1.4. Community Capital Grant;
- 3.2.1.5. Community Impact Grant;
- 3.2.1.6. Games Legacy Grant; and
- 3.2.1.7. Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant.

3.2.2. Municipal Facility Operating Grant:

- 3.2.2.1. The Municipal Facility Operating Grant provides funding to registered non-profit organizations that operate and maintain municipally-owned facilities.
- 3.2.2.2. The amount of the Grant is subject to the availability of funds.

3.2.3. Subsidiary Grant:

- 3.2.3.1. The Subsidiary Grant provides funding to organizations that are owned by or under the control of the Municipality to support programs and services that align with Council's Strategic Plan.
- 3.2.3.2. The amount of the Grant is subject to the availability of funds.

3.2.4. Community Sustaining Grant:

- 3.2.4.1. The Community Sustaining Grant provides funding to registered non-profit organizations that provide strategic services that contribute to three or more funding priorities that align with Council's Strategic Plan.
- 3.2.4.2. The amount of the Grant is subject to the availability of funds.

3.2.5. Community Capital Grant:

- 3.2.5.1. The Community Capital Grant provides funding to registered non-profit organizations to support the enhancement, development, or renovation of public use facilities.

3.2.5.2. Community Capital Grants are subject to the following funding limitations:

- (a) up to 50% of total planning and design costs for the capital project;
- (b) up to 50% of total construction and acquisition costs for the capital project; and
- (c) up to 50% of total land purchase costs for the capital project.

3.2.5.3. The amount of the Grant is subject to the availability of funds.

3.2.6. Community Impact Grant:

3.2.6.1. The Community Impact Grant provides funding to registered non-profit organizations to deliver programs, projects, and events that improve quality of life for residents in the region.

3.2.6.2. Applicants shall only submit one application and shall only receive one Community Impact Grant per call for applications.

3.2.6.3. Grant funding may be requested up to a maximum amount that varies depending on the Stream, as follows:

(a) Community Programs and Projects – maximum \$100,000; and

(b) Community Events – maximum \$25,000.

3.2.6.4. The amount of the Grant is subject to the availability of funds.

3.2.6.5. The maximum percentage is set to ensure sustainability of the Grant and to reduce reliance on the Grant over time. The maximum percentage shall be set at 75%.

3.2.7. Games Legacy Grant:

3.2.7.1. The Games Legacy Grant provides funding to support development in amateur sport and residents competing at a provincial, national, or international level.

3.2.7.2. Applicants shall only submit one application and shall only receive one Games Legacy Grant per call for applications.

3.2.7.3. Applicants may apply for more than one activity, program, or competition.

3.2.7.4. The amount of the Grant is subject to the availability of funds based on interest from the Games Legacy Endowment Fund.

3.2.7.5. Once the established amounts as determined under 3.8 are allocated to applicants, the Games Legacy Grant will be capped.

3.2.7.6. Grant funding may be requested up to the following maximums:

(a) maximum Grant for individuals or coaches will not exceed \$1,500; and

(b) maximum Grant for teams or groups will not exceed \$3,000.

3.2.8. Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant:

- 3.2.8.1. The Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant provides funding to individuals and groups to support initiatives related to arts, culture, and heritage that align with the priorities of the Wood Buffalo Culture Plan.
- 3.2.8.2. Eligible initiatives include, but are not limited to, hosting events, attending masterclasses, participating in training opportunities, and engaging in other creative activities that enrich the region's cultural landscape.
- 3.2.8.3. Applicants shall only submit one application and shall only receive one Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant per call for applications.
- 3.2.8.4. Applicants may apply for more than one project under a single Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant application.
- 3.2.8.5. Grant funding may be requested up to the maximum of \$5,000 per application.
- 3.2.8.6. The amount of the Grant is subject to the availability of funds.

3.3. General Eligibility Criteria:

- 3.3.1. Program Grants will only be provided to an Applicant that:
 - 3.3.1.1. has resided or operated within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo for at least one year;
 - 3.3.1.2. has operations within and provides services to residents of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo;
 - 3.3.1.3. provides programs and services that are aligned with community investment funding priorities; and
 - 3.3.1.4. meets additional eligibility requirements of the specific Program Grant and Stream.
- 3.3.2. Where the Applicant is a group, club, or incorporated organization, it shall not hold unrestricted net assets in excess of the organization's annual operating expenses, as reflected in the financial statements of the most recent fiscal period prior to application, unless the total unrestricted net assets is less than \$50,000.
 - 3.3.2.1. 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) a copy of the relevant board minutes; and
 - (b) a written explanation detailing the nature and purpose of the restrictions.
- 3.3.3. The following must be satisfied and will be verified by the Municipality prior to awarding Program Grant funding:
 - 3.3.3.1. property taxes are current and paid;
 - 3.3.3.2. utility bills are current and paid;

- 3.3.3.3. there is not a related unresolved order to comply with the Land Use Bylaw, Building Code, Fire Code, Community Standards Bylaw, or other regulation;
- 3.3.3.4. the Applicant is not a party to a legal dispute with the Municipality; and
- 3.3.3.5. all necessary municipal permits and permissions have been received for the project and are closed and without deficiencies.
- 3.3.4. Exceptions to section 3.3.3 will be at the discretion of the Municipality on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.3.5. The following are ineligible to receive Grants under the Program:
 - 3.3.5.1. individuals (with the exception of the Games Legacy Grant and Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant);
 - 3.3.5.2. for-profit organizations;
 - 3.3.5.3. political organizations or organizations engaged in political activities, including rallies, endorsing candidates, lobbying, or advocating for specific government policies or legislation;
 - 3.3.5.4. federal and provincial governments and affiliated bodies;
 - 3.3.5.5. organizations requesting funding for religious activities such as worship, faith-based instruction, or programs, projects, events or services that promote or require religious participation or membership;
 - 3.3.5.6. Applicants that have overdue or incomplete accounting or reporting requirements related to any Grant previously awarded by the Municipality;
 - 3.3.5.7. Applicants who request funding for programs or services that are provided by a group or organization that is already funded by the Municipality;
 - 3.3.5.8. Applicants that do not demonstrate adherence to policy, strategic priorities, or relevant outcome measurements;
 - 3.3.5.9. Applicants who request funding for programs, activities, or facilities which are the mandate or responsibility of the federal or provincial governments, including but not limited to health care, education, religious activities, housing, and childcare programs and facilities;
 - 3.3.5.10. Applicants who request funding for programs or services that conflict or compete with other programs or services funded or provided by the Municipality;
 - 3.3.5.11. Applicants who request funding for debt retirement, depreciation, or financing charges;
 - 3.3.5.12. Applicants who request funding for retroactive payments (i.e., costs incurred before Program Grants are approved), with the exception of the Games Legacy Grant and Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant;
 - 3.3.5.13. Applicants who request funding amounting to more than 75% of the budget of the program, project, event, or service (with the exception

of the Municipal Facility Operating Grant, Subsidiary Grant, Games Legacy Grant, and Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant); and

3.3.5.14. Applicants that do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements.

3.3.6. When an applicant attempts to influence or contact a Committee Member outside the established process, the Approval Committee may vote to deem the Applicant ineligible for funding during that funding cycle.

3.4. Submission of Applications:

3.4.1. All applications must be submitted through the application portal prior to the application closing date.

3.4.2. Applications that are not submitted before the deadline will not be considered for Program Grant funding.

3.4.3. The Administration Team shall only accept complete applications.

3.5. Assessment Criteria:

3.5.1. Eligible applications will be prioritized based on the greatest positive impact on the community.

3.5.2. Applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

3.5.2.1. alignment with Council's Strategic Plan and community investment funding priorities;

3.5.2.2. contribution to the quality of life of residents and anticipated impact of the funding;

3.5.2.3. evidence of community support, including:

(a) additional financial and non-financial resources being leveraged from other sources (including success rate at achieving other funding sources);

(b) number of volunteers that will be involved in the work and the number of hours they will contribute; and

(c) collaboration or partnerships with other organizations;

3.5.2.4. organizational track record, including, but not limited to, ability, skills, and capacity to undertake the work;

3.5.2.5. history of having successfully completed similar work;

3.5.2.6. extent to which the funding targets Indigenous culture and communities and promotes Indigenous community healing, language, cultural restoration, reconciliation, equity, and inclusion through the program, service, or event;

3.5.2.7. whether similar services already exist in the community;

3.5.2.8. overall sustainability of the organization and activity;

3.5.2.9. type and purpose of the Grant funding request; and

3.5.2.10. availability of funding.

3.6. Approval Committee Decisions:

- 3.6.1. There is no appeal of the Approval Committee's decision.
- 3.6.2. An Applicant may request disclosure of the final evaluation of their application.
- 3.6.3. Additional information is available in the Community Investment Program Administrative Procedure FIN-220-P01.
- 3.6.4. Irregularities in the Grant approval process may be addressed by submitting a complaint under the Whistleblower Policy LEG-150.

3.7. Reserve Funds:

- 3.7.1. The Municipality may use the Community Initiative Reserve to fund the Program each year.
- 3.7.2. In accordance with Bylaw No. 02/032 Community Initiatives Reserve, the allocation of these funds will be presented to Council annually.

3.8. Endowment Funds:

- 3.8.1. The Municipality will use the interest earned on the Games Legacy Reserve Fund only to supplement the Games Legacy Grant.
- 3.8.2. In the event that the interest from the Games Legacy Fund is less than \$10,000, an Operating Budget request will be proposed to Council during the annual operating budget process.
- 3.8.3. In the event that the interest from the Games Legacy Fund is greater than \$15,000, the surplus will be added to the Games Legacy Endowment Fund.

3.9. Approval and Disbursement Processes:

- 3.9.1. Approval processes will be consistent with Program Guidelines.
- 3.9.2. Program Grants will be disbursed only to Recipients in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Agreement.

3.10. Communications and Grant Recognition:

- 3.10.1. If required by the Agreement, Recipients must recognize the Municipality as a funding partner in any official communications.
- 3.10.2. Where the Recipient has received a Capital Grant, a commemorative plaque or sign must be displayed at the facility or site, or on the equipment, acknowledging the financial support from the Municipality.

3.11. Monitoring and Reporting:

- 3.11.1. The Administration Team will evaluate the outcomes, as outlined in the Agreement between the Municipality and the Recipient, to ensure accountability for use of funds, monitor how goals were achieved, and assess ability to address funding priorities.
- 3.11.2. Recipients will be required to report on the status of any additional funds included in their Program Grant application.
- 3.11.3. Eligibility for future funding will depend on the actual outcomes compared to the predicted outcomes included in the application.

- 3.11.4. Guidelines may require 6-month and annual outcome measurements and progress reporting.
- 3.11.5. Recipients who receive more than \$25,000 or more than 50% of Program Grant maximum, not including the Games Legacy Grant or Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant, are subject to an annual review.
- 3.11.6. Recipients who have less than three years of history with the Program are subject to an annual review.
- 3.11.7. The Administration Team may require additional reporting on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.11.8. Any reporting requirements not met by the Recipient may result in cancellation of the Program Grant or ineligibility to receive Grants in the future.
- 3.11.9. All funds not used for the approved purpose must be returned to the Municipality, unless the Municipality approves, in writing, their use for another purpose, as per the guidelines below:
 - 3.11.9.1. Amounts below \$2,500 may be forgiven;
 - 3.11.9.2. The Municipality may request repayment in full for amounts greater than \$2,500 in the event that:
 - (a) the Recipient receives additional funding from other sources or incurs lower actual expenses for the approved program, project, service, or event, resulting in a surplus; or
 - (b) the Program funds exceed 75% of total program, project, service, or event expenses under the Community Sustaining Grant or Community Impact Grant; or
 - (c) the Program funds exceed 50% of the total actual capital cost under the Community Capital Grant.
- 3.11.10. Use of Program Grant funds is limited to the Grant cycle in which they are awarded. These amounts will not be reserved and carried over, except in the following circumstance:
 - 3.11.10.1. when a written request is submitted, and approval is provided by the Municipality; or
 - 3.11.10.2. when the Municipality announces that amounts can be carried over due to unforeseen situations, at the discretion of the Municipality.

3.12. **Budget Process:**

3.12.1. **Municipal Facility Operating Grant and Subsidiary Grant:**

- 3.12.1.1. Applicants for the Municipal Facility Operating Grant and Subsidiary Grant shall present their annual budgets to Council as part of the annual Operating Budget process.

3.12.2. **Community Impact, Community Capital, Community Sustaining, Games Legacy, and Arts, and Culture & Heritage Grants:**

- 3.12.2.1. The Community Services department shall prepare the annual budget for the Program with consideration given to Program outcome

measurement results for previous years and alignment with Council's Strategic Plan.

3.12.2.2. The Community Services department shall present the budget request to Council during the annual operating budget process.

3.12.2.3. Maximum budgets for Program Grants will be established for consideration during the Grant cycle.

3.12.3. Where possible, Recipients should procure goods and services locally.

4. Rescind and Replace

This Policy rescinds and replaces the Community Investment Program Policy FIN-220, dated June 25, 2024.

APPROVAL

This Policy was approved by Council. It will be reviewed not later than its next Revision Date to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. It may be assessed before that time, as necessary.


Sandy Bowman, Mayor


Jade Brown, Chief Legislative Officer


Date

SUPPORTING REFERENCES AND POSITION RESPONSIBLE

Legal References:	Societies Act, RSA 2000, c S-14
	Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26
Cross References:	Community Investment Program Administrative Procedure FIN-220-P01
	Whistleblower Policy LEG-150
Position Responsible:	Director, Community Services

COUNCIL POLICY DETAILS AND REVISION HISTORY

Date	Action	Description
June 24, 2014	Introduction	New Community Investment Program Policy FIN-220 to rescind and replace the Grant Distribution Policy FIN-100.
March 10, 2015	Revision – Substantive	Revised the application and funding process to include thresholds requiring presentation to the Audit and Budget Committee.
October 8, 2019	Revision – Substantive	Added Community Capital Grants, added definition, and revised responsibilities and general procedures.
July 11, 2023	Revision – Substantive	Revised content and reformatted the Policy to align with the new template.
January 9, 2024	Revision – Substantive	Revised the general procedures.
June 25, 2024	Revision – Substantive	Revised responsibilities and general procedures.
June 24, 2025	Revision – Substantive	Added the Arts, Culture & Heritage Grant and revised definitions, responsibilities, and general procedures.