



Centre Wellington

Policy: Township of Centre Wellington, Community Investment Fund Policy	Revision Date: November 25, 2024
Previously known as Community Impact Grant Policy	Previous Versions: The Grant Program has been updated in : 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2021 and 2023.

PURPOSE: The intent of the Community Investment Fund is to provide financial assistance to enhance the quality of life in the Township of Centre Wellington by fostering, strengthening and stimulating wider community appreciation and participation in the community.

1.0 FUND CATEGORIES AND FUNDING ALLOCATION

Funding for these grant stream opportunities comes from a combination of Township tax dollars as well as funding from Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG).

Consideration of grant applications will be made under the following streams:

Annual Specific:

This funding is awarded automatically annually for a specific initiative of a community group. The small group of recipients are outlined in Appendix A. A post-event or post-program letter to review the success of the initiative, is also required. The initial maximum limit for this type of grant is \$5,000 and will be adjusted annually by the Ontario Consumer Price Index starting in 2024. Annual adjustments by the Ontario Consumer Price Index will be based on the index for December of the previous year, for example, grant requests for 2024 will be considered in Fall 2023 and will be adjusted based on the December 2022 Ontario Consumer Price Index. This could push the annual support level beyond the \$5000 ask limit, over time.

Effective with the endorsement of the New Community Investment Fund Policy by Council, no new initiatives will be considered for inclusion in this funding stream. Existing initiatives that provide services to the Township, such as Horticulture Societies maintaining gardens, and parade leadership, will continue under this stream. All other initiatives previously included will be required to apply through an alternative funding stream.

Community Impact Stream:

This funding stream supports initiatives that address local challenges through innovative, locally driven solutions. The focus is on projects that have a direct and meaningful impact on the lives of Centre Wellington community members. By fostering grassroots efforts and empowering local organizations, this stream aims to create lasting positive change and strengthen the fabric of our community. Whether through social services, environmental initiatives, or educational programs, the Community Impact Stream is committed to making a tangible difference where it matters most.

This stream will have focus areas aligned with Council's Strategic Plan and groups will apply annually for funding up to \$5000.

Arts & Culture Programming and Events Stream:

This funding stream supports initiatives that enrich our local community and possibly attract visitors to boost the local economy. This focus is on events, creative projects, and arts-based programs that showcase our cultural heritage, promote diversity, and enhance community engagement. By supporting a vibrant arts and culture scene, this stream fosters cultural appreciation and drives economic growth through increased tourism and local participation.

Groups will apply annually for funding up to \$5000.

Inclusive Community Stream (pending Council Approval to be implemented in 2026):

This funding stream is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and equitable community that respects and values the diversity of all its members. The Inclusive Community Stream supports opportunities for smaller, grassroots organizations or community groups and those led by marginalized groups. This stream aims to empower local initiatives that promote inclusion and equity, ensuring that every community member has a voice and a place in Centre Wellington.

Groups will apply annually for funding up to \$5000. Details for eligible applicants and terms for this stream will be released in 2025, and added as an Appendix to this Policy.

2.0 APPLICANT QUALIFICATION

Applicants for Community Investment Fund must meet the following qualifications:

2.1 Eligible organizations for the Community Investment Fund streams must be the following:

2.1.1 be operating as a not for profit or charity for at least one year with a volunteer board of directors. Individuals are ineligible for consideration. Private corporations/organizations are ineligible for consideration.

2.1.2 Organizations must meet one of the following:

A) be based in the Township of Centre Wellington, with at least a majority of members being Township residents. Programs, services, and activities must be open and accessible to all Township citizens, regardless of membership status, and must primarily benefit Township residents. Programs targeting specific groups, such as vulnerable populations, youth or seniors, are encouraged, but overall participation should not be limited to exclusive membership or closed groups, or

B) an urban off-reserve Indigenous-led organization located in the Township of Centre Wellington which may also provide culturally based programming outside the boundaries of the Township of Centre Wellington.

2.2 All eligible organizations for any grant stream under this policy must also meet all of the following:

2.2.1 serving clearly identified community needs not already adequately addressed by another organization, be it government, corporate or another not-for-profit organization.

2.2.2 able to provide evidence that the community has shown a commitment to their programs through participation in the organization or attendance at functions sponsored by the organization.

2.2.3 able to demonstrate financial support from some other source of funds, other than government funds. Other sources of income could include private donations, membership fees, ticket sales or sponsorships.

2.2.4 be able to show financial responsibility by preparing and submitting operating budgets and financial statements or a review engagement as required by the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA). For organizations with annual revenues under \$50,000, the Township will accept internally prepared balance sheet and income statement, recognizing that full financial statement preparation can be costly for smaller organizations.

2.2.5 in good standing with the Township. The organization must be current on accounts receivable and not in litigation with the Township.

2.3 Unqualified applicants need to apply with a qualifying partner. This would include young NFP's, community groups or individuals. Unqualified applicants will be declined but will receive support on how to improve their application. This support may include suggestions for potential organizational partnerships, securing reference letters, and other recommendations to strengthen future applications)

2.4 Eligible Applications

2.4.1 The goal of this program is to be able to support as many organizations as possible that positively impact the community. Eligible organizations shall prioritize one application for one initiative in one stream.

Organizations may submit their application under the umbrella of a parent organization, provided these initiatives are distinctively different from the parent organization's primary, prioritized application. Each affiliated group must independently meet the eligibility criteria and focus on a unique initiative that aligns with the Fund's goals. This arrangement allows parent organizations to support various community-impact initiatives without compromising their ability to seek funding for their primary initiative. Each affiliated group is limited to one application per funding cycle, ensuring equitable access for a wide range of initiatives across the community.

2.4.2 Requests for the Community Impact, Arts & Culture Programming and Events and Inclusive Community streams shall not exceed \$5,000 and the initiative is required to be completed by December 31 of the year the grant was approved.

2.5 Ineligible Organizations

2.5.1 Projects or programs organized by organizations that are for-profit organizations/corporations, schools, groups or organizations with a primary focus other than community service, for example, parent and student councils.

2.5.2 Organizations with mandates from other levels of government, such as schools, hospitals, and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), are generally ineligible unless they are organizing activities that provide a direct benefit to the community, beyond the scope of their primary mandate.

2.5.3 Organizations who have failed to provide satisfactory reports, including financial statements, as to the success of the previous year and specifically with respect to the allocation of grant funds.

2.5.4 Requests for grants to an individual, or to an individual group that is controlled by a parent organization (in this case the parent organization should apply for the grant).

2.5.5. Stacking (combining funding from multiple Township sources by the same organization in the same year) is discouraged. This includes but is not limited to:

- a) initiatives that have received funding from previous funding years that have not been completed yet;
- b) organizations funded by the Township through other sources;
- c) subsidies or discounts, for example facility rental subsidies for major special events or minor sports discounts;

2.5.6 Applicants are required to self-disclose any additional Township funding. Failure to disclose other funding or in-kind support from the Township funding may impact future funding eligibility.

2.5.6 Organizations that receive additional Township funding but still wish to be considered for the Community Investment Fund may request up to a maximum of \$5,000, inclusive of their current and any additional Township funding.

2.5.7 The goal is to support as many community groups as possible, which is why stacking is not preferred. Exceptions require approval from Council.

2.6 Ineligible Expenses

2.6.1 Travel or accommodation, uniforms, personal equipment, banquets, trophies or personal entertainment. Performers for an event is an eligible expense.

2.6.2 Rent of office space or space required for the operating of business, utilities or debt repayment (i.e. mortgages). A short-term Township facility rental to support a program/event would be an example of something that would be eligible.

2.6.3 Attendance at conferences, workshops or seminars.

2.6.4 Request for contributions to fund prior year deficits incurred by the organization.

2.6.5 Payroll related costs. A short-term program related cost, directly paid to run a program (i.e. for 6 weeks, once a week), could be an eligible expense.

2.6.6 Funds cannot be used to host an event that is fundraising focused.

2.6.7 Council may grant special consideration to entities that do not meet all the above criteria but are unique in nature and fulfill a specific need in the community.

3.0 GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

3.1 Community Impact, Arts & Culture Programming and Events and Inclusive Community Streams:

3.1.1 In the fall of each year, the Township will advertise all relevant information relating to the upcoming grant application process. Timing is related to the annual budget approval process, and the timing can change in the year of a Municipal Election.

3.1.2 Applications must be filled out using the online form on the Grants webpage on the Township of Centre Wellington website. The date and time will be outlined in advertisements and on the website.

3.1.3 Council has the sole authority to award grant funding; however all grant applications will be forwarded to the applicable Council Advisory Committee for review and will make recommendations to Council. On behalf of the committee, staff will prepare a report outlining the committee's funding recommendations and a summary of funding justification for each application to Council. The total allocation recommended by the committee will be within the budget approved by Council for Community Investment Fund.

3.1.4 The applicable Council Advisory Committee will review the applications based on the applicant qualifications listed in section 2.0, and the following measures:

- Alignment with Council's Strategic Plan
- Community Need and Impact
- Project Feasibility and Readiness
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Sustainability
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Evaluation and Measurement

3.1.5 The applicable Council Advisory Committee and/or Council reserves the right to request any applicant to participate in an interview with the appropriate Committee of Council or a presentation to Council to further clarify information within their application.

3.1.6 Upon Council approval, successful grant applicants will be notified in writing. Grant cheques will be issued in a timely manner.

3.1.7 The granting of financial assistance in any year is not to be regarded as a commitment by the Township to continue such assistance in future years. In addition, the Township will not provide guaranteed funding beyond the current year. In approving grants, the Township may impose conditions as it sees fit.

3.1.8 In the event of a surplus after the funding allocations have been determined, funds will be available for Section 5.0 or 6.0 of this policy.

3.2 Annual Specific Stream

3.2.1 Council will review the Annual Specific recipients annually as part of the preliminary annual budget process. Any changes (additions or deletions) to the section will be communicated to the affected organizations in writing prior to the advertisement.

3.2.2 If an Annual Specific recipient organization wants to submit a request for increased funding, the organization must identify the need and the amount of increase within the required letter noted above. The request for an increase shall not eclipse the initial funding ceiling (including CPI increases) identified in 1.0 (\$5,000).

3.2.3 Recipients of Specific Annual Grants are exempt from the requirements of section 3.1

4.0 CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

4.1 Grant recipients must acknowledge the support of the Township of Centre Wellington in all printed materials associated with the initiative funded.

4.2 Grant recipients must complete the online Post Impact Report within two months of the project/program/service. Organizations will not be considered for future grant funding until all required reports are received by the Township of Centre Wellington's Community Services Department.

4.3 Funded projects are required to share the experience and lessons learned upon project completion. Photographs from events with signed Photo Release Waivers for sharing purposes are to be provided to the Township for promotional and online purposes.

5.0 REQUESTS FOR EMERGENCY & DISASTER RELIEF FUNDING

5.1 Consideration of requests under this section must be by an organization compliant with 2.1 and fall under one of the following categories:

5.1.1 Emergency Funding – Funding for organizations that are experiencing extensive financial hardship because of an unforeseen short-term increase in expenditures or decrease in revenues.

5.1.2 Disaster Relief Funding – Funding for organizations or communities whose property and possessions have been extensively damaged in an unexpected natural

disaster. Natural disasters include, but are not restricted to floods, tornados, fires, and storms. This excludes impact due to disease related events.

5.1.3 Applications for funding under this section must come in the form of a report or letter. The report or letter must outline the extent of the emergency/disaster, the estimated financial impact and the requested amount of funding.

5.1.4 Applications for funding under this section may be forwarded to the Township of Centre Wellington at any time throughout the year. These applications are NOT to follow the Community Investment Fund process.

5.1.5 The report or letter must be forwarded to the Corporate Services Department of the Township of Centre Wellington, 1 MacDonald Square, Elora, Ontario, N0B 1S0. After the report or letter has been examined, the Corporate Services Department will issue a report to Council. This report will include a copy of the original report or letter received under section 5.1.3 of this policy as well as a recommendation (including possible funding sources, if applicable).

5.1.6 Council will consider the Corporate Services Department report and upon Council approval, funding will be issued by the Corporate Services Department in a timely manner.

6.0 REQUESTS FOR SUBSIDIZED TOWNSHIP PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY RENTALS

6.1 Organizations requesting a reduction in the Township's fees as per the approved Fees and Charges Schedule for the purpose of Parks and Recreation facility rental/service are required to submit a written request directly to Council. Requests for direct deductions on Township fees is not part of this program.