



Business Assistance Program

Economic Development
Policy M14

Policy:	M14 – Business Assistance Program
Policy Department(s):	Economic Development
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Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide an *assistance program* to small and medium County of Grande Prairie businesses based on identified business needs, through the annual business visitation program.

Policy Statement

The focus of this policy is to assist the County of Grande Prairie's small and medium-sized businesses with varying issues. The assistance will be determined by Council with input from the results of the annual business visitation program.

Definitions

"Applicant" means an established small or medium County of Grande Prairie business.

"Assistance Program" means the level and type of assistance provided to the County of Grande Prairie Small and Medium businesses. This will be determined by Council on an annual basis.

"Council" means the duly elected Council members of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1

"County" means the municipal corporation of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 has jurisdiction under the *Municipal Government Act* and other applicable legislation.

"Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy" means the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, RSA 2000, Chapter F-25, as amended thereto, also known as FOIP.

Guidelines

1. Providing timely access to grants is key to supporting the business community. This policy framework supports a swift response while ensuring appropriate levels of oversight.
2. The Business Assistance Program is designed to be flexible, allowing Council and/or Administration to review grant performance regularly, and pivot as required within the existing policy framework. Given that business-related challenges and needs evolve, maintaining grant agility will be key to its success.



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3. The budget for the Business Assistance Program will be determined annually during budget deliberations.
4. There is a need to balance the immediate financial needs that local businesses face with longer-term priorities related to diversification and local business sustainability.
 - 4.1. The County must also balance needs versus resources available. This policy endeavors to support this balance while maintaining mechanisms to pivot if/when required.
5. Awarding of the grants will be determined by Council upon review of applications and all supporting documentation received.
6. Outcomes of the annual program will be reported back to Council before determining future programming.
7. Recommendations for future programming will be brought forward for Council direction upon completion of annual business visitations.
8. To ensure that the assistance programs are effective and relevant, the Economic Development Department requires business information. All information submitted is confidential and will only be used as aggregated data to assist the Economic Development Department in strategies, policy guidance, and programming.

Funding

9. Council will establish the funding during the County's annual budget process. The allocated funds will come from the Business Assistance Program grant as determined.
 - 9.1. Funding will be allocated on a first come first serve basis until grant funds have been depleted, or the one-year grant timeline has expired; whichever comes first.

Application Procedures

10. Applicants must complete the formal application, with all required supporting documents.
11. Council will review the completed applications and make recommendations for approval or denial of grant funding.
12. Once an application is approved, the Applicant will be required to complete an Acknowledgement of Compliance form with the County.

Reporting

13. Grant recipients are required to meet the following responsibilities or jeopardize their opportunity to receive the anticipated reimbursements and/or be considered for any future programs offered by the County.
 - 13.1. A duly authorized officer of the Applicant must sign an Acknowledgement of Compliance form and meet the conditions outlined therein.



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- 13.2. Submit a copy of the paid invoice and applicable program survey responses as a final report before the end of the program year in which reimbursement was received.

Eligibility:

14. Small and Medium businesses with less than 100 employees.
15. Businesses located within the County and pay County commercial or industrial taxes.
16. Businesses that have been in operation for a minimum of three (3) years prior to the annual grant parameters.
17. Businesses that have proof of the previous year's end statements from the Canada Revenue Agency showing that all Canada Revenue Agency accounts are paid up to date. Those with outstanding Canada Revenue Agency debt, subject to insolvency and/or bankruptcy will not be eligible.
18. Businesses with a gross annual revenue of less than \$3 million dollars.
19. Businesses that are considered viable based on the submission of financial statements.
20. Additional eligibility requirements may be required as stated in the Business Assistance Program and supporting guidelines.

Business Assistance Programs

21. Employee Recruitment, Retention, or Work from Home Policy Development
 - 21.1. Geared to assist County businesses to utilize Certified Human Resources professionals with one of the following:
 - 21.1.1. Employee Attraction Strategy (the effort needed to fill an existing position within the company) – Maximum Grant \$1,000.00
 - 21.1.2. Employee Retention Strategy (the effort needed to retain talent and create a positive workplace culture) – Maximum Grant \$1,000.00
 - 21.1.3. Work from Home Policy Development (to assist in creating the flexibility for productive work from home situations) – Maximum Grant \$500.00
 - 21.2. Reimbursement of the grant will be made upon proof of payment to the Certified Human Resources Professional and program reporting.
 - 21.3. In addition to all eligibility requirements in the Business Assistance Program Policy, the following criteria are required:
 - 21.3.1. Small and Medium Businesses who do not have access to corporate Human Resources staff and/or programs.
 - 21.3.2. Businesses that show a high turnover for specific positions.
 - 21.3.3. Businesses that need to create a new full-time position or have had job postings that have remained open for a minimum of three (3) months.



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- 21.3.4. Businesses that have had to pivot and have office staff work from home, due to pandemic or other unforeseen circumstances.
- 21.4. Applicants may choose from a list of County approved Certified Human Resources Professionals or a Certified Human Resources Professional of their choice provided that proof of certification is submitted to the County.
- 21.5. Refer to the Employee Recruitment, Retention and Work from Home Policy Development Program Guidelines for program guidelines and minimum program criteria.

Attachments

N/A

References

Legal Authorities	Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26
Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.	Policy B1 – Policy Development
Other	Employee Recruitment, Retention, and Work from Home Policy Business Assistance Program Application Acknowledgment of Compliance Form Reimbursement Request Form

Revision History

Review Date	Description
N/A	N/A