

Connected Community Grant

Recreation and Culture
Policy K6

Policy:	K6 – Connected Community Grant
Policy Department(s):	Recreation and Culture
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Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define and establish a unified framework through which the County of Grande Prairie No.1 provides financial support to community organizations, volunteer groups and community members for initiatives that enhance recreation, culture, heritage, safety and community pride within the County.

Policy Statement

The County of Grande Prairie No. 1 is committed to ensuring that recreational, cultural and community improvement programs and opportunities are available to meet the needs of County residents.

The following Connected Community Grant streams are available under this grant program:

- **Community Vibrancy and Wellness:** Designed to support initiatives led by community and volunteer groups that enhance civic pride, environmental responsibility, and overall community safety and well-being within Hamlets and Rural Subdivisions. This includes projects such as community beautification, the development and maintenance of temporary or non-fixed local amenities (e.g., volunteer-led ice surfaces), and initiatives that foster safe, healthy and inclusive communities.
- **Emergent Funding Requests:** Considered to be an unforeseen situation or outcome where an urgency exists, and the situation must be dealt with in a timely manner. Applicants must meet the definition of Emergent within this policy, and the applicant must be prepared to defend the situation as Emergent.
- **Sponsorship, Donations and Community Support Requests:** Groups or organizations that provide County residents with cultural and Recreation opportunities or contribute to the quality of life and enhance the livability of the community can apply for event Sponsorship, or other support or funding needs. Events or groups that fundraise to disperse funding raised to other organizations are not eligible for this grant program.

Definitions

“Agriculture” means the science, art, or occupation concerned with cultivating land, raising crops, and feeding, breeding and raising livestock; farming.

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“Agriculture Fair” means an exhibition that is intended to promote Agriculture by including a variety of exhibits of livestock and/or Agriculture products.

“CAO” also known as “County Manager” or “Chief Administrative Officer” means the person, or delegate appointed by Council to the position of Chief Administrative Officer under the Municipal Government Act for the County.

“Community Beautification Initiative” means small-scale outdoor projects that directly enhance the appearance, comfort or functionality of a community space. This may include, but is not limited to, garden supplies, plants, landscaping features, temporary decorative assets such as lighting, and beautification infrastructure including benches, picnic tables and similar amenities.

“Community Milestone” means an anniversary occurring at intervals of 25 years for a community, that could be a city, town, village, hamlet, residential subdivision or localized residential area with a minimum of 5 households and a school or church located wholly within the boundaries of the County of Grande Prairie.

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

“County” means the municipality of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 having jurisdiction under the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation.

“Donation” means a gift for charity, humanitarian aid or to benefit a cause without a return consideration. It may take various forms including money, aims, services or goods. Charitable Donations of goods or services are also called gifts in kind. Gifts or gifts-in-kind may include gift baskets, County branded merchandise and event tickets.

“Emergent” is considered an unforeseen situation or outcome where urgency exists and the situation must be dealt with in a timely manner. Examples can include natural disasters, critical infrastructure failure, sudden loss of major funding or urgent safety needs.

“Funding Raised for Other Associations” means groups who fundraise on behalf of a third party with the intention to donate purchased goods or supplies to another third party with County recognition. This excludes groups that donate monetary funds.

“Graduation Support” means dry graduation events, where no alcohol is present, for Grade 12 graduating classes. Funding can be utilized for items such as venue, equipment, marketing, supplies and similar approved purposes.

“Grants” means non-repayable funds or products disbursed by the Council to a grant recipient, such as a not-for-profit entity, local organization or volunteer group that provides Recreation or cultural programs and opportunities that benefit County residents.

“Greenspace” means land used for Recreation and leisure, including public parks and community buildings owned by the County that is dedicated for Recreation purposes and accessible to the public.

“Hamlet” means an unincorporated community designated by Council that consists of 5 or more dwellings, has a generally accepted boundary and name, and contains land that is used for non-residential purposes.

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"Municipal Reserve" means land that has been designated as reserve and are available for public enjoyment. May include both Municipal Reserve (MR) and municipal and school reserve (MSR) as described under Division 8 Reserve Land, Land for Road and Utilities of the Municipal Government Act.

"Neighborhood Ice Surface" means any temporary, outdoor natural ice surface set up for the winter season on a Municipal Reserve Greenspace within a neighborhood or subdivision. The ice surface could have low board edge or a snowbank edge.

"Operating" means funding or projects related to maintaining or enhancing operations that are not directly related to infrastructure.

"Recreation" refers to the range of experiences that support individual and community wellbeing, including play, sport, cultural activities, and outdoor pursuits, and that contribute to the social, mental, and physical health of individuals and communities.

"Rural Subdivision" means a group of 2 or more parcels within the area(s) of the County that are predominately utilized for agricultural purposes.

"Site" means location of the Neighborhood Ice Surface within the neighborhood or subdivision. It is acknowledged that there may be several potential Sites within the same subdivision – for example, phased development within a subdivision. In this case, a separate Volunteer Group must be established to manage each Neighborhood Ice Surface Site.

"Sponsorship" means the act of supporting an event, activity, person or organization financially or through the provision of products or services with an expectation of corporate recognition.

Policy Guidelines

Eligibility

1. Any events, programs or ice surfaces supported by this policy must be open and accessible to County residents.
2. Any events or programs occurring within the County, and/or benefit County residents.
3. Recipients are in good standing with no compliance issues.
4. Programs or events do not fall within the funded Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) mandate.

Funding

5. Council will identify a Connected Community Grant funding budget during the annual budget process. Financing for the grant will come from general revenues or other funding sources as determined by Council.
6. In recognition of the Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs) established between the County and surrounding municipalities, organizations located within a partnering municipality are required to apply to their own municipality before seeking County funding.

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Applicants must outline any municipal funding or in-kind support received and identify the extent to which County residents benefit from their facilities.

7. Each year, the Connected Community Grant program will have the following sub sections within the grant to direct the distribution of funds:
 - 7.1. Community Vibrancy and Wellness: Applicants may apply for one of the following levels, based on the type of initiative.
 - 7.1.1. Level 1: Up to \$1,000 – Approved by Administration and intended to support participating Hamlet or Rural Subdivision that is to be used solely for a Community Beautification Initiative within their area.
 - 7.1.2. Level 2: Up to \$1,500 – Approved by Administration and intended for programs such as Neighborhood Ice Surfaces, Community Gardens, and Safety and Wellness programs that impact less than 300 people.
 - 7.1.3. Level 3: Up to \$5,000 – Approved by Council with no presentation and intended for programs such as Rural Crime Watch initiatives, non-fixed infrastructure upgrades, and Safety and Wellness programs that impact more than 300 people.
 - 7.2. Sponsorship, Donations and Community Support: Applicants may apply for one of the following funding levels:
 - 7.2.1. Level 1: Under \$500 – Approved by Administration and intended for programs such as Graduation Support, where the amount of County Residents directly impacts approved funding.
 - 7.2.2. Level 2: Under \$1,500 – Approved by Administration and intended for events such as Agricultural Fairs, Community Fundraisers, Single Day Festivals and Dine and Dances with less than 299 attendees.
 - 7.2.3. Level 3: Under \$5,000 – Approved by Council with no presentation and intended for events such as Multi-Day Community Fundraisers, Single Day Cultural Events, Dine and Dances with 300 to 999 attendees, and Groups hosting Provincial/National competitions under \$100,000 Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
 - 7.2.4. Level 4: Under \$7,500 – Approved by Council with no presentation and intended for Dine and Dances with over 1000 attendees, Groups hosting Provincial/National Competitions with over 101,000 GDP, and Multi-Day Cultural Events
 - 7.2.5. Level 5: \$7,501 to \$10,000 – Presentation to Council is required for approval and intended for large-scale events with funding from the Community Grants Reserve and with estimated attendance of over 7,500 people for a multi-day event.

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- 7.2.6. Level 6: Over \$10,000 – A presentation to Council is required prior to interim budget for the upcoming year in which the event is scheduled to take place. This is intended for large-scale, multi-day events such as Folk Festivals, Community Milestone and Pro-Rodeos. The funding source is to be determined by Council during budget deliberations.
8. Any grant funds initially budgeted for but not allocated (undersubscribed) during the fiscal year (to a maximum of \$20,000) may either be transferred to the Community Grants Reserve or otherwise through a motion of Council.
9. If grant funds are depleted before the end of the fiscal year, Council may pass a motion to supplement the funds from the Community Grants Reserve or another source as determined by Council.
10. Emergent funding is sourced from the Community Grants Reserve.

Applications for Funding

11. Applications must be received through the County's grant application software by the specific deadlines:
- 11.1. Community Vibrancy and Wellness: Any requests over \$1,500 will follow the quarterly submission chart below. Requests under \$1,500 may be submitted at any time for administrative approval. A maximum of \$5,000 will be allocated per initiative, unless otherwise approved by Council.
- 11.2. Emergent Operating Funding Requests: Will be prioritized by Administration and scheduled at the next available Regular Council Meeting. To meet these criteria the applicant must provide a business case to justify the Emergent nature of the request.
- 11.3. Sponsorship, Donations and Community Support Requests: Any requests over \$1,500 will follow the quarterly submission chart below. Requests under \$1,500 may be submitted at any time for administrative approval. Funding requests over \$7,500 require a delegation presentation to Council.
12. Applications that are received after the deadline may be considered pending approval by the CAO or Community Services, General Manager.
13. Applications that do not meet the criteria may not be brought forward to Council for consideration.
14. Religious faith-based groups may apply if the program services provide a Recreation and cultural benefit to the broader community, they are a registered charity or incorporated not-for-profit, the Grant funding is not used towards religious activities or programs and is inclusive to all members of the community following equity and diversity guidelines.

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15. The quarterly application schedule is as follows:

Application due date:	March 1	June 1	September 1	December 1
Event takes place between:	April 1 - June 30	July 1 – September 30	October 1 – December 31	January 1 – March 31
Council Meeting / Funding released:	March	June	September	December

16. Applications must demonstrate that the opportunities being provided are open for the use and enjoyment of County residents. If user fees are charged, all users will be charged at the same rate. Preference will be given to projects that:

- 16.1. Benefit a number of County residents or open to the community for use.
- 16.2. Provide evidence that there is a large volume of volunteerism and/or fundraising.
- 16.3. Demonstrate success in achieving project or initiative goals.
- 16.4. Include a well-organized business plan that includes performance measures.
- 16.5. Applications that do not duplicate or compete with existing Recreation or cultural opportunities unless there is a definite need or benefit to be achieved.
- 16.6. Funding for Sponsorship and Donations should not exceed 50% of the total costs.

Distribution of Funds

- 17. Community Vibrancy and Wellness: Upon approval by Council motion, funding for successful applications will be processed within 2 business weeks or less. For requests under \$1,500 that are approved by Administration, funding for successful applications will be processed within 2 business weeks or less of notification.
- 18. Emergent Funding: Upon approval by Council motion, funding for successful applications will be processed within 2 business weeks or less.
- 19. Sponsorship, Donation and Community Support: Upon approval by Council motion, funding for successful applications will be processed within 2 business weeks or less. For requests under \$1,500 approved by Administration, funding for successful applications will be processed within 2 business weeks of notification.

Reporting Compliance Requirements

- 20. Administration will provide a quarterly report to Council on funding allocations approved by Administration.

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21. All recipients of the Connected Community Grant must complete the following compliance requirements:
 - 21.1. All funding recipients will be required to submit a written report that shows outcomes and includes a financial account of the funds expended and net proceeds for fundraising events.
 - 21.2. Any and all unused funding for any Connected Community Grant Initiatives must be returned to the County.
 - 21.3. Failure to submit compliance reporting may result in ineligibility for future funding.

Risk Management and Insurance Considerations

22. All grant recipients must be willing to undertake a review process if requested by the County to ensure that insurance compliance and best practices are being followed.

Recognition

23. All grant recipients must publicly recognize the contributions that the County made to their project as reasonably requested by Administration through the County's Recognition Guidelines.

Attachments

N/A

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References

Legal Authorities	Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Acts
Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.	Policy B1 – Policy Development Policy C27 – Financial Reserves Policy
Other	County Grant Portal

Revision History

Review Date	Description
July 13, 2026	Reviewed and Amended CM20260713.009
December 12, 2022	Reviewed and Amended CM20221212.007
January 20, 2020	Reviewed and Amended CM20200120.003
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