POLICY NUMBER: POL-F11-001, REV. 00
DEPARTMENT: Finance **CONTACT:** Director of Finance
SUBJECT: Municipal Grants
APPROVAL DATE: May 28, 2018
REVISION DATE:
APPROVED BY: Sarnia City Council
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Council, municipal staff and the public with a framework by which Municipal grants will be applied for, reviewed and awarded.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the City of Sarnia to provide modest financial assistance to not-for-profit, community-based organizations for projects that pro-actively contribute to the strategic priorities of Council as identified in the City's Strategic Plan.   It is recognized that volunteer efforts of community organizations are significant and that Sarnia's taxpayers cannot fund every worthwhile project. This policy provides criteria to establish eligibility and encourages community organizations to create long-term funding sustainability plans suitable to their initiative. The application and selection process section focuses on administrative efficiency for grant applicants, municipal staff and Council.

SCOPE/APPLICATION

This policy shall apply to applications for funding of Municipal Grants, and the Festival & Event Policy & Procedures Manual identifies specifically how the Major Event Assistance Fund will be administered.

As per Section 107 of the Municipal Act, 2001, Council has the authority to provide grants for any purpose considered to be in the interest of the municipality.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Project: An activity or program that is clearly defined with a specific objective, specific budget and will be executed in a fixed period of time.

PROCESS

Municipal Grant Budget
The current year's draft operating budget will include the total amount of grant funds that were awarded to external organizations in the previous year's

operating budget. Increases to this budget will only be made through an approved motion of Council on budget deliberation day.

Eligible Organizations
To be eligible for a municipal grant, applicants must:
- Be a not-for-profit incorporated organization or registered charitable organization that has been in operation for a minimum of one year
- Be governed by a community-based volunteer Board of Directors
- Extend services to the general public of the City of Sarnia
- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility and sustainability

Funding Ineligibility
Municipal grant funding is not eligible for the following:
- Individuals
- For-profit organizations
- Other levels of government
- Organizations with political affiliations
- Organizations that provide grants to others
- Organizations whose activities or outcomes are inconsistent with the City of Sarnia's values or goals
- Organizations whose activities may breach the Ontario Human Rights Code or Charter of Rights

Project Eligibility
Eligible Projects must:
- Be accessible to everyone
- Have a budget separate from the organization's operating budget
- Benefit the citizens of the City of Sarnia
- Include significant volunteer involvement
- Have a specific benefit and outcome that pro-actively contributes to the priorities identified in the City of Sarnia's Strategic Plan
- Be sustainable beyond the support of the municipal grant

Ineligible Projects and expenditures include:
- Programs that other levels of government have legislated responsibility for funding
- Operating, administration, or deficit reduction expenses

- Costs related to fundraising activities
- Food or beverage costs, contingency, or miscellaneous costs
- More than 50% of the budget of the project

Application

Funding applications will be considered on an annual basis. Budget dates and submission deadlines are set by Council each year. Any organization that is requesting funding during the annual budget process must submit a complete application by the due date. Applications that are incomplete or not submitted by the due date will not be considered.

Application forms shall be designed to capture sufficient information about the project and applicant to assist staff in completing the eligibility review and for Council to complete the assessment.

Depending on the nature and value of the requested grant, additional information may be requested after the initial application.

Assessment & Selection Process

Projects that meet the application requirements will be reviewed by staff to determine if the eligibility requirements are met, and summarize this within the draft budget documents. Those that meet the eligibility requirements will have the full application included in the draft budget documents.

It is understood that there are limited funds that Council allocates to municipal grants and not every worthwhile project can be funded. On budget deliberation day Council will consider, but is not limited to, the following assessment criteria in evaluating the grants to be awarded for the upcoming year;

- Demonstrated need for the Project within the City of Sarnia
- Alignment of the Project with the City's Strategic Plan
- Outcomes and Measures of the Project
- Community Impact and Volunteer Involvement in the Project
- Financial Feasibility of the Project
- Organizational Effectiveness and Long-term Sustainability of the Project

Council will allocate grant funding up to the amount included in the draft operating budget or approve an increase or decrease through an approved motion during budget deliberations.

Municipal Grant award decisions of Council are final and not subject to appeal.

Funding Conditions
- Recipients will publicly acknowledge support from the City of Sarnia, and include a current City logo on all forms of communication related to the project.
- A grant is not to be regarded as a commitment by the City to continue assistance in the future.
- A grant will only be used for the purpose approved by Council. The grant recipient must request approval for any proposed material changes to the project prior to implementation. If the changes result in cancellation or significant delay, the recipient will, after consultation with staff, be required to return the grant funds received that year.
- Failure to meet the reporting requirement will affect future requests for funding.

Reporting Requirements
Successful applicants who receive funding from the program must report on how the funding was spent and the impact the funding achieved. A reporting template will be provided with the grant award. The final report must be submitted to the City within 60 days of completion of the project. If the project continues into the next calendar year, an interim report is required by the end the calendar year.

Other Grants
Requests for contributions to local disaster funds, such as fire, flood, earthquakes etc. are time-sensitive, and will be considered by Council through a notice of motion or within the urgent matter portion of a Council meeting. Each request will be considered on the merit of each request, and funding source determined at that time.

The Council adopted Event and Festival Policy and Procedure Manual identifies how the Major Event Assistance Fund is administered.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council is responsible for determining what amount will be included in the annual operating budget for Municipal Grants, and the application submission deadline. They are also responsible for the Assessment of Grant applications in relation to the assessment criteria outlined in this Policy and the determination of how the funding will be allocated to specific projects.

Finance staff are responsible for preparing and posting the application form, reviewing the applications to determine the eligibility based on the requirement of the policy, determining if additional information should be requested, and including information within the draft budget documents for Council's consideration. After Council has determined which projects will be funded, Finance staff will issue payments, and track post-project reports.

Applicants are responsible for the accurate completion of the application form, submitting by the deadline, any supplementary information if required, and completing the reporting requirements.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years.