

1. Policy

Policy Number:	P-CS-23-04
Policy Name:	Discretionary Grants
Effective Date:	
Last Revised:	
Last Reviewed:	June 2024

2. Policy Purpose

This policy serves to prioritize and allocate discretionary grants to organizations, groups and events that support and enhance the cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being of the community of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Through the allocation of discretionary grants, the Council of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake acknowledges the significance of various organizations, groups, and events that contribute to the community's welfare. These grants, subject to budget limitations and deliberations, are intended to provide direct or indirect benefits to the citizens and are evaluated and approved through the Discretionary Grants Committee.

3. Scope

The scope of this policy extends to the administration of the Discretionary Grants Program and is for provided under Section 107 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*:

107 (1) Despite any provision of this or any other Act relating to the giving of grants or aid by a municipality, subject to section 106, a municipality may make grants, on such terms as to security and otherwise as the council considers appropriate, to any person, group or body, including a fund, within or outside the boundaries of the municipality for any purpose that council considers to be in the interests of the municipality. 2001, c. 25, s. 107 (1).

4. Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Discretionary Grant	One-time grants to financially assist organizations, events and activities that Council has determined improve the quality of life of the residents in the Town.

5. Policy Statement

Discretionary grants may be offered by Council to financially assist organizations, events and activities whose functions, in Council's estimation, improve the quality of life of the people in the Town.

Specific examples are described by, but not limited to, the following:

- Human Services, social, health care and educational programs that benefit our citizens and improve the quality of life

- Economic Promotion and Development
- Environmental Promotion, Climate Change Adaptation/Mitigation Development or initiatives that help reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions or carbon footprint
- Arts, Culture and Recreation, activities and events that may enrich and perpetuate the artistic level and cultural heritage of the citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake; and
- Other beneficial organizations not easily classified

6. Policy Details

All organizations seeking discretionary grants must meet the following: (Requirements may be waived at Council's discretion)

6a. Eligibility

Eligible Applicants must:

- Be categorized as at least one of the following and provide their Business Identification Number:
 - Registered charitable organization
 - Incorporated as a not-for profit organization
- Have a volunteer board of directors and constitution or governing by-law that satisfies best practices
- Be in good standing with the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Be physically located within the Town or provide services related to the residents of the Town
- Address a community need, an underserved demand or represent an innovative approach to delivering service.
- The service must provide a social, recreational, cultural and/or economic benefit to the community
- The activities or services proposed must be extended to all members of the general public in the Town and should not exclude anyone by reason of race, religion or ethnic background, or disability.
- For events, only new events or initiatives will be considered, and for existing events, only new items/initiatives will be considered for funding.

Ineligible Applicants:

- Individuals
- For-profit organizations
- Other levels of government
- Political organizations and entities
- Religious organizations (unless for an inclusive project)
- For events, paid ticketed events

Eligible Costs:

- Facility construction/renovations
- Equipment/Vehicle
- Facility or equipment rentals and permits
- Supplies and materials
- Marketing
- Entertainment and speakers
- Incremental wages and contracted services related to the project
- Contributions to a capital project (project management, consulting fees, design, engineering, etc)

Ineligible Costs:

- Regular operating costs including regular staff wages
- Debt retirement, deficit reduction, depreciation, of financing charges
- Retroactive payments (costs incurred before the grant approval date)
- Secondary allocations (allocation of funds to another organizations, including supporting fundraising activities for other organizations)
- Projects that have previously received funding but did not have an enhanced or expanded project scope
- Top-ups to shortfalls of government-mandated programs (i.e. school, health programs, etc)
- Activities that primarily serve the membership or purposes of religious organizations
- Expenses not directly related to the project

6b. Application

- Each applicant will be required to complete the necessary application for discretionary grants
- Each applicant must indicate the reason for its existence and how its proposed services will relate to the existing pattern of other services, and/or provide new services, to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of the Town. Thus, the merit of the proposed services can be evaluated in sufficient detail in order that the Committee can assess the value of the services to the community
- Each applicant must demonstrate that, if it is successful in obtaining a grant from Council, the group or organization becomes financially capable of offering the services it proposes. Financial statements for the previous fiscal year along with current year budget statements that show the organization's financial activities must be provided. In the first year of application, the organization must provide more than one set of previous financial statements to demonstrate financial stability.
- Each applicant must demonstrate if it has and will be actively seeking other sources of financial support from the private sector and other levels of government

- The individual submitting the application must have the authority to bind/commit the organization.

7. Procedures

Discretionary Grant applications will be extended to all members of the general public in the Town and should not exclude anyone by reason of race, religion or ethnic background. Applications will be posted on the Town's website and a notice will be placed in the local newspaper advising of the deadline for filing applications. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Subject to available funds, number of applications, and pre-existing Council direction and motions; the Discretionary Grant Committee will attempt to extend funds to the maximum number of applicants as possible. Where possible, the Committee will prorate requests based on the pool of available funding after considering pre-existing Council motions/direction; but reserves the right to make allocations as it deems appropriate.

The total amount available through the Discretionary Grant program will be indexed annually by the general Consumer Price Index to a maximum of 3%; however, this does not preclude Council from amending the total discretionary grant budget.

Discretionary Grant applications will be reviewed by a Committee consisting of three (3) Council Members and one (1) Corporate Services staff member and one (1) Senior Management Team member, known as the Discretionary Grant Committee.

Discretionary Grants are offered in the following two categories:

Category 1

Category 1 covers groups/organizations that are looking for financial assistance for a specific event or undertaking that would benefit residents of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (Town). This may take place only once or could be an annual event, but the event or undertaking for which funds are being requested must have a defined starting and finishing period.

The organization would be required to complete an "Application for Discretionary Grant" and include with the application their financial statements from the previous year as well as a proposed budget.

The Discretionary Grant Committee will review each application including the Guidelines/Criteria and decide whether the organization will qualify for financial assistance from the Town.

Examples: Fireworks displays, Community Festivals, etc.

The maximum amount of funding per organization for this Category is \$7,500.00

Category 2

Category 2 covers groups/organizations that are requesting significant financial assistance to achieve longer-term capital goals to enhance their operational capabilities.

Examples: Major capital improvements (examples include: roof replacement, boiler/HVAC replacement, and a building expansion project).

The maximum amount of funding per organization for this Category is \$15,000.00

Please note: It is not the intention or mandate of the Discretionary Grant Program to provide ongoing operational funding to any organization in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Applicants will be required to complete an “Application for Discretionary Grant” and include financial statements from the previous year and a proposed budget. The Discretionary Grant Committee will permit organizations in this category to apply for one or several years of support if they wish, limited only by the condition that the support requested must not extend past the final fiscal term associated with the anticipated term of Council. Should the Discretionary Grant Committee wish to approve funding for more than one year, the organization will still be required to file annual financial statements and a proposed budget on an annual basis, including a brief statement regarding the organizations’ success achieved to date through grant proceeds.

Disbursement of Approved Discretionary Grants

If the approved Discretionary Grants are:

- i) less than or equal to \$1,500 - 90% of the grant is payable as soon as possible, after Council has approved the annual budget. The balance will be released once the final report is received and all requirements are met.
- ii) greater than \$1,500 – 40% once the grant is executed, 40% once the progress report has been received and 20% once the final report is received and all requirements are met.

NOTE: In certain instances, Council may choose to issue Grants at times different from those above. Also, the Treasurer may deviate from the above disbursement schedule, in special circumstances where it is not practical.

8. Reporting Requirements

Each successful applicant must submit a progress report and final report by the deadlines outlined in funding agreement.

Progress Report

A progress report must be submitted 6 months after the approval of the grant. This report must detail the progress made on the project and the expected completion date of the project.

Final Report

A final report must be submitted to the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake within 60 days of the Grant end date.

Information to be provided in the final report includes:

- Reporting on project outcomes including results, number of people engaged, testimonials
- Overview of challenges
- Project expense report and receipts for expenses covered by the grant
- Summary of the project and the impact on community from the grant funds
- Photos of the project or event with permission for them to be shared on the Town website and social media

9. Terms and Conditions

- a. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Discretionary Grant Program is subject to funding availability and conditional on Council's approval of the annual operating budget. Council reserves the right to cancel or alter grant programs as needed.
- b. The Town reserves the right to reject any grant request or application including those that meet all conditions as stated in this Policy in cases where the demand for grants is greater than the funding available for allocation, or the Town, in its sole discretion, is of the opinion that it is in its best interests that the grant request be rejected.
- c. Grant funding awarded may be lower than the requested amount depending on demand for the grant, and applications received.
- d. Approved grants or other types of assistance in any one year, or over several years, is not regarded as a commitment for future assistance and/or ongoing financial assistance.
- e. Successful applicants will have one year from the effective date of the grant agreement to spend grant funds.
- f. If grant funds are not used for the project/program indicated in the application:
 - i. The funds must be returned to the Town to the attention of the Treasurer within 30 days of notice, and,

- ii. If the funds are expended inappropriately or for a purpose other than the event/program/project indicated in the application, Council may at its discretion disqualify the organization from all subsequent financial or in-kind assistance from the Town.

- g. Applications will only be accepted from eligible organizations and signed by officers of a Board of Directors, Executive Committee, or an authorized member of an organization that has the authority to bind an organization.

- h. Successful grant recipients must obtain and provide proof of liability insurance providing coverage for their organizations and operations in addition to any other liability insurance requirements deemed necessary by the Town before a grant can be distributed. Failure to obtain liability insurance that is deemed acceptable by the Town will result in the cancellation of an awarded grant.

- i. For events, successful grant recipients must apply for a Special Event Permit from the Town

- j. The Town reserves the right to cancel awarded grant assistance without notice if the applicant violates any terms and conditions outlined in this policy or other legally binding agreements

- k. Grant recipients must acknowledge funding support from the Town in communication materials, media coverage, and verbal promotion pertaining to the program or project being supported by the grant and follow the Town branding guidelines when doing so.

10. Forms

- Discretionary Grant Application Form

11. Responsibilities

POSITION or OFFICE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Director of Corporate Services	1. Periodically review the Discretionary Grant Program and make recommendations for improvement. 2. Coordinate and execute the program per this policy.

12. Related Information

N/A

13. Contacts

Please direct any questions regarding this policy to be below contacts:

OFFICE	PHONE	EMAIL
Director of Corporate Services	905-468-3266 ext. 296	kyle.freeborn@notl.com

POLICY GOVERNANCE	
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