

CORPORATE POLICY



Policy Title: **Culture Sector COVID-recovery Grant Policy**
Policy Category: **Municipal Services**
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Department: CAO – Economic Development
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POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Waterloo recognizes that a strong arts and culture community is essential for enhancing Waterloo's quality of place and contributing to a robust and diversified economy. The City of Waterloo also recognizes that the arts and culture sector has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many arts, culture and festival organizations have been particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 due to the unprecedented loss of revenue caused by the cancellation of performances, exhibitions, productions and community events, the closure of venues and the prohibition of public gatherings. The Culture Sector COVID-recovery Grant is one way the City supports local not-for-profit cultural organizations as they begin to reopen and recover from the pandemic.

Funding through the Culture Sector COVID-recovery Grant is intended to help stabilize arts, culture and festival organizations that are still struggling with operational viability due to the pandemic or to support new initiatives that help build organizational resilience and pursue business innovation and transformation.

PURPOSE:

The Culture Sector COVID-recovery Grant provides a framework for distribution of available program funds. This includes identifying eligibility criteria, funding use parameters, assessment processes, and accountability measure, among other factors.

Mandatory Policy, *Municipal Act*: no
Policy Administration Team, Review Date _____
Corporate Management Team, Review Date _____

The policy supports understanding, transparency, and consistency in grant application, assessment, and allocation decision-making.

DEFINITIONS:

Affiliated Organization: a community organization that has entered into a formal relationship with the City of Waterloo to support a mutual interest to provide recreation and sports, arts and culture, festivals and events, and/or programs and services, in accordance with the City's goals.

Affiliation Service Agreement: a formal agreement entered into by an Affiliated Community Organization and the City of Waterloo that specifies mutual expectations and benefits to the respective parties.

Capital funds: funds used for one-time expenses related to structures, equipment, or other long-term assets.

Grant Assessment Committee: an ad-hoc committee consisting of two (2) staff from the Economic Development division, one (1) staff from the Finance division, and three (3) members of the Advisory Committee on Culture.

Operating funds: funds for regular, ongoing operating costs related to an organization, which may include, but are not limited to rent, insurance, telephone and internet services, salaries of professional or administrative staff, and in-house training.

Project funds: funds for support of one-time, temporary, and/or innovative endeavors with a specific objective that is completed in a specific timeframe with a clear beginning and end date. Projects must be different from, or in addition to, current core services and programs.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to:

- All applicants to the Culture Sector COVID-recovery Grant program
- City of Waterloo staff responsible for the delivery of the Culture Sector COVID-recovery Grant program
- Members of the Advisory Committee on Culture

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

This policy will be communicated by means of:

- A user-friendly program toolkit for applicants available online
- Including the website location for the program toolkit in promotional information distributed to Affiliated arts and culture organizations and Affiliated festival and events organizations

- Posting the policy on the City of Waterloo website
- Posting the policy on the City of Waterloo intranet accessible by staff
- Providing a copy to all staff involved in the delivery of the grant program
- Providing a copy to all Advisory Committee on Culture members

It is the applicant's responsibility to be proactive in seeking out the program toolkit, including the grant application form and submission deadlines.

POLICY:

1.0 Grant program principles

The Culture Sector COVID-recovery Grant program is intended for culture sector initiatives that are:

- Led by Affiliated arts and culture organizations, Affiliated festival and events organizations or designated Key Cultural Institutions; and
- Aimed at addressing operational viability due to the pandemic and/or focused on building organizational recovery and resilience, business innovation and transformation.

The Culture Sector COVID-recovery Grant program is intended to:

- Have an easy to follow application process;
- Allow for innovative cultural initiatives;
- Be flexible in terms of the range of ideas funded and their implementation;
- Help mitigate the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on culture sector organizations.

2.0 Program description

Each applicant and project is unique. The Culture Sector COVID-recovery Grant is intended to encourage innovative cultural initiatives and to offer flexibility to applicants.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact City Staff to discuss their application prior to submission.

This program provides projects funds, capital funds, and/or operating funds. See definitions above for more information.

The following criteria should be considered by applicants and will be used by the Grant Assessment Committee to assess applications.

Eligible organizations must have:

- An organizational COVID-recovery plan or strategies;
- A demonstrated decrease in operations and staffing compliment due to COVID; and,
- A demonstrated loss of revenue from fees or rentals due to COVID.

Eligible funding requests must support COVID-recovery initiatives, and could include:

- In person programs or events that will re-engage patrons;
- Fees for additional space usage/rental
- Costs associated with marketing and promotional materials;
- Using the COVID-recovery Grant to leverage additional funds;
- Purchases for equipment or materials for staff or patron safety;
- Building or venue upgrades.

3.0 Eligible applicants

Arts and culture organizations or festival and event organizations with current Affiliation Service Agreements and designated Key Cultural Institutions are eligible to apply.

The following types of groups are not eligible to apply:

- A single individual.
- Groups or organizations not currently in an Affiliated Service Agreement
- Affiliated organizations in the sports, recreation, or neighbourhood sectors
- Political organizations.
- Government organizations.
- For-profit businesses.
- Educational institutions.
- Other not-for-profits and registered charities, beyond those listed above under Section 3 Eligible Applicants.

4.0 Eligible expenses

Eligible expenses include:

- project materials;
- artist fees;
- capital asset development/improvement; and
- ongoing operating funding.

Ineligible expenses include:

- items already purchased;
- retroactive expenditures;
- debt reduction/loan repayment.

5.0 Application submission and assessment

- a) Applicants must submit their completed applications, using the provided application form, by the submission deadline. Applications submitted after the grant deadline or incomplete will not be assessed by the Grant Assessment Committee.

- b) Grant applications will be assessed by the Grant Assessment Committee. Applications will be reviewed using an assessment tool, based on this policy, to guide the evaluation of each application and to make funding allocation decisions.
- c) The Grant Assessment Committee may ask applicants to clarify information provided, or ask for additional information before making a funding decision.
- d) The Grant Assessment Committee will notify all applicants of final funding decisions within 4-6 weeks of the application submission deadline. This timeline will allow City staff to gather information from relevant City departments to support project success, and for the Grant Assessment Committee to make funding decisions.
- e) Successful applicants will be notified of the amount of funding allocated by City staff.

6.0 Conditions

- a) Notice of receipt of a grant does not imply approval of municipal permits and permissions.
- b) Partial amounts of grant funding may be held back until permits and permissions are received from the City of Waterloo and/or other agencies/organizations as required.
- c) Successful applicants may be required to put additional measures in place to ensure the safety of project participants. This may include a requirement for adequate liability insurance, depending on the nature of the project.
- d) Grant recipients must acknowledge the support of the City of Waterloo, and any other funders of the grant, on all promotional materials that relate to their project and as otherwise determined by staff.
- e) Grant funds must be used as per the approved grant application. Any significant changes to the original grant application must be discussed with and approved by the appropriate City of Waterloo staff liaison prior to implementation. If the proposed changes are acceptable, the grant funding may be revised to reflect the changes, or if the proposed changes are not acceptable to the City, approval may be revoked and grant funding will not be forwarded to applicant or the applicant will be required to return any grant funding already provided. Failure to seek approval from the City for any changes from the approved grant application may result in ineligibility for future funding or the need to return any grant funding received.

- f) Projects should be completed within one year (12 months) of receipt of funding.
- g) Extensions may be provided based on extenuating circumstances. Grant recipients must complete and submit to the City of Waterloo a Grant Summary Report, including final reconciled budget, within 12 months of receipt of funding.
- h) Submission of a grant application does not guarantee the applicant will receive full or partial funding.
- i) Grants should not be considered renewable in subsequent years. This grant is a one-time funding allocation.

7.0 Appeals

Appeals will not be considered. The decisions of the Grant Assessment Committee regarding applicant eligibility, application assessment, and grant allocation will be considered final.

COMPLIANCE:

In cases of policy violation, the City may investigate and determine appropriate corrective action.