

CORPORATE POLICY



Policy Title: **Neighbourhood Matching Fund Policy**
Policy Category: **Municipal Services**
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Department: Community Services
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Attachments:
Related Documents/Legislation:
M-004 Community, Culture & Recreation Cash Grants Policy
City of Waterloo Neighbourhood Strategy

Key Word(s): neighbourhood, community-building, placemaking, grant

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Waterloo recognizes that neighbourhood resident-led and delivered projects contribute to community building and foster neighbourhood identity and sense of belonging.

The Neighbourhood Matching Fund (NMF) program is one way the city supports grass roots neighbourhood projects and helps residents build strong communities. It encourages neighbourhood projects to be inclusive and welcoming, and encourages resident-led placemaking. It provides financial resources and guidance from staff to help residents working with their neighbours to make their projects, events, and activities happen. The Neighbourhood Matching Fund is intended to inspire residents to become more involved in their neighbourhood and to play a role in making their neighbourhood even better.

Mandatory Policy, *Municipal Act*: No
Policy Administration Team, Review Date: August 1, 2018
Corporate Management Team, Review Date: by email

PURPOSE:

The Neighbourhood Matching Fund Policy provides a framework for distribution of available program funds. This includes identifying eligibility criteria, funding use parameters, assessment processes, and accountability measures, among other factors.

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

DEFINITIONS:

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

Grassroots group: A group involving ordinary people; an informal group of residents/neighbourhoods that have come together for a particular purpose.

Neighbourhood: A district where people live. Neighbourhood boundaries can change over time and can be defined differently depending on each individual. For the purposes of this policy the term neighbourhood will refer to a single neighbourhood or more than one neighbourhood working together, and will consider neighbourhoods to have flexible boundaries.

Resident-led placemaking: When the neighbours collectively lead or help decide how their public spaces will look and be enjoyed. Placemaking inspires residents to collectively reinvent public spaces as the heart of their community through events, activities, and community projects.

Project summary report: all grant recipients are required to submit a project summary report within 30 days of completing their project. The project summary report must include a written overview of the project implemented, final budget, and all receipts. A template will be made available.

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 Neighbourhood Matching Fund program.
- Staff (City of Waterloo and other program funders) responsible for the delivery of the Neighbourhood Matching Fund program.
- Members of the Community Grants Committee.

POLICY COMMUNICATION:

This policy will be communicated by means of:

- A user-friendly program toolkit for applicants available online and hardcopy.
- Including the website location for the program toolkit in promotional information distributed to the public.
- 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 Community Grants Committee 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 Neighbourhood Matching Fund is intended for neighbourhood initiatives that are:

- Primarily resident-led and delivered;
- Aimed at community-building;
- Focused on a neighbourhood, rather than a city wide focus;
- Accessible and inclusive;
- Broadly supported by the neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood Matching Fund is intended to:

- Have an easy to follow application process;
- Allow for innovative neighbourhood initiatives;
- Be flexible in terms of the range of ideas funded and their implementation.

2.0 Eligible projects

Each applicant and project is unique. The Neighbourhood Matching Fund is intended to encourage innovative neighbourhood initiatives and to offer flexibility to applicants.

Applicants are encouraged to contact City Staff to discuss their project prior to submitting an application.

This program provides projects funds and capital funds. It does not provide operating funds. See definitions above for more information.

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

Eligible projects should typically:

- Involve neighbourhood residents in planning and execution.
- Demonstrate sufficient commitment by neighbours to support successful implementation.
- Demonstrate interest and support from residents in the neighbourhood.
- Be implemented mostly using volunteers.
- Be inclusive and accessible, encouraging diverse involvement and participation
- Contribute to neighbourhood community-building, wellbeing, placemaking and/or neighbourhood identity and belonging.

Eligible project must:

- Be focused on a neighbourhood (not city-wide) within Waterloo city limits.
- Occur on accessible public land, or private land that is readily accessible by all residents of the neighbourhood (access is not restricted to members).
- Be free or low cost for participants.
- Not be a revenue generating activity, unless revenues are to be used by a neighbourhood group for other neighbourhood focused projects.
- Have or committed to pursue, with City Staff support, all required permits and permissions prior to implementation.

3.0 Eligible applicants

Both formal and informal neighbourhood-based community groups in the City of Waterloo are eligible to apply.

Eligible applicants include:

- Any two or more residents who live in a neighbourhood who are interested in working together on a project.
- Grassroots groups of neighbours.
- Groups that have formed for the purpose of a specific neighbourhood project.
- Affiliated Neighbourhood Associations.
- Non-affiliated neighbourhood groups.
- Homes Associations.
- Groups of temporary residents (e.g. post-secondary students) living in the same neighbourhood.

- Religious organizations if they can demonstrate support from the surrounding neighbourhood and the initiative is not religious in nature.

The following types of groups are not eligible to apply:

- A single individual.
- Groups previously awarded a NMF grant that have not completed the project within 12 months of funding receipt and have not returned the funding to the City.
- Groups that have previously been awarded a NMF grant but have not submitted their Project Summary Report.
- 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;
- food (to a maximum 50% of funding request);
- equipment or technology rental (or purchase if required for the project on a long term basis);
- entertainment;
- capital asset development/improvement.

Ineligible expenses include:

- ongoing operating funding;
- items already purchased;
- alcohol, cigarettes, cannabis, or any other drugs;
- purchase of equipment, technology, licences/certifications that will have ongoing personal benefit to the applicant (outside the project). The applicant should instead explore rental options for the duration of the project.

5.0 Matching funds

The Neighbourhood Matching fund requires applicants to demonstrate a matching contribution of equal or greater value than the cash being requested. The purpose of the match is to show how an infusion of cash leverages other community resources to the neighbourhood's benefit.

The applicant's matching contribution may include:

- Volunteer labour, including the hours of all volunteers who contribute to project planning and implementation (valued at the recognized living wage for Waterloo Region).
- Donated professional services or contractor services (valued at the reasonable retail value of the service).
- Donated materials and supplies (valued at retail price).
- Borrowed equipment (valued at standard cost to rent).
- Cash.

Additional requirements for an eligible match:

- The amount and type of match must be appropriate for the proposed project; the applicant must be prepared to justify the match proposed in the application.
- While the match can include contributions from collaborators, including for-profit businesses and community organizations such as charities, a minimum of 25% of the match must come from the applicant group itself.
- Funds from other City of Waterloo funding sources (such as Community Cash Grants or affiliation service agreements), or from co-funders of the Neighbourhood Matching Fund, cannot be counted as part of the match. Funds from other granting sources will be considered.

6.0 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 will not be assessed by the Community Grants Committee.
- b) As a first step to the assessment process, a Feasibility Committee comprised of relevant City staff will review each grant application to offer operational and risk management advice, and to identify requirements for permits and approvals. City staff will also review each applicant to determine basic eligibility. This information will be shared with the Community Grants Committee to inform decision-making. City staff will not evaluate the quality of the application, or make funding decisions.
- c) Grant applications will next be assessed by the Community Grants Committee.
- d) The Community Grants Committee will review each application and use an assessment tool, based on this policy, as a guide to evaluate each application and make funding allocation decisions.
- e) The Community Grants Committee may ask applicants to clarify information provided, or ask for additional information before making a funding decision.

- f) Priority will be given to applicants, such as new or emerging neighbourhood groups, who do not receive funding from any other city source.
- g) Priority will be given to first time applicants and applicants who have not received funding during the previous twelve (12) months.
- h) Priority will be given to new projects. Applicants seeking funding for a recurring or ongoing project will be considered if funding remains after applications for new projects are evaluated.
- i) The Community Grants 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 Community Grants Committee to make funding decisions.
- j) Successful applicants will be notified of the amount of funding allocated, requirements for permits and approval, and any other criteria or considerations related to the grant funding.
- k) Successful applicants will be assigned a single point of contact at the city to assist with any processes or approvals required to complete their project.
- l) When an application is not successful, the reason(s) the application was not funded will be shared with the applicants to help inform future grant applications.

7.0 Conditions

- a) A dollar-based cap per grant will be established by staff annually based on available funding. The cap will be communicated as part of the grant promotion.
- b) Notice of receipt of a grant does not imply approval of municipal permits and permissions.
- c) Grants may be awarded in installments based on milestones in the completion of the project.
- d) Full or 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.
- e) 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.

- f) 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.
- g) 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.
- h) The project should typically be completed within one year (12 months) of receipt of funding. Extensions may be provided based on extenuating circumstances.
- i) Any capital investment on non-city property will require an agreement ensuring continued access and use by the community prior to receiving grant funding.
- j) Grant recipients must complete and submit to the City of Waterloo a Project Summary Report, including final budget and receipts, within 30 days of project completion and prior to applying for another Neighbourhood Matching Fund grant.
- k) Submission of a grant application does not guarantee the applicant will receive full or partial funding.
- l) Grants should not be considered renewable in subsequent years.

8.0 Appeals

Appeals will not be considered. The decisions of the Community Grants 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.