MUNICIPALITY OF BRIGHTON

Corporate Policy — Community Grants in Aid Program

Policy Number:	FI 40 (Revised)	**Department:**	Finance
Policy Title:	Community Grants in Aid Program	**Approved By:**	Council Resolution No. COU-2026-313
Effective Date:	August 20, 2026	**Replaces:**	Policy FI 40, as amended June 2018
Review Cycle:	Once per term of Council	**Related Direction:**	Staff Report FIN-2026-116; Resolutions COU-2026-145, COU-2026-146

1. Purpose

The Municipality of Brighton recognizes that community organizations, volunteers, and not-for-profit groups deliver programs and services that significantly enhance the quality of life of Brighton residents, often at a fraction of the cost the Municipality would incur to deliver comparable services directly. The Community Grants in Aid Program provides financial assistance to eligible organizations in a manner that is transparent, equitable, accountable, and administratively efficient.

The program provides financial assistance (monetary or in-kind) to eligible organizations delivering programs, services, or activities that enhance the quality of place and economy for Brighton's residents in the areas of social services and health, arts, culture, heritage, recreation, youth initiatives, and the environment. Definitions of these funding areas are set out in Schedule C.

This policy establishes the program's structure, funding envelope, eligibility criteria, evaluation process, approval authorities, multi-year agreement provisions, and accountability requirements, in accordance with the direction provided by Council on the tiered hybrid administrative model (Resolution COU-2026-145) and the establishment of a standing grant stream for hospital and healthcare funding and advocacy (Resolution COU-2026-146).

Legislative authority: Section 107(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001 authorizes a municipality to make grants, on such terms and conditions as to security and otherwise as Council considers appropriate, to any person, group, or body, within or outside the boundaries of the municipality, for any purpose that Council considers to be in the interests of the municipality.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all grants in aid made by the Municipality to external organizations, including standing grants, competitive community grants, and hospital and healthcare funding and advocacy. It does not apply to purchases of service under contract, sponsorships governed by other policies, capital contributions approved by Council outside this program through the budget, or the Youth Initiative Fund, which is administered outside this policy through the annual budget process.

3. Definitions

- **“Applicant”** means a not-for-profit organization, registered charity, or unincorporated community group that applies for funding under this policy.
- **“Envelope”** means the total annual funding available under this program, established in Section 5.

- **“In-Kind Support”** means non-monetary assistance with an assignable fair value — such as waived or reduced facility fees, staff time, equipment, or services. The value of in-kind support counts toward the amount of a grant for stream determination and Envelope purposes.
- **“Good Standing”** means the status of an organization that meets the criteria set out in Section 11.
- **“Standing Grant”** means recurring annual funding provided to a qualifying organization without requiring an annual competitive application (Streams A and D).
- **“Cemeteries and Comparable Heritage / Essential Service Organizations”** means active cemetery boards operating within the Municipality and organizations that deliver a comparable heritage or essential community service, as further defined in Schedule B.
- **“Multi-Year Agreement”** means a funding agreement approved by Council committing grant funding for more than one year, subject to Section 9.
- **“Scoring Matrix”** means the standardized, publicly available evaluation rubric attached as Schedule A.
- **“Review Panel”** means a panel of at least two Municipal staff members, appointed by the Treasurer, that scores eligible applications against the Scoring Matrix.

4. Program Structure

The program consists of four streams administered under a tiered hybrid model, with delegation of approval authority tiered by grant amount:

Stream	Name	Process	Approval Authority
A	Standing Grants — Cemeteries and Comparable Heritage / Essential Service Organizations	Simplified annual renewal; no competitive scoring; funding based on organizational need; multi-year agreement option	Treasurer or CAO
B	Community Project and Investment Grants (requests up to $5,000)	Annual competitive intake; simplified application; scored against Schedule A matrix; staff report on allocations	Treasurer or CAO, within approved budget; reported to Council for information
C	Major / Strategic Grants (requests above the Stream B threshold)	Annual competitive intake; full application; scored against Schedule A matrix; presentation at the request of Council	Council, by resolution, on staff recommendation
D	Standing Grant Stream — Hospital and Healthcare Funding and Advocacy	Requests and initiatives considered individually; funded outside the annual envelope	Council, by resolution

4.1 Stream A — Standing Grants: Cemeteries and Comparable Heritage / Essential Service Organizations

Organizations qualifying under Stream A are exempt from the annual competitive application process. In place of a competitive application, qualifying organizations complete a simplified annual renewal, with funding based on organizational need and approved by the Treasurer or CAO, in order to provide funding certainty and ensure the sustainability of essential volunteer-operated services such as cemeteries. Multi-year agreements are available under Section 9. Qualifying organizations must maintain Good Standing and remain subject to the accountability requirements of Section 10. Staff will maintain the list of Stream A organizations and report it to Council annually.

To qualify under Stream A, an organization must: (a) deliver an ongoing heritage or essential community service to Brighton residents that would otherwise fall to the Municipality (for example, operation of an active cemetery); (b) be volunteer-operated or maintain minimal paid administration; (c) have a stable, predictable annual funding need rather than project-based requests; and (d) have a multi-year history of municipal support. Additions to, and removals from, the Stream A qualifying list require Council approval.

4.2 Stream B — Community Project and Investment Grants; Stream C — Major / Strategic Grants

Streams B and C form the annual competitive program. Requests up to $5,000 are processed under Stream B (Community Project and Investment Grants) with a simplified application, approved by the Treasurer or CAO within the approved budget, and reported to Council. Requests over $5,000 are processed under Stream C (Major / Strategic Grants) with a full application and require Council approval by resolution; applicants may be asked to present to Council. All applications in both streams are scored against the same Scoring Matrix.

There is no fixed upper limit on the amount an individual organization may request. Applicants are encouraged to request the amount genuinely required to deliver their program, recognizing that the total available funding is finite and that requests are evaluated competitively.

4.3 Stream D — Hospital and Healthcare Funding and Advocacy

Pursuant to Resolution COU-2026-146, a standing grant stream is established for hospital and healthcare funding and advocacy, with a mandate to support and coordinate the pursuit of grant and external funding opportunities for hospital and healthcare related initiatives.

- Requests under Stream D are considered individually by Council and are not subject to the competitive Scoring Matrix.
- Stream D funding is provided outside the annual Envelope and is addressed through the budget process or by specific resolution of Council.
- Initiatives that primarily operate outside the Municipality (for example, regional hospitals and physician recruitment) are not excluded from Stream D where they benefit Brighton residents.
- Staff will track and report annually to Council the total municipal funding directed to hospital and healthcare purposes across all sources.

5. Financial Envelope

5.1 The annual Envelope for the competitive program (Streams B and C combined) is 1% of the previous year's municipal tax levy. Because the Envelope is a percentage of the levy, available funding grows as the levy grows. The Envelope is a guiding mechanism for staff during budget preparation; Council may direct a higher amount in any year by amending the draft budget.

5.2 The Envelope applies to Streams B and C only. Standing grants under Stream A (based on organizational need) and hospital and healthcare funding under Stream D are budgeted in addition to the Envelope.

5.3 Where total eligible requests exceed the available Envelope, staff may recommend, and Council may approve, proportional reductions across successful applications so that a broad base of community organizations receives support, rather than eliminating otherwise-qualifying applicants.

5.4 Envelope safeguard: If approvals under Stream B in any intake would exceed 50% of the Envelope, staff will pause further delegated approvals and report the full slate of applications to Council, so that Council may direct how the remaining Envelope is allocated between Streams B and C.

5.5 Nothing in this policy limits Council's authority to approve a one-off funding request outside this program by resolution or through the budget, where Council determines the request warrants funding above the Envelope.

6. Eligibility

6.1 To be eligible, an applicant must be a not-for-profit organization, registered charity, or organized community group; must operate primarily within, or primarily for the benefit of residents of, the Municipality of Brighton; and must be in Good Standing where previously funded.

6.2 Applicants must further demonstrate that they:

- Provide their services and programs in an effective, accessible, open, and inclusive manner, including completion of Accessible Customer Service Training;
- Maintain financial policies approved by their governing body that include, at minimum: two signing authorities on cheques; segregation of bank reconciliation duties from cheque-signing authorities; and no cash withdrawals from bank accounts (per Resolution 2018-433, Part 5 financial controls); and
- Maintain financial records in the name of the lead organization applying.

6.3 The Scoring Matrix weights local benefit. Applications from organizations that do not operate within the Municipality and do not primarily serve Brighton residents will score accordingly and will generally not be recommended for funding. This criterion does not apply to Stream D.

6.4 The following are not eligible for funding under Streams B and C:

- Individuals and for-profit businesses;
- Organizations receiving support through another municipal funding program for the same project;
- Organizations with political affiliations, or whose primary or secondary purpose is to lobby levels of government;
- Organizations serving as funding sources for others (e.g., service clubs), and events whose sole purpose is fundraising;
- Faith organizations where the funded services or activities include the promotion of, or required adherence to, a faith;
- School boards, primary and secondary schools, and post-secondary institutions;
- Programs within the legislated mandates of other government agencies, and provincial/national organizations unless a local chapter exists to serve Brighton residents;
- Organizations receiving 80% or more of their funding from senior levels of government;
- Wages or the supplementing of staffing costs; debt retirement; and retroactive funding of costs already incurred.

For clarity, the exclusions above do not limit Council's discretion under Stream D, and the lobbying exclusion does not restrict the advocacy mandate of Stream D as established by Resolution COU-2026-146.

6.5 Where several projects or sub-committees operate under the same lead or umbrella organization, all projects must be submitted under one cover application, with project-specific budgets and information as attachments. Applications submitted separately may not all be considered eligible.

7. Application and Evaluation

7.1 Staff will conduct one annual intake for Streams B and C. Applications will be open and advertised, with forms and requirements published on the municipal website. The intake period runs September 1 to September 30, closing at 4:00 p.m. on September 30; late or incomplete applications will not be considered, and no exceptions will be made. During October, staff screen and score applications and follow up with applicants as needed. Staff present their recommendations, and Council hears any delegations, at the first Council meeting in November. There is no appeal process; funding is competitive and applicants are not guaranteed funding. Applicants are notified of results in writing following approval of the annual budget.

7.2 Every application is screened for eligibility and completeness, then scored by the Review Panel against the standardized, publicly available Scoring Matrix (Schedule A). Panel members score independently, settle a consensus score, and record a brief rationale, so that evaluation is objective and consistent.

7.3 Every applicant must demonstrate financial need for the amount requested. How need is demonstrated is at the applicant's discretion — for example, financial statements, the activity budget, or other financial records — provided the information is sufficient for the Review Panel to assess need against the Scoring Matrix. Applications requesting more than $20,000 must also include audited financial statements or review-engagement statements prepared by a licensed accountant.

The Municipality's audit rights (Section 10.2) and reporting requirements (Section 10.1) apply to all recipients regardless of the documentation submitted at application.

7.4 For all Stream C applications, Council receives the scored summary matrix, staff recommendations, and requested amounts, allowing Council to make final allocation decisions with a consistent, comparable evidence base.

7.5 Requests outside this process: Any request that falls outside the process outlined in this policy, including a request received outside the annual intake, will be considered by Council on a one-off basis.

8. Approval Authority

8.1 Approval authority is delegated as set out in the table in Section 4. Approvals under Streams A and B are exercised by the Treasurer or CAO within the approved budget and reported to Council for information, including amounts, recipients, and for Stream B, scores. All allocations under this policy are reported publicly on an annual basis as part of budget documentation.

8.2 A grant may be approved for less than the amount requested. Staff may approve the eligible portion of a request where another portion is ineligible or unsupported, and may apply reduced amounts under Section 5.3. Council may approve any amount it considers appropriate for a request before it.

8.3 Notwithstanding the delegation in Section 8.1, the CAO retains the authority to refer any application to Council for decision, regardless of tier.

8.4 The Clerk has confirmed that no amendment to the Delegation of Authority By-law is required to implement this policy. The approval authorities in Sections 8.1 and 8.2 are exercised under the authority of this policy as approved by Council resolution.

9. Multi-Year Grant Agreements

9.1 Council authorizes multi-year grant agreements for qualifying organizations in Good Standing. All multi-year agreements, regardless of annual amount, require Council approval by resolution.

9.2 The maximum term of a multi-year agreement is three (3) years. Every multi-year agreement, regardless of amount or stream, is approved by Council by resolution (Section 9.1). An agreement may not extend beyond the term of the Council that approves it unless the approving resolution expressly acknowledges the extension.

9.3 As a guideline, and to preserve capacity for new and emerging organizations, the total value of Envelope funding committed under multi-year agreements in any future year should not exceed 40% of the projected Envelope for that year. This limit is a recommendation to guide staff and Council; Council may, at its discretion, approve commitments exceeding it where it determines a multi-year investment warrants doing so.

9.4 Multi-year agreements are conditional. Each agreement must set out clear annual benchmarks and reporting requirements, and funding in the second and any subsequent year is released only upon staff confirmation that the organization remains in Good Standing and has met its benchmarks. The Municipality may reduce, suspend, or terminate a multi-year agreement where the organization ceases to be in Good Standing.

9.5 Approved multi-year commitments are identified separately in each year's draft budget so that Council and the public can see committed versus uncommitted Envelope capacity.

10. Financial Accountability and Reporting

10.1 Every recipient must report back on the use of funds, in a form prescribed by staff that is proportionate to the size of the grant, including a financial accounting. Reports are due within three (3) months of completing the funded activity or, for ongoing programs and operating support, within three (3) months of the organization's fiscal year end. A subsequent application is not complete until all required reporting has been received.

10.2 The Municipality reserves the right to audit the use of any grant at any time. Staff will exercise this right proportionately, having regard to the dollar value of the grant and the organization's history.

10.3 Staff will publish an annual public summary of all grants approved under this policy — recipients, amounts, and streams — and report it to Council. Under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, application information is used to select grant recipients, and the names of successful applicants and the amounts awarded are made public on the municipal website and in budget reports.

10.4 Grant funds not spent for the approved purpose within the year for which they are provided must be returned to the Municipality.

10.5 Unless otherwise approved by Council, no grant funding will be paid until the annual municipal budget has been approved. Commitments made by an applicant prior to, or in anticipation of, official written notification of approval are made at the applicant's risk; if an application is rejected, the Municipality is not responsible for expenditures already incurred.

11. Good Standing

An organization is in Good Standing where, in the assessment of the Treasurer (or designate), it meets the following criteria:

- Prior grant funds were used for the approved purposes, and all required report-backs have been submitted;
- Financial information provided with applications demonstrates responsible financial management and genuine financial need;
- The organization has no amounts owing to the Municipality, including property taxes where it is a property owner;
- The organization remains active, in operation, and compliant with applicable law; and
- For multi-year agreements, the organization continues to meet the benchmarks in its agreement, assessed actively during the term and not solely retrospectively.

Loss of Good Standing is not permanent. An organization that regains compliance may be reassessed and restored to Good Standing. The Good Standing mechanism exists to protect the Municipality's ability to withhold or discontinue funding; it is applied transparently, with reasons provided to the organization.

12. Transition

12.1 Grants approved under the former Policy FI 40 remain subject to the conditions under which they were approved, including reporting requirements. This policy applies commencing with the first annual intake following its adoption.

12.2 2026 transitional timeline: For the 2026 intake only, the intake period is extended to October 31, closing at 4:00 p.m., so that the program changes can be communicated to and understood by applicants. Staff review and follow-up will occur in November, with any delegations and the staff report at the first Council meeting in December. This timeline also aligns with the 2026 municipal election calendar.

13. Administration and Review

13.1 The Treasurer is responsible for the administration of this policy, including maintaining the Scoring Matrix, application forms, and the Stream A qualifying list.

13.2 Staff will review this policy once per term of Council, or earlier where program experience warrants, and report to Council on program outcomes annually.

Schedules

- Schedule A — Scoring Matrix, Community Grants in Aid Program (Streams B and C)
- Schedule B — Standing Grants (Stream A): Qualification Criteria and Annual Renewal Form
- Schedule C — Funding Area Definitions
- Schedule D — Application Form, Community Grants in Aid Program (Streams B and C)