



2027 COMMUNITY SUSTAINING GRANT GUIDELINES



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1. Purpose of the Grant

The Community Sustaining Grant provides funding to registered non-profit organizations providing strategic services that align with **three** or more Funding Priorities set by Council.

Community Investment Funding Priorities (the Funding Priorities):

- Accessibility, Inclusion and Belonging
- Community Participation and Local Opportunity
- Community Wellbeing and Preventative Support Services
- Indigenous and Rural Community Relationships
- Safe, Connected and Welcoming Communities
- Value of Culture, Heritage and Regional Pride

2. Grant Eligibility

2.1 Eligible Organizations

Organizations must:

- Be a registered non-profit organization.
- Have been residing within the Region for a minimum of one year.
- Conduct operations within and provide services to residents of the Region.
- Not hold unrestricted net assets exceeding annual operating expenses, outlined in the most recent financial statement (unless unrestricted net assets are less than \$50,000).

Full eligibility criteria can be found in the Community Investment Program Policy FIN-220

Note: Internally or externally restricted net assets must be specified in the financial statements, and the organization must provide a copy of the board minutes and a written explanation detailing the purpose of the restrictions.

Services that meet the [Provincial Family and Community Support Services \(FCSS\) Accountability Framework Prevention Strategies](#) may be recommended to receive funding from the Provincial FCSS and must follow the guidelines of the [Family and Community Support Services Act](#), and [Associated Regulations](#). The allocation of the Provincial FCSS funding is at the discretion of the Municipality.

Note: When an organization attempts to influence or contact a Community Investment Program Approval Committee (CIPAC) Member outside the established process, CIPAC may vote to deem the organization ineligible for funding during the funding cycle.

2.2 Eligible Services

- Contribute to three or more Funding Priorities.
- Improve the quality of life for residents with measurable outcomes.
- Demonstrate community support:
 1. Additional financial and non-financial support from other sources.
 2. Volunteer Engagement
 3. Collaborations/Partnerships with other organizations or community partners. A letter of partnership from each collaborating organization is required to show commitment and clarify the partnership's nature. **(See Appendix A4-Partnership Letter Template)**
- Be inclusive, accessible, community-focused, and open to all.
- Be delivered within the Regional Boundary.
- Be either no cost or low-cost for participants.
- Remain neutral, non-political and non-religious.
- Encourage public participation.

2.3 Eligible Expenses

All direct expenses that are directly related to the delivery of the program, project, service or event are considered eligible, unless otherwise listed in the Ineligible Expenses section.

2.4 Ineligible Expenses

- Alcohol
- Costumes or Uniforms including those for participants
- Debt retirement, depreciation, or financing charges
- Donations, Grant, or Scholarship to another person, group, or organization
- Financial assistance to individuals or families: Any form of financial support to sustain an individual or family
- Expenses for language training or lessons
- Fundraising Expenses
- Gifts or Gift Cards
- Land, Building or other Capital Purchases & Expenses
- Media & Print Publications including but not limited to books, magazines, documentaries, or podcasts
- Medical Equipment or Supplies, and Facilities
- Municipal Property Taxes and Levies
- Prizes or Prize Money
- Retroactive payments
- Sabbatical leave or Student Exchange
- Travel to attend events, conferences, or training courses outside of the Municipality

- Other expenses may also be deemed ineligible at the municipality's discretion

3. Funding Conditions

Funding Limit: The maximum percentage is set to ensure sustainability of the Grant and to reduce reliance on the Grant over time. The maximum percentage shall be set at 75%.

If actual costs of a funded program, project, service, or event change, such that the grant award accounts for more than 75% of total revenue and expenses, organizations may be required to return funding.

Other Revenue Sources: Applicants must contribute a minimum of 25% of the eligible expenses from other revenue sources. The contribution can be secured or in progress at time of application. It must be directly related to the service and may include:

- Other grants,
- Cash donations,
- Donated labour, materials or services (in-kind support).

Governance Training Requirement:

Beginning in the **2027 Grant Cycle**, required governance training for all CIP-funded organizations' Boards of Directors will be a phased expectation.

Training is being introduced as a requirement this year. A phased approach is designed to give applicants time to understand expectations, prepare for full implementation, and take steps for compliance.

For the 2027 grant cycle

- Training is expected, but applicants will not be penalized if their Boards have not yet completed it during the 2027 grant year.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to begin identifying training options and planning how their Board's will meet the requirement.
- Applicants should assess their Board's current governance capacity and plan for full compliance as the requirement is monitored in future.

What Is "Relevant Governance Training"?

Relevant governance training refers to a structured learning that helps Board of Directors strengthen effective oversight, understand fiduciary responsibilities, and support accountability with public funding requirements. Training should introduce or reinforce core governance concepts, such as board roles and responsibilities, fiduciary and financial oversight, risk management, ethical and equitable decision-making, and grant accountability.

Training should be delivered by a credible educator and provide a certificate or record of completion for organizational files and grant reporting. The RMWB recognizes the following training programs as fulfilling requirements of relevant governance training:

- Social-profit or government networks e.g., FuseSocial (local), Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (Alberta Board Member Essentials Training), Government of Alberta Community Development Unit
- Nationally recognized governance training institutes (e.g., Capacity Canada, First Nations Information Governance Centre)
- Universities or colleges offering board governance courses (online or in-person, hybrid learning, workshops, etc.)
- Sector-recognized trainers and consultants

Other equivalent training programs may qualify, to confirm, please reach out to CIP team and provide the training details.

4. Assessment Criteria

Each program, project, service or event will be assessed based on the following categories (See **Appendix A5-Application Evaluation Scoring Sheet**):

Category	Weight
Applicant capacity	25%
Project feasibility	25%
Evidence of need	25%
Contribution to community resilience	25%
TOTAL	100%

4.1 Applicant Capacity

Assesses an organization's ability to manage and deliver the program, project, service or event, including past grant compliance, mission alignment, financial sustainability, leadership and governance.

4.2 Project Feasibility

Evaluates the clarity, scope, and uniqueness of the application, ensuring it meets community needs and the Funding Priorities. It also considers community support through partnerships, other funding sources, and volunteer involvement.

4.3 Evidence of Need

Assesses whether the application demonstrates an existing community need aligned with program goals and Funding Priorities. Support for equity-deserving groups and Indigenous culture is strongly encouraged but not mandatory.

4.4 Contribution to Community Resilience

Evaluates the anticipated impact and evaluation methods, considering past success with CIP funding for experienced applicants and proposed outcome measurements for new ones, along with partner collaboration to enhance impact.

5. Funding Disbursement Process

Grant funding will be disbursed only to recipients in accordance with the agreement's terms and conditions.

The following requirements must be satisfied and will be verified by the Municipality prior to awarding grant funding:

- Property taxes and utilities are current and paid
- No outstanding compliance orders relating to Land Use Bylaw, Building Code, Fire Code, Community Standards Bylaw or other regulations
- No ongoing legal disputes with the Municipality
- Required permits are obtained and closed for the project without deficiencies

Exceptions to the above will be at the discretion of the Municipality on a case-by-case basis.

6. Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients must complete the following mandatory reports in the CIP Grant Portal as per the Reporting and Monitoring requirements of their Grant Agreement:

1. Certificate of Insurance

Submit within 30 calendar days of receiving the request.

2. Six-Month Report

Highlight ongoing successes and challenges.

3. Final Report

Demonstrate the use of funds, and positive impact of the funded program, project, service or event, including collected data on:

- Number of unique participants by location;
- Total participation;
- Number of volunteers and volunteer hours;
- Outcomes and success stories;
- **Required Attachments include:**
 - Public recognition of RMWB funding, refer to [Logo Request Form](#) and the [Logo Standards Guide](#) for usage.
 - The organization's Signed Financial Statements, based on the total grant received for the grant term:
 - Organizations receiving over \$500,000 must submit Audited Financial Statements.
 - Organizations receiving \$500,000 and less must submit Review Engagement Financial Statements.

- If the organization's fiscal year does not align with the grant term, the organization must submit financial statements for two consecutive fiscal years (e.g., Fiscal year ending in 2027 and Fiscal year ending in 2028) to ensure the entire grant term is covered.

4. CIP may require additional reporting on a case-by-case basis.

6.1 Final Report Evaluation

CIP will evaluate the Final Report to confirm all grant agreement obligations are met including validation of outcome data, and financial documentation.

If revisions are needed, recipients will be notified via email with a deadline. If actual expenses fall below the budget or additional revenue is received after grant approval, the grant amount will be adjusted to adhere to the funding limit (no more than 75% of actual eligible expenses). In such cases:

Excess funds may be requested to be returned unless alternate use is approved in writing by CIP.

- a. Amounts below \$2,500 may be forgiven.
- b. Amounts over \$2,500 may be requested to be repaid in full.

Once all requirements are met and any repayments are received, a File Closure Letter will be issued.

Failure to meet reporting requirements may result in termination of the grant and ineligibility for future grants.

7. Acknowledgement Standards & Requirements

Grant recipients must acknowledge the municipality as a funding partner in all official communications.

- Use of the RMWB logo must adhere to the [Logo Standards Guide](#) via the [Logo Request Form](#).
- Funding recognition may include:
 - News release or media articles
 - Social media posts (e.g., X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, blog posts)
 - Website or newsletter mentions
 - Signage at program, project, or event locations

8. Protection of Privacy Act (POPA)

The personal information collected on the grant application is collected under the authority of Section 4(c) of the Protection of Privacy Act and is managed in accordance with the Act. It will be used to process the application and contact you if needed, during the review of the application. If you have any questions about the collection and use of personal information you may contact Access and Privacy by calling the Pulse line at (780) 743-7000.

10. Disclosure of Information

A condition of accepting funding is that the Municipality has the authority to examine recipients' records at any time to ensure funds are being used in the manner originally agreed upon. Any funds not used as described in the agreement may have to be returned.

11. Contact Information

If you have any questions, or would like clarification, please contact the Community Investment Program.

Email: CIP@rmwb.ca

Phone: Pulse at **780-743-7000** or toll-free at **1-800-973-9663**

Website: www.rmwb.ca/CIP

By Mail:

Community Investment Program
Community Services
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
9909 Franklin Avenue, 6th Floor
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2K4

Appendix

A1. Key Dates

Date	Key Action
September 2, 2026	Applications open.
September 3 – October 7, 2025	Pre-application meeting, information sessions, and one-on-one support (contact CIP@rmwb.ca).
September 30, 2026, 4:30 p.m. MST.	Applications close. Applications will not be accepted after this time.
October 14 – October 21, 2026	CIP may request revisions. Deadline to submit revisions: October 21, 4:30 p.m. MDT. Information will not be accepted after this time.
October 30, 2026	CIP completes preliminary review of applications
November (TBD)	CIPAC reviews applications and may request additional clarification with strict deadlines. Information will not be accepted after the deadline.
Early December (TBD)	CIP Review Panel evaluates CIPAC's decisions.
Early December (TBD)	Council Meeting - 2027 budget approval.
Early December (TBD)	CIPAC selects successful applicants.
Early December (TBD)	CIP sends CIPAC's decision to applicants.
Within 2 weeks of notification	Applicants may request their application evaluation.
Early January 2027	CIP issues grant agreements.
Within 30 days of Grant Agreement execution	Grant funds distribution.
Within 30 days of request from CIP	Recipient submits Certificate of Insurance.

Date	Key Action
February 28, 2028 & April 30, 2028	Recipient submits Final Report.
180 days after Organizations Fiscal Year End	Recipient submits Financial Statements as specified in Grant Agreement.
Within 30 days of Financial Statements due date	CIP completes Final Report review and evaluation.
Within 30 days of Financial Statements due date	CIP requests Report Revisions (if applicable) or issues a Repayment Letter (if applicable).
Within 60 days of Financial Statements due date	CIP issues File Closure Letter once all requirements are met and repayments (if any) are received.

A2. Definitions

Agreement – The agreement between the recipient and the Municipality that sets out the terms and conditions for participating in the Community Investment Program.

Applicant – Organization incorporated as a non-profit, charitable or Subsidiary Corporation, or registered as a society under the Alberta Societies Act and in good standing under its relevant legislation who applies.

Audited Financial Statements – Financial statements audited by an independent Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) in accordance with Section 200 of the CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance. An audit provides a professional opinion on whether the statements are prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with an applicable financial reporting framework. Statements must follow generally accepted accounting principles for non-profit organizations, be approved by the Board of Directors, and signed by the Chair and Treasurer. Final audited statements must be submitted with the CPA's audit engagement report.

Board Governance – Refers to the rules, processes, and structures that guide how a board of directors operates, including board composition, meeting procedures, and oversight responsibilities.

Certificate of Insurance – For details on the level of insurance required, please contact CIP.

Community Investment Program Approval Committee (CIPAC) – The Council Committee to approve program grant recommendations, which is composed of Council-appointed members at large and supported by members of administration who provide information and guidance as needed.

Council – Mayor and Councilors of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

Equity-deserving Groups: Communities that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources due to disadvantages and discrimination i.e., youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQIA+, immigrants, refugees and or/newcomers, First Nation, Metis, and or/Inuit peoples, other racialized communities, women and/or girls, people experiencing poverty and/or homelessness, people living with disabilities, people living in rural communities, other.

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Accountability Framework – Provides a common definition of prevention, identifies key provincial prevention priorities, and increases accountability through a better outcomes model that will demonstrate the impact and value of FCSS.

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Program – Is an 80/20 funding partnership between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities or Metis Settlements. FCSS programs promote and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through the delivery of preventive programs and services.

Financial Statements – A structured summary of a non-profit organization's financial performance and position. It includes a minimum of Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for a period reflecting the organization's operational results (also called Statement of Operations, or Income Statement) and Statement of Financial Position at a point of time showing the organization's assets, liabilities, and net assets (also called Balance Sheet).

Good Standing – An organization has satisfied all its legal obligations.

Grant – Transfer of monies from the Municipality to an applicant for a project or purpose as per Community Investment Program requirements.

In-Kind Donation – Refers to non-monetary donations or support provided to a project or initiative. These contributions are typically goods or services rather than cash. i.e., volunteers working at an event, office space, equipment, and material.

In-Progress Revenue – Funds or income that an organization expects to receive but has not yet been fully secured or guaranteed. In-progress revenue carries more uncertainty compared to secured revenue; therefore, it is not included in the grant request calculation.

Low-Cost – That participation fees are set in a way that does not prevent anyone from taking part, regardless of income or financial circumstance. A program is considered low cost when fees are minimal, optional, or structured to ensure affordability, so that cost is never a barrier and the program remains accessible to the whole community.

Member-at-large – A Member-at-Large is a full board member who does not hold a specific, defined position within the board of directors (such as President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or Chair). Instead, they serve as a general member of the board, contributing to overall decision-making and governance without specific responsibilities. A Member-at-Large does not have these specific duties and instead has a broader, more flexible role within the organization.

Municipality – The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

Operating Expenses – The operating costs to run the organization for a full year, as reflected on the organization's financial statement.

Partnership – A formal or informal collaboration between organizations, or groups that agree to work together toward a shared objective. Partnerships involve mutual commitment and may include financial support, shared resources, joint planning, or coordinated efforts to amplify impact.

Partnership Letter of Support - A letter of partnership confirms an active role that an individual, organization, or stakeholder will play in the planning, implementation, delivery, or evaluation of a proposed program, project or event. The letter should clearly describe the partner's contributions, responsibilities, and any committed resources, such as funding, facilities, equipment, staff time, expertise, or in-kind support.

Program Grants – Different grant options available under the Community Investment Program.

Recipient – An applicant approved for a grant who has signed an agreement with the Municipality.

Regional Boundary – The physical area of the Municipality that includes any lands comprising of First Nation Reserve located within the Municipality's geographical boundaries.

Repayment Letter – A letter issued by the municipality requesting an organization to return all or part of the funds received through the CIP. A repayment letter will be issued after a repayment is determined when the final report is evaluated or if the organization fails to comply with the grant agreement.

Review Engagement Financial Statements - Financial statements reviewed by an independent Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) in accordance with Section 8100 of the CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance. A review provides limited assurance and is less extensive than an audit. Statements must follow generally accepted accounting principles for non-profit organizations, be approved by the Board of Directors, and signed by the Chair and Treasurer. The finalized statements must be submitted with the CPA's review engagement report.

Restricted Net Assets – Accumulated net assets that the organization has set aside for a particular purpose or earmarked by a donor for a specific program or project, as reflected on the organization's financial statements. These assets are excluded from the calculation that determines eligibility.

Secured Revenue – Funds or income that an organization has already received or has been guaranteed through formal agreements, contracts, or commitments. This type of revenue is considered reliable and can be confidently counted on when planning budgets or financial strategies. Because it is assured, secured revenue can reduce the need for additional funding or grants.

Shortfall – An organization's expenses exceed its revenues, resulting in a financial deficit. The grant request cannot be higher than the projected shortfall (secured revenue minus budgeted expenses).

Societies Act – A society may be incorporated under this Act to promote any benevolent, philanthropic, patriotic, religious, charitable, artistic, literary, educational, social, professional, recreational, sporting or any other useful object, but not for the purpose of carrying on any trade or business.

Term – The effective date and duration of the agreement.

Total Participation – The cumulative number of times participants engage in sessions, activities, or events within a funded program, project, service, or event. Each instance of participation is counted, even if the same individual takes part multiple times.

Unique Participants – The total number of distinct individuals who take part in a funded program, project, service, or event. Each person is counted only once, regardless of how many times or activities they attend.

Unrestricted Net Assets – Accumulated net assets that the organization has not set aside for a particular purpose or earmarked by a donor for specific program or project, as reflected on the organization's financial statements.

A3. Funding Priority Definitions

Accessibility, Inclusion and Belonging – Supports initiatives that remove barriers, promote accessibility, and foster inclusive communities where everyone feels seen, valued, and empowered to participate and thrive.

- **Accessibility** – Ensuring programs, events, facilities, and services are affordable, reachable, and physically accessible to individuals of all abilities and backgrounds.
- **Inclusion** – The intentional practice of welcoming and amplifying underrepresented and marginalized voices in all aspects of community life and decision-making.
- **Belonging** – Creating spaces where every person feels recognized, respected, and connected within the RMWB community they call home.

Community Participation and Local Opportunity - Supports initiatives that reduce barriers to participation in community, encourage youth engagement and skills development, and foster community-led programs, social enterprise, and inclusive events.

Community Wellbeing and Preventative Support Services - Focuses on programs that strengthen individual and community capacity through prevention and early intervention, including mental health, addiction supports, and services for youth, seniors, and vulnerable populations.

Indigenous and Rural Community Relationships - Supports initiatives that advance Truth and Reconciliation, improve access to services in rural areas, and foster meaningful partnerships with Indigenous communities through culturally appropriate, community-led approaches.

Safe, Connected and Welcoming Communities – Builds community safety through prevention, social connection, and initiatives that reduce isolation and strengthen a sense of belonging.

Value of Culture, Heritage and Regional Pride - Promotes arts, culture, and heritage initiatives that celebrate the region's identity, including First Nations and Métis heritage and the diverse cultures that contribute to Wood Buffalo's unique identity.

A4. Partnership Letter Template

Partnership Letter

[Partner Organization Letterhead or Logo]

[Date]

To Whom It May Concern,

Subject: Partnership Letter for [Project Name]

On behalf of [Partner Organization Name], I am pleased to express our strong support and commitment to partnering with [Lead Applicant Organization Name] in the implementation of [Service, Program or Project Name]. This initiative aligns with our shared mission to [shared mission or objective].

We are committed to working collaboratively with [Lead Applicant Organization Name] to ensure the success of this project. We recognize the pressing need for [briefly describe the issue or need the project addresses] in our community.

[Choose one of the following options:]

- Our organizations have a history of successful collaboration, including [briefly describe past projects or initiatives, outcomes, and impact], which demonstrates our ability to work effectively together.

OR

- While this is a new partnership, we believe it is a natural and strategic fit. Our complementary strengths – [briefly describe each organization's strengths, expertise, coordinated services, etc.] – position us well to deliver this project collaboratively and effectively.

As a committed partner, [Partner Organization Name] will contribute to the project in the following ways:

- Roles and Responsibilities: [Be specific e.g., program delivery, outreach, evaluation, training, etc.]
- Resources Committed: [Be specific e.g., staff time, facilities, in-kind support, funding contributions, etc.]

For any further information or clarification, please contact:

[Name]

[Title]

[Partner Organization Name]

Phone: [Phone Number]

Email: [Email Address]

Website (if applicable): [Website URL]

We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate on this important initiative and are confident in the positive impact it will have on our community.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]

[Title]

[Partner Organization Name]

Applicant:

Service, Program, Project or Event:

Applicant Capacity	Not Applicable - N/A Not Met – 0 Needs Work – 1 Needs Some Work - 2 Good – 3 Exemplary – 4	Weight	Score
The organization has fulfilled all obligations under prior agreements, including those set out in Schedule B. (past 2 years)*		25%	0.00
Program or Project aligns with organization's mission and mandate.**			
Organization has demonstrated financial sustainability and ability to deliver project as outlined?**			
The organization has demonstrated sound leadership/governance - board and director structure.			

Project Feasibility	Not Applicable - N/A Not Met – 0 Needs Work – 1 Needs Some Work - 2 Good – 3 Exemplary – 4	Weight	Score
Organization provided a clear, easy to understand, and concise application (including relevant attachments)?		25%	0.00
Application includes a clear description of the activities that clearly outlines the proposed scope of what funding will be used for?			
Does the application reasonably demonstrate that the program, project, service or event is not duplicative by clearly outlining the uniqueness of the initiative in comparison to services provided by or funded by your department or the Municipality?			
Project is accessible, relevant, adaptable and targets identified needs in the community in accordance with project outcomes. **			
Project has community support, demonstrated by additional funding sources, non-funding support (e.g., in-kind), partnership/collaboration, and volunteer involvement. (Consider ability to support project without CIP funding).			
Proposal meets at least three objectives (SUS) one objective (CPP & CE) of Council's funding priorities, including demonstrated alignment to Council's strategic plan?*			

Evidence of Need	Not Applicable - N/A Not Met – 0 Needs Work – 1 Needs Some Work - 2 Good – 3 Exemplary – 4	Weight	Score
Has the application effectively demonstrated community need?		25%	0.00
Has the application identified reasonable project outcomes in alignment with the project objectives, Council's funding priorities, and demonstrated community need.			
Extent to which the project enhances Indigenous culture and communities and promotes Indigenous community healing, language, cultural restoration, reconciliation, equity, and inclusion.*			
Has the application demonstrated support of an equity-deserving group and addressed reducing barriers to the target group? Equity-deserving groups: Communities that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination. i.e., people of the following communities: 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous, Black, Neurodivergent, People with Disabilities, Visible/Non-Visible Minority, Newcomers, Immigrants, Refugees, Other.			

Contribution to Community Resilience	Not Applicable - N/A Not Met – 0 Needs Work – 1 Needs Some Work - 2 Good – 3 Exemplary – 4	Weight	Score
Expected outcomes have been well considered and will have significant impact on the community if achieved**		25%	0.00
Applicant outlines appropriate methods for evaluating project results.			
Prior success with outcomes of CIP funding. (Demonstrated sound logic modelling and outcome measurement). (past 2 years)*			
Project involves appropriate partners to amplify impact through collaboration.			

Note:

* Questions with N/A answers will be omitted in weighting. Applicant will not be penalized for not meeting the criteria.

** Questions will be weighted higher