City Grants Community Grants Program

Full Guidelines

Updated: October 2026

Grant Program Description

The City Grants program was established to improve community well-being through support of programming related to social support services, arts and culture, heritage, recreation and environmental initiatives.

Funded by the City's revenue sharing agreement with OLG Casino Brantford and administered by the **Brant Community Foundation** (BCF), City Grants are awarded to qualifying local organizations based on specific eligibility criteria.

Calls for City Grants applications are launched twice per year (Fall and Spring). The online application portal, as well as application support resources, can be found at brantcommunityfoundation.ca

The grant program operates on an annual grant cycle consisting of two application rounds.

- **Round 1** opens in **October** and closes in **November**.
- **Round 2** opens the following **March** and closes in **April**.

Although the two application rounds occur across two calendar years, they are considered part of the same **grant year**. For example, the **2026–2027 Grant Year** includes:

- **Round 1:** October–November 2026.
- **Round 2:** March–April 2027.

General Eligibility

- Applicants must be a non-profit organization.
- Applicants do not need to be a Registered Charity or an Incorporated Not-For-Profit to be eligible for the City Grants program.
- Applicants must be able to submit a complete application and provide the mandatory supporting documents:
    1. List of board of directors, steering committee, or volunteer committee members.
    2. Most recent financial statements (do not have to be audited).
    3. Annual operating budget for the organization's current or upcoming fiscal year.
    4. Budget for the funding request (specific to project/program/event being applied for). Budget information will be submitted using tables within the application form.
    5. By-laws, terms of reference, or other governance documents.
- There are three grant streams: Operational, Event, and Start-Up/Capital. Applicants cannot apply to the same grant stream twice in one granting year:
    - Example: If an applicant applies to the Event Stream in Round 1, they cannot apply to the Event Stream in Round 2; (including if the event was not funded in Round 1).
- The City Grants program is not intended to provide ongoing operational funding. Organizations should not rely on receiving funding through this program on a year-to-year basis.
- Applicants must demonstrate that the City Grant would not be their only primary source of funding, and that other sources of potential funding have been explored.
- Proposals must align with at least one of the City's Community Safety and Well-being Plan priority areas.
- A minimum of 75% of those served by the proposal must be Brantford residents.
- Successful applicants must use City Grants funding for the purposes specified in their application and must submit a final evaluation report.

Demonstration of Community Benefit:

- Proposed programs / projects must be for the benefit of the Brantford community, not for an individual's or organization's profit.
- Proposed programs / projects must address an identifiable need in the community, address an under-serviced demand, engage equity deserving individuals and/or groups, and/or represent an innovative approach to delivering a local service, program, or event.
- Applicants must also explain how their proposal aligns with one or more of the priority areas of the City of Brantford's Community Safety and Well-being Plan, including:
    - **Access to Healthcare:** Programs / projects that support access to equitable, timely, and coordinated healthcare.
    - **Food Security**: Programs / projects that strengthen local systems to increase access to affordable, nutritious food.
    - **Substance Use and Mental Health**: Programs / projects that contribute to education, prevention, treatment, and/or advocacy surrounding substance use and mental health, especially those that focus on individuals and groups most affected.
    - **Intimate Partner and Gender-Based Violence**: Programs / projects that contribute to education, prevention, and/or advocacy surrounding intimate partner and/or gender-based violence, especially those that focus on individuals or groups most affected (ex. 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and communities).
    - **Climate Change**: Programs / projects that promote sustainable practices and collective action to build environmental resilience.
    - **Truth and Reconciliation**: Programs / projects that foster respect, understanding, and equity in relationships with Indigenous communities.
    - **Housing Solutions**: Programs / projects that contribute to the local availability of and access to affordable and/or supportive housing.
    - **Inclusive, Safe, and Vibrant Neighbourhoods**:
        - Programs / projects that contribute to community safety, inclusivity, connectivity, vibrancy, and/or creativity (ex. events, arts and culture, heritage, recreation, social activity groups, etc.).
        - Programs / projects that contribute to cultural learning, anti-discrimination, anti-racism, and/or accessibility (ex. training, education materials, community arts projects, community engagement activities, etc.).
    - **Economic and Community Investment**: Programs / projects that drive local economic growth and opportunities for a thriving community.
    - **Children and Youth**: Programs / projects that contribute to health, wellness, safety, and/or social inclusion of children and youth.
    - **Older Adults**: Programs / projects that contribute to the health, wellness, safety, and/or social inclusion of older adults and seniors.

Stream Descriptions & Funding Request Examples

Operational Stream: $10,000 maximum

Description: All applications for the operational costs of launching new programs, ongoing operations of existing programs, or the expansion of existing programs must be submitted under this stream.

Examples of **eligible operational** expenses include but are not limited to:

- Staffing.
- Supplies.
- Program materials.
- Food/items provided to community members (for example: food for programs addressing food insecurity).
- Rental fees.
- Utilities.
- Office supplies, postage.
- Website hosting fees.
- Advertising/promotion/marketing expenses.
- Sporting equipment provided for participants of recreational programming.
- Operational costs of attaining charitable status such as insurance, administrative costs, legal services, professional services.
- Operational costs of running non-religious programming in religious buildings. For example: operational costs directly related to running a meal program in a religious building is eligible for funding, including staff dedicated to running the meal program and food for the meal program.

Examples of **ineligible operational** expenses include but are not limited to:

- Duplicate requests: applications from the same organization for the same activities across multiple grant streams per grant year.
- Leasehold improvements for rental properties.
- Gift cards.
- Funding to provide or add to endowment funds.
- Funding to cover operating deficits or retire debts.
- Fundraising costs.
- Funding for sectarian, religious, or political purposes.
- Expenses incurred prior to the adjudication decision date.
- Operational costs for running religious or political organizations.
- Operational requests related to religious activity.

Start-Up / Capital Stream: $15,000 maximum

Definition: All applications for the expansion or renovation of a facility owned by the applying organization AND/OR the purchase, replacement or repair of equipment required to start up a new program or expand an existing program.

Examples of **eligible start-up / capital expenses** include but are not limited to:

- Equipment; for example, freezers for the expansion of food programs.
- Renovation or expansion of buildings owned by applying organization.
- Pre-development costs of construction projects: city permit applications, site preparation, architecture work fees; limit of one application per project total, regardless of site changes.

Examples of **ineligible start-up / capital expenses** include:

- Leasehold improvements for rental properties.
- Capital purchases that support an existing program, service, or project **without explanation** of how purchases will support expanding the existing program.
- Capital campaigns.
- Purchase of land and/or buildings.
- Purchase of gift cards.
- Expenses incurred prior to the adjudication decision date.
- Requests related to religious activity; for example, repairs to religious buildings, even if non-religious programs are offered in these buildings, **are not** eligible.

Event Stream: $5,000 maximum

Description: All applications for new or annual community events. Events must be open (free or nominal admission price) to the public, to all ages, and not-for-profit.

Examples of **eligible event costs** include but are not limited to:

- Direct event-related costs including venue and equipment rentals, permits, and supplies
- Expenses can be, but are not limited to, City-related expenses (for example, rentals).
- Celebration of a milestone event (municipal or country centennial).
- Start-up of a new community festival or community show.
- Publication of a book of community interest.
- Celebration of Royal Family or other celebrity visit.
- Recurring annual events.
- Brantford International Villages.
- Fundraising events.
- Parades.
- Runs/walks.
- Concerts.
- Festivals.
- Celebrations.
- Live entertainment.
- Environmental clean-ups.
- Community tree plantings.
- Event related rentals.
- Promotional items, signage.
- Food / supplies for events.
- Personnel for events.

Examples of **ineligible event costs** include but are not limited to:

- Damage deposits.
- Deficits or funding shortfalls.
- Property taxes.
- For profit events.
- Events that have occurred prior to funding being approved.
- Summer camp (summer camps are eligible under the operational stream).
- Private events.
- Events that incite any form of discrimination, hate, and/or violence.
- Recurring weekly events such as drop in programming (recurring weekly programming is eligible under the operational stream).

Required Documents

- Financial statements.
- Annual operating budget.
- Budget for requested funds.
- Governance documents.
- List of board members.

Financial Statements

- Financial statements are documents that provide an overview of an organization's overall financial health.
- There are websites that have examples of the below financial statements, as well as free templates you can use to create financial statements for your organization.
- Financial statements do not have to be audited.

Acceptable Financial Statements - Examples

- Audited financial statements: financial statements extensively reviewed by a Chartered Professional Accountant.
- Balance sheets: show an organization's current assets, liabilities, and equity.
- Profit & loss statement / Income statement / Statement of operations: shows an overview of an organization's revenues, expenses, and net income over a specific period of time.
- Cash flow statement: tracks the movement of cash into and out of the organization based on multiple categories; it shows where an organization's money is coming from, and how it is being spent.

Ineligible Financial Statements – Examples

- Annual budgets.
- Bank statements / balance.
- Statements lacking detail – ex. income statements with only total revenue and expenses that are not itemized.

Annual Operating Budgets

- A statement of expected revenues and expenses over 12 months.
- Annual budgets need to cover at least part of the organization's current or upcoming fiscal year.
- Annual budgets need to show total operating annual revenue and expenses for the organization, not just the project requiring funds.
- Annual budgets need to show itemized **revenue sources and expenses**.

Acceptable Operating Budgets - Examples

- Operating budget for the applying organization's current or upcoming fiscal year.

Ineligible Operating Budgets - Examples

- Operating budget for an organization's past fiscal years.

- Budgets that only contain items for the requested funding and not the entire operating budget (a budget specific to the funding request is a separate requirement for the application).
- Budget that only contains expenses – must also show expected sources of revenue (ex. other grants).

Budget for Funding Request

- All Streams: a table within the application form must be filled out showing the breakdown of the requested funding. Figures will total the amount requested.
- Operational Stream: a table within the application form must be filled out detailing **all** sources of operational funding, including from other organizations, levels of government, donations, earned revenue, fundraising, and grants requested and confirmed.
- Event Stream: a complete event budget table within the application form must be filled out detailing **all** event expenses and sources of funding.
- Start-Up / Capital Stream: a complete project budget table within the application form must be filled out detailing **all** project expenses and sources of funding.

Governance Documents

A set of rules and procedures that govern how an organization operates.

Acceptable Governance Documents - Examples

- By-laws: outline an organization's structure, decision-making process, and rights and responsibilities of members and board.
- Terms of reference: outline the purpose and structures of a committee or smaller group within an organization.

Ineligible Governance Documents - Examples

- Articles of incorporation.

Board of Directors or Steering Committee – Member List

- Include a list of members on your board of directors or steering committee, including name and position title (chair/president, vice chair/ vice president, secretary, treasurer, member).

Common Reasons for Disqualification

Late Applications

- Grant applications close at a specified time on a specified day; to ensure every applicant has the same amount of time to apply, late applications cannot be accepted.

Missing Documents or Incorrect Documents

Examples:

- Annual budgets are not eligible as financial statements.
- Annual budgets need to cover at least part of the current year.
- Applications must contain an annual operating budget for the organization in addition to a budget specific to the funds requested.
- Intentionally blank documents.

Ineligible Funding Requests

- See list of ineligible requests in this document.

Applying to Same Stream as Previous Grant Round

- Applicants cannot apply for the same grant stream twice in one granting year.
    - A granting year runs from Fall to Spring; the first grant round takes place in the fall.
    - Example: If an applicant applies to the Event Stream in the first round, they cannot apply to the Event Stream in the second round.
- Applicants cannot apply for the same project under multiple streams – this is considered a repeat application and will be disqualified.

Lacking Brantford Specific Impact

- If an applicant's organizational mandate extends beyond the municipal boundaries of the City of Brantford, they must demonstrate that at least 75% of the individuals and/or groups they serve through the requested funding are Brantford residents.
- If an application comes from an organization not based in Brantford, the application must be clear and specific about how the funds will be used to benefit Brantford.
    - Example: stating that an event will be held in Brantford is not enough detail. The Foundation requires specific information about venue, dates, anticipated attendees, etc. in order to deem that the funds will be used to benefit Brantford.