

	Policy Title: Community Grant	Policy No: CO-032
	Authority: Council	Classification: Finance
	Date Adopted: February 9, 2026	Motion No:
Historical Changes:		

Purpose:

The purpose of the Community Grant Policy is to support community-based projects and initiatives that enhance the quality of life for residents of Sooke. The program provides limited financial and in-kind support to help launch new initiatives that foster arts, culture, community engagement, environmental stewardship, emergency preparedness, place-based education, and community events. Through this program, the District aims to cultivate a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient community by encouraging collaboration, creativity, and shared experiences. By investing in grassroots initiatives, the District helps strengthen community connections, celebrate local identity, and promote environmental and social sustainability — all of which contribute to the overall well-being and vitality of Sooke.

Policy Statement

The District of Sooke recognizes the importance of supporting local organizations and community groups that contribute to a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community. Through the Community Grant Program, the District provides seed funding and in-kind support to help initiate new projects and community events that benefit residents of Sooke and promote community well-being.

Scope:

Eligibility

- An Applicant must be a Community-Based and Non-Profit Organization, or volunteer group with a fiscal sponsor
- Projects must primarily benefit Sooke residents and occur within District boundaries.
- Projects must be new initiatives in one or more of the following areas:
 - Arts and culture
 - Community engagement and local events
 - Destination tourism events
 - Environmental stewardship and sustainability
 - Emergency preparedness and community resilience
 - Place-based education
 - Youth development and inclusion
 - Health and wellness
 - Reconciliation, diversity, and accessibility
- Projects should demonstrate a clear community benefit and alignment with District strategic priorities.
- Recipients must acknowledge the District of Sooke's contribution as outlined in Section "Recognition of District Support".
- Non-eligible entities and activities include:
 - For-profit businesses
 - Political or religious advocacy
 - Core operating expenses such as rent, wages, ongoing administrative costs.

Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy

Defined word	Definition
Applicant	An eligible non-profit organization, incorporated society, registered charity, or volunteer group applying for financial or in-kind support under this policy and responsible for meeting all program requirements.
Community-Based Organization	A non-profit, volunteer, or charitable organization that operates primarily within the District of Sooke and primarily benefits Sooke residents.
Community Event	A publicly accessible gathering or celebration that promotes community pride, inclusion, and engagement and is open to the general public.
Council	The elected Council of the District of Sooke.
Destination Tourism Event	A publicly accessible, time-limited event that attracts visitors to Sooke while delivering clear cultural, social, or economic benefits to residents and aligning with District values.
Emergency Preparedness	Activities or initiatives that strengthen the community's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies or natural disasters.
Environmental Stewardship	Initiatives that protect, restore, or enhance the natural environment through education, conservation, or sustainable practices.
Fiscal Sponsor	A non-profit organization, incorporated society, or registered charity that administers grant funds on behalf of an eligible unincorporated group and is accountable for financial management, reporting, and compliance.
Grant	A financial or in-kind contribution provided by the District of Sooke to support a specific, time-limited project or initiative that benefits the community.
In-Kind Contribution	Non-cash support provided by the District of Sooke, such as access to facilities, equipment, or limited staff support, excluding overtime or additional staffing costs.
New Initiative	A project, program, or event that has not previously received funding through the Community Grant Program or represents a significant expansion of an existing effort.
Operational Capacity	The ability of District staff and resources to support a project within existing schedules, workloads, and approved budgets.
Place-Based Education	Educational initiatives that connect learning to Sooke's local heritage, culture, environment, and community.
Project	A defined, time-limited activity, event, or initiative designed to address a specific community need or objective.
Reporting Requirements	The obligation of grant recipients to submit a report outlining project outcomes, use of funds, and recognition of District support.
Seed Funding	Limited financial assistance intended to launch or pilot a new project, program, or event, not to support ongoing operations.

Principles:**Funding and In-Kind Contribution(s)**

- 1.1 Maximum Financial Contribution: Up to \$5,000 per organization per year.
- 2.1 Additional in-kind contributions may be requested at the time of application, subject to operational capacity. These may include access to municipal parks or facilities, associated permits, District-owned equipment, and limited event support. Overtime costs are not eligible for in-kind contribution.

Available Funds

- 3.1 The total funds available for community grants will be determined annually through the District's budget process. The number of grants awarded will depend on available funding and the volume of eligible applications received.
- 4.1 Funding availability will be publicly communicated with the call for applications.

Application Process

- 5.1 Applications must be submitted digitally through the District's designated online form.
- 6.1 Applications must be completed in full to be considered for review.
- 7.1 The intake period is March 1 to April 8 each year.
- 8.1 Applications will be reviewed by staff against Council-approved criteria and referred to Council for final approval.
- 9.1 Successful applicants will be notified following Council deliberations.
- 10.1 Applications received after the deadline or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Evaluation Criteria

- 11.1 Applications will be assessed based on the criteria outlined in Appendix A of this policy.

Reporting Requirements

- 12. 1 Recipients must submit a brief final report within 60 days of project completion, summarizing outcomes, participation, community impact, and how funds were used. Failure to submit a report will affect eligibility for future grants.

Recognition of District Support

- 13.1 While recognition requirements may be adapted for the scale and nature of the project, all recipients must acknowledge the District of Sooke's contribution as a program partner by:
 - a) Including the District of Sooke logo on promotional and marketing materials related to the funded project or event, including posters, social media, and print or digital advertising.
 - b) Mentioning the District of Sooke as a partner on social media posts or event announcements where applicable.
 - c) Recognizing the District verbally at events or through public announcements, where appropriate.

Administration

- 14.1 This policy shall be administered by District staff under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer.
- 14.2 Annual reports on the Community Grant Program will be provided to Council for information and published on the District's website and through a news release. Reporting will include a list of recipients, funding amounts and summary outcomes.

This policy will be reviewed every five years or as directed by Council.

References: Appendix A

Policy Owner:	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Endorsed by:	Council
Date Approved:	February 9, 2026
Review Date:	February 9, 2031
Revision Date:	
Related Policies:	Sponsorship Contribution Policy
Related Publications:	Community Investment Program

Appendix A: Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated against the following **Council-approved criteria**:

Criterion	Description	Weighting
Alignment with District Priorities	The extent to which the project supports the District's strategic priorities, Official Community Plan objectives, or Council's vision for a vibrant and sustainable community.	20%
Community Benefit and Engagement	Demonstrated benefit to Sooke residents and engagement of the local community, including inclusivity and accessibility.	20%
Innovation and Creativity	The project introduces new ideas, partnerships, or approaches that contribute to local vibrancy and resilience.	15%
Environmental, Social, or Emergency Preparedness Value	The project promotes environmental stewardship, climate awareness, social sustainability, place-based learning, or community readiness and resilience.	15%
Feasibility and Organizational Capacity	The organization demonstrates the ability to successfully deliver the project within available resources and timelines.	10%
Collaboration and Partnerships	Evidence of partnerships, volunteer involvement, or collaboration with other organizations or community groups.	10%
Financial Need and Budget Clarity	The funding request is reasonable, transparent, and clearly justified within the project budget.	10%