

**TO:** Chair and Members of Grants Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:**

  
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Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** November 10, 2022

**SUBJECT:** **Proposed Administrative Order 2022-005-ADM Respecting the Community Grants Program**

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## **ORIGIN**

This is a Staff initiated report.

## **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*HRM Charter, S.N.S 2008, c.39*

59 (3) In addition to matters specified in this Act or another Act of the Legislature, the Council may adopt policies on any matter that the Council considers conducive to the effective management of the Municipality.

79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if

(a) the expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality;

...

*HRM Grants Committee Terms of Reference.*

The duties of the HRM Grants Committee are to:

4.1 Advise Regional Council on all matters related to the allocation of grants, as defined by Regional Council.

*Administrative Order 54 Respecting Procedures for Developing Administrative Orders*

5. All Administrative Orders, amendments to Administrative Orders, and repeal of Administrative Orders require at least seven (7) days' notice to all the Council Members in accordance with subsection 59(1) of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*.

*Administrative Order 2019-007-ADM Respecting Public Disclosure of Municipal Grants.*

**RECOMMENDATION ON PAGE 2**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Grants Committee recommend that Regional Council adopt Administrative Order 2022-005-ADM *Respecting the Community Grants Program*, as set out in Attachment 1.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 1996 a region-wide, centralized “Grants Program” was created following the amalgamation of four municipalities to form the Halifax Regional Municipality (“HRM”). Although the program’s funding categories and priorities have evolved over the past 25 years to reflect Council’s interests the approach has been largely reactive. With the introduction of a municipal [5-Year Strategic Priorities Plan](#)<sup>1</sup> it is now possible to gauge which of HRM’s priorities are supported by the Community Grants Program and to review the program’s alignment at regular intervals. The proposed Administrative Order is included as Attachment 1 of this report. Although the policy largely reflects current practice, updates have been made informed by the findings of an internal review that included input from program participants and members of the public.

With the proliferation of municipal grant programs in recent years, most of which focus on a distinct program or service sector, consideration has also been given to how the Community Grants Program is positioned in relation to these grant opportunities. This review concludes that the availability of more municipal funding does not necessarily equate to enhanced access. Organizations able to “navigate” HRM’s online presentation of information may have an advantage in accessing funds or in-kind assistance from more than one source while others receive comparatively little, if any. Likewise, unless these grant programs are discrete there is a risk of duplication, overlap, or inefficiencies for both HRM and applicants. As identified in the review, a consolidation of sector-specific funding could enhance navigation and efficiencies through a “single-point-of-entry” while increasing the Community Grants Program’s capacity. For example, a consolidation of grants for heritage property owners, affordable housing, emergency service providers, and rural transit.

## **BACKGROUND**

Government grants are not uniformly available across the full range of programs and services offered by the non-profit and charitable sector. To do so would be cost-prohibitive. Consequently, competing interests should be expected to challenge the exclusion of a particular sector. Likewise, among those sectors eligible for consideration comparisons will be made in terms of the type, duration, dollar value, or extent of municipal cash and/or in-kind assistance to a particular organization or program/service sector. These issues are reflected in the following retrospective review of the Community Grants Program’s development.

### **Origin of the Community Grants Program**

Prior to municipal amalgamation cash grants to non-profit and charitable organizations were primarily available to groups located in the urban core. These grants supported social services<sup>2</sup>, large-scale recreation facilities, and events intended to attract tourists and visitors to the provincial capital. In contrast, the smaller population and commercial tax base in rural and suburban areas resulted in limited access to cash grants. Consequently, municipal assistance to groups located outside the urban core was primarily through tax relief and less than market value leasing<sup>3</sup>. Following amalgamation, funding for civic and non-

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<sup>1</sup> [2021-2022 Strategic Priorities Plan](#), presentation to HRM Budget Committee meeting of January 12, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Examples included shelters for the homeless, family services, seniors, and mental health services.

<sup>3</sup> For example, tax relief for community halls, sports and seniors’ clubs, parks, and campgrounds owned by non-profit and charitable organizations.

recurring events hosting was consolidated under the former Tourism, Culture and Heritage business unit. Operating grants to social service providers were transferred to the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services under the Provincial/Municipal Service Exchange Agreement and any remaining commitments were centralized under a single "Grants Program". The inaugural program had three funding categories: Social Services, Recreation, and Culture/Tourism. These categories reflected a continuation of pre-amalgamation practices with a high percentage of funding going to a very small number of established organizations, notably in Recreation and Culture/Tourism. By comparison, the Social Services category had the largest number of applicants and awards, but the value of grants was generally lower in the range of \$500 to \$5,000.

Because access to a municipal grant program extended across the entire region competition increased, but those organizations without an established municipal funding relationship would have had comparatively limited awareness of and/or experience with a formal funding process. Hence, the distribution of funds to only a few large-scale organizations was a source of contention. In general, there was a perception that "those with the most, got the most". Organizations with paid staff, higher revenues, and property ownership were assumed to have an advantage over others.

### **Program Development**

To address concerns with respect to any advantage based on human or financial capacity the program's purpose was described as "...primarily developmental with a focus on support to volunteer-led initiatives and organizational capacity building". Reporting identified organizations that were entirely volunteer or largely self-funded and public reports grouped applicants by "tier" based on their prior year's gross revenues<sup>4</sup>. Policy also stated that "...preference may be given to organizations not in receipt of federal, provincial or municipal funding". The program's scope was expanded with an increase in the number of funding categories (for example, environment) and grants for small events were consolidated under the Department of Tourism, Culture & Heritage.

During this period decision-making transparency was enhanced using a narrative form of reporting in preference to simply a list of names and dollar amounts. This format provides a rationale as to "why", not simply "who?" or "how much?". Applications not recommended for funding or ineligible for consideration are also included in staff reports with an explanation, not simply in relation to program budget capacity. As integral to the decision-making process, the composition of the Council appointed Grants Committee was amended to include members of the public and elected officials from urban, suburban, and rural areas of the Municipality. Given the proliferation of municipal grants programs it may be prudent for Council to request a review of the Terms of Reference for the Grants Committee, which have not been updated since 2012.

As the duration of the Community Grants Program extended concern arose with respect to organizations perceived to be in receipt of a disproportionate number of grants or recurring awards. An internal review concluded that over a 10-year period only three organizations received an above-average number of awards. The Grants Committee chose not to apply a limit on successive applications due to the number of property-related capital grant requests. Instead, staff reports now identify prior funding to the same organization over the preceding four years and organizations who have not received a grant over this same period are listed as 'new' to the program.

### **Municipal Auditor's Report (2011)**

In 2011 the Auditor General of HRM published a report on Corporate Grants, Donations and Contributions. The Auditor's review identified 57 "programs" where cash or in-kind assistance was provided to non-profit organizations either under formal policy or by practice. Of concern was the number of points of entry (both formal and informal) and the lack of an organization-wide system for risk management, reporting, and

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<sup>4</sup> Tier 1 <\$50,000, Tier 2 > \$250,000, Tier 3 over \$250,000.

analysis. The centralization of the delivery of grants, donations, and contributions in one division with responsibility for policy, business practice, and reporting was recommended (recommendation 3.8, at p.37). Although the Auditor's recommendation could enhance navigation and is consistent with jurisdictions that have implemented a "single-point-of-entry" process, HRM grant programs are primarily funded through departmental budgets and tend to be focused on one sector/municipal strategy or priority outcome. In contrast, the Community Grants Program and the Tax Relief for Non-Profit Organizations Program cover multiple sectors and are budgeted under Fiscal Services. In preference to the polarization of a centralized versus fully de-centralized approach, HRM could consider a hybrid model wherein specific functions are centralized while program delivery is de-centralized.

### **Current State**

The current Community Grants Program has an annual budget of \$500,000 and provides project-specific grants in eight funding categories<sup>5</sup>. Program uptake varies annually but over the past four years has averaged in the range of 90 to 150 applications. Over this same period the combined value of requests, including ineligible applications, exceeded \$1 million dollars each year. The value of requests is skewed by the higher funding threshold for property-related capital grants which are in high demand in the History, Leisure, and Recreation categories.

With the Municipality's adoption of a Diversity and Inclusion Framework in 2018 there is an increased awareness of disparities in access to opportunity including systemic racism, literacy, language, ableism, limited experience with or trust in government, technology, and access to information. While acknowledging the term "access to opportunity" can be interpreted from multiple perspectives, this review has considered access to the Community Grants Program<sup>6</sup> and accessible information<sup>7</sup>.

Although the Community Grants Program had a Diversity<sup>8</sup> funding category prior to adoption of HRM's Diversity and Inclusion Framework, this category was re-named to bring attention to challenges faced by vulnerable interest-based or geographic communities. However, it is important not to inadvertently perpetuate negative stereotypes. Organizations serving marginalized populations have and are expected to continue to receive funding under the Community Grants Program. But, because the program is project-based, submissions are considered under the applicable funding category by type of program or service. Consequently, a count of only grant recipients under the Diversity & Inclusion category results in an under-representation of the type and overall scope of awards. Informed by this internal review, the funding priorities for each category have been revised to include and/or encourage enhanced access to community-based programs and services, diverse representation and participation, and inclusivity as shown in the evaluation matrix in Table 1.

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<sup>5</sup> Capital grants of up to \$25,000 are awarded for property-related projects which tend to be higher cost, the purchase of large or expensive equipment, and permanent installations (for example, a public art commission such as a sculpture). Project grants are awarded in the range of \$500 to \$5,000.

<sup>6</sup> Diversity & Inclusion Framework. Priority #4. Meaningful Partnerships. Strengthen relationship-building by increasing external outreach and the Municipality's "participation" in diversity and inclusion initiatives undertaken by community members.

<sup>7</sup> Diversity & Inclusion Framework. Priority #5. Accessible Information. Development and implementation of a communications plan.

<sup>8</sup> The former Diversity category focused on ethnocultural organizations and those organizations serving persons with a disability.

<b>Table 1. Evaluation Matrix</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Category Priority	Does the project directly address a funding priority for this category?	5
Financial Need	Demonstrated inability to self-fund. Limited access to government or other funding sources.	5
Public Benefit	Accessible, affordable, inclusive.	5
Volunteer Support	Supports volunteers in the development and/or delivery of a program or service serving residents.	5
		x/20

A Communications Plan for the Community Grants Program is included as Attachment 2 of this report. As proposed, the technology that enabled virtual meetings implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic will be maintained to enhance access to staff assistance and efficiencies for both HRM and applicants. However, internet access, affordability, and proficiency varies significantly. Therefore, paper-based resources and submissions by mail or in-person must be maintained to sustain inclusion.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Review Methodology**

The review encompassed:

- (i) a profile of Nova Scotia’s nonprofit and charitable sector;
- (ii) an internal scan of municipal grant program Administrative Orders;
- (iii) interviews with staff who administer a municipal grant program who were asked to identify any duplication, overlap, gaps, or opportunities;
- (iv) a targeted scan of comparable grant programs in other Canadian jurisdictions;
- (v) a compilation of data from 416 applications to the Community Grants Program over four consecutive years from 2018 to 2021; and
- (vi) a program participant/public survey.

### **Review Limitations**

The internal review, development of a new Administrative Order and new program materials was undertaken within the Finance department’s existing staff and budget allocation but with the addition of an 18-month internship. The review timeline was established with the goal of implementing revisions for the 2023 Community Grants Program which opens for applications in January. However, if the pace is too fast or poorly communicated the process could inadvertently create unintended barriers to program participation. Consequently, any consolidation between/within municipal grant programs will need to be phased and is not considered feasible for fiscal 2023.

### **Main Findings**

The results of the review, including survey responses, are included as Attachment 3 of this report.

### **Main Program Revisions**

The proposed Administrative Order 2022-005-ADM is included as Attachment 1 of this report. The following is a synopsis of the main additions to policy and communications to help prospective applicants locate the Community Grants Program to determine if the program is an appropriate fit for their project.

*Simplification:*

- Improved application form and guidebook.
- Funding category definitions to aid navigation within the program.
- Simplified evaluation criteria included with each funding category listed in the program guide.
- Added clarification if application deadline falls on a weekend or a civic holiday
- Added clarification for arrears owed to the Municipality.
- The standard contribution agreement is not considered warranted because these funds are awarded in accordance with policy approved by Regional Council and financial risk to the Municipality is moderated by a maximum funding threshold of up to \$5,000 or up to \$25,000. The letter of notification which accompanies a grant payment sets out the conditions of the grant, specifies the expenditure(s) supported by the grant, and includes a final report form. The CFO may set standard terms and conditions. Interpretation and assistance in completing the final report is available from staff.
- Failure to submit a final report, or the use of funds for ineligible costs or purposes, will result in suspension of eligibility for up to three years.

*Clarification:*

- Authority to the CFO to establish priority outcomes by funding category.
- Duration of ineligibility for reporting default reduced.
- Confirmed eligibility of unregistered groups as co-applicants.
- Amended eligibility of leasehold improvements to include public property (provincial or federal) with the owner's consent but conditional upon funding to match or exceed any municipal grant. Leasehold improvements to HRM property are excluded based on annual departmental operating and capital budgets and access to the District Capital Fund<sup>9</sup>.
- Refund threshold established for unspent grant monies.
- Registration in default explained.

*Communication:*

- Expanded promotion – HRM web site, social media, community newspapers.
- Communications plan.
- Scheduled meetings with Parks & Recreation Community Development staff.

*Navigation:*

- New web site address: [halifax.ca/grants](http://halifax.ca/grants).
- Continuation of digital meeting capacity.

**Next Steps**

- Publish guidebook and applications form.
- Schedule and purchase media communications.
- Investigate cost and reach of community radio advertising.
- Investigate expanded communications through the Councillors' Support Office.
- Accommodate limited staff capacity for in-person workshops. For example, partner with other municipal departments, government, or funding agencies and/or explore the feasibility of online, self-directed resources (video, webinars).
- Develop key performance indicators that reflect the program's focus on smaller, local volunteer organizations with limited financial capacity or funding opportunities.

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<sup>9</sup> In 2022-23 the District Capital Fund budget was \$1,504,000.

- Investigate the feasibility, cost, and utility of purchasing data regarding the region's non-profit and charitable sector to coincide with a program review in relation to HRM's 5-Year Strategic Priorities Plan.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no changes proposed to the Community Grants Program budget in M311-8004. Any additional costs in relation to expanded communications or outreach (workshops, online instructional videos) will be subject to annual administrative budget capacity.

### **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Low – The program's risk management strategies are proportional to the scale of funding.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

A copy of the survey, respondent feedback, and revised draft guidebook have been posted online at <https://www.halifax.ca/business/doing-business-halifax/community-non-profit-resources/community-grants>. Feedback to respondents has been included to demonstrate any changes included in policy or the guidebook/application form. Once the Administrative Order is approved and program materials published this background information will be removed.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Not applicable. This report is with respect to the design and promotion of a discretionary municipal grant program.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. The Grants Committee could recommend that Regional Council adopt the proposed Administrative Order with amendments.
2. The Grants Committee could recommend that Regional Council decline to adopt the draft Administrative Order. This would lead to a continuation of the status quo.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Administrative Order 2022-005-ADM Respecting the Community Grants Program.
2. Communications Plan.
3. Review Main Findings.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](https://www.halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER 2022-005-ADM  
Respecting the Community Grants Program**

**WHEREAS** the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality values the contribution of volunteers in providing a range of leisure, learning, and recreational opportunities for residents and the provision of programs, services, and amenities to enhance public safety and the well-being of individuals and families who require specialized services or accommodation;

**AND WHEREAS** the Council supports the principles of diversity and inclusivity;

**BE IT RESOLVED AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER** of the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality under the authority of *the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, as follows

**Short Title**

1. This Administrative Order may be known as the Community Grants Program Administrative Order.

**Interpretation**

2. In this Administrative Order:

(a) “applicant” means an organization making application for funding to the Community Grants Program;

(b) “CFO” means the Chief Financial Officer of the Halifax Regional Municipality;

(c) “Council” means the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality;

(d) “Grants Committee” means the Committee of Council convened to advise and make recommendations to the Council with respect to the allocation of grants;

(e) “non-profit organization” means:

i. a non-profit society incorporated pursuant to the *Societies Act* (R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 435);

ii. a non-profit association incorporated pursuant to the *Co-operatives Associations Act* (R.S.N.S. 1989, c. 98);

iii. a not-for-profit corporation incorporated pursuant to the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act* (S.C. 2009, c. 23); or

iv. a non-profit organization otherwise incorporated under an Act of the Nova Scotia Legislature or an Act of the Parliament of Canada;

(f) “parent organization” means a non-profit organization or registered Canadian charitable organization that has, as part of its organizational structure, associations of individuals that have a common interest but are not independently incorporated;

(g) “registered Canadian charitable organization” means a charitable organization registered pursuant to the *Income Tax Act (Canada)* and registered with the Canada Revenue Agency; and

(h) "registered in good standing" means the registration status of the applicant has not been revoked or suspended.

### **Purpose**

3. The aim of the Community Grants Program is to support the volunteer participation of residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality in local nonprofit and charitable organizations that develop or deliver a project, program, service, or amenity to benefit members of the public and that aligns with elements of the Municipality's 5-Year Strategic Priorities Plan.

### **Grants Available**

4. The community grants program is hereby continued.

5. There are two types of grants available:

(a) Project Grants: available annually in an amount of \$500 to \$5,000 to support projects that are modest in scale or expense and enhance an existing program or service, or the development of a new program or service; and

(b) Capital Grants: available annually in an amount of up to \$25,000 to support large-scale property-related projects or expensive or specialized equipment as follows:

i. the purchase of real property;

ii. construction, repairs, renovation, upgrade or improvements to real property owned by the applicant;

iii. the purchase of a large or specialized item of equipment, including vehicles, costing over \$5,000; or

iv. a public art commission or purchase, a monument, or installation.

6. (1) Notwithstanding sub-clause 5(b)(ii), Capital Grants are available to support improvements to land leased from the Government of Nova Scotia or the Government of Canada if the following conditions are met:

(a) the applicant has a signed lease agreement with a minimum of three (3) years remaining in the current term;

(b) the property owner has provided written consent; and

(c) an application has been made for provincial or federal funding in support of the project in an amount equal to or exceeding the value of the municipal grant requested.

(2) Capital Grants approved in accordance with this section shall be contingent upon confirmation of receipt of the provincial or federal funding referenced in clause (c) of subsection 1.

(3) Improvements to municipal or private property are not eligible for a Capital Grant.

7. Only projects located within the geographic boundary of Halifax Regional Municipality are eligible for a grant under this Administrative Order.

8. The Community Grants Program does not provide multi-year funding commitments.

### **Funding Categories and Priorities**

9. The funding categories for Project and Capital Grants shall be as set out in Schedule 1 of this Administrative Order.

10. The program's funding categories shall support community-based programs, services, and amenities that advance inclusion, diverse cultural representation, and accessibility.

11. The CFO may set priority outcomes within the funding categories, which may change annually.

12. The funding categories and priority outcomes shall be published in the program's guidelines and be made available to the public.

13. The funding categories listed in Schedule 1 of this Administrative Order shall be reviewed regularly in relation to the Municipality's 5-Year Strategic Priorities Plan and other municipal assistance programs and practices. Upon review, the Council may amend Schedule 1 to continue, amend, or discontinue funding categories.

### **Eligibility of Applicant**

14. (1) Subject to subsection (2), to be eligible for consideration for a grant pursuant to this Administrative Order, the applicant shall:

- (a) be a non-profit organization or registered Canadian charitable organization;
- (b) be incorporated for a minimum of one (1) year prior to the deadline for applications;
- (c) be registered in good standing in accordance with their constating legislation; and
- (d) not otherwise have their eligibility suspended under this Administrative Order.

(2) An association of individuals that have a common interest but is not incorporated is eligible for consideration for a grant as part of a joint application in accordance with section 22.

### **Application Requirements**

15. There is one intake period per fiscal year. The intake period and application deadline will be established by staff and advertised in all print and digital media, the application form and program guidelines.

16. If the application deadline falls on a weekend or holiday the application deadline shall be the next business day.

17. Late or incomplete applications shall not be reviewed or considered.

18. (1) An applicant may apply for one grant per fiscal year.

(2) The application may be for either a Project Grant or a Capital Grant.

(3) For greater certainty, where a non-profit organization or registered charity is a parent organization to more than one association of individuals that have a common interest but are not independently incorporated, the applicant shall be the non-profit organization or registered charity.

19. Applications shall be submitted on the form provided by the Municipality and shall include:

(a) an itemized financial statement for the applicant for the previous fiscal year showing all revenues, expenses, assets, and liabilities;

(b) a detailed project budget; and

(c) a listing of other sources from which funding is being sought by the applicant, including any other municipal program, and the status of the application(s).

20. An application form must be signed by two authorized representatives of the applicant, one of which must be a member of an applicant organization's Board of Directors.

21. Applications may be submitted by mail, email, in-person through an HRM Customer Service Centre, or by courier to the addresses provided in the program guidebook and application form.

22. (1) An application for a grant may be submitted jointly by more than one applicant.

(2) At least one applicant in a joint application shall meet the eligibility criteria as set out in sub-section 14(1).

(3) Where a joint application is submitted, each applicant shall:

(a) sign the application form in accordance with section 20; and

(b) provide an itemized financial statement for the previous fiscal year showing revenues, expenses, assets, and liabilities in accordance with section 19, and in the case of an association of individuals that have a common interest but are not incorporated, a simple statement of its cash position may be substituted, as applicable.

(4) In the event of the approval of a grant for a joint application, payment shall be made to one applicant, which shall be that applicant meeting the eligibility criteria as set out in sub-section 14(1).

(5) A joint application shall be funded in accordance with the maximum funding threshold stated in section 5.

(6) In the event of default in submitting a final report with proof of payment for the expenditure of the grant awarded to a joint application, the eligibility of both applicants shall be suspended pursuant to sections 45 and 47.

### **Eligible Grant Expenditures**

23. A grant awarded under this Administrative Order shall be used only for the project as set out in the application and approval.

24. The expenditures shall be made in the same fiscal year (April 1 – March 31) in which the grant was approved unless an extension has been approved under sections 41 to 43.

## **Ineligible Grant Expenditures**

25. No portion of a grant awarded under this Administrative Order shall be used for:

- (a) an organization's operating costs including but not limited to salaries, wages, insurance, utilities, rent, debt, registration or membership fees;
- (b) a stipend, bursary, scholarship, honoraria, prize, financial gift, or item(s) for personal ownership;
- (c) leasehold improvements, repairs and/or fixed upgrades to a building, land or equipment that is not owned by the applicant(s), except as provided for under sections 6;
- (d) housing or residential accommodations used for an institutional purpose, private ownership, or any part of a dwelling provided as an employment-related benefit;
- (e) costs associated with the purchase of surplus municipal property in accordance with Section 17, Schedules 1 and 2 of Administrative Order 50;
- (f) events including but not limited to a dinner, trade show, reunion, meeting, conference, festival, fundraising event, or tournament;
- (g) consumables including but not limited to office supplies, travel, admission or membership fees, food, utilities, or fuel;
- (h) academic or school-based projects or educational programs including preschool and childcare programs and facilities;
- (i) projects directly or indirectly serving the interests of a trade, profession, industry, commerce, or business including a sole proprietorship;
- (j) economic development or employment except for an inclusive employment project, program, service, or amenity exclusively serving persons with a disability;
- (k) a medical program, service, amenity, facility, or equipment;
- (l) international development;
- (m) pre-paid expenses; or
- (n) a project, program, service, or facility that advances a political or religious doctrine.

## **Application Evaluation**

26. (1) Applicants recommended for an award will be screened by the Finance Department for any outstanding payments owed to the Municipality.

(2) If payments are identified to be outstanding under subsection (1), an application may be declined or a grant payment withheld pending resolution of the debt or the execution of a signed payment plan.

27. The following criteria shall be used by staff to evaluate applications for consideration by the Grants Committee for recommendation to Council:

- (a) the way in which a project addresses a program funding priority;
- (b) the applicant's demonstrated financial capacity and the incremental impact of a municipal grant;
- (c) the applicant's reliance on volunteers and self-generated revenues – preference may be given to organizations not in receipt of recurring municipal, provincial, or federal government funding; and
- (d) the type and scope of public benefit in terms of one or more of the following: accessibility, diversity, affordability, or inclusivity.

28. Preference may be given to:

- (a) applicants ineligible for consideration under another municipal grant program;
- (b) geographic or interest-based communities with limited access to public amenities; or
- (c) amenities open to the public at no or low cost.

### **Application Review Process**

29. Applications shall be reviewed by staff and a recommendation report submitted to the Grants Committee, for recommendation to Regional Council.

30. The staff recommendation may include additional terms and conditions upon which approval is recommended for individual grants.

31. The Grants Committee shall review the staff recommendations and may recommend that the Council:

- (a) approve the staff recommendation;
- (b) decline the staff recommendation;
- (c) amend the value of the award or the terms and conditions recommended for approval in the staff recommendation; or
- (d) refer an application to staff for further review.

32. Final approval of all applications for a grant, and the amount thereof, is a decision of the Council in its sole discretion.

33. Approval of grants is conditional upon Council's approval of the annual program budget.

34. Not all eligible applications may receive funding.

## **Notification and Payment**

35. Applicants will be notified in writing of the Council's decision.
36. Written notification to grant recipients shall include the terms and conditions of funding, which shall include a final report on grant expenditures and the reporting submission timeline in accordance with sections 44 to 47.
37. Payment may be issued in full or in installments.
38. Payment may be withheld under the following circumstances:
  - (a) pending confirmation of an ability to proceed with the project as presented in the application;
  - (b) pending confirmation of an applicant's registration status; or
  - (c) pending resolution of debt to the Municipality.

## **Inability to Proceed**

39. If a funded project cannot be completed and no extension has been granted pursuant to section 41, the grant shall be refunded in full to the Municipality.
40. If any portion of the grant has been expensed prior to suspension of the project, the grant recipient shall submit a final report with proof of expenditures and refund the balance of the grant remaining.

## **Extension of Term of the Grant and Final Reporting**

41. If a project cannot be completed by the stated reporting deadline the grant recipient(s) may request an extension of up to twelve (12) consecutive months.
42. Confirmation of an extension shall be issued in writing with a revised reporting due date.
43. During the term of an extension, the grant recipient is ineligible to apply for a grant under this Administrative Order.

## **Mandatory Final Report and Default Penalty**

44. The recipient of a grant shall submit a final report by the reporting deadline stated on the form provided by the Municipality, which shall include proof acceptable to the Municipality of expenditures funded using the grant.
45. (1) A grant recipient that fails to submit a final report by the stated deadline shall have its eligibility to apply for grants under this Administrative Order suspended for a term not to exceed three (3) consecutive years.
  - (2) An applicant may have their eligibility restored prior to the end of the term of suspension under subsection (1) upon the Municipality receiving the final report with proof to the satisfaction of the Municipality of expenditures funded using the Municipality's grant.

(3) Where eligibility is restored pursuant to subsection (2), it will be effective for grant applications for the following fiscal year.

(4) An applicant that failed to submit a final report for a community grant awarded prior to April 1, 2023 may have its eligibility to apply for a grant under this Administrative Order restored in accordance with this section.

46. Any surplus funds of \$50 or more remaining at the time of the final report shall be returned to the Municipality at the time the final report is submitted.

47. Where funds are found to have been spent on ineligible costs or for purposes other than those approved in the grant application, the applicant shall be notified that the amount shall be refunded to the Municipality by a stated date, failing which their eligibility to apply for grants under this Administrative Order shall be suspended for a term not to exceed three (3) consecutive years

### **General Provisions**

48. Council delegates to the CFO the ability to create procedures to support the administration of grants under this Administrative Order, and to set standard terms and conditions for the issuance of grants hereunder.

### **Mandatory Public Reporting**

49. Awards shall be reported annually in compliance with section 79C of the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* and HRM Administrative Order 2019-007-ADM Respecting Grants Reporting.

### **Scope**

50. Nothing in this Administrative Order shall be interpreted to limit or otherwise prescribe Council's general discretion to provide grants under the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter* or otherwise.

### **Transition**

51. This Administrative Order applies to community grants awarded by Council on or after April 1, 2023.

Done and passed in Council this , day of 2022

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Municipal Clerk

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Municipal Clerk of the Halifax Regional Municipality, hereby certify that the above noted Administrative Order was passed at a meeting of Halifax Regional Council held on \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

\_\_\_\_\_  
[ ], Municipal Clerk



## Schedule I

1. The funding categories for the Community Grants Program are as follows:
  - (a) Affordable Housing: enhances housing safety, availability, suitability, and affordability
  - (b) Community Arts: encourages residents' engagement in the arts as a learning or leisure activity
  - (c) Community Histories: protects, interprets, and presents the region's culturally diverse histories
  - (d) Diversity & Inclusion: addresses barriers to participation for under-represented, economically-disadvantaged, equity-seeking, or interest-based communities
  - (e) Emergency Assistance & Public Safety: community-based supports for individuals and families unable to meet their basic needs for daily living and projects that enhance public safety
  - (f) Environment & Climate Change: prevents or remedies harm to the natural environment
  - (g) Leisure: strengthens social connection through community-based organizations, self-directed group activities, and community-owned venues
  - (h) Recreation: encourages physical fitness through non-elite and inclusive sport and recreational activity

## Communications Plan

### 1. Outreach and Support – Community Grants Program

Action Item	Purpose	Status
Program guidebook	Policy and procedure	On-going
Staff assistance	Telephone, email <sup>1</sup>	On-going
Designated program email	Communications	On-going
Applicant feedback	De-brief on application	Available upon request
Workshops	Program orientation	Staff capacity issue
HRM Volunteer Conference	Program promotion	On-going

### 2. Accessible Information

#### Existing Communications

Action Item	Purpose	Status
Print advertising in regional media	Notice of program open/close	Corporate Communications
halifax.ca/grants designated web page	List of HRM grants and assistance	Corporate Communications/IT
<a href="mailto:nonprofitgrants@halifax.ca">nonprofitgrants@halifax.ca</a>	Inquiries	IT
Print and digital guidebook	Internal distribution and mailout	Corporate Communications
Livestreaming Grants Committee meetings/online agenda	Access to staff reports and decision-making process	Office of Municipal Clerk/IT
Halifax.ca home page “card”	High profile announcement subject to availability	Corporate Communications
Expanded print advertising in community newspapers	Masthead News, Cobequid Wire, Eastern Shore Cooperator, Chebucto News	Corporate Communications

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<sup>1</sup> An in-person meeting or site visit may be warranted in some circumstances but limited capacity due to staff availability. Virtual meeting capacity enables expanded geographic reach and may moderate literacy/language competencies.

## Future Communications Considerations

Action Item	Purpose	
Regional Council community announcements	Notice of program open/close	Optional
Councillors' Support Office	Social media and district newsletter	Optional
At-a-glance calendar all municipal grant programs	Open/close dates with links	Pending
Digital screen promotion	Promotion in select HRM locations	Pending
Google display network	Promotion	Pending
Electronic posters	Target internal distribution	Pending
Social media	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn	Pending
Community radio	Notice of program open/close	Pending

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## Review Main Findings

### Literature Review

The ability to gauge the Community Grants Program's exposure to and uptake by eligible organizations, particularly a target sub-sector or "audience" of smaller, local, volunteer groups with limited resources is compromised because little is known about the non-profit sector and even less about unregistered groups. Data tends to be aggregate, multi-sectoral, and terminology is not standardized.

Despite methodological limitations, the latest data estimates that there are 856 charities and 1,674 non-profits located in HRM<sup>1</sup>. Combined these groups represent approximately 33% of the provincial total which is to be expected given population size and a concentration of educational, health, and umbrella organizations in HRM<sup>2</sup>. By comparison to other provinces, Nova Scotia's voluntary sector has a stronger focus on education, research and healthcare which is attributed to a reliance on government, an older population, and a high proportion of universities per capita<sup>3</sup>. In combination, the largest non-profit/charitable sub-sector is Culture and Recreation (~36%) which was defined in the data collection methodology to include arts, history, sports and recreation, community halls, and social clubs<sup>4</sup>. Charitable organizations are primarily religious institutions and affiliated groups, and social services.

Of note, organizations trying to reduce their reliance on government funding by increasing their self-generated revenues may have limited access to government funding as compared to support for small businesses and entrepreneurship. These income-generating activities tend to be retail (product or service sales) but also include space rentals, catering, educational or training instruction, cultural and leisure activities. It is not proposed that small business development or tourism be integrated into the Community Grants Program. However, except for funding to business improvement districts, there may be a gap in municipal support to community-based economic development. Presumably, any such program would be aligned with HRM's 5-Year Strategic Priorities Plan and have priority outcomes and evaluation criteria that differ from those of the Community Grants Program.

The Community Grants Program's alignment with smaller volunteer organizations is consistent with the findings of the 2022 survey conducted by the Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia cited above. Responses to this survey indicate most had an annual operating budget of less than \$50,000 over the preceding four years (2019 to 2022). This benchmark aligns with the Tier 1 descriptor used in staff reports. Further, only a third of all respondents had a contingency fund to deal with unanticipated expenses. Self-reports identifying challenges facing the non-profit sector include operating funds/multi-year commitments and reporting, staff training and retention, information technology, innovation, capacity building, and streamlining access to funding. Some of these issues may be more applicable to larger organizations in receipt of government service contracts or multi-year funding commitments whereas smaller groups, especially those without paid staff and those that do not own property, may have different needs and priorities. For example, "streamlining access to funding" suggests that awareness of funding opportunities may be limited (communication, access to information, and timing) and there is a need to simplify processes for volunteer or inexperienced groups. Hence, a focus on access to opportunity could have broad appeal and impact and this issue is not limited to only the Community Grant Program.

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<sup>1</sup> 2022 State of the Sector Report. Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia. 2022, p.6.

<sup>2</sup> An "umbrella organization" refers to an association comprising organizations that share a common purpose who coordinate activities to advance their common interests.

<sup>3</sup> The State of the Nonprofit Sector in Nova Scotia. Atlantic Provinces Economic Council. April 2020, p.10.

<sup>4</sup> 2022 State of the Sector Report. Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia. 2022, p.2.

## **Municipal Administrative Orders**

A review of current Administrative Orders was undertaken to identify common characteristics or unique criteria between municipal grant programs<sup>5</sup>. Overall, there is consistency in terms of a focus on registered groups (transparency and accountability) and ineligible expenditures but inconsistency in access to funding for capital projects. Awareness of Administrative Order 54 across the organization might also be strengthened with respect to consultation with business units that could be affected by the introduction of program policy, subsequent amendments, or repeal.

## **Municipal Staff Interviews**

Staff who administer a municipal grant program were invited to identify any potential duplication, overlap, opportunities, or gaps in relation to the Community Grants Program. The main finding reaffirms the potential benefits of consolidating sector-specific funding within a single, targeted program. For example, affordable housing or heritage property conservation. This approach could enhance navigation, realize efficiencies for both HRM and prospective applicants, and further distinguish the Community Grants Program from other municipal programs.

## **Program Participation (2018 to 2021)**

Over the 4-year period 2018 to 2021 the combined number of applications to the Community Grants Program, including applications ineligible for consideration, totalled 416<sup>6</sup>. A review of these files indicates that ineligible applications are typically for capital improvements to property not owned by the applicant, events, operating costs, or applications missing or containing insufficient financial information. Overall, the presentation of financial information appears to be a challenge for some applicants in terms of a financial statement and/or an itemized project budget. Terms such as “assets”, “liabilities”, and “restricted versus unrestricted funds” might not be widely understood and suggests that organizational capacity-building could target this aspect of financial literacy.

## **Comparable Municipal Grant Programs**

Grant programs targeting the non-profit sector, excluding economic development, most comparable to the Community Grants Program in terms of content, communications, or application process were selected from an online keyword search. The Community Grants Program differs from most insofar as it covers multiple sectors. However, there is a general movement towards simplification and navigational aids such as a “grants gateway” or “grants portal”. The latter provide a single access point which lists individual programs to enhance an applicant’s ability to select the appropriate program. HRM has done likewise through a centralized Community/ Non-Profit Resources webpage with links to departmental programs ([www.halifax.ca/grants](http://www.halifax.ca/grants)). In recent years there has also been a general increase in specialized programs funded by government or charitable foundations targeting equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Similarly, HRM is advancing access for marginalized and interest-based communities across the organization.

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<sup>5</sup> Recreation and Active Transportation Trails, Community Museums, Professional Arts, Affordable Housing, Rural Transit, Regional Events, Marketing Levy Special Events, Heritage Incentive Grants, Heritage Conservation District Incentive Grants, Volunteer Ground Search and Rescue/EMO Organizations, and Business Improvement District Fund.

<sup>6</sup> The annual distribution of applications was: 2018 (101), 2019 (114), 2020 (90), and 2021 (111). A decrease in program uptake in 2020 is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Survey

To solicit feedback from past program participants and the public a survey was conducted which asked respondents to identify their area of interest, how they heard about the program and prior experience, as applicable. Participants were also invited to give feedback on the revised program guidebook and application form, and to add general comments. This survey targeted organizations that had applied to the program in the prior four years (2018-2021). After removing recurring organizations and duplicate addresses the survey and draft materials were emailed to “primary contacts” for a total sample of 291. Participants targeted by the program (smaller volunteer groups with revenues below \$50,000 and those new to the program) were also prompted with a printed copy sent by mail. The survey was also made public and unrestricted on an online platform for access by all stakeholders and advertised on municipal social media channels, in community newspapers, municipal digital screens, and posters in 31 community centres<sup>7</sup>.

The survey received 181 responses that included representatives of 108 non-profit or charitable organizations. Among those who represented an organization most (~48%) identified as small, fully volunteer-driven groups. This finding aligns with the program’s stated purpose. Overall, the highest survey response rates were in relation to the History, Recreation, Leisure, and Affordable Housing categories. Typically, these funding categories have a consistent annual uptake and represent a high proportion of property-related capital grant requests.

Over 30% of respondents representing organizations reported that they did not know whether their organization had applied to the Community Grants Program in the past, or otherwise did not answer the question. This reflects the nature of the non-profit and charitable sector, having either high employee/volunteer turnover or a small number of people actively involved in the grants-writing process which might not have been the survey respondent. Among those familiar with the program, most heard about the program from sources other than official communications including work (paid or volunteer), word-of-mouth, or communications from elected officials. The latter suggests that members of Regional Council and/or committees are an important aid to navigation and this finding has been integrated into the Communications Plan included as Attachment 2.

## Survey Feedback

A summary of the survey findings and feedback has been posted online at:

<https://www.halifax.ca/business/doing-business-halifax/community-non-profit-resources/community-grants>.

Although some suggestions are beyond the scope of the Community Grants Program a response has been provided as to what has been clarified, simplified, or incorporated.

## Analysis by Funding Category

The findings of this internal review have been used to refine the Community Grants Program’s funding categories, priorities, and revised program materials. A synopsis is provided below, listed in alphabetical order by funding category.

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<sup>7</sup> A statement in French on these communications provided instructions to access a translated version of the survey made possible by the *Canada–Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services 2018-23*.

## Affordable Housing

**Strategic Priorities Alignment** Communities. Affordable Communities.

The Municipality demonstrates leadership and fosters partnerships that provide access to a full range of quality, affordable housing options in safe and vibrant communities.

**Stated Purpose** *Enhance housing availability, suitability, and affordability.*

### Priority Outcomes

- Housing in under-served, remote, rural, or suburban communities located outside the Regional Centre.
- Housing for persons who face barriers to tenancy based on income, age, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- Enhance building safety and state of good repair.

### Position Relative to other Municipal Programs

The Community Grants Program has addressed housing under two funding categories: (1) Emergency Assistance & Neighbourhood Safety which funds temporary accommodations for the homeless or victims of violence and (2) Affordable Housing which targets mixed income rental accommodations. With the introduction of an Affordable Housing Grants Program covering the continuum of housing providers there is potential duplication or overlap. Also, eligibility under the Affordable Housing Grants Program is primarily for property located within the Regional Centre. Organizations with property outside this geographic area may access a smaller allocation under the Affordable Housing Grants Program (~\$200,000) or apply to the Community Grants Program<sup>8</sup>. This has created disparity with respect to access to opportunity for non-profit and charitable housing providers and creates navigation issues for potential applicants.

### Staff Input

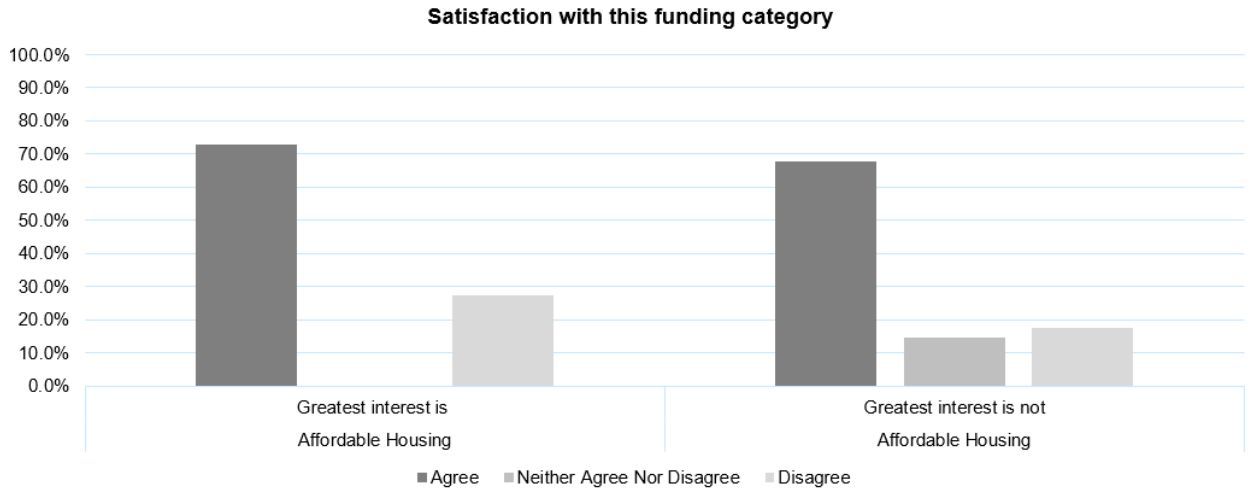
Preliminary discussions with Planning & Development staff indicate that there is general agreement that an expansion of the Affordable Housing Grants Program to include the entire region is preferable.

### Survey Feedback

The following bar chart shows survey respondents' overall satisfaction with this category. On the left are those which declared the Affordable Housing category as their funding category of greatest interest (11). On the right are all other survey respondents (68)

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<sup>8</sup> The exception to this general approach is housing projects funded by the federal and/or provincial government or modest funding under the District Capital Fund.



Concerns were raised that advance the idea that affordable housing is a spectrum applicable to all residents and not just those in designated vulnerable populations and, as one respondent noted, “...to lump a critical issue into a generic non-profit grant program ... doesn't do this problem justice”.

### Summary

Pending the possible consolidation of funds for the development, expansion, or rehabilitation of affordable housing it is recommended that in the interim this category remain in the Community Grants Program to address current gaps in eligibility. For example, housing located outside the urban core, safety, code compliance, major repairs, building condition reports, or need assessments.

## Community Arts

**Strategic Priorities Alignment** Communities. Involved Communities.

Residents are actively involved in their communities and enjoy participating in a wide range of leisure, learning, social, recreational, cultural, and civic opportunities.

**Stated Purpose** *Encourage residents' engagement in the arts as a learning or leisure activity.*

### Priority Outcomes

- Production and presentation of works by non-professional arts organizations and groups whose mandate is not arts-based.
- Community engagement art projects.
- Preservation and expression of cultural identity through the arts.

### Position Relative to other Municipal Programs

Uptake in this category has increased following the launch of the Grants to Professional Arts Organizations Program. Participation in rural and suburban locations, inclusive of a range of ages and abilities, is strong.

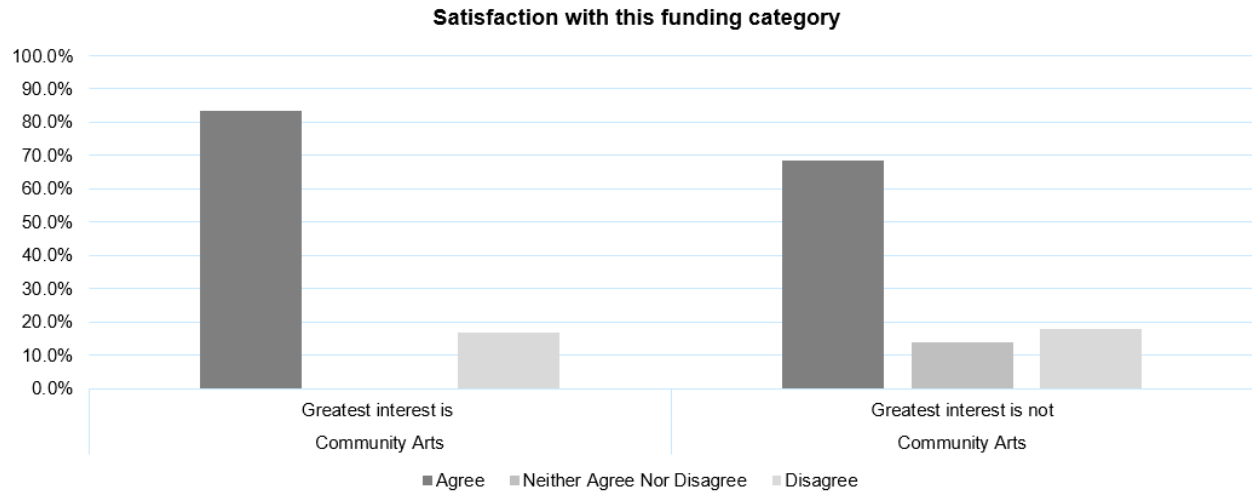
### Staff Input

Make the distinction clearer between professional/pre-professional and non-professional arts funding.



## Survey Feedback

The following bar chart shows survey respondents' overall satisfaction with this category. On the left are those which declared the Community Arts category as their funding category of greatest interest (6). On the right are all other survey respondents (73).



Some confusion expressed as to whether non-professional arts are a leisure activity.

## Summary

Uncertainty as to whether a project would be considered under the Leisure or Community Arts category has been addressed in the guidebook to help readers' select the appropriate category or contact staff for assistance.

Any implications from the [Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan](#) are unknown as of the date of this report.

## Community Histories

**Strategic Priorities Alignment** Communities. Involved Communities.

Residents are actively involved in their communities and enjoy participating in a wide range of leisure, learning, social, recreational, cultural, and civic opportunities.

**Stated Purpose** *Protect, interpret, and present the region's culturally diverse histories.*

### Priority Outcomes

- Broaden the inclusion and active participation of diverse or under-represented communities.
- Engage residents in community-based research, interpretation, and presentation.
- Encourage self-representation.

## Position Relative to other Municipal Programs

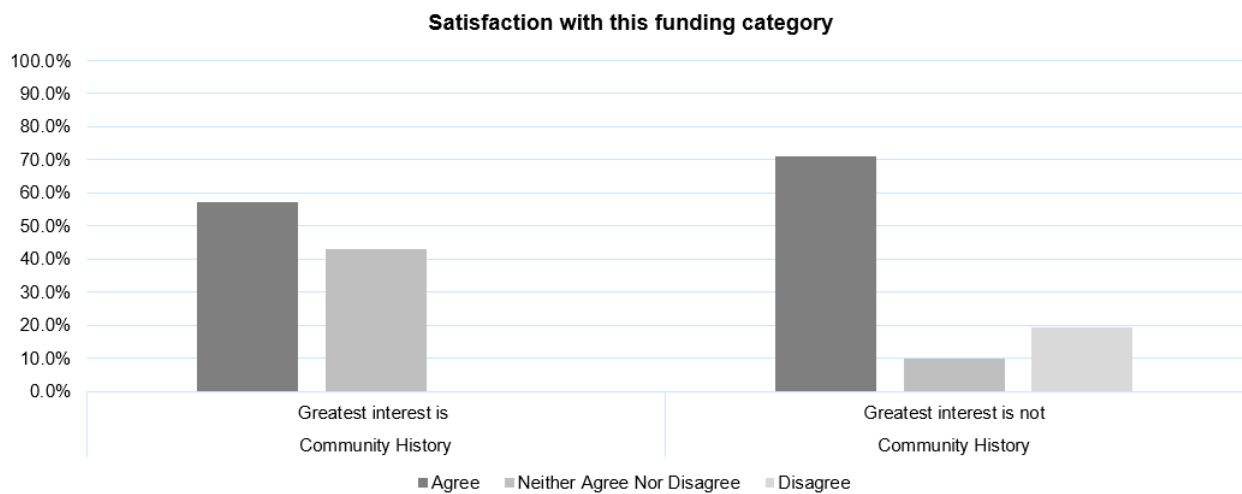
This category is over-subscribed category due to the number of capital grants for repairs/conservation of registered heritage buildings and sites. Heritage Planner approval is required for capital projects. Although there is no duplication in funding, efficiencies for both HRM and applicants could be enhanced through consolidation with the Heritage Incentives Grants Program but would require amendment to the Administrative Order. For example, the current matching contribution required of applicants could present a financial barrier.

## Staff Input

Preliminary discussions with Planning & Development staff indicate general agreement with respect to the possible consolidation of funding for registered heritage properties under the Heritage Incentives Grants Program.

## Survey Feedback

The following bar chart shows survey respondents' overall satisfaction with this category. On the left are those which declared the Community Histories category as their funding category of greatest interest (7). On the right are all other survey respondents (72).



The term “History” was preferred by one respondent which may reflect concern with respect to the eligibility or priority of institutional or occupational history relative to geographic location or an interest-based community<sup>9</sup>.

There are navigational issues between the Community Grants Program, the Heritage Incentives Program, and the Interim Community Museums Grant Program. Since the funding priorities for this category do not directly speak to heritage properties, some respondents did not see their projects reflected in this category which might explain the three respondents who selected “Neither Agree nor Disagree” of the seven

<sup>9</sup> An interest-based community is not defined by a geographic area but comprises people who share a common interest or identity. Examples include, race/ethnicity, religion, language, cultural identity, or a common history.

respondents who declared this their category of greatest interest. The guidebook and webpage have been modified with examples to address these issues.

## Summary

The name of this category has been changed to Community Histories to reflect diverse interpretations and experiences. This is an intentional challenge to the perception or practice of a “dominant narrative” which tends to reflect or advance the interests, priorities, or ideologies of the dominant social strata.

The Interim Community Museums Grant Program has been amended to a “single-point-of-entry” for those organizations that meet the eligibility criteria and includes operating, project, and capital grants. This change reduced pressure on the Community Grants Program budget and resources which can be directed to support “museums” that do not meet HRM’s operational definition, historical societies, and history-related projects undertaken by groups whose mandate is not history.

Project grants may be under-utilized. For example, building condition and heritage conservation reports; community-based research on the social significance of a property, person, or event; interpretation; and public education. Uptake may increase if capital funding is consolidated under the Heritage Incentives Grants Program and the potential impact of project grants funded under the Community Grants Program promoted. For example, building condition report or heritage conservation plan.

Any implications from the [Culture & Heritage Priorities Plan](#) are unknown as of the date of this report.

The Community Histories category’s alignment with the [5-Year Strategic Priorities Plan](#) is with respect to social not economic development (business development or tourism) and is not exclusively focused on the built environment.

## Diversity & Inclusion

**Strategic Priorities Alignment** Communities. Inclusive Communities.

Residents live in a community that fosters greater well-being by removing systemic barriers to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

**Stated Purpose** *Address barriers to participation based on physical or cognitive disability, age, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or income.*

### Priority Outcomes

- Actions to identify and reduce barriers to access a program or service due to a physical or cognitive disability including but not limited to facility accessibility.
- Actions to address under-representation and/or participation of persons, families and communities based on age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, geographic location, or income.
- Projects that present the Municipality as welcoming to immigrants, refugees, and newcomers.

### Position Relative to other Municipal Programs

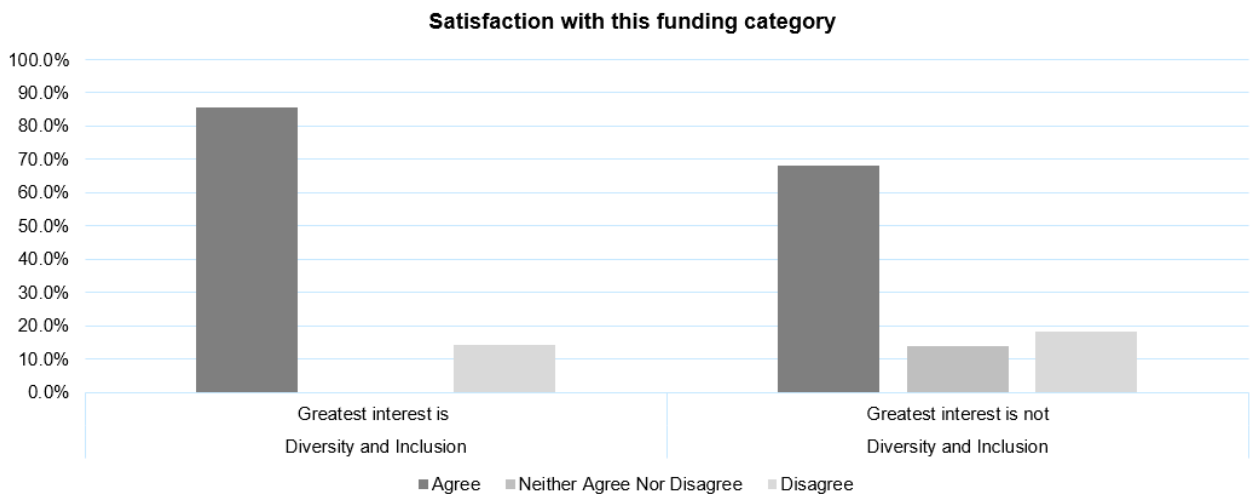
The implications of a municipal Anti-Black Racism Grants Program or from the recommendations of the [Task Force on the Commemoration of Edward Cornwallis and the Recognition and Commemoration of Indigenous History](#) are unconfirmed.

## Staff Input

Diversity & Inclusion staff requested that this category remain in the Community Grants Program to advance recognition and encourage participation. Future amendments may be warranted as municipal strategies advance. With respect to accessibility, actions to prevent or reduce barriers in the physical environment for persons with a disability identified as a priority and is consistent with the [Accessibility Act \(2017\)](#) and the provincial [Access by Design 2013](#) strategy.

## Survey Feedback

The following bar chart shows survey respondents' overall satisfaction with this category. On the left are those which declared the Diversity & Inclusion category as their funding category of greatest interest (7). On the right are all other survey respondents (72).



Respondents highlighted seniors as a user group interested in inclusion.

## Summary

Prior to the development of a Rural Transit Grants Program community-based transit providers were considered under the Diversity & Inclusion category based on service to under-served communities with limited if any access to public transit or commercial operators. Possible consolidation of funding under the Rural Transit Funding Program could realize efficiencies and accommodate infrastructure-related requests. For example, fleet expansion, replacement or energy retrofit, transit-related facilities such as garages, bus shelters, or parking.

## Emergency Assistance & Neighbourhood Safety

**Strategic Priorities Alignment** Communities. Safe Communities.

Residents and visitors feel safe and are supported by a network of social infrastructure that helps community members thrive.

**Stated Purpose** *Community-based support for individuals and families unable to meet their basic needs for daily living and projects that enhance public safety.*

## Priority Outcomes

- Accommodation and support services located outside the Regional Centre for persons who are temporarily homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Programs and services for individuals and families unable to meet their need for safety, food, shelter, or basic household items.
- Safety education and risk prevention or reduction.

## Position Relative to other Municipal Programs

Some efficiencies could be realized by centralizing access to funding for specialized equipment for municipally recognized comfort centres (generator, heat pumps, water) and amateur radio clubs (specialized transmission equipment).

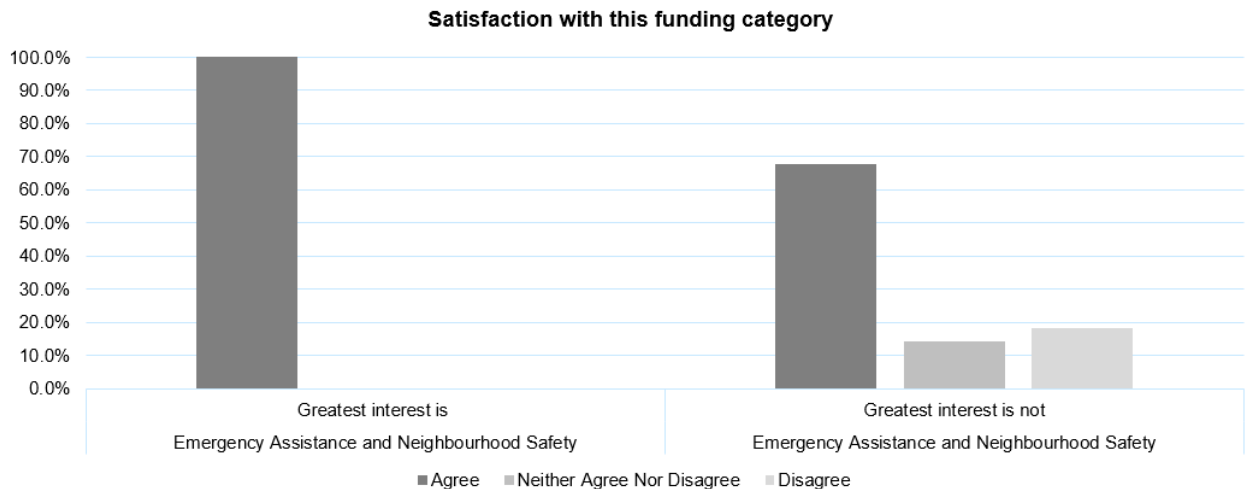
## Staff Input

An extensive list of programs, services and amenities was submitted by HRM's Public Safety office including crime prevention (sexual assault, human trafficking), harm reduction, mental health, community resilience, education/training (cultural competency, harm reduction, emergency preparedness), housing for vulnerable populations, program evaluation, data collection, and public access to amenities (washrooms, water, Internet). Public Safety staff encourage access to funding for small organizations that are not registered non-profits or charities. The guidebook and application form has been modified to encourage unregistered groups to co-apply with a registered organization; this approach encourages mentorship and collaboration while upholding transparency.

Preliminary discussions with Planning & Development staff indicate that there is general agreement that an expansion of the Affordable Housing Grants Program to include the entire region is preferable.

## Survey Feedback

The following bar chart shows survey respondents' overall satisfaction with this category. On the left are those which declared the Emergency Assistance & Neighbourhood Safety category as their funding category of greatest interest (7). On the right are all other survey respondents (71).



Respondents who indicated they disagreed with this funding category did not qualify their response.

## Summary

Pending the possible consolidation of funding under the Affordable Housing Grants Program it is recommended that in the interim housing serving temporary or chronic homelessness remain in the Community Grants Program to address current gaps in eligibility. For example, shelters located outside the urban core, residential addictions recovery or post incarceration release, safety, code compliance, building condition reports, need assessments, or major repairs. Conceivably, consolidation of funding under the Affordable Housing Grants Program would cover a spectrum of housing types in preference to the Community Grants Program's current use of two categories<sup>10</sup> (Emergency Assistance and Affordable Housing) and would aid navigation.

## Analysis by Funding Category

The following is a description of each funding category, review findings and feedback, and a summary of observations and clarification with respect to the Community Grants Program in relation to other municipal programs.

## Environment

**Strategic Priorities Alignment** Environment. Protected and Sustainable Environment.

Healthy and protected ecosystems support biodiversity and connected habitats and enhanced quality of life.

**Stated Purpose** *Prevent or remedy harm to the environment.*

### Priority Outcomes

- Protect or conserve the natural environment.
- Recognize and support the participation and representation of culturally diverse communities in environmental stewardship.
- Public education and stewardship.

### Position Relative to other Municipal Programs

No duplication with an existing program but participation by the non-profit and charitable sector in HRM's financing programs for solar energy and energy efficiency could be promoted given that these types of capital improvements may be costly.

### Staff Input

An extensive list of programs, services and amenities was submitted by HRM's Energy & Environment office including climate adaptation (naturalizing landscapes), climate-related emergency preparedness, community clean-ups, habitat restoration, energy conservation, energy audits, education, and equipment.

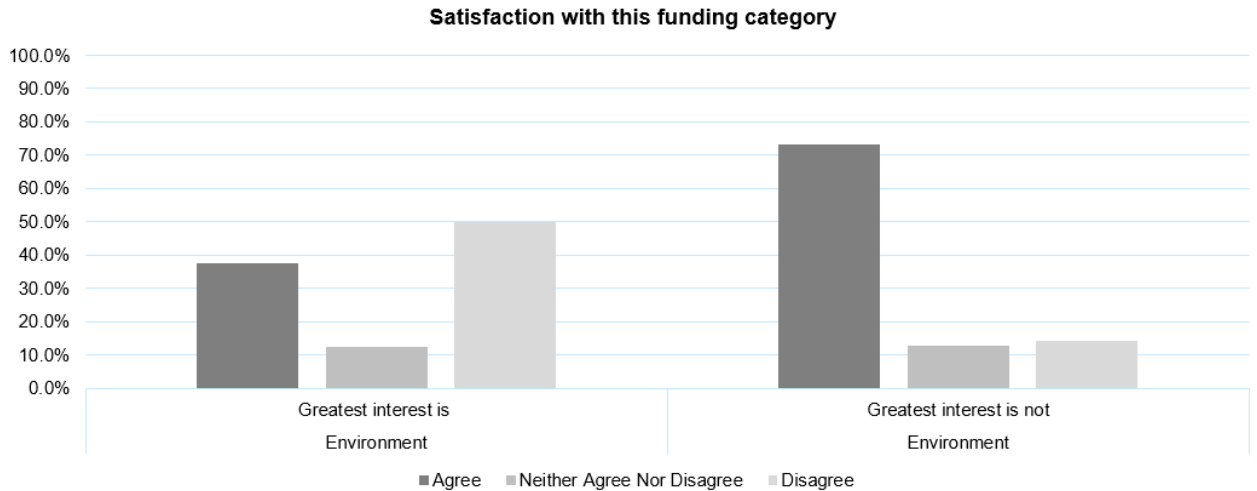
Suggested category name be amended to Environment & Climate Change.

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<sup>10</sup> Temporary shelter and short-term accommodations for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness, including residential addictions recovery, is included under Emergency Assistance whereas Affordable Housing targets rental accommodations for lower income households.

## Survey Feedback

The following bar chart shows survey respondents' overall satisfaction with this category. On the left are those which declared the Environment category as their funding category of greatest interest (8). On the right are all other survey respondents (71).



To keep this chart in context, it is important to note that the left-hand chart above represents only eight responses, of which three were submitted by different representatives of the same organization. Concern expressed regarding “animals”.

The draft guidebook has been amended to acknowledge cultural stewardship is well established among cultural communities, for example Indigenous. Animal welfare (including animal control) and wildlife protection added to guide for clarity.

## Summary

In some circumstances, water testing and scientific experiments/interventions may be better suited to delivery under a service agreement.

Solar City and the proposed Energy Retrofit programs could be promoted and may have greater impact as compared to a modest cash grant (capital grant threshold is up to \$25,000) due to project costs.

For clarity, community gardens are included in this category and encompasses gardens that address food security, gardening as a leisure or social integration activity, and educational initiatives. Wildlife conservation is included in this category, as is animal control.

## Leisure

**Strategic Priorities Alignment** Communities. Involved Communities.

Residents are actively involved in their communities and enjoy participating in a wide range of leisure, learning, social, recreational, cultural, and civic opportunities.

### Stated Purpose

*Strengthen social connections through access to group activities.*

## Priority Outcomes

- Projects that provide or enhance public access to a structured program, service, or facility to encourage social interaction, unstructured or passive leisure activities, and community social gatherings (excluding festivals, events, meetings, reunions, meals etc).
- Amenities in communities with limited access to public facilities.
- Encourage affordable and inclusive programming for a range of ages and abilities.

## Position Relative to other Municipal Programs

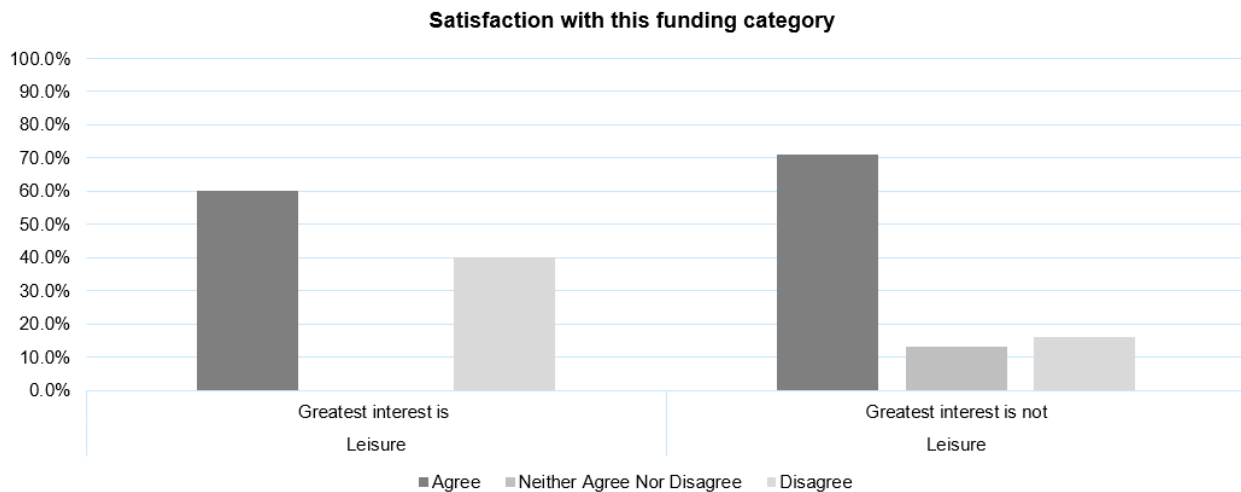
No duplication or overlap identified.

## Staff Input

Provide examples in the program guidebook to avoid applications under other categories.

## Survey Feedback

The following bar chart shows survey respondents' overall satisfaction with this category. On the left are those which declared the Leisure category as their funding category of greatest interest (5). On the right are all other survey respondents (69).



The left-hand side of this chart represents five respondents. The description of this category has changed since the survey was conducted. The previous version had overlapping priorities with other categories, especially Community Arts and Recreation. The description has been refined and examples will be provided in the program guidebook to assist applicants or contact staff.

## Summary

The program guidebook to provide guidance with respect to HRM Comfort Centres officially recognized by HRM Fire & Emergency Services. For example, kitchen cabinetry or appliances for a community hall are not required of a municipal comfort centre.



## Recreation

**Strategic Priorities Alignment** Communities. Involved Communities.

Residents are actively involved in their communities and enjoy participating in a wide range of leisure, learning, social, recreational, cultural, and civic opportunities.

**Stated Purpose** *Encourage physical fitness through sport and recreational activities.*

### Priority Outcomes

- Entry-level learning opportunities and exposure to an activity (not high-performance training or competition).
- Children, youth, seniors, lower income individuals and families.
- Affordability and inclusivity.

### Position Relative to other Municipal Programs

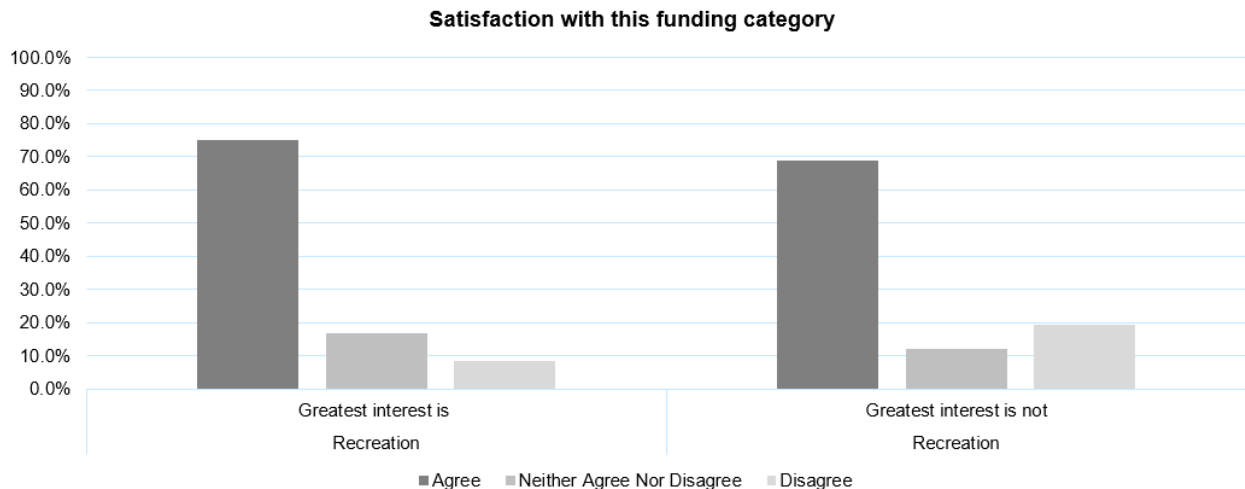
None. Funding under the Community Grants Program could address gaps; for example, a closed-loop or motorized trail on property owned by a non-profit or charity ineligible for consideration under Recreation Trails or Active Transportation Trails.

### Staff Input

Provide examples in program guidebook to avoid applications under other funding categories.

### Survey Feedback

The following bar chart shows survey respondents' overall satisfaction with this category. On the left are those which declared the Recreation category as their funding category of greatest interest (12). On the right are all other survey respondents (67).



One respondent noted that Recreation/Sports projects enjoy access to other funding opportunities and that funds would be better allocated to other categories such as Arts.

**Summary**

This category is over-subscribed due to the size of the sector and the number of requests for capital grants (buildings, amenities, large equipment).