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Town of Aurora

Information Report

No. CMS26-015

Subject: Community Partnership Grant – 2026 Year in Review

Prepared by: Lisa Warth, Manager, Recreation

Department: Community Services

Date: September 8, 2026

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request that this Information Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole or Council meeting agenda for discussion.

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the allocation of the Community Partnership Grant funding for 2026.

- 45 applications were received from 43 different organizations and individuals for a total of \$ 236,702.10 in requests.
- A total of \$86,757.81 has been allocated to various projects.

Background

The Community Partnership grant was endorsed in April 2023 and has become an increasingly popular program among community groups and individuals hoping to make an impact in the community with various events and initiatives.

In May 2025, staff made some recommendations to better manage and more fairly distribute the funding of the grant. These recommendations included reducing the maximum funding amount from \$10,000 to \$7,000 and reducing 4 intake periods per year to 2 intake periods. These new intake periods are December for the following year and April. Based on these new intake periods, the majority of funding has now been allocated for 2026.

Analysis

45 applications were received from 43 organizations and individuals for a total of \$236,702.10 in requests.

Eligible organizations are permitted to apply to the program more than once per year and can receive up to a maximum of \$7,000 between all requests, annually.

Of the 45 applications, 27 were funded or partially funded through the Community Partnership Grant program. 17 applications were not funded as they did not meet the eligibility criteria, either by the nature of the organization, the nature of the project, missing deadlines or information. The total amount of funding requested by these 17 organizations was \$83,944.29. Several of these organizations support the community in various ways such as persons with disabilities, hospice services, and unhoused individuals as examples. However, the fund currently only supports organizations in the realm of recreation and culture activities in the community.

A total of \$86,757.81 has been allocated to various projects.

This table outlines the approved applications for 2026.

Applicant	Amount Requested	Amount Granted	Description
Aurora Chamber of Commerce	\$13,000	\$13,000	Annual allocation
John West Memorial Scholarship	\$2,000	\$2,000	Annual allocation
The Aurora Community Band	\$7,000	\$7,000	Concert production
Huayun Multicultural Assoc.	\$7,000	\$7,000	Choir production
Neda Pessian Haghighi	\$7,000	\$7,000	Persian cultural events
Fanghua Arts Troupe	\$7,000	\$7,000	Talent show production
Borealis Big Band	\$7,000	\$6,500	Concert production
Alison Hughes	\$5,000	\$5,000	Inclusive holiday events
James Brown	\$7,000	\$3,500	Aurora Jazz Series
Aurora Skating Club	\$1,357.81	\$1,357.81	In ice logo installation

Applicant	Amount Requested	Amount Granted	Description
Skai Spooner	\$7,500	\$2,500	Awaken Aurora event
NGN Hacks	\$400	\$400	Hackathon event
Ella Liapis	\$500	\$500	Catchball programming
Porchlight Arts	\$500	\$500	Community art program
Aurora Farmers Market	\$6,000	\$3,000	Market programming
Sport Aurora	\$10,000	\$3,000	Recognition events
Aurora Pride Festival	\$7,000	\$2,000	Aurora Pride Festival
Ping Fan Bel Canto Choral	\$7,000	\$1,000	Concert production
Canada Philharmonic Multicultural Association	\$7,000	\$1,000	Youth talent show
Girls Inc. of York Region	\$7,000	\$2,000	Sporting Chance program
Voices of Joy Choir	\$7,000	\$4,000	Choir production
Shadowpath Theatre group	\$5,000	\$2,000	Performance production
Athletic Victory Club	\$6,000	\$1,000	Sport programming
National Federation of Literati and Artists of Canada	\$7,000	\$2,000	Art Exhibition
Daves Vinyl Party	\$7,000	\$2,000	Vinyl café and lounge
The Optimist Club of Aurora	\$500	\$500	Car rally event
Rocco Morsillo	\$7,000	(\$2,000) (funds recently returned)	Aurora Film Festival (event cancelled)
Total	\$155,757.81	\$86,757.81	
Remaining Balance		\$2,842.19	Will be allocated to existing applications

With the recent return of \$2,000 that had been granted for the Aurora Film Festival, the grant allocation committee will reconvene to review the existing applications that were only partially funded and award the remaining funds in accordance with the guidelines of the grant.

Over \$63,000 in eligible requests went unfunded due to the limited amount in Community Partnership Funds budget. These projects were each special and impactful and had the potential to contribute to the vitality of the Aurora community. Future councils may want to consider increasing the community partnership fund so more projects could be funded or fully funded.

Some of these groups are also eligible for funding through the Mayor's Charity Golf Tournament funds for grants up to a maximum of \$5,000.

Advisory Committee Review

Not applicable

Legal Considerations

None

Financial Implications

A total of \$89,600 was approved as part of the 2026 operating budget in support of the Community Partnership Grant program, including \$2,000 for John West Memorial Scholarships. Of this amount a total of \$86,757.81 in grants have been awarded. These grants are fully funded by the tax levy with the exception of a supporting \$2,000 contribution from the John West Memorial Scholarship reserve.

Communications Considerations

Communications assist in promoting the Community Partnership Grant program to Town of Aurora eligible organizations. Notice is provided with our enewsletter, social media, advertisements and on the Town's website.

Climate Change Considerations

The actions from this report do not impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaptation.

Link to Strategic Plan

The Community Partnership Grant supports the following Strategic Plan goals and key objectives:

Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all in its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objectives within these goal statements:

- Celebrating and promoting our culture
- Encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle
- Strengthening the fabric of our community

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

None

Conclusions

The Community Partnership grant has grown in popularity and awareness as many worthy organizations and individuals apply with initiatives to enhance the Aurora community and assist the Town in accomplishing some of the goals of the Corporate Strategic Plan. Staff will continue to be diligent and responsible to ensure maximum community impact of the funds.

Attachments

None

Previous Reports

Report No. CMS25-012, Community Partnership Grant – Status Update and Recommendations for Future, May 13, 2025

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on August 20, 2026

Approvals

Approved by Robin McDougall, Director, Community Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer