

Operating Assistance

Recreation and Culture
Policy K14

Policy:	K14 – Operating Assistance
Policy Department(s):	Recreation and Culture, Financial and Business Planning Services
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Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the process by which the County of Grande Prairie No.1 provides Operating Assistance Grant funding to eligible not-for-profit organizations and volunteer groups that own or operate recreational or cultural facilities, or that own transportation assets that benefit residents within the County of Grande Prairie.

Policy Statement

Recreational and Cultural Facilities or transportation assets that provide opportunities for people to enjoy sport, leisure, or community activities that promote healthy, active and satisfying lifestyles.

The County is committed to ensuring that Recreational and Cultural Facilities and Transportation assets (accessible vehicles) are available to meet the needs of County residents and visitors. County Council offers financial assistance to organizations and neighboring municipalities to help support a portion of facility operating expenses.

The following streams are available under this grant program:

- Facility and Organization Operating Assistance Grant Funding: For organizations and facilities that contribute to the quality of life and enhance livability that fall outside ICF agreements. The term is to be determined by Council.
- Transportation Operating Assistance Grant Funding: For local organizations and municipalities who own buses that provide transportation to seniors and individuals, with physical and cognitive disabilities, for medical appointments, shopping and recreation.

Definitions

“Automatic Funding” refers to operating funding for facility/organizations that has been allocated for distribution on a recurring on a term basis unless otherwise directed by Council.

“Council” means the duly elected Council members of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1

“County” means the municipality of the County of Grande Prairie No.1 having jurisdiction under the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation.

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“Cultural Facilities” means museums, libraries, art galleries, community centers, historical sites, theatres and other publicly accessible facilities intended to support the enhancement of regional civilization.

“Facility” means a physical structure that is designed and built to serve a specific function affording a convenience or service

“Grants” are non-repayable funds or products disbursed by the County of Grande Prairie Council to a grant recipient, such as a not-for-profit entity, local organization or volunteer group that provides recreation or cultural programs and opportunities that benefit County of Grande Prairie residents.

“Operating Funding” is funding intended to help offset utility and operating costs or for projects related to maintaining or enhancing operations that are not directly related to infrastructure unless otherwise directed by Council. (snowing and mowing could be considered enhancements)

“Organization” means an incorporated municipality, or a duly registered society in good standing within the Province of Alberta, or a formal service group which has been identified by County Council as the provider of community services.

“Persons with physical disabilities” means short or long term loss or impairment of part of a person’s body function, resulting in a limitation of physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina.

“Persons with cognitive disabilities” means certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of him or herself and social skills.

“Recreation” refers to the range of experiences that support individual and community wellbeing, including play, sport, cultural activities, and outdoor pursuits, and that contribute to the social, mental, and physical health of individuals and communities.

“Recreation and Community Facilities” ice arenas, swimming pools, curling rinks, community halls, and major event centres that serve a large number of County residents by supporting physical activity, community engagement, and quality of life.

“Transportation Asset” A bus or passenger accessible vehicle that is owned by a non-profit organization, municipality, Indigenous community, or other eligible entity and is used to deliver community-based transportation, mobility, and access services for seniors and those with cognitive or physical disabilities. Transportation assets may include the vehicle itself and essential accessibility, safety, and operational equipment required for its intended use.

“Shopping” means transportation to acquire essential goods such as groceries, household supplies, or personal care items.

“Term Funding” refers to operating funding for a facility/organization that has been allocated through a council motion with specific timelines attached.

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Policy Guidelines

Eligibility

1. Local, not-for-profit, community volunteer group located within the county or within a neighbouring municipality with significant regional impact.
2. Any operations supported by this policy must be open and accessible to County Residents.
3. Recipients are in good standing with no compliance issues.

Funding

4. County Council establishes Operating Assistance funding for recreation and community facilities or accessible vehicles during their annual budget process. This funding will be distributed to approved facility operators based on an application process. The intention is to help offset utility and operational costs unless otherwise directed by Council.
5. Organizations approved for term Operating Assistance funding will receive annual funding automatically for the duration of the term provided they submit their financial statements and utilization data for the previous year.
6. Program specific operational requests \$5000.00 and under will be directed to the Recreation Advisory Boards as outlined in Policy K15 – Recreation Advisory Boards.
7. Term funding is dependent on the organization making a request to Council to extend funding to another term.
8. Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework agreements with neighboring municipalities fall outside of this policy. Organizations operating facilities or accessible vehicles located within a partnering municipality are required to apply to their own municipality for operational support before seeking County funding support.
9. Council retains the right to modify annual Operating Assistance funding for a specific facility outside of this policy with a Council motion.

Applications for Funding

10. Applications for Operating Assistance grants are accepted from August 1-September 30 annually and managed by the Recreation and Culture department according to established grant procedures.
11. Applications for Operating Assistance must include:
 - 11.1. Current year operating budget;
 - 11.2. Financial statement from prior year;
 - 11.3. Clearly identify costs for communications, internet, heating, water, sewer, solid waste and insurance;
 - 11.4. Program and project objectives;

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- 11.5. Benefit to County residents;
 - 11.6. Provide membership and facility usage data annually;
 - 11.7. Level of volunteerism and fundraising efforts; and
 - 11.8. Proof of valid insurance.
12. Applicants should not duplicate or compete with existing recreational or cultural opportunities funded by the County of Grande Prairie unless there is a definite need or benefit to be achieved.
13. Applicants maybe required to present their operating funding request to Council.

Allocation of Funds

14. Funding allocations are primarily determined by facility and regional impact:
- 14.1. Halls.
 - 14.2. Curling Rinks.
 - 14.3. Arenas (does not include natural or seasonal ice surfaces).
 - 14.4. Museums.
 - 14.5. Community Centres Which could includes County legions and County Seniors Centres
 - 14.6. Event Centres.
 - 14.7. Organization Owned Transportation Asset (Accessible Vehicle)
 - 14.8. Community Organizations that provide significant regional impact.
15. Preference for funding allocations for Transportation will be given to:
- 15.1. Applications that demonstrate that the transportation opportunities being provided are open for the use of rural residents.
 - 15.2. Applications that provide transportation to County or rural residents for medical, shopping, and recreation activities.
 - 15.3. Applications that demonstrate other funding sources, including ridership fees and corporate sponsorship or donations.
16. Additional financial consideration may be given to facilities that are significantly greater in size, scope or operating budget.
17. The amount of funding for each facility will be determined at the annual Interim Budget process, based on a funding matrix as determined by Council.

Notification

18. Annual report to Committee of the Whole and/or Meeting with County Administration.

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19. Applicants will be notified on the status of their application following approval of interim budget.

Distribution of Funds

20. Operating Assistance facility funding is released to organizations in late June or early July. Requests for early release of funds can be submitted to County Administration or approval by the General Manager of Community Services.

Reporting Requirements

21. Recipients of Annual or Term Operating Assistance funding for recreation and cultural facilities must submit:
 - 21.1. Valid and adequate insurance certificate – property and liability;
 - 21.2. Financial statements for prior year;
 - 21.3. Society Annual Return/proof of filing;
 - 21.4. Current year operating budget;
 - 21.5. Clearly identify costs for telephone, internet, heating, water, sewer, solid waste and insurance; and
 - 21.6. Complete and submit the Compliance Report (Schedule A), provide an annual report to Committee of the Whole and/or Meeting with County Administration by December 31st of the year that funding is received.
22. Recipients of Annual or Term Operating Assistance funding for recreation and cultural facilities and Transportation assets (accessible vehicles) must notify the County if the facility becomes inoperable for any reason.
23. Failure to comply with the reporting requirements may impact an organization's ability to receive any additional County grants in the future.

Risk Management and Insurance Considerations

24. Organizations receiving Operating Assistance funding are required to hold valid insurance and be willing to undertake a review process by the County' ensure insurance compliance and best practices are followed.
25. Insurance inspections, building and accessible vehicle maintenance best practice expectations are to be followed as determined by the County.

Recognition

26. All Operating Assistance grant recipients must publicly recognize the contributions that the County made to their project as reasonably requested by Council.

Attachments

N/A

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References

Legal Authorities	Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000, c M-26 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.	Policy B1 - Policy Development Policy K6 - Connected Community Grant Policy K10 - Capital Grant Policy C27 - Financial Reserves
Other	Compliance Report

Revision History

Review Date	Description
October 5, 2026	Reviewed and Amended CM20261005.037
December 12, 2022	Reviewed and Amended CM20221212.016
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