

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA

REPORT NO. SI-2024-0018

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
COUNCIL**

September 11, 2024

SUBJECT: NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION GRANT PROGRAM

1. RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Council receive Report No. SI-2024-0018, prepared by the Corporate Strategy and Transformation Division, Strategic Initiatives Department dated September 11, 2024 respecting the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program;**
- 2. That Council re-allocate \$140,000 from the \$350,000 Non-Profit Organization Grant Program for the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture and that the Director of Community Services bring a report to Council regarding the details of a 5-year service agreement and longer-term lease agreement with the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture;**
- 3. That Council direct staff to consider Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture's request for increased funding, above the \$140,000, alongside other grant requests through the annual Non-Profit Organization Grant Program;**
- 4. That Council establish an ongoing annual operating budget for the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program of \$210,000 starting in 2025;**
- 5. That Council direct staff to make the following updates to the grant program:**
 - Create one intake to consider all applications at the same time**
 - Revise the maximum funding per organization per year to be \$60,000**
 - Add a guideline that specifies "Requested funds must be to deliver a program or service for the community and are not to deliver a capital project. A maximum of \$5,000 may be requested in capital items if directly related to the delivery of the program or service"**
 - Include a guideline that restricts the provision of funds to be in alignment with existing corporate policies as referenced in section 4.3; and,**
- 6. That Council direct staff to consider the Georgina Military Museum as an exception in the 2025 program year, as they require funding to cover operating expenses (rent, hydro, etc.).**

2. PURPOSE:

This report proposes continuous improvement modifications to the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program based on feedback and lessons learned from the 2024 intakes. The report also addresses the request made by the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture to have their funding request dealt with through a 5-year service agreement.

3. BACKGROUND:

In 2023, staff engaged a consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of the manner in which the Town provides grant funding to community organizations and make recommendations to improve the process. The intention of this review was to improve the openness, transparency and equity for all organizations and respond to the need for financial accountability and agreed upon performance measures.

The Non-Profit Organization Grant Program was re-launched in November 2024, and incorporated the consultant recommendations in the form of guidelines listed below:

1. There would be \$350,000 to award over two intakes (Intake 1 - December 2023 and Intake 2 - March 2024).
2. Organizations could request up to \$100,000.
3. An Internal Review Team made up of staff with relevant expertise across the organization would review the applications and provide funding recommendations to Council for the final funding decision (Over \$10,000 request to be approved by Council and under \$10,000 requests to a maximum of \$50,000 total could be approved by staff)
4. Organizations would be evaluated through one stream with the understanding that some organizations would require exceptions due to the history of Town funding provided to support core operations (i.e. staffing, lease rates, utilities)
5. The intention of the grant program was to reduce dependency on Town funding over time.

The Town received applications from 15 organizations over two intakes with \$586,046 in eligible funding requests.

After the Internal Review Team's assessments and recommendations over the two intakes, and Council's final decisions, the following funding amounts were awarded in 2024:

1. Routes - \$44,200
2. Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture - \$136,300
3. Skills Training Centre (GTTI) - \$50,000
4. Georgina Feral Cat Committee - \$8,500
5. Georgina Military Museum - \$25,000

6. Georgina Chamber of Commerce - \$64,000
7. Georgina Farmers Market - \$10,000
8. Ontario Water Centre (ClearWater Farm) - \$12,000

In addition to the above financial contributions, staff from the various departments continued to support these organizations through collaborative marketing and paid attendance at various programs and events. For support in finding additional funding opportunities, staff direct organizations to York Region's Community Investments resources, including their weekly newsletter that shares funding opportunities for non-profits.

Based on the feedback received from Council and the applicants, and in the spirit of continually improving the Grant Program, several modifications are recommended to better serve the local non-profits and Georgina community.

4. ANALYSIS:

4.1 Consideration of Organizations Dependent on Town Funding for Operating Costs

In the review and development of the funding program, it was recognized that some non-profit organizations depend on Town funding to support operating costs (Georgina Military Museum, Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture). The intention of the grant program was to reduce this dependency over time.

In Report no. SI-2024-0001 on January 24, 2024, Council endorsed the recommendation: "That the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture and the Military Museum be requested to conduct a review of their business operations, and present to the Town's Internal Review Team in the Fall of 2024 a report to outline long-term plans to become more financially sustainable. And further, that staff meet regularly with these organizations and advise of any additional partnerships or funding opportunities that may be available to support their operations".

To date, staff have received the following information regarding the Georgina Military Museum and Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture's funding needs for 2025:

- Staff have been advised by the Chair of the Georgina Military Museum that they will still require \$25,000 for the 2025 calendar year to cover overhead expenses (rent, hydro, gas, insurances, amenities for public usage, etc.). This is due to the organization being 100% volunteer run without staffing capacity to focus on generating revenue. However, they have recently undergone leadership changes and are demonstrating increased social media presence and outreach efforts, and are seeing higher attendance at events. Staff will

continue to meet with the Georgina Military Museum team to further discuss their sustainability efforts moving forward. At this time, staff are asking that Council consider Georgina Military Museum as an exception that can request funding to cover operating expenses in the 2025 program year (rent, hydro, etc.).

- Representatives from the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture (GCAC) made a submission to staff stating that they are currently operating above capacity, and that a five-year investment would allow them to build staff and programs, achieving a level of stability and diversity of revenue sources. Their request is \$165,000 for the 2025 calendar year, with a 4% increase on the request each year (\$165,000, \$172,000, \$179,000, \$186,000, \$193,000) for the next 5 years to a total of \$895,000. They are also requesting a new 10-year Municipal Capital Building Agreement, expiring December 31, 2034, which will allow them to apply for capital funding from additional funding sources. They presented to Council on August 14, 2024 regarding their organization's 2023-24 growth and projected 2025-29 plans, and are coming back to Council on September 11, 2024 to provide details on this request. Due to Council's direction that staff consider their request from the August 14, 2024 Council meeting, staff recommend that \$140,000 be re-allocated from this grant program to a 5-year service agreement with GCAC which matches their 2024 funding amount (rounded up) as well as entering into a new lease agreement, and that the additional funding request be considered through the 2025 Non-Profit Organization Grant Program intake alongside other grant requests.

4.2 Consideration of Georgina Food Pantry

As part of the Special Council Meeting on Tuesday March 5, 2024 (on Affordable Housing and Homelessness) through resolution no. C-2024-0080, Council directed Town staff to "Bring forward a business case as part of the 2025 budget deliberation process that proposes dedicated annual funding of \$25,000 for the Georgina Food Pantry". Accordingly, this request will not be treated through this Non-Profit Organization Grant Program.

4.3 Feedback from 2024 Grant Program and Recommended Updates for 2025 Program

Staff and Council received feedback from non-profit applicants during the Intake 1 and Intake 2 report presentations held on January 24, 2024 and May 8, 2024 as well as separate discussions that staff had with the organizations during the funding year.

This feedback and associated recommendations are summarized below.

	Feedback during 2024 Program	Recommended Updates for 2025 Program
1	Two intakes meant that some funds had to be set aside for the second intake without knowing how many requests there would be, this meant some deserving organizations / projects in Intake 1 could not be funded in full, and additional staff and Council time was spent administering two separate intakes	Create one intake to consider all applications at the same time. Open the intake in early Fall so that funding decisions can be made before the start of the funding year i.e. before January 1 st
2	Several organizations applied for capital projects (i.e. structural improvements, building retrofits, etc.) which did not align with the intention of the grant program, which is to provide funding to organizations that contribute to the social, economic, cultural, health or general well-being of the Town of Georgina and demonstrate a return on investment to the community.	To align with the intention of the grant program, add a guideline that specifies that: <i>“Requested funds must be to deliver a program or service for the community and are not to deliver a capital project. A maximum of \$5,000 may be requested in capital items if directly related to the delivery of the intended program or service”</i>
3	Providing a maximum grant amount of \$100,000 was too high based on the \$350,000 total funding allocation and the desire to open the application process to additional organizations.	Due to the \$350,000 funding allocation and funding needs from the organizations mentioned above, it is recommended that the maximum funding amount be \$60,000 to set more realistic expectations for applicants.
4	The grant guidelines were not explicit on the types of organizations or projects that were ineligible to receive funding in order to mitigate any risks in the provision of funds.	Add a guideline that restricts the provision of funds in particular circumstances, in alignment with existing corporate policies. The guidelines would state: <i>“The program will ensure that the provision of funding does not pose a risk to the Town. This includes, but is not limited to, providing funding to recipients:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Whose activities are be perceived to be incompatible with the Town's goals, values, or mission</i> <i>• Whose activities are in conflict with any applicable laws, Town by-laws and/or policies</i> <i>• That is in litigation, judicial and/or arbitral proceedings against the Town,</i>

	Feedback during 2024 Program	Recommended Updates for 2025 Program
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>That promotes, endorses or in any other ways supports:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, vaping, or any other substance</i> ○ <i>Pornography</i> ○ <i>The support of, or involvement in the production, distribution, and sale of weapons and other life-threatening products</i> ○ <i>Terrorism</i> ○ <i>Religious or political affiliations</i> • <i>That engage in any activity which, if associated with the Town, may constitute a reputational risk for the Town as determined by Staff"</i>

5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The initiative supports the 2023-2027 Corporate Strategic Plan:

Pillar	Delivering Service Excellence
Goal	Ensure continued financial sustainability and accountability
Initiative	Conduct a review and implement a streamlined Municipal Funding Program for Community Agencies

6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:

Staff are requesting that an ongoing annual operating budget for the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program be created at \$210,000 starting in the 2025 funded year.

Staff are also requesting that \$140,000 from the original \$350,000 budget for the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program be re-allocated to the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture, and that the Director of Community Services bring a report to Council regarding the details of a 5-year service agreement and longer-term lease agreement with the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:

There is no statutory requirement to provide notice of this report.

8. CONCLUSION:

The Non-Profit Organization Grant Program implemented a new process in 2024 to administer funds to local non-profits, and feedback and lessons learned were taken from this first program year to make modifications to the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program.

Based on this feedback and Council direction from the August 14, 2024 presentation from the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture (GCAC), staff recommend that Council re-allocate \$140,000 from the \$350,000 Non-Profit Organization Grant Program for the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture, and that the Director of Community Services bring a report to Council regarding the details of a 5-year service agreement and longer-term lease agreement with the Georgina Centre for Arts and Culture.

Staff then recommend that Council establish an ongoing annual operating budget for the Non-Profit Organization Grant Program of \$210,000 starting in 2025. All annual applications, including GCAC's additional funding request, will be considered through this program with funds allocated according to grant guidelines and assessment criteria.

Finally, staff recommend that Council direct staff to make the following updates to the grant program:

- Create one intake to consider all applications at the same time
- Revise the maximum funding per organization per year to be \$60,000
- Add a guideline that specifies "Requested funds must be to deliver a program or service for the community and are not to deliver a capital project. A maximum of \$5,000 may be requested in capital items if directly related to the delivery of the program or service"
- Add a guideline that restricts the provision of funds in particular circumstances, in alignment with existing corporate policies as referenced in section 4.3
- Consider Georgina Military Museum as an exception that can request funding to cover operating expenses (rent, hydro, etc.) in the 2025 program year

Once approved, staff will begin preparing to launch the intake in Fall 2024.

APPROVALS

Prepared By: Simone Weinstein
Program Manager

Reviewed By: Olga Lawton
Manager, Corporate Strategy and Transformation

Recommended By: Shawn Nastke
Director, Strategic Initiatives

Rob Wheeler
Deputy CAO/Treasurer

Approved By: Ryan Cronsberry
Chief Administrative Officer