Other Initiatives Program

Program Guidelines

~IMPORTANT INFORMATION~

Please read the guidelines carefully.
For an application or to address any program questions please contact by:

- **emailing CommunityGrants@gov.ab.ca**
- **phoning 1-800-642-3855**

Alberta

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Other Initiatives Program

1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Government of Alberta endeavors to be responsive to the needs of the non-profit sector when special circumstances occur.

1.1 The Other Initiatives Program (OIP) aims to support non-profit/voluntary sector projects that fall outside the scope of other Community Grants funding streams.

1.2 Support through OIP is intended to achieve the following broad **outcomes**:
- **Support community driven goals that have a public benefit.**
- **Stimulate economic activity across the province.**

1.3 OIP is guided by a set of principles that help guide decision-making and administration of the grant program. These **principles** are:
- **Community Driven Public Benefit**
- **Transparency**
- **Equity**
- **Accountability**
- **Flexibility**
- **Simplicity**

1.4 The OIP is governed by the terms outlined in the Ministerial Grant Regulation.

2. OIP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

2.1 OIP funding stream:

Other Initiatives Program Funding Streams	
Funding Range	**Unrestricted**
Application Deadlines	**Ongoing**
Project Completion and Financial Reporting Timeframe	**On or before 18 months from start of the term of the grant agreement**
Application Package	• **Application Form (with Checklist for supporting mandatory documents)** • **Project Budget** • **Application for Electronic Payment**
Stream priorities	**One-time projects** **Provincial, national, or international in scope**
Grant Agreement	**Formal grant agreement upon approval**

2.2 Capital requests will only be considered for disaster or emergency related projects that are provincial in scope and which fall outside the scope of other Community Grants funding streams.

3. OIP PROJECT-BASED ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Applicants must contact Community Grants office in order to receive an application.
- Phone: 1-800-642-3855
- Email: CommunityGrants@gov.ab.ca

3.2 Eligible Organizations

All applications are first reviewed to ensure they meet the mandatory eligibility requirements. To be eligible for the OIP grant, all of the following criteria must be met.

The applicant must be:
- Registered in Alberta as a non-profit organization, in good standing, under one of the following Acts:
  - Societies Act
  - Part 21 of the Business Corporations Act - Extra-Provincial Corporations*
  - Companies Act, Part 9 (Non-profit Companies)
  - Special Act of the Alberta Legislature
  - Income Tax Act (of Canada and operating in the Province of Alberta (Charities))
- A First Nation or Metis Settlement in Alberta
- A Foundation established and regulated under Alberta's *Regional Health Authorities Act*
- A university, college or institute as defined under Alberta's *Post-Secondary Learning Act*

*Must have an Alberta based address which is regularly monitored by an active member of the organization.

3.3 Ineligible Organizations and/or Applicants
The following organizations are not eligible to apply for funding under OIP:
- Municipalities;
- For-profit organizations;
- Any other organizations not registered under one of the above mentioned *Acts;*
- Organizations that have overdue or incomplete accounting/reporting relating to any grant previously awarded by Arts, Culture and Status of Women; and
- Individuals.

3.4 Eligible Projects
3.4.1 OIP funding provides financial assistance for projects that fall outside the scope of other Community Grants funding streams and take place in Alberta. It is not a replacement or extension of other grant programs.

3.4.2 Eligible OIP projects may include (but are not limited to) the following:
- Project/events that are one time and that are not eligible under other Community Grants programs.

- Support may also be provided to international disaster relief initiatives.
- Projects that are emergency or urgent in nature.

3.5 Ineligible Projects

The following projects are not eligible for funding within OIP:

3.5.1 Ongoing operational funding;

3.5.2 Applicants cannot request multi-year funding for a project.

3.5.3 Projects that are eligible under any other Community Grants program.

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4. CRITERIA

Each application is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the following general criteria will be used to evaluate project funding requests:

4.1 Projects must address a community-identified need and demonstrate community involvement.

4.2 Projects that demonstrate limited public access or benefit will be given a lower priority.

4.3 Due to limited funds, not all requests that meet the established criteria will be approved for funding. Applicants may receive full, reduced or no funding for their projects.

4.4 Applications will be assessed against the following specific criteria and priority will be given to those projects that best meet the criteria. Applicants must address the criteria below when completing their applications.
- Organization's Capacity
- Project Viability and Financial Feasibility
- Project Benefits
- Accessibility
- Community and Regional Need

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5. MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

5.1 OIP does not require matching funding; however, organizations are encouraged to show additional sources of income to support their overall project and must be able to demonstrate financial viability.

5.2 International disaster relief initiatives require an appeal to Albertans through a public request for donations to these disasters in developing countries. The province will then consider a matching grant.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The following specifies the procedure for submitting an application to OIP:

6.1 Each funding stream has its own application package which includes an application form, financial/budget template and mandatory information requirements which must be fully completed. Applicants need to ensure they are applying to the funding stream that is best suited for their project. Applicants are encouraged, if needed, to contact the Community Grants office for assistance with completing the application by phoning 1-800-642-3855.

6.2 In order to process applications, the information requested from applicants needs to be fully completed and all questions on the application form must be answered. Applicants need to ensure to submit all required and supporting documents, when submitting the application.

6.3 Program staff may return incomplete applications.

6.4 It is important that applicants keep a complete copy of their application. Applicants may need to refer to this copy if Program staff have questions about the application.

6.5 Project expenses included in the application may not be considered if they are incurred before the application has been received by Program area. Incurring these expenses prior to approval of the application is at the applicant's own risk. Applicants who begin the project prior to receiving notification relative to their application, will not be eligible to resubmit their project if funding is not approved.

6.6 Applications are fully reviewed against the program criteria, project assessment factors and supporting documentation provided. Organizations may be contacted if further information or clarification is required.

6.7 Applicants that have overdue or incomplete accounting/reporting related to previously approved Arts, Culture and Status of Women funding will not be considered for new funding until their outstanding accounting and reporting requirements have been closed. If an applicant has financial reporting due within six months of the application deadline, or is unsure about the impact of any outstanding reporting due to Arts, Culture and Status of Women or another Government of Alberta grant program, contact Program staff before
applying by phoning 1-800-642-3855 or emailing CommunityGrants@gov.ab.ca.

6.8 The Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women may exercise discretion in approving applications that fall outside the general intent of the program, based on the extent to which the applicant can demonstrate the project's potential and vital contributions to the community.

6.9 Organizations can submit their application by emailing communitygrants@gov.ab.ca.

7. NOTIFICATION

7.1 Applicants will receive written notification of the decision regarding their application.

7.2 All decisions on grant applications are final, and no appeals will be considered.

7.3 The review and decision-making process takes approximately three months. The notification period for the OIP is as follows:

Application Deadline	Notification Period
Ongoing intake	Approximately three months from submission date

Applicants may not resubmit an application for the same project until written notification of the outcome of the current application is made by Arts, Culture and Status of Women.

7.4 Applicants may not apply to the OIP for a project that has been declined funding through another funding program within Community Grants.

8. FUNDING CONDITIONS

Applicants that are successful in receiving grant funding must be aware of and observe the following funding conditions:

8.1 After the review, approval of an **OIP Funding Stream** application:
- The grant recipient must sign a formal grant agreement with the ministry outlining the terms and conditions of the grant funding prior to funding being released.
- Program staff will provide the grant funding agreement to the grant recipient.

8.2 Grant funds must be deposited into an account in accordance with the terms of the grant agreement.

8.3 The grant funds must be spent according to approved eligible costs as determined by Program staff. If the grant funds are being provided to a third party (e.g., municipality, school division) to carry out the project and this was not known or indicated at the time of the application, the grant recipient is required to notify program staff ideally before signing the grant agreement, but definitely before proceeding with the project.

8.4   Payment must be made by a verifiable method. Cash payments for expenditures are not acceptable as there is no verifiable proof from a third party (example: financial institution's negotiated cheque) that the payment has been made to the vendor.

8.5   Grant funding not used or accounted for in accordance with the approved eligible costs shall be repayable by the grant recipient to the Government of Alberta. Program staff should be contacted for instructions.

8.6   Project scope and financial reporting must be completed and submitted to Program staff within the following specified time frames, unless an extension of the reporting date has been approved:
  - Other Initiatives Funding stream: on of before18 months from the start of the term of the grant agreement.

8.7   Project Extensions

If the grant recipient anticipates that the project will not be completed within the allotted timeframe, and wishes to request an extension, a written request must be submitted to Program staff, which must be sent to: cmsw.cgaccounting@gov.ab.ca.

8.7.1   Extension requests for OIP grants must be made 90 days in advance of the expiry of the term of the grant funding agreement.

8.7.2   The extension request should include:
  - the reasons why the project could not be completed within the timeframe;
  - a description of what has been completed and costs incurred to date (in order to demonstrate the amount of progress that has been made);
  - a copy of an updated bank statement showing the balance of the grant funding; and
  - a description of what remains to be done and a reasonable timeline for completion
  - (including a proposed new project completion date –year/month/day).

8.7.3   The decision on extension requests will be communicated in writing to the grant recipient by Program staff along with appropriate documentation to confirm it.

8.8   Change of Project Scope
8.8.1   The grant recipient must notify Program staff of any anticipated fundamental change of scope in the purpose for which the recipient wants to use the grant funds - or a proposed reallocation of funding or shortfall of expenses for the project - prior to spending any grant funds on a new or revised purpose. As a result, the grant recipient may be requested to:
  - submit a written request to use the remaining funds for the proposed project change/new purpose, and only if approved, apply the unexpended funds to this purpose; or
  - if the change of scope is not acceptable, submit a cheque made payable to the Government of Alberta for the remaining unexpended funds once this amount has been confirmed by Program staff. Repayment must be submitted to Program staff for processing and file closure.

8.8.2 The decision on change of project scope requests will be communicated in writing to the grant recipient by designated Program staff along with appropriate documentation to confirm it.

8.9 For capital projects, the grant recipient is required to notify Program staff if the facility or capital equipment is vacated, sold (if owned by the recipient), or the lease/other instrument of occupation is terminated within five years from the end of the OIP Grant Agreement.

8.10 Approval of OIP funding in no way constitutes a commitment, implicit or otherwise, of longer-term funding by the Government of Alberta to the project or the organization. Should any project require additional grant funding in the future, then a new funding application would need to be submitted.

9. FINANCIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

9.1 Project scope and financial reporting must be completed and submitted to Program staff within the specified time frames unless an extension of the reporting date has been approved:
- OIP Funding Stream: on or before 18 months from start of term of the grant agreement.

9.2 A reporting schedule will be set out in the agreement, program staff maintains the right to request interim reporting at any time.

9.3 For the **OIP Funding Stream** grant recipients must provide a:
- summary report that includes
    - A detailed description of the completed project
    - The benefits of the completed project
    - A description of communication opportunities provided for the Government of Alberta
- A review engagement or audited financial statement, prepared by a certified public accountant licensed to practice in Alberta, and accompanying financial statement relating to the completed project.

9.4 Recipients must provide access, upon request, to the Minister or Minister's representative, or auditors engaged by the Minister to all financial documents or records relative to all expenses and revenues related to the project including OIP grant funding as set out in the agreement.

9.5 Recipients shall permit, if requested, the Minister or Minister's representative, or auditors engaged by the Minister, to examine during regular business hours, the books or records relating to the project for which the OIP funding was used as set out in the agreement.

9.6 Records should be kept for seven years from the date of the notification letter of file closure from Program staff.

9.7 Any recipient that does not comply with the reporting requirements may be ineligible to receive additional funding from any Government of Alberta grant program until acceptable reporting is

provided. A breach of any requirement in the grant agreement may result in the Government of Alberta pursuing legal action.

9.8 If the grant recipient is applying for new OIP funding, overdue financial reporting relating to other Arts, Culture, and Status of Women grants must be provided to the relevant grant program(s) in a satisfactory manner.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STANDARDS & REQUIREMENTS

10.1 Recipients of OIP funds are encouraged to acknowledge the Government of Alberta wherever possible and appropriate.

10.2 Acknowledgment credits, promotion, and publicity (written, electronic and verbal) requirements, for OIP Funding stream approved projects are outlined in the formal grant agreement.

10.3 The Government of Alberta logo is available upon request and recognition of funding can be achieved in a variety of ways:
- News release or submitted article to local/regional media
- Social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and blog postings, etc.
- Organization's website or newsletter
- Signage, either temporary or permanent

11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

11.1 In addition to complying with the OIP guidelines and the Ministerial Grant Regulation, an individual affiliated with a grant recipient should not place themselves in an apparent or actual conflict of interest when using the grant funds. A conflict of interest arises when a conflict between an individual's personal interests (what they could gain financially or otherwise) and their duty to administer the grant funds in an accountable and transparent manner are in question.

11.2 A conflict of interest may be actual or perceived.
- *Actual conflict exists* where an individual's personal interests could improperly influence the recipient's duty to utilize the grant funds in a responsible and accountable manner. For example, an individual employed by the recipient wants to use the grant funds to rent space from a private company owned by the individual. An actual conflict of interest exists because the individual personally benefits from this decision.

- *Perceived conflict of interest* exists when there is the appearance that an individual has a private interest that could improperly influence the individual's duty to act in the best interests of the grant recipient.

11.3 Whether a conflict of interest is categorized as actual or perceived, the individual affiliated with the grant recipient should avoid placing themselves in a situation where their personal interest could interfere with their duty to be transparent and accountable with the use of the grant funds. For example, the individual should ensure that their family members or the businesses they have an interest in, have no involvement with the project and in no way personally benefit from the Government of Alberta funding that was provided.

11.4 As soon as reasonably possible after becoming aware of a personal interest that causes or is likely to cause a conflict of interest in relation to the use of the grant, the grant recipient must give notice of the conflict to the Minister. After giving notice of a conflict, the grant recipient may not commence nor continue the project until instructed to do so by the Program staff. If, in the opinion of the Minister, a conflict of interest warrants such action, the recipient may be given notice of termination of the agreement and be required to return the grant funds.

12. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

12.1 The personal information that is provided on the grant application form will be used for the purpose of administering OIP and advising the applicant of grant program updates and relevant Ministry initiatives. It is collected under the authority of section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (*FOIP Act*) and is protected by the privacy provisions of the FOIP Act.

12.2 The *FOIP Act* applies to any information that is provided to Arts, Culture and Status of Women. This information may be disclosed in response to an access request under the *FOIP Act*, subject to any applicable exceptions to disclosure under the *FOIP Act*.

12.3 Please note, once an application has been approved and funding issued to an organization, the grant recipient, project, amount funded, community/city and fiscal year become a matter of public record. Information on grants awarded by Government of Alberta programs is published on the Government of Alberta Previous Grant Recipients Database at the following link: https://extranet.gov.ab.ca/env/previous-grant-recipients-database

12.4 If agreed to by the applicant on the application form, occasionally, Alberta Culture may contact applicant organizations to provide information about Ministry initiatives or announcements related to the following topics:
- Grant program changes, funding announcements and opportunities to provide input/opinion on programs; and

- Awareness of Ministry resources available to the non-profit sector including Ministry sector events.

12.5 Only authorized contact representatives noted in the grant application may request specific information about grant applicants from the Community Grants office.

12.6 For questions about the collection and use of this information, please contact Community Grants office.

13. OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION

13.1 General contact information for the OIP is:

Toll-free: 1-800-642-3855
Email: CommunityGrants@gov.ab.ca
Website: alberta.ca/other-initiatives-program.aspx

14. OIP GUIDELINES REVIEW

14.1 These guidelines will be reviewed, at a minimum, every two years to ensure they best support the needs of Alberta's communities as well as align with best practices in grant administration.