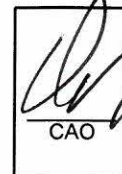
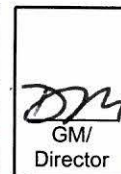
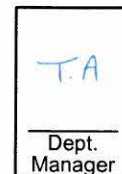


AGENDA INFORMATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular Meeting	Date: July 10, 2023
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Date: _____



The District of North Vancouver REPORT TO COUNCIL

June 21, 2023
File: 10.4792.01/002.000

AUTHOR: Eirikka Brandson, Community Planner

SUBJECT: 2023 Community Service Grants

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the 2023 Community Service Grants recommendations of \$375,465, as described in the June 21, 2023 report of the Community Planner entitled 2023 Community Service Grants, is APPROVED.

AND THAT staff be directed to refer the request for an inflation adjustment to the Community Service Grants budget for the 2024 financial planning process.

REASON FOR REPORT:

This report provides Council with the Community Services Advisory Committee's (CSAC) recommendations for the 2023 Community Service Grants program.

SUMMARY:

Twenty-nine applications are being recommended for 2023 community service grants (**Attachment 1**). These applications include funding for operations and 57 programs. CSAC reviewed the Annual Accountability Forms from 26 agencies that were submitted in the second year of their 2-year funding cycle. These applications included funding for operations and 58 programs. This report recommends the following budget allocation for 2023:

2023 – 29 grant applications	\$195,734
2022 – 26 grant applications (in second year funding cycle)	\$179,731
TOTAL	\$375,465

BACKGROUND:

Approved in 1982, the District Municipal Community Service Grants Policy established operating and program support for non-profit organizations contributing to the wellbeing and quality of life of District residents.

The [Community Services Advisory Committee](#)¹ was created to advise staff on social and cultural concerns that affect the quality of life in the municipality and make recommendations regarding the planning and development of social programs to meet community needs. This Committee is responsible for reviewing grant applications and making funding recommendations to District Council.

In 2003, an expanded evaluation criteria was developed by CSAC members to look at ways to make the process more focused, effective, fair and accountable. This led to the Council approving the [Municipal Community Service Grants Goals and Guiding Principles](#)² in 2004.

Each year, CSAC members work together to make grant recommendations to Council based on these goals and the approved budget. Approximately half of the yearly approved budget is held for agencies in the second year of their funding cycle. Two-year cycles were introduced in 2012. This allowed agencies a secure and consistent grant amount without having to make an annual application.

On January 24, 2022, Council passed the following resolution:

THAT staff is directed to report back on increasing budgets for core funding, community grants and other supports for non-profit agencies.

In response to this direction, staff undertook analysis of historic and predicted population growth and how it affected grant program budgets. Staff also did a broader assessment of community need based on engagement with service providers. (Further detail on this analysis was included in the report entitled [2023 Social Service Grants – Core Funded Agencies](#)³ from the January 23, 2023 Regular Council meeting.)

Council approved an overall 6% increase to grant programs during the 2023 financial planning process.

EXISTING POLICY:

- District of North Vancouver Municipal Community Service Grants Policy⁴
- Municipal Community Service Grants Goals and Guiding Principles
- Official Community Plan (2011):
 - Policy 6.3.1: Facilitate the delivery of accessible community services and social programs to meet the current and future needs of all District residents;
 - Policy: 6.3.3 Facilitate the provision of accessible services, programs, and facilities that encourage seniors and people with disabilities to function independently; and

¹ District of North Vancouver Community Services Advisory Committee Terms of Reference:

<https://www.dnv.org/sites/default/files/edocs/csac-terms-references.pdf>

² Municipal Community Service Grants Goals and Guiding Principles:

<https://www.dnv.org/sites/default/files/edocs/community-grants-goals-and-guiding-principles.pdf>

³ 2023 Social Service Grants – Core Funded Agencies: <http://app.dnv.org/OpenDocument/Default.aspx?docNum=5893022>

⁴ Municipal Community Service Grants Policy 5-1850-2:

<https://app.dnv.org/OpenDocument/Default.aspx?docNum=2611249>

- Policy 6.3.11: Support civic and community partners with resources, information sharing and collaboration in the achievement of District objectives.

ANALYSIS:

This year, the Community Service Grants Program was transitioned to an online grant management platform called Submittable. The software has simplified the manual work in managing applications and allowed for committee members to review information online, making the process more practical and time-efficient for staff and committee members. The software also provides opportunities for applicants to provide more information about their programs, making it easier to demonstrate how their programs align with Council priorities.

Twelve agencies consolidated their applications with the introduction of the new software. The application form was also updated and now includes all agency information (operations and programs) to improve readability and understanding of the work that each agency does.

Thirty applications were submitted by the January 31, 2023, grant deadline. One application was deemed to be ineligible as it did not meet the grant criteria and was encouraged to apply to the District's [Sustainability Grant Program](#). The remaining 29 applications moved to the evaluation phase and were reviewed by CSAC members.

Attachment 1 summarizes the recommended grants for 2023 and shows the funds for the agencies in the second year of their 2-year grant cycle. **Attachment 2** provides additional organization and program details for the recommended agencies.

New Applications

Eight applications were new to the District this year (yellow-shaded in **Attachment 1**) and one had applied previously but not been recommended by the committee. The eight new organizations are:

- Best Buddies of Canada;
- Better Environmentally Sound Transportation Association;
- Black Girl Collective Society;
- Foundations for Social Change;
- Iranian Laughterclub;
- Third Bridge Foundation;
- Turning Point Recovery Society; and
- Variety – the Children's Charity of British Columbia

All of the above applications are being recommended for funding. Applicants offer a variety of programs and services across the lifespan, ranging from broad to specific forms of supports, with a priority focus on vulnerable populations. Some of these organizations also receive funding or benefit from other District programs including child care grants and permissive tax exemptions.

Application Assessment Process

The Community Services Advisory Committee met five times between March and May to complete the evaluation process. CSAC members used a weighted scoring model to

evaluate each application. Introduced last year, this system enabled committee members to compare applications more comprehensively. Six organizations (most of which were new to the District) made presentations to the committee to enhance learning and understanding of their programs and services.

Financial Reconciliation Process and Budget

The total budget allocation for 2023 community service grants is \$375,465. Approximately half of this amount, \$179,731, is proposed to be directed to fund agencies in the second year of their 2-year grant cycle. The remaining amount, \$195,734, represents the funding available for the 2023 applications.

In 2023 \$492,300 was requested. After the detailed evaluation by CSAC members, this amount was reduced to \$253,400. In order to reconcile the total recommended amount (\$253,400) with the available funds (\$195,734), a tiering system was applied as follows:

- Where the committee determined that a full funding request was warranted, the amount was reduced by 10%; and
- Where the committee determined that a partial funding request was warranted, the amount was reduced by either 25% or 29% based on the results of the weighted score.

Observations and Trends

Each year, applicants are asked in the grant application to identify trends affecting their organization. One CSAC meeting during the evaluation period is dedicated to discussing observations and trends (held this year on April 19, 2023). Key themes are summarized below.

1. *The continued growth in demand for services*

Applicants described how their existing operations could not keep pace with the demand for services. Expanding hours and the scope of programs were solutions for some applicants, while others described the need to recruit and train new staff.

Staffing concerns were also noted by applicants, including the need to increase staff wages and desire to pay a living wage. Most staffing challenges stemmed from the low wages offered in the non-profit sector and the high cost of living on the North Shore. Increasingly, agencies are hiring staff who travel by transit to the North Shore, because of the lack of affordable housing nearby.

The difficulty in paying for additional staff or higher wages is intensified due to the limited number of operational funding sources, and the continued decline in both donations and fundraising observed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similar to last year, most applicants described how they continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Applicants shared how they had returned to in-person programming and also maintained hybrid options to accommodate clients who were not ready to return or preferred online opportunities.

Some applicants noted that volunteers were also returning, though not yet to pre-pandemic levels. Many noticed that the older adult volunteers (i.e. the seniors) were choosing not to return at all after the pandemic.

Stress and burnout were also mentioned by applicants in relation to volunteer retention. Volunteers are increasingly impacted negatively by the high cost of living, inflation, or other negative impacts related to the economic downturn. This affects their mental wellbeing and reduces the probability they choose to or continue to volunteer.

2. Negative impacts related to the current economic climate

The current economic climate has impacted the non-profit sector in many negative ways. This includes the growth in demand for services and the complexity of clients (including worsening mental health) who are reaching out for support and services. On the revenue side, many applicants talked about donations and fundraising initiatives being lower due to the impact of inflation on their supporters.

Food insecurity and affordable housing are two of the main drivers that lead residents to seek support. Unfortunately, with growing demand and complexity with clients, applicants are also reporting longer waitlists to serve clients.

3. Persistent challenges linked to worsening mental health

Several applicants who seek to address homelessness reported disturbing upward trends in the experience of homelessness by seniors, single parents and families due to eviction notices. Data provided by the North Shore Shelter speaks to the need for additional supportive housing options for individuals with multiple barriers, complex medical needs and concurrent disorders. They reported approximately 30% of individuals staying in the shelter in 2022 had stays of one year or more, due to unavailability of permanent housing options for individuals who need wrap around supports.

Two other vulnerable groups that were mentioned by applicants were:

- Ukrainian newcomers, often women and families who fled the war against Ukraine. They have complex needs and require trauma informed approach to services and often require language translation (Ukrainian or Russian); and
- Members of the Iranian community who seek additional services because of the crisis in Iran that has impacted the community here on the North Shore. Clients are experiencing greater mental health challenges, as well as financial and family stresses. Agencies mentioned the need for Farsi-speaking workers to be able to support these clients.

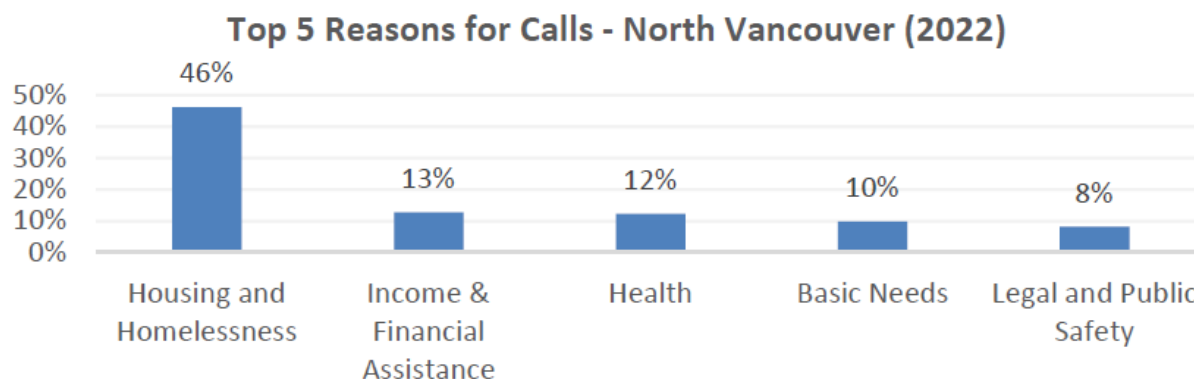
This year the first Overdose Prevention Site was opened on the North Shore located at the North Shore Shelter. This service is in response to the escalating Opioid Crisis (30 overdose deaths occurred on the North Shore in 2022) and the needs of the community for expanded harm reduction services.

In addition to the information and feedback that agencies provide annually, this year staff reached out to [BC211](#) a free and confidential provincial service that connects people to resources in their community. BC211 provides callers with information and referrals to a broad range of social services (by phone text, e-mail or web-chat).

Last year, BC211 responded to 705 individual requests for information from North Vancouver (District and City). Sixty-five individuals who used this service identified as female, 15% were aged 65+ and 16 individuals requested interpretation (Farsi, Russian, Ukrainian).

The main reasons people cited for calling BC211 were related housing, income and financial assistance and health care needs. The top five reasons are illustrated in **Table 1**.

Table 1: BC211 Top 5 Reasons for Calls – North Vancouver 2022



Timing/Approval Process:

Subject to Council approval, funding would be disbursed to agencies in July 2023. All agencies will be required to complete an accountability form by January 31, 2024. The form requires agencies to describe how they used their funding, if they achieved their goals, and the benefits they observed in the community.

Concurrence:

Finance staff have reviewed the report and are supportive of the recommended options.

Financial Impacts:

Over the last ten years, the Community Service Grants budget has grown by 45%, from \$259,500 in 2013 to \$375,465 in 2023. The Vancouver consumer price index over the same period was 29%.

A 13% increase over 2022 has been provided to the Community Services Grants budget. This year's budget is proposed to be distributed to 29 agencies recommended in this report, totalling \$195,734, and to the 26 agencies in their second year of the 2-year grant cycle, totalling \$179,731 (**Attachment 1**).

Social Policy Implications:

The non-profit sector contributes to the health, wellbeing, and functioning of the District. The sector is very diverse, as shown by the different mandates and scope of work provided by applicants to the Community Service Grants Program. The non-profit sector continues to support populations that are experiencing new and intense levels of vulnerability. Continued funding through the Community Service Grants helps to ensure that the District meets its social policy objectives.

Environmental Impact:

Demonstrating sustainability is part of the criteria used to evaluate applications and was updated in the application this year to align better with the District's key areas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect and enhance ecosystems health and biodiversity, and improve our resilience to climate change. The most common responses from applicants in response to how they were helping to manage the climate emergency were:

- Reusables (e.g. cup/containers share program), recycling, and composting options
- Office easily accessible by walking/cycling/transit
- Options to reduce commuting (e.g. carpooling program or remote work options)

Conclusion:

The 2023 Community Service Grants recommendations meet the District's funding criteria and align with the District's social policy goals. Non-profit organizations rely on community grants to sustain their operations and to deliver community supports and services. Through their programs and services, they provide information and tools to enable District residents to feel empowered, dignified, and successful.

Options:

1. THAT the 2023 Community Service Grants recommendations of \$375,465, as described in the June 21, 2023 report of the Community Planner entitled 2023 Community Service Grants, is APPROVED.

AND THAT staff be directed to refer the request for an inflation adjustment to the Community Service Grants budget for the 2024 financial planning process.

OR

2. THAT Council directs staff to reconsider the 2023 Community Service Grants allocations.

Respectfully submitted,



Eirikka Brandson, Community Planner

Attachment 1: Summary of 2023 Community Service Grant Recommendations

Attachment 2: 2023 CSAC Recommended Applicant Organization and Program Details

REVIEWED WITH:

- ☐ Community Planning _____
- ☐ Development Planning _____
- ☐ Development Engineering _____
- ☐ Utilities _____
- ☐ Engineering Operations _____
- ☐ Parks _____
- ☐ Environment _____
- ☐ Facilities _____
- ☐ Human Resources _____
- ☐ Review and Compliance _____
- ☐ Climate and Biodiversity _____

- ☐ Clerk's Office _____
- ☐ Communications _____
- ☒ Finance  _____
- ☐ Fire Services _____
- ☐ ITS _____
- ☐ Solicitor _____
- ☐ GIS _____
- ☐ Real Estate _____
- ☐ Bylaw Services _____
- ☒ Planning JP

External Agencies:

- ☐ Library Board _____
- ☐ NS Health _____
- ☐ RCMP _____
- ☐ NVRC _____
- ☐ Museum & Arch. _____
- ☐ Other: _____