

Social Services Grants Policy Review**Report Purpose**

Following a comprehensive review of Policy SER-005-001 Social Services Grants, a substantially amended policy is being proposed.

Recommendation

THAT amended SER-005-001 Social Framework Community Grants Policy, as set out in Enclosure 2 of the June 19, 2018 Family and Community Services report, be approved.

Council History

December 12, 2017 - Council approved revision to Policy SER-005-001

December 4, 2017 - Council carries Budget Meeting motion 2017/442

April 25, 2017 - Council carries motion 2017 /158 that Administration review the current policy and funding parameters for the Strathcona County Partnership and Operating Grants Program and report back to Council by the end of the 4th quarter

October 23, 2012 - Council approved revisions to Policy SER-005-001

February 3, 2009 - Council approved revisions to Policy SER-005-001

December 10, 1985 - Council approved Policy SER-005-001: Social Services Grants

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economy: The proposed Social Framework Community Grants (Community Grants) will continue to assist social service groups to meet needs in the community, particularly important during periods of economic downturn.

Governance: The Community Grants encourage collaboration and partnership with multiple sectors including community, non-profit organizations, business and others. The Community Grants are intended to encourage the development of relationships and increase involvement in responding to issues affecting Strathcona County.

Social: The Community Grants are intended to address social needs, support strong neighbourhoods and communities, and foster connectedness and a sense of belonging.

Culture: The relationships and initiatives supported through the Community Grants contribute to a shared community identity and sense of place as the community works together to be a welcoming community in which to live.

Environment: n/a

Other Impacts

Policy: The *2017 Strathcona County Social Framework: A Platform to Unlock the Ingenuity of the Community*.

Legislative/Legal: The *Municipal Government Act* provides that municipal purposes include the development of safe and viable communities and authorizes the Chief Commissioner to establish and implement all policies and programs set out by Council.

Interdepartmental: n/a

Summary

The traditional service delivery system has evolved over the last century. Today's resulting service delivery system can be described as a number of service silos; separate programs or organizations delivering services in a way that can create duplication, disconnectedness, inefficiency and confusion for people trying to access programs or services.

The new Social Framework takes a systems approach which recognizes that all social organizations and the individuals within them are connected and form a complex whole. At an organizational level, when agencies are able to consider non-traditional partnerships and

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forge new interdependent relationships, positive change can happen. At a systems level, when contributing organizations work together to see beyond silos, they can identify areas for greater, system-wide change and improved community outcomes. A review and renewal of the Social Services Grants Policy is required in order to align with the policy direction set out in the Social Framework.

Policy Review Process

A Social Services Grants Policy review was initiated in the fall of 2017. Interviews were conducted with community partners, non-profit agencies and Family and Community Services (FCS) Advisory Committee members. Previous and current Councillors were also interviewed. The review informed the development of a new policy and guidelines. In February 2018, the draft policy and guidelines were shared with ninety seven previous grant applicants seeking their feedback and input. In addition, two in-person engagement sessions were held: one with the FCS Advisory Committee and a public session attended by community non-profit organizations.

Policy intent

The funding approach set out in the new policy supports a learning community of citizens, non-profit agencies and community stakeholders to build competencies in fostering systemic community-wide change. It encourages collaboration and social innovation by bringing groups together to think, share and plan collectively on shared priorities. It is also intended to create opportunities for ideas for social wellbeing, prevention and early intervention to be initiated on a small scale to see if there is promise for greater scale and to stimulate small grassroots opportunities at the community and neighbourhood level.

The three funding streams proposed are:

- Core social funding (1-3 years): to support the non-profit sector to provide prevention and early intervention supports for social needs and contribute to the Social Framework outcomes and shifts in thinking
- Collaboration funding (2-3 years): to mobilize cross-sector partnerships and collective resources to address community-wide issues
- Community seed funding (up to one year): to promote innovative, creative projects and ideas that bring people together around opportunities in a community or neighbourhood for positive change

What is different from the existing Social Services Grants Policy

The new policy aligns with the Social Framework policy direction and shifts in thinking. It creates greater stability and sustainability of social programming with core social funding for up to three years, rather than one year grants. Collaboration grants will require a minimum of two applicants with priority to applications that include more than one sector. The current community small grants are not encompassed within the existing Social Services Grants Policy. The proposed Social Framework Community Grants Policy incorporates community seed funding as a stream of grant funding. Community seed funding eligibility is broader and more flexible to stimulate innovative and creative projects and ideas. In addition, a more transparent decision-making process and competency-based governance approach is described.

Proposed Governance

It is proposed that the Social Framework Community Grants Advisory Committee continue to be an Administrative Committee with a change in how members are appointed to the committee. Historically these members have been appointed by the Director of Family and

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Community Services. It is proposed that Strathcona County citizens be invited to apply to become Advisory Committee members through the transparent Strathcona County recruitment process. A small administrative committee which will include community members will review candidates using a competency, experience and knowledge matrix to guide their selections. It is proposed that the Social Framework Community Grants Advisory Committee review all grant applications for the core social funding and collaboration funding streams and make funding allocation recommendations to FCS administration. The recommendations will be presented to Council for final decision and approval of grants. It is further proposed that review and decisions on the community seed funding stream (funding up to \$2,000) be delegated to FCS administration. As a reference, in 2018 over 100 small grant applications were submitted.

Communication Plan

Pending approval of the proposed policy, an education and awareness approach and communication plan will be developed to inform and educate the community about the new policy and what it means for interested community organizations, groups and individuals.

Enclosure

- 1 SER-005-001 Social Services Grants Policy (Current)
- 2 SER-005-001 Social Framework Community Grants Policy (Proposed)
- 3 Social Framework Community Grants Policy Presentation