

# STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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**DATE:** April 19, 2023

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCIL

**NAME AND TITLE:** Walter Babicz, City Manager

**SUBJECT:** City of Prince George Grants Review - Phase 1: Discovery: Communications and Engagement Research and Recommendations

**ATTACHMENT(S):** Revitalizing Grant Programs: A Comprehensive Review of Investments and Opportunities Phase 1 Discovery: Communications and Engagement Research and Recommendations Report

Revitalizing Grant Programs: A Comprehensive Review of Investments and Opportunities Phase 1 Discovery: Communications and Engagement Research and Recommendations PowerPoint

## RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated April 19, 2023 from the City Manager, titled “City of Prince George Grants Review – Phase 1: Discovery: Communications and Engagement Research and Recommendations”.

## PURPOSE:

The Corporate Work Plan includes a comprehensive review of the City’s grant processes and the provision of associated recommendations to Council as a key activity. Phase One of the phased project has been completed. This report provides Council with an overview of the comprehensive discovery process comprising phase one, and the steps proposed for subsequent project phases.

## BACKGROUND:

The City of Prince George provides grants to the local not-for-profit (NFP) sector to help ensure the delivery of social health and well-being programs and services for its residents. Through local NFP organizations and countless volunteer hours, residents in the City benefit from a wide range of recreation, arts and cultural, as well as social well-being services that might not otherwise be possible, or affordable.

However, a comprehensive review of the City’s grant streams, one component of its investment in the NFP sector, has not been undertaken in recent years. This prompted an internal project team, assisted by Jan Enns Communications Inc., to launch a comprehensive review process. The main goal of the project was to consult with local NFPs on how to improve the current grants and financial assistance programs. Additional goals included:

- Increase awareness about the benefits and outcomes of the City’s grant process that enable the provision of services and programs that might not otherwise exist or be as readily affordable or available in our community.
- Strengthen relationships with other similar granting organizations, not-for-profit organizations, and community champions.
- Engage thought-leaders, funders, and interested parties in identifying trends and potential options for consideration and/or collaboration.
- Use the information to better inform the development of recommendations to Council for the next phases.

Phase One, comprised of five key activities, was designed to better understand the target audiences, their behaviours, attitudes and needs with a focus on what is working well with current grant processes and what needs improvement. Notably, throughout the process, it was identified that the NFP community was very appreciative of the City’s support. When asked about their experience with the community grant programs, most survey respondents rated the program as good or excellent. The findings and associated recommendations are framed from the perspective of continuous improvement opportunities.

<b>High-Level Trend Review</b>	A review of trends in grant programs, with a specific focus on local governments was undertaken.
<b>Idea Jam</b>	Staff hosted an information and idea exchange with other local government contacts, funders, and key partners to identify trends, challenges, and opportunities for program improvements and collaborations. Participants engaged in a facilitated discussion to share and learn from each other about emerging needs, trends, and leading practices.
<b>Survey of NFPs</b>	260 surveys were distributed to local NFPs, that had previously applied for a City grant(s) or were affiliated with the City as part of their service delivery in the community. The survey was also shared by three other local funders to NFPs within their network. 110 were completed which is considered a good representation of the perspective of local not-for-profit groups.
<b>Focus Groups</b>	4 focus groups were hosted, with a total of 14 NFPs participating to further explore and validate survey themes. In addition, a staff focus group was hosted to ensure the capture of internal insights.
<b>Meetings with Local Funders</b>	These meetings were designed to provide information about the review process and seek opportunities for collaboration. Participants included the Prince George Community Foundation, Integris Credit Union, United Way, Canadian Tire.

## Key Findings

Insights gathered from the activities noted above can be categorized in five theme areas: emerging and evolving needs of NFPs, priority alignment, grant structure and processes, capacity building and support, and promotion, communications, and collaboration.

Specific findings for each theme area are noted in the attached report, as are a number of related recommendations. It is suggested that these recommendations, summarized in the table below, be considered and implemented by a staff working group in subsequent project phases. The table of recommended activities serves as a roadmap. While Stage One (Now) activities are already

underway, Stage Two and Three activities require the development of a project charter before timelines and accompanying amendments to the Corporate Work Plan can be considered.

**Roadmap: Revitalizing City Grants Program**

Stage One: Now	Stage Two: Next	Stage Three: Then
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present overview of Phase 1 to Council.</li> <li>• Establish Staff Working Group with Terms of Reference.</li> <li>• Create PDF of application questions for all grant programs.</li> <li>• Complete inventory of City investments in NFPs.</li> <li>• Collate samples of descriptions and instructions for each grant.</li> <li>• Continue to provide letters of support as per the City’s policy on letters of support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm and clearly define types of City supports provided.</li> <li>• Confirm priorities for future grant program.</li> <li>• Review criteria, and admin procedures for applying, reporting, and debriefing.</li> <li>• Identify any changes.</li> <li>• Create a plan to inform and engage NFPs and other funders prior to implementation if required.</li> <li>• Review communications to ensure consistent content.</li> <li>• Prepare checklists for staff for grant administration.</li> <li>• Prepare a communications plan and communications checklists.</li> <li>• Review web content for consistency and to feature description of purpose for each.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to adjust or create new grants to address specific priorities such as Truth and Reconciliation, equity, and diversity.</li> <li>• Identify process for monitoring successes, outcomes, and opportunities for continuous improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host workshops, recognition events, recruitment fairs.</li> <li>• Check in with NFPs to inform on actions taken, next steps, and potentially engage if changes being made.</li> <li>• Involve NFPs and other funders in a meeting around addressing capacity building needs.</li> <li>• Identify and take action on any new or changes to investments provided.</li> <li>• Determine if Staff Working Group needs to meet annually once program moves into full implementation.</li> <li>• Implement any opportunities for continuous improvement.</li> <li>• Continue to meet with other local governments and funders as part of continuous improvement.</li> <li>• Continue to update Council as identified.</li> <li>• Moving forward, consider structure to achieve coordination of grant administration processes.</li> </ul>

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

The 2023/2023 Strategic Plan identified the following priority applicable to this initiative.

**City Government: Continue to improve processes and practices to support effective and efficient service delivery.**

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

The Corporate Work Plan includes a comprehensive review of the City’s grant processes and the provision of associated recommendations to Council as a key activity. Phase One of the phased project has been completed. This report provides Council with an overview of the comprehensive

discovery process comprising Phase One, and the steps proposed for subsequent project phases. While Stage One (Now) activities are already underway, Stage Two and Three activities require the development of a project charter before timelines and accompanying amendments to the Corporate Work Plan can be considered.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Walter Babicz, City Manager

**Report Prepared By:** Sarah Brown, Supervisor - Civic Initiatives & Partnerships

**APPROVED:**

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2023/05/08