



Town of Whitby Policy

Policy Title:	Accessibility Improvement Grant Policy
Policy Number:	A 020
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Approval:	Council
Point of Contact:	Accessibility Coordinator

Policy Statement

The Accessibility Improvement Grant program utilizes revenue from Transportation Network Companies to provide financial assistance for Whitby non-profit groups, not-for-profit organizations and small businesses, to help undertake initiatives that will benefit the inclusivity of the community. At the current time, this program is dependent upon licensing revenue.

Purpose

The program will provide matching dollars to assist with the costs of making accessibility improvements to applicant's facilities, programs and services, which increase access for persons with disabilities. Accessibility Improvement Grant funds are allocated in a fair and transparent manner to Whitby non-profit groups, not-for-profit organizations, and small businesses.

Scope

In accordance with this Policy, there are three categories of grants, with each category defined based on the size of project, and intended audience defined below.

The program will provide three streams of funding annually, as follows:

- **Lead Project Grant** - up to \$10,000 of matching dollars will be awarded to one lead project looking to make a greater impact in the community.
- **Small Project Grants** – up to \$5,000 of matching dollars will be awarded in smaller community projects.
- **Educational Awareness Grant** – up to \$2,000 provided for an initiative with a focus to increase accessibility awareness within Whitby schools.

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1. Definitions

- 1.1. **Accessibility Advisory Committee** is an independent committee of Council, operating and appointed in accordance with its Council approved Terms of Reference, and delegated authority to review and award Grants in accordance with this Policy.
- 1.2. **Annual Report** is an annual report submitted to Council identifying the use of the funds, the number of applicants, who receives funding in any one year, and the benefit to the community from the grants. It will also identify any suggestions for changes in the process that Council should consider.
- 1.3. **Criteria** is used to evaluate grant applications, and make recommendations for grant eligibility based on how the project will benefit the community (scale, inclusivity, direct and indirect benefits), soundness of business plan (including resources, own funds and fundraising), the importance of the Town's contribution, and how the success of the project will be determined.
- 1.4. **Non-profit group** as defined by the Canadian Revenue Agency is a club, society, or association that is not a charity and that is organized and operated solely for: social welfare; civic improvement; pleasure or recreation; or any other purpose except profit.
- 1.5. **Not-for-profit organization** as defined by the Province of Ontario as a corporation: dedicated to purposes other than pursuing a profit; without share capital, which means that the corporation does not issue ownership shares; may not distribute any profits to its members, directors or officers; must use any profit exclusively for its not-for-profit purposes; and, includes both charitable and non-charitable organizations. For this program, the not-for-profit must be housed and operate within the Town of Whitby.
- 1.6. **Small Business** as defined by the Province of Ontario accessibility legislation is an organization who employs at least one, but less than 50 people. For this program the business must be housed and operate within the Town of Whitby.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. Council shall appoint members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee and consider recommendations for changes to the grant program, as submitted by the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- 2.2. Community Services Department will promote Grant opportunities in collaboration with the Communications Division.
- 2.3. The Accessibility Advisory Committee will review applications and award grants based on the grant criteria outlined in the Accessibility Improvement Grant Procedure and available funds in the Accessibility Improvement Grant program. All decisions of the Accessibility Advisory Committee will be final.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee shall submit an Annual Report to Council.

3. General

3.1. Accessibility Improvement Grants:

- a) The Accessibility Improvement Grant program utilizes revenue from Transportation Network Companies paid to the Town of Whitby as part of the Town's licensing requirements;
- b) The Accessibility Improvement Grant program provides a Lead Project Grant of up to \$10,000 in matching dollars which will be awarded to one lead project looking to make a greater impact in the community.
- c) The Accessibility Improvement Grant program provides Small Project Grants of up to \$5,000 in matching dollars;
- d) The Accessibility Improvement Grant program provides Educational Awareness Grants of up to \$2,000 for initiatives focused on increased accessibility awareness within Whitby schools;
- e) The determination of the Lead Project Grants will be completed by the end of May of any given year for the Accessibility Improvement Grant program;
- f) The remaining funds will be distributed among Small Project Grants of up to \$5,000 and an Educational Awareness Grant of up to \$2,000, to eligible applicants as determined by the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

3.2. Eligible Grant Recipients:

- a) Whitby based non-profit groups, not for profit organizations, schools and small businesses with a presence in Whitby, or Whitby residents in special circumstances;
- b) Organizations already receiving funding from the Town of Whitby for a specific purpose may be eligible for community grant funding for the same purpose, but given low priority;
- c) Organizations receiving funding from the Town of Whitby may qualify to access Grants for other initiatives not already funded by the Town, based on the relative merit of the initiative.

3.3. Applications:

- a) The Accessibility Improvement Grant program supports innovative projects and initiatives that provide a direct and indirect benefit to Whitby residents;

- b) The Accessibility Improvement Grant program supports innovative projects and initiatives that provide a direct and indirect benefit to Whitby residents;
- c) The program does not focus on providing funding for operating expenses of a non-profit group, not-for profit organization, school or small business;
- d) Non-profit groups, not-for-profit organizations, schools and small businesses seeking financial assistance must submit an application to the Town of Whitby as outlined in the Accessibility Improvement Grant Procedure;
- e) The Grant application process and evaluating criteria shall be followed in accordance with the Accessibility Improvement Grant Procedure.

3.4. Reporting and Transparency:

- a) The Annual Report submitted by the Accessibility Advisory Committee shall include the number and nature of applicants, the distribution of funds, who received funding in any one year, the purpose of the grant, and the benefit to the community from the grant;
- b) The Annual Report must also identify any suggestions for changes in the process that Council should consider. Changes would require Council approval;
- c) The Annual Report will be published on the Town's website each year;
- d) Unused amounts in the Accessibility Improvement Grant program at the end of each year will be carried over to the next year.

This Policy is hereby approved by Council Resolution #152-21 on this 17th day of May, 2021.