

Staff Report

Community Services Department



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REPORT TO: Community and Infrastructure Services Committee

DATE OF MEETING: April 4, 2022

SUBMITTED BY: Michael May, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, ext. 7079

PREPARED BY: Helena Foulds, Manager, Service, Coordination & Improvement, ext. 7193
Carrie Kozlowski, Executive Assistant, ext. 7395

WARD(S) INVOLVED: All Wards

DATE OF REPORT: March 7, 2022

REPORT NO.: CSD-2022-119

SUBJECT: 2022 Community Grants Tier 2

RECOMMENDATION:

That 2022 community grants (Tier 2) in the amount of \$172,215 be approved as outlined in Appendix A attached to Community Services Department report CSD-2022-119; and

That the following organizations be approved to move to the Tier 1 grant process for the 2023 grant cycle:

1. Community Coalition on Refugee and Immigrant Concerns
2. Hohner Avenue Porch Party
3. Irish Real Life Festival; and further,

That the outstanding community grants balance of \$46,789 be allocated to the three-year pilot of the 'Racialized and Indigenous Supports for Equity' (RISE) fund, a grant providing support for community-led organizations, programs, initiatives and events meant to decrease inequities and increase opportunities and well-being for Black, Indigenous and racialized communities in Kitchener.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

This report:

- outlines the process used to assess community grant applications.
- recommends the transfer of several organizations from Tier 2 to the Tier 1 grant process.
- lists the organizations/groups that applied for a 2022 Tier 2 grant including the amount of each funding request and the recommended grant allocations (see Attachment A).
- provides a recommendation for the best use of the outstanding community grants balance.

BACKGROUND:

Tier 2 community grants assist organizations/groups providing not-for-profit services intended for the common good of residents within the City of Kitchener. Tier 2 grants typically fund new or emerging community organizations, events, and/or initiatives. Organizations providing municipal services in the following sectors are eligible for funding:

- arts and culture
- special events
- sports and recreation
- community support and development

Both previously funded organizations and new applicant groups may apply for Tier 2 community grants. Tier 1 organizations are only eligible for Tier 2 funding for one-time special projects or events. Tier 2 grant allocations typically range from \$1,500 to \$10,000.

A Peer and Staff Review Committee (PSRC) composed of three community volunteers and six staff (from arts/creative industries, special events, sport development, community development and grant administration) reviews applications against the eligibility criteria set out in the Council-approved Community Investment policy (FIN-GRA-525). This committee allocates resources within budget availability and makes funding recommendations to Council.

In November 2018 (CSD-18-088), Council delegated the consideration of appeals to a panel of staff.

REPORT:

For 2022, 53 Tier 2 grant applications were received (\$380,316 in requested funding). The total amount of Tier 2 funding available is \$219,004. The PSRC recommended funding 39 groups (\$160,435). After the appeal process, staff recommend funding 42 groups (\$172,215, as outlined in Appendix A).

Highlights of the 2022 Tier 2 grant process include:

- **Information sharing:** an online presentation was accessible from the City's web site to introduce applicants to the Tier 2 process and provide tips about how to submit a strong application.
- **Thorough review of applications:** PSRC members completed an independent review/assessment of the applications against the grant criteria. Then, the committee participated in three virtual sessions (February 1, 2 and 3, 2022) to develop funding recommendations using an online decision-making platform.
- **Opportunity for appeals:** Applicant organizations had the opportunity to appeal their recommended funding allocations. The appeal deadline was February 25, 2022, and the appeal panel met virtually to make funding recommendations regarding the appeal requests on March 3, 2022. Six organizations/groups submitted appeals.
- **Communication:** applicants were notified of the outcomes of the PSRC and/or appeal panel's deliberations (as applicable).

Assessment process

PSRC members, both community volunteers and staff, dedicated considerable time and effort to reviewing/assessing the applications. Each member spent approximately 20 hours

to independently reviewing the applications. Then the committee met virtually three times for a total of six hours to make funding recommendations as a group. The PSRC's diversity of knowledge and expertise, in combination with the detailed review process whereby applications are considered against the Council-approved eligibility criteria ensures that funding recommendations are made responsibly, in the context of all the applications received and within budget availability.

Appeal process

Tier 2 grant applicants are notified of the PSRC's recommended funding allocations and advised of the option to appeal their recommended allocation via an online appeal form. Six organizations appealed the recommended denial of their grant applications for 2022. The total value of the appeal requests was \$64,780. Upon review of the submissions, the appeal panel made additional allocations (three) as shown in the chart, below, and allocated an additional \$11,780.

Appellant	Amount under appeal	Appeal panel recommendation
Association of Liberians in Kitchener and Environs	\$11,000 (\$10,000 cash, \$1,000 in kind)	\$0 (Apply for RISE grant)
Bereaved Families of Ontario – Midwestern Region	\$15,000	\$0 (Connect with cemeteries division to explore building on existing relationship)
Canadian Arabic Orchestra	\$20,000	\$5,000
Crossroads Productions	\$1,780 (\$1,000 cash, \$780 in kind)	\$1,780 (\$1,600 cash, \$180 in kind)
Cycling into the Future	\$5,000	\$5,000
Hope for Community Development	\$12,000 (\$10,000 cash, \$2,000 in kind)	\$0 (Apply for RISE grant)
Totals	\$64,780	\$11,780

Transfers to Tier 1

FIN-GRA-525 outlines that organizations receiving Tier 2 funding for five or more years may be considered for Tier 1 funding. To be eligible for Tier 1, organizations must:

- be incorporated as a not-for-profit entity or agree to become incorporated within an agreed upon timeframe (12 months, for example),
- enter into a legal agreement with the City, from one to five years in length. The agreement outlines the responsibilities of the City and the responsibilities of organization, including details of services/events for which the grant is provided, financial reporting requirements, and insurance/indemnity requirements.

The chart below summarizes the organizations recommended to transfer to the Tier 1 grant process for the 2023 grant cycle. If approved, these groups will move with a base grant

amount equal to their 2022 Tier 2 grant. As a result of this transfer, there will be a corresponding reduction of \$11,600 in available funding for Tier 2 grants in 2023.

Organization	2022 grant recommendation	previous Tier 2 funding
Community Coalition on Refugee and Immigrant Concerns	\$3,500 (\$2,650 cash, \$850 in kind)	2016 - 2020
Hohner Avenue Porch Party	\$4,100	2016 – 2020
Irish Real Life Festival	\$4,000	2017 – 2021
total	\$11,600	

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports the delivery of core services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – The budget for 2022 Tier 2 community grants is \$219,004.

The PSRC (with subsequent revisions recommended by the appeal panel) recommends a total 2022 Tier 2 allocation of \$172,215. Thus, \$46,789 of the Tier 2 grants budget for 2022 remains unallocated.

Explanation of variance

This rare positive variance is the result of the following factors:

- Tier 1 grant allocations (funded from the same source as Tier 2 grants), remained lower than anticipated for a second year. Again, the pandemic caused some Tier 1 organizations to scale back their planned activities and corresponding funding requests. The reduction in Tier 1 allocations led to a subsequent increase in available funding for the 2022 Tier 2 grants program.
- While the number of Tier 2 grant applications was up over last year, it remains lower than in pre-pandemic times. Further, typical grant requests (for events, festivals and programs) remain lower than usual, due to the uncertainty and challenges COVID-19 poses.
- The PSRC and appeal panel carefully considers all applications against the eligibility criteria outlined in the Council-approved Community Investment policy. Despite that available funding for the Tier 2 program was higher and the number of applications was lower than usual, the committee upheld the eligibility criteria and made responsible funding recommendations in keeping with the intent of the policy. The committee was unwilling to allocate funds to projects that neither adequately met the grant criteria nor demonstrated need.

Recommendation for the variance – Additional Funding for City’s RISE Grant

Staff propose that the remaining \$46,789 in the 2022 community grants budget be allocated to the three-year pilot of the ‘Racialized and Indigenous Supports for Equity’ (RISE) fund, a grant providing support for community-led organizations, programs, initiatives and events meant to decrease inequities and increase opportunities and well-being for Black, Indigenous and racialized communities in Kitchener.

Rationale for this recommendation:

- There is high demand for the RISE grant funds. RISE grant requests already exceed the \$50,000 annual budget, and the grant is only in the first of its four 2022 review periods.
- Several applications that were deemed ineligible for 2022 Tier 2 funding are likely eligible for the RISE grant. The RISE grant provides opportunities for groups and organizations to build capacity and demonstrate financial accountability, which will increase their chances of success when applying for future grants.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – The 2022 Tier 2 community grant program was advertised on the city's website, on social media and in Kitchener Life. A new promotional strategy featuring testimonials from previous grant recipients was used in an attempt to reach new demographic groups and demonstrate, through storytelling, the benefits that participation in the community grant program can afford to new and emerging groups. Previous Tier 2 grant recipients were informed of the 2022 application process. The virtual presentation about Tier 2 grants allowed applicants to learn about the program at their convenience and in the safety of their own location.

All grant applicants were informed of the PSRC's recommended grant allocations and were given the opportunity to appeal their allocation via an online form.

This report has been posted to the City's website with the agenda in advance of the council / committee meeting.

CONSULT – The PSRC provided invaluable expertise throughout the assessment process. Their commitment and dedication are very much appreciated.

ENTRUST – Through the provision of grants, community groups/organizations are entrusted to deliver valued programs, initiatives and services to the community.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- CSD-18-088 Community Grants Appeal Process Update
- FIN-GRA-525 Community Investment Policy

APPROVED BY: Michael May, Deputy CAO, Community Services Department

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – CSD-2022-119 2022 Community Grants (Tier 2) Appendix A