

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE GRANT

Date Issued: February 23, 2021 – R41-21

Mandated by: Council

Current Revision: February 23, 2021- R41-21

Cross Reference:

- FIN-014-C Business Development Incentives Policy

Next Review: December 31, 2021

Responsibility: City Manager

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide support to eligible City-based businesses for expenses related to qualified accounting and bookkeeping services required to navigate COVID-19 Support Programs. Professional service providers with knowledge in this area can support businesses to understand program details, collect required information, prepare and complete documentation, and advise on reporting requirements.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 The City may, subject to budget approval and available funds, provide grants to support Resident Businesses that:
- a) maintain a permanent physical location within the City;
 - b) maintain a valid Business Licence; and
 - c) align with the Guiding Principles of this Policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Applicant – means the individual, organization, or business submitting an application for financial support through a Support Grant.
- 3.2 Business Licence – means a licence issued pursuant to the City's Business Licence Bylaw.
- 3.3 Business Development Incentives – means a set of incentives offered by the City and defined in Policy FIN-014-C.
- 3.4 City – means the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
- 3.5 City Manager – means the Chief Administrative Officer for the City.

- 3.6 COVID-19 Support Program – Any official Government of Alberta and/or Government of Canada business support program, including but not limited to Canada Emergency Business Account, Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy, Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant, etc
- 3.7 Personal Use – means assets, equipment, initiatives, and/or property that is used for a purpose other than to directly benefit the business.
- 3.8 Professional Service – means a service requiring specialized knowledge and skill usually of a mental or intellectual nature and usually requiring a license, certification, or registration.
- 3.9 Program Agreement – means a legal instrument documenting the terms and conditions under which an applicant receives public funds through the Program.
- 3.10 Resident Business – means a business that maintains a permanent business premises within the City's corporate limits.
- 3.11 Support Grant – means a financial contribution provided to assist with the consultation of and/or preparing of documentation related to provincial or federal government COVID-19 support programs. Provided that all terms, conditions, and provisions of the Program Agreement are followed, the financial contribution is non-repayable.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Funds available for Support Grants are allocated through the Economic Development Department's budget approved by Council, or from other sources identified by the City Manager.
- 4.2 Council may choose to eliminate or alter the Professional Service Grant at any time.
- 4.3 Provision of the Professional Service Grant is based on objective evaluation of applications submitted by local business owners.
- 4.4 Applications are considered on a first-come-first-serve basis, however preference will be given to applications that utilize service providers/vendors located within the City.
- 4.5 Applications are reviewed by Economic Development Department staff and approved by the City Manager or their delegate.
- 4.6 Support Grants are available to Resident Businesses only.
- 4.7 The Support Grant will only be provided for assets, equipment, initiatives, technology and/or software that are exclusively for the operation of the business, and not for Personal Use or benefit.
- 4.8 The maximum amount available under the Professional Service Grant is \$1,000.
- 4.9 Applicants and/or businesses are only eligible to receive one Professional Services Grant.
- 4.10 All efforts shall be taken to reduce risk to the City. These efforts include but are not limited to:

- a) successful Applicants will be required to enter into, and abide by, a binding Program Agreement;
- b) grant funds will be provided as a reimbursement upon receipt of documentation that the Applicant has met all conditions, terms, and provisions within the Program Agreement.
- c) Applicants found to be in violation of a Program Agreement may be prohibited from applying for any Support Grant or Business Development Incentives for a period of 10 years and must refund all funding received from the Professional Service Grant back to the City.

4.11 Every effort shall be taken to maintain transparency and integrity of the Program. These efforts include but are not limited to:

- a) records of decisions shall be maintained; and
- b) information on support grants awarded will be published on the City's website. This information may include details such as:
 - i. amount of funding approved;
 - ii. recipient of the Support Grant;
 - iii. total estimated project cost;
 - iv. nature and scope of the project;
 - v. actual amount of funding provided at project completion.

5. AUTHORITY / RESPONSIBILITY TO IMPLEMENT

5.1 The City Manager is authorized to establish procedures for the implementation of this Policy which are consistent with the Guiding Principles.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES GRANT

Date Issued: March 10, 2021

Responsibility: City Manager

Termination Date: December 31, 2021

Cross Reference:
• FIN-016-C

1. PURPOSE

To set out the process to review, approve, and administer the Professional Services Support Grant, as reference in FIN-016-C Professional Services Grant Policy.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Applicant – means the individual, organization, or business submitting an application for a Professional Services Support Grant.
- 2.2 Application Date – means the date in which the application was acknowledged as received by the Program Review Officer.
- 2.3 Business Licence – means a licence issued pursuant to the City's Business Licence Bylaw.
- 2.4 City – means the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
- 2.5 City Manager – means the Chief Administrative Officer for the City.
- 2.6 Council – means the municipal Council for the City of Fort Saskatchewan.
- 2.7 Completion Date – means the date which all work on the proposed project must be completed to the satisfaction of the City.
- 2.8 COVID-19 Support Program – Any official Government of Alberta and/or Government of Canada business support program, including but not limited to Canada Emergency Business Account, Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy, Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant, etc.
- 2.9 Eligibility Criteria – means terms that specify who qualifies to receive support through the Program and/or the actions necessary to qualify for the incentives prior to receipt of funds.
- 2.10 Eligible Expenses – means those expenses related to an approved project as outlined in the Program Agreement.

- 2.11 Non-Resident Business – means a Business which operates, in whole or in part, within the City's corporate limits, but which does not maintain a permanent premises within the City's corporate limits.
- 2.12 Professional Services means a service requiring specialized knowledge, skill and experience, usually requiring a licence, certification, registration, or designation.
- 2.13 Program – means the Professional Services Grant.
- 2.14 Program Agreement – means a legal instrument documenting the terms and conditions under which an Applicant receives public funds through the Program.
- 2.15 Program Review Officer – means a staff member representing the Economic Development Department.
- 2.16 Project Inspection – means the periodic inspection by the Project Review Officer and/or appropriate City staff to determine an Applicant's qualification for the Program, review project progress, and to evaluate the completed project with respect to the Program Agreement.
- 2.17 Qualified Professional – means an individual or group of individuals with demonstrable skills and/or experience in the areas of accounting, bookkeeping, and/or finance. Usually demonstrated through an accounting designation such as a CPA, CGA, or CMA.
- 2.18 Resident Business – means a business which maintains a permanent premises within the City's corporate limits.
- 2.19 Support Grant – means a financial contribution provided to assist with the consultation of and/or preparing of documentation related to provincial or federal COVID-19 Support Programs. Provided that all terms, conditions, and provisions of the Program Agreement are followed, the financial contribution is non-repayable.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 3.1.1 Applicants to the Professional Services Grant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Program Review Officer that services received are from a Qualified Professional for the purposes of understanding available COVID-19 Support Programs, specifically:
- To identify available programs;
 - Determining eligibility; and
 - Preparation and submission of applications and associated documentation.
- 3.1.2 Support Grants are funded through Business Licence revenue received from Non-Resident Businesses and are allocated through the Economic Development Department's budget approved by Council, or from other sources identified by the City Manager.
- 3.1.3 The Professional Services Grant is meant to be a temporary program to support businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 3.1.4 In no way shall Support Grant funding received from the City be seen as an endorsement of products, services, or ideas of the Applicant.
- 3.1.5 Applications are reviewed in an impartial manner by the Program Review Officer and other City staff as deemed necessary.
- 3.1.6 The Professional Services Grant is available to Resident Businesses only.
- 3.1.7 Applicants are required to have a valid Business Licence.
- 3.1.8 Applicants who receive a Support Grant will be published on the City's website and may be promoted through various other City platforms at a minimum of once per calendar year.
- 3.1.9 Applicants found to have falsified documents and/or reports, or submit information that is false or misleading, shall immediately reimburse the City any funds received from the Professional Services Grant.
- 3.1.10 The City Manager may make minor exceptions to the Professional Services Grant Procedures in consultation with the Program Review Officer and/or City staff, within the Policy mandated by Council.
- 3.1.11 Preference will be given to those businesses demonstrating severe impacts to their operations by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.2.1 The City Manager or their designate shall:
 - a) Select a Program Review Officer(s);
 - b) Approve, within signing authority, Program Agreements between the City and Applicant;
 - c) Identify sources of funding;
 - d) Establish the program period, during which applications can be submitted; and
 - e) Provide additional definition and interpretation of the boundaries and terms of the Support Grant as required.
- 3.2.2 The Program Review Officer shall:
 - a) Serve as the City's primary contact for the receipt of applications;
 - b) Review and evaluate applications in an objective manner;
 - c) Seek additional information when necessary to make an informed decision on an application;
 - d) Prepare reports on applications for the City Manager or their delegate;
 - e) Recommend changes to these Procedures to the City Manager;
 - f) Maintain records of decisions;
 - g) Prepare appropriate schedules and documentation pursuant to the Program Procedures and Policy; and
 - h) Conduct Project Inspections as necessary.
- 3.2.3 The Applicant shall:
 - a) Provide all documentation required by the application, and requested by the Program Review Officer;
 - b) Adhere to the stipulations and conditions of the Program Agreement;

- c) Obtain all necessary permits and/or licences required;
- d) Provide all necessary reports and documentation at the conclusion of the project;
- e) Ensure the project is complete by the Completion Date stated within the Project Agreement; and
- f) Not submit documentation that is false, incomplete, incorrect, or misleading.

3.3 GUIDELINES

3.3.1 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES GRANT

a) PURPOSE

- (i) The purpose of this Support Program is to provide support to eligible businesses for expenses related to services received from a Qualified Professional for the purposes of accessing COVID-19 Support Programs.

b) ELIGIBILITY

- (i) The Applicant must meet the following minimum requirements to be eligible to apply for the Professional Services Grant:
 - i. Must be a Resident Business
 - ii. Must possess a valid Business Licence; and
 - iii. Be able to demonstrate a need for the services of a Qualified Professional.
 - iv. Businesses which possess in-house accounting staff and/or capabilities will not be considered eligible.

c) ELIGIBLE ASSISTANCE

- (i) Maximum funding allowed under the Professional Services Grant is \$1,000.
- (ii) Amount of funds are allocated at the discretion of the Program Review Officer based on the maximum amount under the program, available funds, and the scope and nature of the project.
- (iii) Eligible activities include accounting services for the purposes of:
 - i. Understanding program details and requirements;
 - ii. Determining eligibility for programs; and
 - iii. Preparation and/or submission of program applications and reporting.
- (iv) Eligible costs include:
 - i. Consultation services;
 - ii. Document review and preparation;
 - iii. Application preparation and submission; and
 - iv. Financial reporting as it relates to receipt of COVID-19 Support Programs

- (v) Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:
 - i. Tax filings or other advice/services not related to accessing COVID-19 Support Programs;
 - ii. Services rendered prior to application.

d) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- (i) Applications submitted under the Professional Services Grant must include:
 - i. A completed application form;
 - ii. A description of the activities to be undertaken and/or services to be received;
 - iii. Detailed costing, including quotation for services;
 - iv. Demonstrated need for support; and
 - v. Verification that services will be provided by a Qualified Professional. This can include but is not limited to a valid accounting designation, a valid business licence, and/or demonstration that the Qualified Professional possesses specialized expertise and provides accounting services on a full-time basis.

e) APPLICATION PROCESS

- (i) Applicants are encouraged to consult with the Program Review Officer, and/or the Economic Development Department prior to submitting an application.
- (ii) Completed applications will be submitted to the Program Review Officer.
- (iii) The Program Review Officer will acknowledge receipt of the application and the Application Date.
- (iv) Costs related to activities and initiatives that are incurred prior to the Application Date will not be eligible for the Support Grant.
- (v) Costs related to activities and initiatives incurred after the Application Date, but before the Program Agreement is executed may be considered eligible at the discretion of the Program Review Officer.

f) APPLICATION REVIEW

- (i) All completed applications are reviewed and evaluated by the Program Review Officer. They may, at their discretion, consult other City staff and/or external expertise.
- (ii) The Program Review Officer will recommend to the City Manager, or their designate, approval, modification, or refusal regarding the decision to enter into a Program Agreement regarding any applications.
- (iii) The Program Review Officer will determine whether an application is in compliance with the Policy and Procedures.

- (iv) The Program Review Officer will determine the eligibility of costs/expenses, and the allocation of funds depending on the nature and scope of the project, relative to the Policy and Procedures.
- (v) The Program Review Officer may, at their discretion, allocate funding that is less than the requested amount, depending on the nature and scope of the project, and/or program budget.
- (vi) Approvals are based on Eligibility Criteria and how well the application aligns with the Policy and Procedures.
- (vii) There is no method of appeal for a decision of the Program Review Officer.

g) PROJECT FUNDS

- (i) City funds will be provided upon completion of the project.
- (ii) City funds will only be provided for eligible costs/expenses as identified within the Program Agreement and shall be the lessor of the allocation approved by the Program Review Officer, or the actual costs/expenses incurred on eligible activities.
- (iii) City funds will only be provided for the activities and services identified in the Program Agreement, and only after the Qualified Professional has acknowledged payment for services provided.
- (iv) The Applicant is responsible for payment of all invoices and costs.
- (v) The Applicant must reimburse the City any funds used for ineligible activities.
- (vi) The Applicant must reimburse the City all funding if the terms, conditions, and provisions of the Program Agreement are not met to the satisfaction of the City.

h) MUNICIPAL CONTROL

- (i) Council may choose to eliminate or alter the Professional Services Grant at any time.
- (ii) The delivery of Support Grant funding is subject to the terms and conditions of the Program Agreement.
- (iii) Submitting an application does not commit the City to enter into a Program Agreement.
- (iv) The acceptance of an application does not constitute approval, or that a Program Agreement will actually be entered into by the City.
- (v) The Program period during which applications can be submitted is at the discretion of the City Manager or their designate.