

Date: 2023-05-31

Subject: **Advance Brampton Fund: Framework Update**

Contact: **Kelly Stahl, Senior Manager, Cultural Services**
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Report Number: Community Services-2023-367

Recommendations:

1. That the report from Kelly Stahl, Senior Manager, Cultural Services, dated May 31, 2023, to the Committee of Council meeting June 21, 2023, titled **Advance Brampton Fund: Framework Update**, be received;
2. That Council endorses the Advance Brampton Fund framework as outlined in this report for implementation starting with the 2024 program year; and
3. That the Commissioner, Community Services be delegated authority to approve funding recommendations and execute on behalf of the City any required grant agreements and other agreements and documents deemed necessary for implementing approved funding from the Advance Brampton Fund beginning with the 2024 program year, on such terms and conditions as may be satisfactory to the Commissioner, Community Services or designate and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor or designate.

Overview:

- **The City of Brampton's Community Grant Program has operated since 2015 to provide funding to eligible Brampton-based unincorporated and incorporated nonprofit organizations (NFPs) and charities for events, programs and projects that positively impact residents and increase their quality of life.**
- **On October 16, 2019, Council approved a framework for a new Community Grant Program, the Advance Brampton Fund (CW386-2019).**

- **Since launching in 2020, the program has received 470 applications totalling \$5,114,822 in funding requests. To date, the City has disbursed \$2,743,278 in Grant Funds.**
- **Data gathered from annual grant closeout reports demonstrate that the City of Brampton's investment in the local nonprofit and charitable sector through the Advance Brampton Fund program significantly benefits the community.**
- **A 2019 report by Hill Strategies reported Brampton's cultural grants were very low both as a per capita dollar figure and as a proportion of overall cultural investment.**
- **While the annual program budget has grown to \$1.2M, to bring the City of Brampton closer to alignment with regional comparators and respond to community needs, staff will request incremental funding through annual budget submissions.**
- **In 2023, staff conducted two program surveys and considered feedback from grant applicants and recipients on the proposed framework updates.**
- **Proposed updates to the program include removing application limits, revising priority areas, removing the matching fund requirement for the emerging stream and increasing the minimum passing score for the developing and amplifying streams.**

Background:

The City of Brampton's Community Grant Program has operated since 2015 to provide funding to eligible Brampton-based unincorporated and incorporated nonprofit organizations (NFPs) and charities for events, programs and projects that positively impact residents and improve their quality of life.

On October 16, 2019, Council approved a framework for a new Community Grant Program, the Advance Brampton Fund (ABF) (CW386-2019). First delivered in 2020, the program opened to Brampton-based unincorporated NFP organizations, incorporated NFP organizations, and registered charities for strong project proposals that advanced Council priorities and took place in Brampton.

Program Statistics

Since launching in 2020, the program has received 470 applications totalling \$5,114,822 in funding requests.

Table 1: Advance Brampton Fund Grant Allocations (2020-2023)

Year	Number of Applications Submitted	Total Request Value	Total Number Approved	Total Value of Grants Funded	% of Requested Funding	Average Score
2020	113	\$1,080,600	48	\$435,561	40%	58.8%
2021	122	\$1,336,614	67	\$634,302	47%	72.5%
2022	122	\$1,427,019	64	\$615,769	43%	74.8%
2023	113	\$1,270,589	69*	\$1,057,646*	100% *	75.5% *
Total	470	\$5,114,822	248	\$2,743,278	n/a	n/a

**YTD total as Emerging program stream evaluation and funding allocation process was in progress when this report was authored.*

Program Budget

A 2019 report by Hill Strategies reported Brampton's cultural grants were very low both as a per capita dollar figure and as a proportion of overall cultural investment. The City of Mississauga delivers \$4.4M in grants annually, with approximately 50 percent to arts and culture.

Historically (2020 – 2022), with an operating budget of \$600,000, the program was limited to approving less than 50% of requested funding. Once the funding envelope was depleted, organizations were declined due to insufficient funds.

At the January 25, 2023, City Council meeting, Council approved an additional \$461,858 in program funding to meet a demonstrated community need (C010-2023). An additional \$200,000 in program funding for the Emerging program was approved as part of the 2023 budget submission bringing the total funding envelope for the Advance Brampton Fund Program to \$1.2M.

To implement the Arts & Culture specific funding goals of the Culture Master Plan, address feedback received from applicants (i.e., consideration of multi-year funding) and meet the community's growing needs, the amount of grant funding available must

increase. As such, staff will request incremental funding through the annual budget submission, with a goal of a \$2 million grant fund by 2027.

Grant Cycle

The Advance Brampton Fund program follows a typical grant cycle, including the following steps:

- 1. Call for Applications**
- 2. Deadline for Applications**
- 3. Evaluation**
 - a. Administrative Review** (to verify the following requirements):
 - i. That the baseline eligibility for funding is met
 - ii. That the funding amount requested does not exceed the maximum available in the stream
 - iii. That City of Brampton funding will only be used for eligible expenses
 - iv. That Projects/Programs have merit, a reasonable delivery model and will advance the City priority area to which they were directed
 - b. Scoring**
 - i. Applications are scored based on the project's ability to impact the Priority Area they are submitted towards and on a demonstrated ability to deliver the project described.
- 4. Funding Allocation**
 - a. Applications with the highest scores in each Priority Area are recommended for funding until funding is depleted. Any remaining funding is reallocated to fund the highest-scoring application in all streams until the budget is depleted.
- 5. Funding Recommendation**
- 6. Notice to Applicants**

Program Impact

The City recognizes the unique and valuable role the nonprofit sector can play in delivering projects that meet community need, complement City services and contribute to advancing City priorities. Brampton Nonprofit & Charitable organizations:

- Play a vital role in building a healthy community by providing critical services
- Have strong community relationships and intimate local knowledge
- Better understand community needs and the best ways to meet them
- Can catalyze growth and opportunity

Data gathered through the annual closeout reports highlight the impact of the City's investment through ABF on the community:

- Grant-supported programs engaged 1,938 volunteers who contributed over 34,393 hours to project planning and delivery in Brampton.

- The program funded over 750 creative productions and engaged over 1,663 artists. This work generated over \$530,000 in revenue for arts-based nonprofits and reached an audience of over 234,000.
- Over 7,700 Brampton residents reported feeling more mentally and physically healthy due to the 550+ health and wellness programs delivered with the support of the Advance Brampton Fund.
- Local organizations engaged over 6,000 Brampton residents to provide 75+ distinct environmental education resources.

These metrics represent the value proposition the Advance Brampton Fund distributes. The Advance Brampton Fund delivers above and beyond existing City services and provides significant community benefit.

Program Review and Feedback

To ensure the Advance Brampton Fund continues to meet community needs and advance City priorities, staff gather impact data through annual closeout reports and program feedback through surveys, discussions at seminars, workshops and 1:1 meetings.

In Q1 2023, a program survey was issued with over 100 previous program applicants or grantees responding. The following are key themes that surfaced among survey responses:

- Accessibility of application process: Close to one-third of respondents indicated they would have benefited from a more accessible application process.
- Ease of securing matching funds: Close to half of the survey respondents found it challenging to secure matching funds for the grant.
- Funding structure: Survey respondents would like a broader range of eligible expenses based on the organization's needs.
- Size of grants: a more significant percentage favoured 'smaller grants to more organizations' than 'larger grants to fewer'.
- Multi-year funding: 78 percent of respondents were in favour of multi-year funding.

In addition, 83 percent of respondents rated the level of communication about the fund positively, and 90 percent agreed that the Advance Brampton Fund positively impacted their organization and its ability to deliver programs and/or projects.

"COVID did great damage to our business model. We could not perform, could not sell tickets and lost many members ... the ABF support is allowing us to continue to exist and begin rebuilding our membership and audience."

The combined impact data, survey results and grantee feedback were analyzed and considered as part of the program review and support the proposed updates to the framework.

Current Situation:

The Advance Brampton Fund offers a consistent and transparent structure to provide funding to implement programs, projects and initiatives that support local development and deliver on City priorities. On an annual basis, staff review the program framework taking into consideration community needs, the local funding landscape, and feedback received from applicants and grant recipients.

Advance Brampton Fund Framework

The Advance Brampton Fund Framework (Table 2: Advance Brampton Fund Framework proposed) details the Program Streams, Tiers, Program Funding, Funding Allocation, Matching Financial Requirement, Holdback, Project Types, Project Timelines, Eligible Organizations, Insurance Requirements, Intake, Evaluation, Minimum Score, Funding Allocation, Approval Authority, Results and Closeout requirements for the effective delivery of the funding program on an annual basis.

The Advance Brampton Fund Framework includes proposed changes (italicized and bolded), which upon Council approval, will be incorporated into ABF guidelines and applications beginning with the 2024 program year.

Table 2: Advance Brampton Fund Framework (proposed)

Advance Brampton Fund Framework (proposed)			
Funding Priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Arts & Culture</i> • <i>Healthy & Active Community</i> • <i>Community Safety and Well-being</i> 			
Program Stream	Emerging	Developing	Amplifying
Tiers	Up to \$5,000, including up to \$2,500 in capital expenses.	Up to \$12,500, including up to \$5,000 in capital expenses.	Up to \$25,000, including up to \$5,000 in capital expenses.
Proposed Program Funding*	<i>\$1,500,000 (proposed 2024 fund)</i> <i>\$1,700,000 (proposed 2025 fund)</i> <i>\$1,900,000 (proposed 2026 fund)</i> <i>\$2,000,000 (proposed 2027 fund)</i>		

Proposed 2024 Funding Allocation**	\$250,000 50 projects @ up to \$5,000	\$500,000 40 projects @ up to \$12,500	\$750,000 30 projects @ up to \$25,000
Matching Financial Requirement	No	Yes 50% financial contribution is required from the applicant.	Yes 50% financial contribution is required from the applicant.
Holdback	No	10% holdback, released upon staff approval of closeout report.	10% holdback, released upon staff approval of closeout report.
Project Types	New and emerging projects.	Existing projects with the potential to grow and develop.	Projects with a proven track record of well-managed success.
Project Timelines	January 1 – December 31 (within each program year)		
Eligible Organizations (must be Brampton-based)**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unincorporated NFPs**** • Incorporated NFPs • Registered Charities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporated NFPs • Registered Charities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporated NFPs • Registered charities
Insurance Requirement	All organizations must carry \$2M Commercial General Liability insurance year-round. Proof of this insurance is a requirement to apply and, if successful, must be kept in full force for the duration of the funding agreement.		
Intake	Bi-Annual	Annual	
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications are evaluated by City staff with subject matter expertise within tiers with other projects of the same scope and scale. • Evaluated on likelihood of project success and advancement of funding priorities • Projects must take place in Brampton. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any third-party fundraising efforts must be secondary components of the project and be directed back into the City of Brampton. 		
Minimum Score	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 50% score to be considered for funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 60% score to be considered for funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 70% score to be considered for funding.
Funding Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding is allocated to the highest-scoring project within each stream and priority until available funding is depleted. Once the allocation is complete, funding recommendations are prepared for Commissioner's approval. 		
Approval Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioner, Community Services to approve funding recommendations and execute any required agreements and other documents deemed necessary for the Advance Brampton Fund in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor or designate. 		
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of each intake period, applicants are notified of funding decisions. 		
Closeout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closeout ensures that final reports are received and evaluated, allowable costs are determined, and holdback payments are made. Closeout reports must be submitted within 60 days of the end of the project period or December 31 of each program year (whichever is earlier). Failure to submit timely and accurate final reports may affect future funding to the organization. 		

*Pending council approval of the annual operating budget

**Funding Envelopes for each stream are outlined in the program guidelines and are set annually based on budget, funding landscape, corporate priorities and community needs.

***Brampton-based" as defined by having a permanent organizational address in the City of Brampton.

****When two or more Brampton residents agree to pursue a common purpose, which is not-for-profit. The organization must be governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, provide evidence of their nonprofit purpose and activity (i.e. the organization's by-laws, constitution, terms of reference or charter), and have two authorized Board Members over the age of 19 with permanent residential addresses in Brampton, who will execute grant application and the City's grant agreement both personally and on behalf of the organization.

Proposed Changes in Detail

Remove Application Limits: Initially, the program limited projects to a maximum of three consecutive annual granting cycles; however, that limit was extended to four cycles in 2023 to support sector and community recovery post-pandemic. Staff recommend removing the limit altogether, allowing organizations to apply for funding on an ongoing or as-needed basis.

Revised Priority Areas: While the framework initially aligned with Term of Council priorities (Mosaic, Green, Healthy & Safe), staff propose alignment with Community Services departmental divisions of Arts and Culture, Recreation and Community Safety and Well-being. This change ensures alignment with corporate strategic goals and strengthens program delivery and oversight. In addition, to deliver on the previous 'green' priority and

extend the impact of this work, staff will ask all applicants to demonstrate responsible and sustainable environmental practices for projects and programs.

Remove Matching Funds Requirement for Emerging Stream: Based on survey feedback that close to half the respondents found it challenging to secure matching funds and comparator research that matching funds are not typical at smaller grant levels, staff recommend removing the matching fund requirement for the emerging (\$5000) program stream.

Increase Minimum Score for Developing and Amplifying Streams: To ensure the City is funding strong and impactful applications, the minimum score for the developing stream should increase to 60 percent and the amplifying stream to 70 percent. The Emerging program stream will remain at 50 percent, allowing new and smaller organizations to continue access to the program at a lower threshold.

Update Approval Authority: Update authority to the Commissioner, Community Services, to approve funding recommendations and execute any required agreements due to changes in the organizational reporting structure.

Not-For-Profit (NFP) Sector Development

It is further recognized that to enhance the effectiveness of the Advance Brampton Fund program in meeting Council's objectives, the City must invest in strengthening and building the capacity of Brampton's NFP sector. Over the past three years, the City has delivered 33 programs to 866 community organizers. One of the measurable impacts of this training can be seen in the year-over-year increase in applicants' average scores from 59 percent in 2020 to 75 percent in 2022.

The learning series will continue focusing on a dual curriculum of core skills for running and managing a nonprofit, including grant writing and advanced topics focused on sector trends and best practices. While these learning series are valuable, there is a future opportunity for the City to demonstrate municipal leadership and innovation in developing this sector by considering dedicated staff advisory services.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

The base budget includes \$1,274,408 in approved funding, which is sufficient for the recommendations in this report subject to Council approval. In addition, staff will request incremental funding through the annual budget submission, subject to Council approval, as follows:

Year	Proposed Increase	Total Budget
2024	\$225,592	\$1,500,000

2025	\$200,000	\$1,700,000
2026	\$200,000	\$1,900,000
2027	\$100,000	\$2,000,000

Legal Implications:

Legal Services will review and approve as to form all grant and other agreements required for the Advance Brampton Fund.

Term of Council Priorities:

This recommendation aligns with the Term of Council Priorities. Responsible program administration supports a *Well Run City*, while the Advance Brampton Fund directly contributes to a City of Opportunities. The program furthers Brampton as a *Mosaic* and a *Healthy and Safe City*, by providing grant funds within administrative limits to the NFPs that deliver programs and projects in these service areas.

Conclusion:

This report outlines the proposed framework update for delivering the annual Advance Brampton Fund program.

Authored by:

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Submitted by:

Bill Boyes, Commissioner, Community Services

Approved by:

Marlon Kallideen, Chief Administrative Officer