



**To:** New Westminster City Council  
in Regular Council

**Meeting Date:** February 23, 2026

**From:** Blair Fryer, Director, Community  
Services

**Report No.:** 2026-79

**Re: Community Grant Program Update 2025-2026**

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### **Staff Recommendation**

*THAT the report titled “Community Grant Program Update 2025-2026” dated February 23, 2026, from the Director, Community Services, be received for information.*

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### **Purpose**

This report provides a status update on the Community Grant Program, including a look back on grants awarded in 2025 and their associated community impact, as well as a summary of grants awarded for 2026. Additionally, it provides an update on the status of the phased adjustments to the Community Grants Program.

### **Background**

Staff last came to Council with a report on the Community Grants Program [October 6, 2025](#), in response to a Council motion from [August 25, 2025](#). At the October 6, 2025 meeting, Council [approved an increase](#) to the 2026 Community Grants program to \$1,467,675.

### **Analysis**

#### 2025 Funding Summary

In 2025, a total of \$1,012,150 was awarded to Community Partners and Residents' Associations from the Community Grants program. This includes cash awards and awarded City Services, as well as funds for Residents' Association Community Investment Funds which, through a Council motion, was increased from \$200 to \$400 for each Residents' Association. Note that Residents' Association Community Investment Funds are not adjudicated by the Community Grants Advisory Committees, and that funds allocated to this portfolio are forwarded to the Residents' Association when they request it.

A total of 68 Community Partners were awarded funds in 2025. These successful applicants were selected from a pool of 91 applications, which constitutes an application success rate of 75%.

The breakdown of the actual Community Grants by portfolio is summarized in the following table:

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Portfolio 1: Grants for Living: Community Livability and Social Equity	\$331,430
Portfolio 2: Grants for Involvement: Social and Cultural Vibrancy	\$343,966
Portfolio 3: Grants for Growth: Community Economic Activators	\$85,926
Residents Associations Community Investment Funds	\$3,600
City Services (cash-equivalent awards for direct costs of services and equipment provided by City departments)	\$247,228
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,012,150</b>

### Community Impact

The 2025 Community Grants program supported numerous programs to operate throughout the year such as food programs, seniors' support, amateur sports, celebrations, and more. The Community Grants program funded several environmental cleanups, programs for newcomers and mental health, sports tournaments, and child care programs.

Fostering the Council Strategic priority of Community Belonging and Connecting, grants supported several smaller festivals and nine major festivals or events including New West Pride, Recovery Day New West, Fridays on Front, Hyack Festival Parade, Farewell to Summer Fireworks and Music Festival, Nagar Kirtan, the New Westminster Farmers Market, and RiverFest.

Nine subject areas were represented including Amateur Sports, Arts, Childcare, Community Economic Activators, Community Wellness, Environmental/Climate Response, Festivals and Events, Heritage, and Sports Travel Grants.

Staff have developed a four page Community Impact Report (see Attachment 1) so that the community can easily understand the breadth of impact by the Community Grants Program through its Community Partners.

In past years, community impact has been reported to Council through an applicant-submitted reporting template called Snapshots of Success. Feedback from Community Partners during the grant review process in 2024 indicated this format of reporting was troublesome in that the one-size-fits-all approach did not allow them to effectively communicate the community impact of their activities. As a result, the reporting process was refined, with scaled reporting requirements in proportion to amount of funds received. Reporting is now submitted through the online grants platform and allows for Community Partners to upload a variety of documentation and media to support their submission.

## Love New West

A new component of the community grant program, beginning this year, is a City-hosted celebration event. The first annual *Love New West* was held on February 7, 2026 at Anvil Centre. All 2025 grant recipients were invited to exhibit and participate at this public event, which includes volunteer stories, exhibits and displays, and interactive activities as well as a community partner panel, and a keynote address aimed at continuing to develop the non-profit sector in New Westminster. This event was developed and marketed as an opportunity for the community to have more meaningful connection with the organizations themselves, rather than only having access to static reporting submitted to the City. This event will take place on an annual basis and will replace the Snapshots of Success report, so that the community has a deeper understanding and appreciation of the impact of the grants program and to promote meaningful connections in the non-profit sector.

## 2026 Funding Summary

In 2026, a total of \$1,403,920 was awarded to 71 Community Partners. A total of 99 applications were received, representing an application success rate of 72%. Adjudication by three Community Grants Advisory Committees took place in fall 2025, and the committees' award recommendations were approved by the Chief Administrative Officer. This procedure is outlined in the Community Grants policy approved by Council.

Organizations previously funded through multi-year grants were given the opportunity to apply for a "lift" in funding given that their multi-year awards had not contemplated an increased budget. Their applications were considered by the Community Grants Advisory Committees alongside the applications received at this most recent intake.

All 2026 grant recipients will be invited to participate in next year's *Love New West* event in February 2027. A list of Community Partners who were awarded funds is included in Attachment 2. Note that the attachment totals \$1,399,120 because it does not include \$4,800 allocated to Residents' Association Community Investment Funds which are not adjudicated.

The breakdown of the recommended Community Grant awards is noted in the following table.

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Awarded</b>
Portfolio 1: Grants for Living: Community Livability and Social Equity	\$452,850
Portfolio 2: Grants for Involvement: Social and Cultural Vibrancy	\$455,525
Portfolio 3: Grants for Growth: Community Economic Activators	\$130,880
Residents Associations (allocated)	\$4,800
City Services (cash-equivalent awards for direct costs of services and equipment provided by City departments)	\$359,865

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,403,920</b>
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In addition to the \$1.4M awarded as outlined above, the 2026 Grants budget also includes a special grants intake of Fired Up for Football small grants (\$50,000), costs related to *Love New West* (\$10,000), and a small contingency (\$3,755).

Targeted Community Grant Program

A \$50,000 allocation of funding has been set aside for [Fired Up for Football](#), the City’s Targeted Community Grants program related to FIFA World Cup 2026™ that was approved by Council on [November 24, 2025](#). The intake for this program is now open, and closes March 16, 2026. All individuals (with co-applicant), businesses, and non-profits in New Westminster are eligible to apply for up to \$1,000 to support their ideas for community activities in New Westminster related to the global soccer tournament.

Status Report of Refinements

Staff continue to deliver the refinements to the City’s Community Grants program that were approved in a phased approach [July 8, 2024](#) and for which a status report was brought to Council [May 26, 2025](#). The phased approach was devised to provide a careful and smooth introduction to changes so that community partners were well informed. Refinements that are still to come include:

Action Item	Status Update
Develop a mentorship program for incubating community ideas	Staff note that when surveyed, Community Partners indicated a lack of capacity to provide mentorship services to emerging organizations. Staff will explore alternative approaches with Social Planning.
Feasibility of Service Agreements	Staff have begun identifying organizations whose scope of delivery may make them suitable for a service delivery agreement. Staff are undertaking a review of existing service agreements, will conduct a municipal scan for promising practices, and consult with the Province’s Gaming Branch to determine if service delivery agreements could have unintended consequences for Community Partners who also rely on Community Gaming grants. Staff plan to report back to Council in Q1 2027, which would allow for any adjustments before the 2028 Grants intake.
Expanded community partner definitions to include new structures	This item was not previously identified for refinement; however, it has become apparent that a broader range of community partners are providing benefit to the community that could be eligible for the City’s Community Grants program, such as co-operatives. Staff plan to expand the definition before the next Community Grants intake.
Delivery of new capacity-building education series	Vantage Point will deliver a fundraising curriculum in Q2 2026 for current grant recipients. This multi-day capacity building educational opportunity is delivered alongside the City’s existing Non-Profit Educational Bursary Support program.

City Services Calculation	Work to adjust how City Services are calculated for grant recipients is underway. City Services include services or use of items that the City provides with a quantifiable value. For example, providing Police, traffic management contractors, or the use of waste disposal all come at a cost. Adjustments were required to how these are calculated for a few reasons, including an increase in safety and security guidelines, increased costs to the City by third party providers, and more refined understanding of specific events' scope and scale. Some modifications to the City Services formula were made for the 2026 Community Grant intake. Continued refinements will be made for the next intake.
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### **Financial Implications**

There are no additional financial implications from actions outlined in this report.

### **Interdepartmental Liaison**

Several departments, such as Engineering, Parks and Recreation, and Electrical, are consulted when developing estimates related to City Services. Finance contributed to this report.

### **Attachments**

Attachment 1 – 2025 Community Impact Report

Attachment 2 – 2026 Community Grants Awarded

### **Report Approval**

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