

Business Retention and Expansion – Infrastructure Technology Grant Program



Economic Development
Policy M14

Policy:	M14 – Business Retention and Expansion – Infrastructure Technology Grant Program
Policy Department(s):	Economic Development
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Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the County's small and medium sized businesses in their growth and development while fostering economic vitality within the community by providing financial assistance and resources while creating jobs and stimulating economic growth.

Policy Statement

This policy is intended to support businesses within the County in addressing infrastructure-related technological gaps. Grant assistance will be determined by Council, informed by data and insights gathered through the County's annual business visitation program.

The Business Retention and Expansion - Infrastructure Technology Grant Program is a tool to assist the business environment. This policy shall promote a responsive approach while ensuring accountability.

The Business Retention and Expansion - Infrastructure Technology Grant Program is designed to be flexible, allowing Council and/or Administration to review grant performance regularly, and pivot as required within the existing policy framework. Given that business-related challenges and needs evolve, maintaining grant agility will be key to its success.

Definitions

"Applicant" means a legally established small or medium-sized business that is independently owned and operated, with under 100 employees and is not part of a franchise located within the County of Grande Prairie.

"Assistance Program" means the level and type of assistance provided to the County's small and medium businesses determined by Council on a cases by case basis.

"County" means the municipality of the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 having jurisdiction under the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation.

"County Manager" means approving authority for the County of Grande Prairie.

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“Infrastructure Technology Grant” means the level and type of funding support provided to small and medium sized eligible businesses operating within the County for eligible technology-related infrastructure improvements (Example: Satellite Internet Equipment) . Grant levels will be determined by Council on a case-by-case basis.

“Program Coordinator” means the approving authority.

Policy Guidelines

1. The budget for the Business Retention and Expansion - Infrastructure Technology Grant Program will be determined annually during budget deliberations.
2. Applications will be reviewed as received and awarded by the County Manager or Program Coordinator.
3. Outcomes and approved applications will be reported back to Council through the Administrative Report to Council.
4. Recommendations for future programming will be brought forward for Council direction upon completion of annual business visitations.
5. To ensure that the Assistance Programs are effective and relevant, all information submitted will be kept confidential and only be used as aggregated data to assist the Economic Development department in strategies, policy guidance, and programming.
6. An Applicant can submit one (1) application per a year, reapplication priority will be given to new Applicants.
7. To be eligible for reimbursement of a maximum of \$2,000, businesses must submit a complete grant application and receive formal approval from the County **prior** to the purchase or installation of any equipment. Expenses incurred before grant approval will **not** be eligible for funding under this program.
8. All projects assisted by this Program must be completed in a timely manner. The agreement will allow a maximum of six (6) months for completion from the time of approval notification. When it can be demonstrated that circumstances clearly beyond the applicant's control prohibited, the applicant must apply in writing to request an extension. Extensions will be approved or declined by the Committee. Failure to complete the project in a timely manner may result in cancellation of the agreement at the discretion of the County of Grande Prairie.

Funding

9. Funding will be allocated on a first come first serve basis until grant funds have been depleted, or the one-year grant timeline has expired; whichever comes first.
10. A grant matching 50% of project costs will be allocated up to a maximum of \$2,000 per Applicant per year.

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Application Procedures and Responsibilities

11. Applicants must complete the formal application, with all required supporting documents as follows:
 - 11.1. Completed application form
 - 11.2. Two (2) quotes provided based on same scope of work
12. Applications shall be reviewed by the County Manager and or Program Coordinator as they are received.
13. The Program Coordinator reserves the right to accept, reject or ask for modifications to any application and render decisions in regard to complete applications as approvals, approvals with conditions, and refusals.
14. The Program Coordinator shall be the approving authority for the completed application forms. The County manager is the approving authority for the awarding the funds.
15. All decisions made by the Program Coordinator regarding whether to approve or reject an application are final and cannot be appealed.

Reporting

16. Grant recipients are required to submit a copy of the paid invoice for reimbursement or jeopardize their opportunity to receive the anticipated reimbursements and/or be considered for any future programs offered by the County.
 - 16.1. Applicant unable to meet the reimbursement deadline of six (6) months must contact the Program Coordinator, the applicant must apply in writing to request an extension. Extensions will be approved or declined by the Program Coordinator. Failure to complete the project in a timely manner may result in cancellation of the agreement at the discretion of the County of Grande Prairie.

Eligibility:

17. Meet the definition of applicant.
18. Businesses located within the County and pay County commercial or industrial taxes.
 - 18.1. Applicant must not be in arrears or have amounts owing with regards to property tax, utilities, or other fees or amounts owed to the County or going through foreclosure.
19. Businesses that have been in operation for a minimum of one (1) year prior to the grant parameters. Additional eligibility requirements may be required as stated in the Business Retention and Expansion - Infrastructure Technology Grant Program and supporting guidelines.

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Attachments

Not applicable.

References

Legal Authorities	Protection of Privacy Act
Related Plans, Bylaws, Policies, Etc.	B1 – Policy Development (all policies will reference Policy B1)
Other	Business Retention and Expansion – Infrastructure Technology Grant Program Application

Revision History

Review Date	Description
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October 11, 2022	Adoption Date CM20221011.028