



NEWS RELEASE

Niagara-on-the-Lake Launches 2026 Community and Youth Initiatives Grant Program

For Immediate Release

March 2, 2026

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake is pleased to announce that its 2026 Community and Youth Initiatives Grant Program (formerly known as the Town's Discretionary Grant Program) will open for applications today, March 2, 2026, and remain open until March 27, 2026.

The Community and Youth Initiatives Grant Program provides funding to local not-for-profit organizations, volunteer groups, and community partners whose programs and events enhance the cultural, social, environmental, and economic well-being of Niagara-on-the-Lake residents.

Following Council direction in July 2025, updates have been made to the program's policy to better align with Council's Strategic Priorities. For 2026, priority will be given to applications that:

- Support community-led programs and events that directly benefit Niagara-on-the-Lake residents
- Enhance youth development, engagement, and leadership opportunities
- Encourage collaboration among local non-profit organizations, schools, and service groups

To strengthen focus and transparency, the Capital Projects funding category has been removed. The program will now prioritize programming and events that demonstrate measurable community impact.

"The Community and Youth Initiatives Grant Program is an investment in initiatives that directly benefit our residents," said Lord Mayor Gary Zalepa. "By prioritizing youth engagement, collaboration, and community-led programming, Council is ensuring these funds deliver meaningful and visible impact across Niagara-on-the-Lake."



The total funding available for 2026 is \$167,443, funded through the Town's Parking Reserve. This includes the 2026 program budget of \$112,357 and \$55,086 in unspent 2025 funds carried forward. Eligible events and qualifying expenses occurring between January 1 and May 31, 2026, will be considered due to the program timeline.

Applications will be reviewed by the Grant Working Group in April, with final funding recommendations brought forward to Council for approval in May 2026.

"Staff have worked to ensure the updated program is clear and aligned with Council's direction," said CAO Nick Ruller. "Our focus is on delivering a consistent and well-structured process that supports community-led initiatives and meaningful outcomes."

Eligible applicants include registered not-for-profit organizations and local volunteer groups based in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

For full program details and to apply, please visit the [Town's website](#). Read the [2026 Discretionary Grant Policy Update](#) report.

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