

2026 Active Living & Culture Grants Youth Development and Engagement Grant Guidelines

Applications will be considered on an ongoing basis until all funds are allocated.

These guidelines have been revised for 2026 – previous versions no longer apply.

If you have questions regarding these guidelines, please contact the Active Living & Culture staff.

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2026 Youth Development and Engagement Grant
City of Kelowna Strong Neighbourhoods Program
1800 Parkinson Way
Kelowna, BC V1Y 4P9
HOURS: Monday to Friday | 8am to 4pm

CITY OF KELOWNA ACTIVE LIVING & CULTURE DIVISION

CORE PRINCIPLES:

The City of Kelowna's Active Living & Culture Division administers several grant programs and services for the community which:

- Encourage active healthy lifestyles.
- Build strong neighbourhoods.
- Nurture lifelong participation in sport.
- Enhance cultural vibrancy.
- Facilitate the development of events.
- Enhance social sustainability.
- Support effective management and operation of sport, recreation, and cultural facilities.

Residents seeking funding support from the City of Kelowna through any of the grant programs administered by the Active Living & Culture Division should be aware of and align with one or more of these core principles.

VALUES:

Residents supported by the City of Kelowna will commit to the following values:

- **Accessibility, diversity, and inclusion:** We welcome everyone to engage in quality experiences that showcase the unique identity of our community.
- **Accountability and fiscal responsibility:** We use resources effectively to leverage opportunities that optimize value and create impact.
- **Innovative:** We support forward-thinking solutions that anticipate needs and bring together a range of experiences to see the future in a different way.
- **Partnerships and collaboration:** We work with others to leverage energy, skills, and resources.

STRONG NEIGHBOURHOOD GRANT GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The Strong Neighbourhood Grant is guided by the following principles:

- **Small is powerful:** Micro-grants can spark community unity, creating connected, resilient, and safe neighbourhoods.
- **Everyone contributes:** Everyone has something to offer - whether through heart, hands, or mind – to strengthen the community.
- **Connection fosters attachment:** Engaged communities develop a stronger sense of belonging and attachment.
- **Residents know best:** Motivated residents who are inspired and involved drive meaningful change in their neighbourhoods.

The Youth Development and Engagement Grant is one of several grant programs offered by the City of Kelowna. Information about additional grant opportunities can be found on the City's website at kelowna.ca/grants.

1.0 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 *Description:*

The Youth Development and Engagement Grant offers up to \$1,000 in matching funds to empower young individuals (aged 13-24) to actively engage in civic participation and shape their communities. By spearheading neighbourhood enhancement projects or organizing events with fellow youth, the grant aims to engage youth in the community, build relationships, instill local pride, foster leadership skills, bridge generational gaps, and create enjoyable experiences and spaces. Its purpose is to support youth-led initiatives that enhance their neighbourhood environment, contributing to its vibrancy and vitality.

1.2 *Objectives:*

The desired outcomes of the Youth Development and Engagement Grant are as follows:

- Kelowna youth will be inspired, engaged, and empowered to create the best city they can imagine.
- Youth will lead the development and delivery of neighbourhood enhancement projects or events.
- Youth will contribute to enhancing the quality of life at a neighbourhood level.
- Youth attachment to the community will be deepened and strengthened.
- Youth will build relationships throughout the community which bridge generational gaps
- Increased civic engagement by youth.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for this program, projects must take place within the City of Kelowna geographic boundaries and applicants must fulfill the following criteria:

1. Be between the ages of 13 and 24.
2. Have commitment from at least two other youth who will co-lead the proposed project.
3. Live or gather in the neighbourhood where the proposed project would be implemented. **
4. Identify an adult project sponsor if all members of the project team are under 19 years of age.

Any group of three or more youths with an idea for a project or event that will enhance their neighborhood is eligible to participate.

**In the context of the Youth Development & Engagement Grant, "neighbourhood" pertains to the immediate area surrounding an individual's residence or organizations gathering space (school, community centre, etc.). This is individually defined, typically within walking or biking distance.

2.1 *Eligible activities and expenses:*

Eligible expenses include:

- Equipment, materials, and other items intended for communal use
- Contract services from external sources, such as master gardeners, journeyman carpenters, performers, or artists. Funding for these services is contingent on the unavailability of a neighbourhood resident willing or able to provide the necessary expertise.
- Promotional materials and translation services.
- Equipment rental.
- Training in skills necessary for projects (e.g., FOODSAFE).
- Food costs (up to 50% of the grant request, with exceptions for food-related skill-sharing projects).
- Volunteer appreciation/honorariums (up to 25% of the grant request).

2.2 *Ineligible activities and expenses are:*

- Projects not aligned with program objectives.
- Ongoing operating costs.
- For-profit business or non-neighbourhood-based projects.
- Retroactive expenses.
- Items which will end in private ownership.
- Travel, trade shows, commercial activities, or donations.
- Projects are already funded by other City of Kelowna sources.
- Political or religious activities.
- Projects violating City of Kelowna bylaws.
- Block parties where funds are exclusively allocated for food and beverages.

3.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply, please visit the City of Kelowna Survey Monkey Apply site at <https://cityofkelownagrants.smapply.ca/>. Before proceeding with the application, applicants are required to undergo an Eligibility Screening on the same site.

Applications must include the following information:

- Describe the project or event and how it will enhance the neighbourhood and connections among neighbours.
- Detail how it will encourage neighbour participation and connection.
- Provide project logistics (timeline, locations, etc.)
- Present a comprehensive budget with quotes and specify how the grant funds will be matched with volunteer hours (valued at British Columbia minimum wage), donations, and in-kind contributions.
- If under 19, include a co-signed application by an adult sponsor.
- Identify and provide contact information for two additional youths committed to the project.
- Explain how it will improve one or more aspects of the neighbourhood attachment (e.g., aesthetics, leadership, safety, social offerings, relationships).

If you experience technical issues or have questions about the process, please contact Strong Neighbourhoods at neighbourhoods@kelowna.ca.

Once the application has been submitted, a Community Development Coordinator will initiate a follow-up to delve into the project details and outline the next steps in the grant process.

It's important to note that applying does not ensure funding. Grant allocation is a competitive process, and the demand frequently surpasses the available resources.

3.0 ASSESSMENT

3.1 *Criteria:*

Each project is unique, and there is no expectation that a resident group will excel in all areas to receive funding. The assessment criteria provide an objective framework to evaluate the feasibility and impact of the project, forming the basis for constructive feedback.

Applications will be assessed based on the following:

- Neighbourhood Participation and Impact
- Alignment with the Program's Focus Areas
- Feasibility of the Project

Additional notes:

- Priority will be given to applicants who meet the criteria and have not previously received grant funds.
- Applicants are limited to one Strong Neighbourhoods Grant per 12-month period.
- Previously supported projects are not eligible for recurring funding.

Drivers of Neighbourhood Attachment

The project or event must enhance at least one of the following six drivers of neighbourhood attachment.

Focus Area	Objective
Aesthetics	Enhance the physical appearance, character, or natural environment in your neighbourhood. <i>Examples: nectar trail, neighbourhood garden, mural, sidewalk art</i>
Leadership	Involve multiple neighbours to share their skills, passions, and/or knowledge. <i>Examples: teaching neighbours how to cook, paint, knit, or build something</i>
Safety	Enhance safety, especially traffic, bike, and pedestrian safety within the neighbourhood. <i>Examples: neighbourhood emergency preparedness toolkit, AED training, neighbourhood clean-up</i>
Social Spaces	Create spaces for neighbours to gather and have fun. <i>Examples: holiday decorating along street, themed little library, playbox, buddy bench.</i>
Relationships	Create opportunities for neighbours to connect, especially neighbours that are new or haven't interacted in the past. <i>Examples: open mic night, porch concert, outdoor movie night, film festival, art show, block party.</i>
Climate*	Actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or adapt to a changing climate and mitigate climate-related risks. <i>Examples: Repair Café with Swap-It Fair, Emergency Kit Build-and-Chill, Planting Party, Garden Makeover, E-Bike Carnival, Neighbourhood Trash to Treasure Swap</i>

* A Climate Action pillar is now part of our drivers for neighbourhood attachment, backed by funding from the Local Government Climate Action Program. Projects and events must align with Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy (Climate Resilient Kelowna Strategy | Get Involved Kelowna) – turning climate action into a fun way to connect neighbours and strengthen community bonds

3.2 Staff Review:

A grant review committee, made up of City staff from various departments, will review applications within two weeks of submission. In certain instances, an applicant may be asked to provide additional information before a final decision can be reached.

3.3 Notification and Distribution:

Applicants will be notified of the evaluation results via email within five weeks of the staff review. Upon successful evaluation, applicants will receive a confirmation letter outlining any terms and conditions, feedback, or follow-up items.

Once the specified requirements in the notification letter are met, funding will be provided by cheque. The primary contact and project sponsor will need to sign a letter of agreement laying out the grant's terms and conditions, commitment to attend workshops and proof of any relevant insurance coverage.

3.4 Request for Clarification/Request for Reconsideration:

If applicants have concerns about a funding notification, they can ask staff for more clarification. If they still disagree even after clarification, they have the option to formally request reconsideration from the Director of the Active Living & Culture Division. If a formal reconsideration request is made, the City may postpone the distribution of some or all the funds in this program until all funding decisions are resolved.

4.0 MENTORSHIP

4.1 Support and Project Delivery:

Project teams will be connected to a Community Development Coordinator who will offer support and guidance in:

- Creating the project action plan and budget
- Liaising with City Departments
- Executing the project
- Assessing the impact of the project

In the implementation phase:

- Recipients will maintain regular communication with the Community Development Coordinator to provide updates, any challenges, and refine their upcoming project goals. This communication can take place in person, over the phone, or via email.
- Recipients must acknowledge the financial support received from the City of Kelowna.

4.2 Workshop:

A workshop opportunity will be offered to assist project groups in finalizing their project plans. This will cover essential topics such as budgeting, developing timelines and action plans, recruiting neighbourhood volunteers, and other crucial aspects contributing to the success of their projects or events. All members of the project groups are invited and urged to participate. We highly recommend attending a workshop to maximize the likelihood of success for the project or event.

5.0 FINAL REPORT

Successful applicants must submit a Final Report via the Survey Monkey Apply site <https://cityofkelownagrants.smapply.ca/> within 15 days of project completion, unless alternative arrangements are made. The report is required for future eligibility in any City of Kelowna grant program.

Final Reporting Requirements:

- Complete a project evaluation detailing the project's neighbourhood impact.
- Submit a final budget, including receipts and proof of volunteer hours, in-kind donations, and monetary contributions.
- Provide a summary paragraph and at least three project photos with signed release forms for publication on the kelowna.ca/neighbourhoods website.

- Return any unused funds to the City of Kelowna.

6.0 TIMELINE

Applications will be considered on an ongoing basis until all funds are allocated.

7.0 CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

The Youth Development and Engagement Grant operates as a matching grant, with the following funding availability and requirements:

- The maximum grant amount per project is \$1000.
- The project lead or co-lead assumes responsibility for project funds and reporting.
- Upon receipt of the signed letter of agreement, a timeline for funding release will be established.
- Matching contributions can include cash, in-kind volunteer hours valued at current British Columbia minimum wage rate, and/or donated materials and equipment.
- Application budgets must accurately reflect the estimated project costs.

This program is not intended as a continual source of support, and prioritizing new applicants is a focus. Residents are limited to one grant per calendar year and must submit a Final Report as a precondition for future eligibility.

Conditions for residents receiving funding:

- Funding is awarded after completing/addressing items outlined in the next steps letter of notification.
- Grant funds must cover current expenses and cannot be used to eliminate deficits or retroactively fund activities.
- Residents must maintain proper records and accounts, providing them for review upon the City's request.
- Any changes in the residents' activities must be immediately communicated to and approved by the City in writing.
- If grant funds are unused or not used as described in the application, they must be repaid in full to the City.
- Upon completion of activities without utilizing the full City funds, the remaining funds must be returned.
- Receipt of a grant does not guarantee future funding.

8.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

All documents submitted by applicants to the City become the property of the City. The City will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of each application and the information contained therein except to the extent necessary to communicate information to staff and assessors for the purposes of evaluation, administration and analysis. General information about the project, including the funded amount and the organization being funded under the program, may also be released. The City will not release any additional information to the public except as required under the Province of British Columbia *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or other legal disclosure process.