

2026 Active Living & Culture Grants Strong Neighbourhood Grant Guidelines

Deadline: last Monday of January, May and August | 8:00am

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

If you have questions after reviewing these guidelines, you can obtain more information from Active Living & Culture staff. Please contact staff well in advance of the application deadline:

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Grant funding provided by



2026 Neighbourhood Grants
Active Living & Culture Division
Strong Neighbourhoods
1800 Parkinson Way
Kelowna, BC, V1Y 4P9

CITY OF KELOWNA ACTIVE LIVING & CULTURE DIVISION

CORE PRINCIPLES:

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

- encourage active healthy lifestyles
- build strong neighbourhoods
- nurture lifelong participation in sport
- enhance cultural vibrancy
- facilitate 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 aligned 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*: the organization will not unreasonably exclude anyone by reason of religion, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, language or income.
- *Accountability and fiscal responsibility*: using resources effectively and efficiently.
- *Innovation*: be leaders in finding new solutions.
- *Optimizing value*: generate more value and impact from existing resources
- *Partnerships and collaboration*: work with others to leverage energy, talent and resources

STRONG NEIGHBOURHOOD GRANT - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Strong Neighbourhood Grant is founded on the following principles:

- **Small is powerful**: even modest grants can spark meaningful connections that build more connected, resilient, and safe neighbourhoods.
- **Everyone contributes**: every person has something valuable to offer - through heart, hands, or mind – to strengthen the community.
- **Connection fosters belonging**: when residents engage with one another, they build a stronger sense of attachment and pride in their neighbourhood.
- **Residents know best**: meaningful change happens when motivated residents lead the way in shaping the future of their neighbourhoods.

1.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Strong Neighbourhood Grant is built on the belief that small actions can lead to big change. Even modest grants have the power to spark meaningful connections that create more resilient, connected, and safe communities. The program recognizes that everyone has something valuable to contribute — whether through heart, hands, or mind — to strengthen their neighbourhood. By encouraging residents to connect and engage with one another, the grant fosters a sense of belonging and pride. At its core, the grant empowers residents to take the lead in shaping their neighbourhoods, acknowledging that those who live within a community understand its needs and potential best.

1.1 Objectives:

The Strong Neighbourhood Grant provides matching grants of up to \$1,500 to support resident-led projects and activities that strengthen neighbourhood connections, enhance community spaces, and promote the sharing of skills and resources. All projects must be planned and led by residents, with the grant matched through volunteer time, donated materials, and cash contributions.

The program includes two funding categories:

a) Project support

Purpose: To fund small-scale, resident-led projects that enhance or improve the neighbourhood.

Funding Level: Up to \$1,500 in matching grant funds.

b) Event support

Purpose: To support neighbourhood events that bring neighbours together and foster connection.

Funding Level: Up to \$500 in matching grant funds.

This program aims to help residents create meaningful, neighbourhood-based initiatives that:

- Build community and enhance quality of life.
- Encourage connections and relationships among neighbours.
- Draw on local knowledge, skills, and creativity.
- Inspire residents to actively contribute to neighbourhood improvement.
- Support grassroots solutions to everyday neighbourhood challenges.

1.2 Eligibility:

Groups of at least three neighbours from separate households may apply. Projects must be completed within the seasonal timeline based on the intake period.

Applicants must:

- Live within the geographic boundaries of the City of Kelowna.
- Live within the neighbourhood where the proposed project will take place.
- Partner with at least two other neighbours from separate households.

1.3 Eligible Activities and Expenses:

Neighbourhood Projects

Matching grants of up to \$1,500 are available for projects that enhance or beautify neighbourhood spaces and encourage collaboration. Examples include:

- Creating a neighbourhood garden or beautifying shared spaces
- Designing or painting a mural
- Enhancing an alleyway
- Building a story walk or little free library
- Hosting a skill-sharing activity, such as a cooking or art lesson

Neighbourhood Events

Matching grants of up to \$500 support events that bring neighbours together, such as:

- Block parties
- Outdoor movie nights
- Porch concerts
- Talent shows
- Community festivals

Eligible Expenses

- Rental equipment
- Promotional material and translation services
- Shared materials that are accessible to the whole neighbourhood
- Contractor or performer fees payments for performer fees
- Honorariums (up to \$200 per volunteer)
- Food costs (up to 50% of the grant, except for food-focused projects)

1.4 Ineligible Activities and Expenses

- Ongoing operating costs
- Projects not aligned with program objectives
- Non-neighbourhood-based initiatives
- Trade shows or commercial/business activity
- Fundraising activities
- Projects which already receive financial or in-kind support from other City of Kelowna sources
- Retroactive funding for activities which have already occurred
- Deficit reduction
- Bursaries or scholarships
- Activities focused on politics, education, religion or advocacy
- Items that revert to private ownership
- Projects violating City of Kelowna bylaws

2.0 APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications must be submitted through the City of Kelowna's online grant platform at cityofkelownagrants.smapply.ca. Applicants will complete an eligibility screening before proceeding to the full application.

Applications are accepted until the seasonal intake deadlines: the last Monday in January, May, and August. Funding decisions will be announced on the last Monday in February, June, and September. Late applications will not be accepted. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. Obtaining a grant is a competitive process and demand often exceeds available resources.

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

3.0 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

All projects are unique; there is no expectation that residents must be demonstrating exceptional performance in all areas in order to receive funding support. However, the assessment criteria provide an objective framework within which the project feasibility and impact can be considered and form the basis for constructive feedback to the organization.

Criteria

1. Describe the project or event and how it will enhance the neighbourhood and strengthen connections among neighbours.
2. Explain how the project will improve one or more aspects of neighbourhood attachment (e.g., aesthetics, leadership, safety, social connections).
3. Outline how neighbours will be encouraged to participate and contribute.
4. Identify key project logistics, including the planned date, time, and location.
5. Provide a detailed project budget.
6. Include a matching grant plan that identifies volunteer hours (valued at the British Columbia minimum wage), donations, and in-kind contributions.

Assessment

Applications are evaluated on:

- Neighbourhood connection, participation, and impact
- Sharing of skills and knowledge
- Project feasibility and sustainability

Additional Considerations

- Priority will be given to applicants who meet the criteria and have not previously received grant funds.
- Applicants are responsible for obtaining required insurance and permits.
- Projects within a Strata property must include written Strata approval. Physical changes to common property may require a $\frac{3}{4}$ owner vote.
- Applicants are limited to one Strong Neighbourhood 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 five drivers of neighbourhood attachment: aesthetics, leadership, safety, social offerings, or relationships.

Focus Area	Objective	Examples
Aesthetics	Improve the neighbourhood's appearance, or environment.	Nectar trail, neighbourhood garden, mural, sidewalk art
Leadership	Involve multiple neighbours in planning and/or implementation, with skill-sharing opportunities.	Teaching cooking lessons, starting a knitting circle
Safety	Enhance neighbourhood safety or promote neighbour safety.	Neighbourhood Evacuation Toolkit, AED training
Social Offerings	Create spaces for neighbours to gather and have fun.	Holiday street decorations, little free library or pantry, play box
Relationships	Foster connections, especially among new or less-engaged neighbours.	Neighbourhood concert, outdoor movie night, buddy bench, festival, block party, neighbourhood cleanup

4.0 GRANT REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

4.1 *Committee Review:*

A grant review committee, made up of City staff from various departments, will review applications within 2 weeks of the deadline.

4.2 *Notification and Distribution:*

Applicants will receive notification of evaluation of results within 4 weeks of the application deadline. Successful applicants will receive a confirmation letter with next steps, terms, and conditions.

4.3 *Request for Clarification/Request for Reconsideration:*

Applicants who do not agree with a funding decision may request clarification from staff; however, the decisions of the Grant Committee are final.

4.4 *Final Report:*

Successful applicants must provide a Final Report through the Survey Monkey Apply site within 15 days of project completion that includes the following information:

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

Submission of a completed Final Report is a pre-condition for future eligibility in any City of Kelowna grant program. Final Reports must be submitted within 15 days of the project's completion or event date.

5.0 SUPPORT AND PROJECT DELIVERY

Approved applicants will be connected to a Community Development Coordinator who will provide guidance in:

- Developing the project concept and plan.
- Implementing activities effectively.
- Evaluating project outcomes and impact.

During implementation:

- Recipients will maintain regular communication with their Community Development Coordinator (in person, by phone, or email) to share updates and address any challenges.
- All promotional materials and communications must acknowledge the financial support of the City of Kelowna and the Central Okanagan Foundation.
- The project lead is required to sign a letter of agreement outlining the grant terms and conditions.
- The project lead or co-lead is responsible for managing funds and submitting required reports.
- Proof of insurance coverage may be required before project activities begin.
- Funds will be released according to timeline established upon receipt of the signed agreement.

6.0 TIMELINE

Applications must be submitted by 8:00 AM on the intake deadline (last Monday of January, May or August). The timeline below is typical, but subject to change.

	Spring	Summer	Fall
Application Deadline	Last Monday in January	Last Monday in May	Last Monday in August
Decisions Announced	Last Monday in February	Last Monday in June	Last Monday in September
Implementation Phase	March to June	July to September	October to December
Project Completion By	June 30	September 30	December 31
Final Report Due	Fifteen days after project is completed		

**Should a deadline fall on a statutory holiday, the deadline will be adjusted to the following business day.*

7.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

All submitted documents become the property of the City of Kelowna. 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.