

Overview

The Town of Halton Hills recognizes that enhancing residents' quality of life and well-being is a shared responsibility among governments, community groups, and organizations. To support this goal, the Town provides municipal funding and resources through its Community Grant Program (CGP), which assists community-based Special Events that align with the Town's strategic priorities.

These guidelines outline the eligibility criteria, available funding and eligible expenses, application process, evaluation standards, and the program's terms and conditions. The Halton Hills Community Grant Program (CGP) provides eligible applicants with grants to deliver Special Events located within Halton Hills that:

- Deliver broad community benefit (i.e. cultural enrichment, social inclusion, education, or economic impact).
- Draw a significant audience size.
- Feature Canadian talent, heritage, or addresses Canadian issues.
- Focus on outdoor activities and connecting residents to nature.
- Promote active recreation, sport, active transportation, and healthy lifestyles for all.
- Contribute to community vibrancy, well-being, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Produce quality opportunities for civic participation and volunteerism.
- Focus on fundraising as secondary goal - if fundraising occurs, it is a byproduct of the event, not the primary focus.
- Mark a commemorative local historical event.
- Advance truth and reconciliation, engages with Treaty holders, upholds Aboriginal and treaty rights, or creates meaningfully collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.

Eligibility Standards

To qualify, applicants must be a minimum of 18 years of age, be hosting their Special Event within the Town of Halton Hills, have a demonstrated online presence proving ease of accessibility to the Halton Hills residents and meet one of the following criteria:

- A Canadian non-profit organization that operates for the benefit of the community.
- A registered charity with a valid charitable registration number issued by the Canada Revenue Agency.
- A registered Canadian amateur athletic association recognized by the Canada Revenue Agency.
- A Halton Hills based service club.
- An event organizer whose focus is the event itself – not fundraising or promotional opportunities.

Applications will not be considered for:

- Any Special Event as determined by the Town that falls under the scope or area of another municipality, Halton Region, the Provincial Government, the Federal Government, school boards, or school councils, or that receives primary funding from another source.
- Applications that are submitted after the intake deadline.
- Special Events that have already occurred.
- Special Events are held outside of the Town of Halton Hills.
- Groups or organizations serving only their members.
- Personal appeals, individual pursuits, or registration fees.
- Group expeditions, contests, or pageants.
- Conferences, trade shows, fairs, or commercial advertising.
- Film, video, book publications, or business promotions.
- Political events or fundraisers.
- Bursaries or scholarships.
- Commercial ventures.
- Fundraising-based Special Events where the sole primary intent is to raise funds for the organization.
- Fundraising-based Special Events who are in support of a provincial, national, or international organization – fundraising must be tied to a local organization. Events that raise funds for a provincial, national, or international registered charitable organization may be considered for support (on a case-by-case basis).
- Fundraising-based Special Events where the sole primary intent is to redistribute funds to a third-party (i.e., bursaries, scholarships, and/or direct financial donations).
- Any Special Event associated with an individual, team or club such as tournaments, competitions, exhibitions, performances, travel, accommodation, training, uniforms, equipment, trophies/awards and/or other.
- For-profit organizations or other corporate community initiatives.
- Any Special Event that could be deemed discriminatory as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code or for which purpose is related to religious, political and/or advocacy activity.
- Community residents, groups or organizations that are not in good standing with the Town.
- Submissions that do not comply with the application requirements, terms, and conditions and/or align with the Town's strategic priorities or CGP criteria as contained in these guidelines.
- Any Special Event designed to raise money for core operating expenses, paying for accumulated deficits or debt, staffing costs and/or other.

Funding Amounts and Expenses

Funding and/or a waiver of municipal fees are available to Special Events (one time per event, per year) through the Special Events Stream for Special Events that fit into one (1) of the following categories:

Small Scale Events – Up to \$1000.00

Community Events – Up to \$2500.00

Signature Events – Up to \$5000.00

**Please consult with the Community Development staff team at the Town to confirm where your event fits into the Special Event Classification System.*

The following is a list of items that may be eligible for funding consideration:

- Contract fees (i.e., security, paid duty policing, etc.)
- Permit fees
- Entertainment expenses (i.e., artists, marching bands, etc.)
- Operating costs (i.e., liability insurance, etc.)
- Rental fees (i.e., portable toilet rentals, facility rental permits, Loan of Town equipment, etc.)
- Eco-friendly consumables, such as paper plates and bamboo or wooden utensils.
- Waste management supplies (i.e., garbage, recycling, etc.)
- Equipment rentals (i.e. chairs, tables, tents, sound systems, etc.)
- Promotional and marketing materials such as posters and signs (does not include swag)
- Honorariums or fees for specialized services required for the event

Funding will not be granted for:

- Rental or purchase of inflatable equipment.
- Purchase of chairs, tables, tents, sound systems, or any items that require ownership after the event.
- Balloons and decorative items.
- Purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, cannabis products, or any type of drugs.
- Restricted food items.
- Academics / tutoring-related activities.
- Activities deemed discriminatory as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Activities whose purpose is to promote religious doctrine or are being led by a person whose mandate includes the promotion of religious doctrine.
- Duplication of funding received from another funding organization or level of government.
- Flow-through funding (redistribution of funds to others, for example bursaries/scholarships).
- Political and/or advocacy activities.
- Purchase of items to be “owned” by someone after the event / activity (i.e., prizes, awards, gifts, medals, merchandise).
- Reimbursement to individuals for time invested.
- Any other items the Town considers inappropriate or unnecessary.
- Special Events that duplicate existing events without demonstrated need or added value.

Application Requirements

- Applications must be submitted on time in accordance with the annually posted deadlines.
- The application intake period is once per year in January, with funding decisions communicated in April.
- Applicants are encouraged to consult with Town staff prior to submitting an application, to confirm eligibility and funding options.
- Applicants must disclose alternate funding sources (i.e., federal/provincial grants) in their detailed budget, including in-kind contributions and expense estimates.
- Projects funded through the 2026 program must be delivered between April 1, 2026 and June 1, 2027.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications are reviewed to assess eligibility, completeness, and clarity. Applications deemed eligible will then be reviewed by a staff review committee and funding recommendations will be made to Halton Hills Town Council.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following key factors:

- **Community Impact:** The event's potential to benefit the broad community and align with Town priorities. Clearly outlines objectives, expected outcomes, and how success will be measured.
- **Feasibility and Readiness:** The Event Organizer's ability to successfully execute the Special Event within the proposed timeline and budget.
- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** The degree to which the Special Event is open, inclusive, and accessible to diverse community members.
- **Collaboration and Community Engagement:** Evidence that the Event Organizer is collaborating with local organizations or community groups.
- **Sustainability and Long-Term Benefit:** The Special Event's ability to create lasting community impact beyond the funding period.
- **Risk Management and Safety:** Evidence that appropriate planning for safety, insurance, and compliance with local regulations has been considered.
- **Financial Responsibility:** Demonstrates sound budgeting, use of funds, and the ability to provide financial accountability.
- **Efficient Use of Municipal Resources:** Demonstrates effort to minimize reliance on Town resources while maximizing impact.
- **Marketing and Outreach Plans:** Demonstrates a strategy to reach target audiences and ensure participation.
- **Volunteerism:** Demonstrates that the Special Event involves volunteers or community members in planning or delivery.

Terms & Conditions

To ensure accountability and the effective use of municipal funds, recipients of the Special Events Stream grant must adhere to the following terms and conditions:

1. Funding must be approved prior to the project start date. Expenses incurred before approval will not be eligible for reimbursement.
2. Approval of funding is subject to the Town's annual budget and available resources. Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.
3. The Town reserves the right to limit and/or decline applications submitted by applicants and/or organizations that have received funding from another Town grant program in the same year, based on the amount or type of funding already awarded.
4. The Town may modify the approved funding amount based on available resources and project needs demonstrated.
5. The Town reserves the right to request proof of liability insurance (providing coverage for their organization and operations in addition to any other liability insurance requirements deemed necessary by the Town) before funds can be distributed. Failure to comply may result in forfeiture of funding.
6. All recipients must submit a final report within two (2) months of Special Event completion. The report must include:
 - A financial summary detailing the use of funds.
 - Measurable outcomes and community impact.
 - Proof of recognition of Town support (where applicable).
7. Any unused or misallocated funds must be returned to the Town of Halton Hills. Additionally, recipients may be required to return funding if they:
 - Cease operations or dissolve before project completion.
 - Provide false or misleading information in their application.
 - Breach any of the terms and conditions outlined in the agreement.
 - Are unable to complete the project as described in the application.
8. The Special Event must adhere to all applicable inspections, permits, licenses, approvals, municipal by-laws, policies, and procedures.
9. The Town reserves the right to request a presentation from grant recipients detailing project outcomes.
10. The Town reserves the right to request copies of expense receipts for items/services used for the Special Event.
11. The Town reserves the right to modify or discontinue the Community Grant Program, including funding streams and eligibility criteria, at its discretion.
12. The Town has the right to request proof of charitable organization status if applicable, prior to proceeding with funding support.

Special Event Multiple Year Funding Agreements

Multiple year funding agreement eligibility is determined based on the event's history (minimum of five-year event delivery), scope, and recurrence. Special Events that demonstrate a history of proven success may be considered for a multi-year agreement, with the possibility of receiving a three-year funding commitment. However, the approval of a multi-year agreement does not eliminate the need for accountability. Recipients of three-year agreements are required to submit an annual report to ensure continued alignment with funding objectives and to assess ongoing performance.

Once a three-year agreement has expired, Event Organizers are required to re-apply to the program for consideration of future funding support.