



PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE NO: 356•1

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TITLE: Barrier-Free Grant Procedure

APPROVAL DATE: March 29, 2021

POLICY: 356, Barrier-Free Grant

REVISION DATE:

SECTION: Finance

RESPONSIBLE

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development

1. APPLICABILITY

- 1.1 Applies to accessibility improvements to local commercial buildings undertaken within the City of Grande Prairie (City) that supports access to services for all residents as outlined in Policy 356. Improvements include the removal of physical, architectural or technological barriers that prevent persons with physical, cognitive or sensory disabilities from accessing or using public commercial spaces on an equal basis with others.
- 1.2 This Procedure is applicable while reserve and other funding sources remain available, as approved by City Council.
- 1.3 The City imposed portions of all Inspection Services Permit Fees, Engineering Services Fees and Planning and Development Fees will be waived for projects that qualify under this Procedures. Amounts remitted to other levels of government, charges as a result of a penalty or relating to construction not approved under Policy 356 remain payable.
- 1.4 The Applicant must provide proof of construction costs associated with improvements for reimbursement.
- 1.5 Applicants are required to comply with all permit requirements, the City's [Land Use Bylaw C-1260](#), [Building Bylaw C-1328](#), Provincial Building Codes, applicable statutory plans, and the National Building Code 2019 (AB) Edition.

2. MUNICIPAL CONTROL

- 2.1 The City shall be protected in the delivery of the Grant that:
 - a) City Council or Administration can close the Grant to new applications at any time;

- b) Any delivery of Grant funding is bound by the terms of a reimbursement or project funding agreement;
- c) Submitting an application does not commit the City to enter into an agreement to pay any costs incurred in its preparation, to participate in subsequent negotiations or to agreement for the project. Further, the acceptance of an application does not constitute an agreement by the City to enter into any agreement;
- d) The period during which applicants may qualify for Grant funding is limited by Administration;
- e) The City will only consider grant funding for a project at a Commercial location under one (1) grant funding program; and
- f) Projects will be funded on a first-come, first-served basis.

3. BARRIER-FREE GRANT

3.1 Eligibility Criteria

3.1.1 The following requirements must be met by the applicant to be eligible for a grant:

- a) Be the property owner(s) or that person's legal representative;
- b) Project must benefit persons with physical, cognitive or sensory disabilities from accessing or using public commercial spaces on an equal basis with others, as defined in the Barrier-Free Grant Guidelines;
- c) Meet any additional criteria specified in the Barrier-Free Grant Guidelines;
- d) Meet additional application requirements as specified by the Barrier-Free Grant Committee (Committee);
- e) Project must be located within the municipal boundaries of the City; and
- f) Property taxes are current.

3.1.2 Funds are allocated subject to the conditions of Policy 356, this Procedure, and a review of proposed improvements for eligible reimbursement.

3.1.3 The City reserves the right to determine applicant participation in the Grant program on a case-by-case basis.

3.2 Application Requirements

3.2.1 Applications submitted must include the following components:

- a) A completed Application Form;
- b) Photos that show the current project area and its context;
- c) A detailed description of the project demonstrating benefits to persons with physical, cognitive or sensory disabilities;
- d) Drawings that show the proposed design. Construction drawings are acceptable; and
- e) Detailed estimates for Project Costs including materials and labour. A minimum of two (2) quotes from two (2) separate contractors that indicate the cost of the project shall be provided.

3.3 Application and Review Process

- 3.3.1 In conjunction with, or prior to, submitting an application, the applicant should review the Application Requirements and may consult the Grant Coordinator regarding the application process, requirements, criteria, rules of eligibility, project design, and other relevant details of the proposed project.
- 3.3.2 In order to ensure adequate and consistent review, the project proposal shall be prepared in accordance with the format established by the Grant Coordinator.
- 3.3.3 To be eligible for reimbursement, no work is to be performed until a Reimbursement Agreement is entered into with the City. Work that has commenced prior to City approval is not eligible for reimbursement.
- 3.3.4 Completed applications shall be submitted to the Grant Coordinator.
- 3.3.5 The application deadline and for each intake period shall be established annually by the Grant Coordinator as necessary.
- 3.3.6 Applications shall be reviewed by the Committee on a bi-weekly basis as necessary.
- 3.3.7 The Committee reserves the right to accept, reject or modify any application and render decisions in regard to complete applications as approvals, approvals with conditions, and refusals.
- 3.3.8 The Committee is the approving authority.
- 3.3.9 The Committee's decision to approve an application is based on the project meeting the eligibility criteria of the Grant and on its compliance with the Barrier-Free Grant Guidelines.

- 3.3.10 Applicants are required to enter into a Reimbursement Agreement with the City which specifies work to be completed, the total Project Costs, the Grant amount and conditions under which the City will provide reimbursement. Detailed requirements of the Reimbursement Agreement are stipulated therein and include such variables as the general upkeep and maintenance of property improvements including the functionality of any structural improvements.
- 3.3.11 A Reimbursement Agreement signed by the applicant must be received by the City within twenty (20) working days of notification of approval.

3.4 Construction Process

- 3.4.1 All projects assisted by this Grant must be completed in a timely manner. The agreement will allow a maximum of twelve (12) months for completion from the time of approval notification. When it can be demonstrated that circumstances clearly beyond the applicant's control prohibited completion within twelve (12) months, 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 City.
- 3.4.2 The applicant shall be responsible for securing all the required construction permits.
- 3.4.3 All contractors must be licensed by the Province of Alberta. All construction agreements will be between the applicant and the contractor.
- 3.4.4 Final determination of the qualification of an Accessibility Improvement Project is not made until the construction is complete and a review has been undertaken to assess the project against the applicant's previously approved proposal.

3.5 Reimbursement of Project Costs

- 3.5.1 The amount of funds reimbursed shall be based on the actual Project Costs, not exceeding the maximum amount outlined in the Reimbursement Agreement.
- 3.5.2 City funds will be disbursed, as per the Reimbursement Agreement, once the post construction review has determined that the project matches the approved proposal and proof of project costs has been provided.
- 3.5.3 At the time a reimbursement request is made, by the applicant, no individual or business will be eligible for reimbursement if such entity is in default of taxes owing or an obligation funded by any other municipal program.
- 3.5.4 The applicant is responsible for payment to contractors. The City will not pay the contractors directly.

4. APPEALS

- 4.1 Applicants may appeal a Committee decision by submitting a request to the City Clerk.
- 4.2 Appeals shall be considered by the Infrastructure & Economic Development Committee at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- 4.3 The Infrastructure & Economic Development Committee may choose to uphold, uphold with modification or overturn the Barrier-Free Grant Committee's recommendation.

5. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Program Coordinator may make minor exceptions to the Barrier-Free Grant Program Guidelines.
- 5.2 The Program Coordinator has the sole authority to confirm completion of work. Certain work may be required or precluded as a condition of funding.

The following Guidelines and Application forms related to this Procedure are:

- 356•1-1 [Barrier-Free Grant Program Guidelines](#)
- 356•1-2 [Barrier-Free Application Form](#)