

Region of Waterloo
Planning, Development, and Legislative Services
Economic Development

To: Planning and Works Committee
Meeting Date: April 4, 2023
Report Title: Entrepreneurial Grants 2023

1. Recommendation

For direction.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To approve the awarding of the 2023 Economic Development – Entrepreneurial Initiative grant program funds, in alignment with the Region’s discretionary grant policy and processes, outlined in report COR-ADM-23-002, dated March 7, 2023.

3. Strategic Plan:

This update aligns with Strategic Objective 1.1, to create a competitive business-supportive community to help attract, retain and grow employers, talent and investments in Waterloo Region.

4. Report Highlights:

- The Region’s 2023 discretionary grant funding budget (COR-ADM-23-002, March 7, 2023) includes \$76,000 to support Economic Development, Entrepreneurial Initiatives.
- The application process opened Thursday March 9, 2023, and closed Thursday March 16, 2023. The grants were publicized on the Region’s website, on social media channels, and previous grant applicants were contacted directly via email/phone.
- The Region received seven grant applications totalling \$166,500.
- Of the seven applications, five met the criteria of the program.

5. Background:

The Region of Waterloo offers an annual Economic Development Grant - Entrepreneurial Initiative. The program is designed to support the strategic economic

development priorities laid out in the Council-approved Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy and the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan:

- to support work that achieves a shared vision for economic prosperity that is locally rooted, internationally competitive and globally recognized,
- to plan and provide services to attract immigrants and keep young talent
- to support organizations and networks that:
 - Promote a diverse and sustainable agricultural system and local food industry;
 - Offer programs and services that foster innovation and entrepreneurship;
 - Assist with regulatory compliance and strengthen producer collaboration networks;
 - Prioritize talent development and retention, and outreach to high schools;
 - Welcome new Canadians and help them start businesses.

These priorities were combined to develop evaluation criteria for the Economic Development Grant – Entrepreneurial Initiatives program.

The 2023 budget includes \$76,000 to support this grant program, however, the funding requested by the five organizations recommended for funding exceeds the total budget by \$62,000. Staff made its recommendation based on the application meeting the criteria, the total number of applications, and the total 2023 Council approved funding envelope.

The following table outlines grant applicants in 2023 and the allocations to the five recommended organizations based on the staff recommended amount within the \$76,000 budget and an allocation based on the full amount requested by the organizations adding \$62,000 to the overall program budget:

Grant Applicant	Program Summary	2023 Funding Request	Total % of Applicant Budget	2023 Staff Recommended Allocation	Allocation to Organizations with \$62K added to budget
Junior Achievement of Waterloo Region	Prepare youth to succeed in a global economy through educational programming, experimental learning, and community partnerships with goal of supporting 1,000 students in the Region (grades 3-12).	\$35,500	3%	\$21,750	\$35,500
Leadership Waterloo Region	Delivers educational leadership experiences (and community project) to a diverse range of individuals and collaboratively works with like-minded organizations in Waterloo Region through delivery of tailored programs.	\$40,000	12.5%	\$20,000	\$40,000

Grant Applicant	Program Summary	2023 Funding Request	Total % of Applicant Budget	2023 Staff Recommended Allocation	Full Allocation to Five Eligible Organizations
Waterloo 4-H Association	Delivers a variety of courses and hands-on programs targeting the personal development of youth in rural communities. Focuses on innovation, business excellence, inclusion, and growth.	\$2,500	10%	\$2,500	\$2,500
The Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region	Provides newcomers, and racialized communities, particularly individuals who identify as Black the training, tools and resources to start their own businesses. The requested funding would directly support an additional 5 entrepreneurs.	\$50,000	4.2%	\$21,750	\$50,000
The Business & Education Partnership of Waterloo Region	Connects local schools, businesses and experienced professions so you can tap into the knowledge, skills and networks to be successful in the workplace building a strong local workforce, community and economy. The requested funding would go towards delivering outreach programs in local high schools that contribute to innovation, entrepreneurship and career-readiness.	\$10,000	2.5%	\$10,000	\$10,000
Conestogo River Horseback Adventures	Provides low-income families and families with special needs children programs with horses in a safe and fun environment, so that more people can experience the gifts of learning and growing that can only be done alongside equine companions. The requested funding would go towards the construction of a facility.	\$20,000	8%	\$0	\$0
Resilient Waterloo Region	Delivers custom workshops that help other organizations change their way of identifying and tackling challenges and opportunities. The requested funding would go towards further developing their business model and foster new relationships by targeting new clients.	\$8,500	15%	\$0	\$0
Total :		\$166,500		\$76,000	\$138,000

Funding History:

Grant Applicant	Funding Received from the Region over the past five years
Junior Achievement of Waterloo Region	2018 Funding: \$21,060 2019 Funding: \$0 2020 Funding: \$23,500 2021 Funding: \$23,500 2022 Funding: \$23,500

Leadership Waterloo Region	2018 Funding: \$40,000 2019 Funding: \$40,000 2020 Funding: \$40,000 2021 Funding: \$40,000 2022 Funding: \$40,000
Waterloo 4-H Association	2018 Funding: \$2,500 2019 Funding: \$2,500 2020 Funding: \$2,500 2021 Funding: \$2,500 2022 Funding: \$2,500
The Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region	N/A
The Business & Education Partnership of Waterloo Region	2018 Funding: \$8,000 2019 Funding: \$8,500 2020 Funding: \$10,000 2021 Funding: \$10,000 2022 Funding: \$10,000
Conestogo River Horseback Adventures	N/A
Resilient Waterloo Region	N/A

The organizations that were not recommended to receive grant funding requested funding for activities that did not align with, or were not eligible, based on the priorities outlined in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan and Council-approved Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy regional objectives.

6. Area Municipality Communication and Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

The grants were publicized on the Region's website and social media channels and previous grant applicants were contacted directly by email/phone. In addition, all townships, municipalities, and EDC were notified about the grant applications.

7. Financial Implications:

The approved 2023 Economic Development operating budget includes a provision of \$76,000 for the Entrepreneurial Initiatives discretionary granting stream as approved on March 7, 2023 through staff report COR-ADM-23-002. Should Council wish to approve grant amounts totalling more than the 2023 budget provision for this stream, the additional expenditure will be treated as a variance in 2023 and will be reflected as such in the Region's overall financial position.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Based on direction from Council, successful applicants will be contacted immediately regarding the status of their application and disbursement of funding.

9. Attachments:

Nil.

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