



Subject: *Community Partnership Fund 2026/2027*
To: Corporate & Residential Services Committee
Date Prepared: January 8, 2026
Related Motions: C25(370)
Prepared by: Jo Swinemer, Community Development Coordinator
Approved by: Alana Tapper, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture

Summary

This report brings forward the annual review of the Community Partnership Fund (CPF) program for 2026/2027 budget considerations.

The seven current recipients have applied to continue their funding. One new application was received, but the funding request for East Hants Farmers Market was redirected to General Government Grant. Staff Grant Review Committee has reviewed the annual reporting for each organization, and are recommending two changes over last year for budget consideration; increases in funding for East Hants Family Resource Centre, as per Council Motion C25(370), and Kids Action Program.

Financial Impact Statement

Funds have been included in the 2026/2027 draft operating budget to provide Community Partnership Funding to the following community organizations:

Organization	2026/2027 Draft Operating Budget	2025/2026 Approved Budget
Corridor Community Options for Adults	\$15,000	\$15,000
East Hants Community Rider	\$50,000	\$50,000
East Hants Family Resource Centre	\$40,000	\$20,000
East Hants Historical Society	\$20,000	\$20,000
East Hants Sports Heritage Society	\$5,000*	\$5,000
* Grant value to max of \$5000 based on operational expenses		
East Hants Youth Links	\$8,000	\$8,000
Kids Action (Annapolis Valley-Hants Community Action Program)	\$20,000	\$10,000
Total	\$158,000	\$128,000

The Community Partnership Fund recommended amounts in the 2026/2027 draft budget total an increase of \$30,000 over 2025/2026.

Recommendation

Staff are recommending the organizations and funding outlined in chart above be included in the 2026/2027 draft budget under the Community Partnership Fund.

Recommended Motion

Move that the Corporate & Residential Services Committee recommend to Council that Council approve the list of recommended Community Partnership Fund Organizations to be included in the draft 2026/2027 budget and grants to be disbursed following final budget approval:

- *Corridor Community Options for Adults, \$15,000*
- *East Hants Community Rider, \$50,000*
- *East Hants Family Resource Centre, \$40,000*
- *East Hants Historical Society, \$20,000*
- *East Hants Sports Heritage Society *Based on operational expenses, up to \$5,000*
- *East Hants Youth Links, \$8,000*
- *Kids Action (Annapolis Valley-Hants Community Action Program), \$20,000*

Background

MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAM POLICY

This is an overarching Council policy that provides a framework for how Municipal grants will be applied for, reviewed and awarded. The policy states that Municipal grants are provided to support organizations whose efforts and mandates align with the Municipality's strategic objectives.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FUND POLICY

The Community Partnership Fund was created in 2014, with the most recent policy review before Council in 2023. This grant program builds partnerships and provides multi-year core funding to help maintain and build the capacity of non-profit community-based organizations. Funding is available to non-profit, community based organizations that provide programs or services that support the key Municipal strategies.

The Community Partnership Fund will:

1. Build and foster relationships with non-profit community-based organizations;
2. Provide seed funding to non-profit community-based organizations during their infancy to allow them to build capacity; and
3. Provide annual financial support that assists with core operating costs of the organization, including salaries of full-time staff, facilities, equipment, communications, and the direct operational expenses.

Community Partnership Fund recipients can receive funding year-over-year; however, the Policy requires an annual renewal of commitment from Council. To facilitate the annual commitment review, the Policy requires annual reporting from the organizations receiving funding. Each year, organizations receive notification of their (continuing) funding in April. In order to have funds released, annual reporting is submitted.

4.4. Fund recipients will be required to report the following information by October 31st of each year:

- 4.4.1. Financial statements from the previous year;
- 4.4.2. Current year's budget; and
- 4.4.3. Annual report summarizing the past year of service provision (services, new trends, and other applicable statistics) and proposed programs and services for the coming year.

Discussion

CURRENT FUNDING RECIPIENTS

Staff have reviewed annual submissions from the seven (7) organizations that received the CPF in 2025/2026. These organizations continue to meet grant objectives and submission requirements. A summary of each organization and their operations are provided below. Documentation provided for annual reporting is for 2024/2025.

Corridor Community Options for Adults (CCOA)

- CCOA's mission is 'to provide residential and vocational environments to individuals living with intellectual disabilities.' There are several different programs/opportunities offered to participants providing greater opportunities for personal growth, recreation, life skills and often employment. Several participants have found work in the community and have moved on to full time employment after skill building at CCOA.
- CCOA has not fully returned to pre-pandemic norms in some of the programs they offer. The thrift store and café and other programs aren't at full capacity which also creates a loss in revenue.

- Vocational environments such as Thrift Shop, Wood Products, Catering and Café all provide meaningful opportunities to CCOA clients. Other services include Job Coaching program, Day Program, Youth Day Program and Home Services for Seniors.
- Just over 40 participants involved in regular programming along with providing support to those residents of the Lantz Residential Programs. There is a waitlist for most programs, and the organization is making plans for increased capacity with new facility.
- In December 2025, the group moved to the new facility in the Elmsdale Business Park allowing for an increase in capacity, as well as a fully accessible space.
- Annual operating budget (aside from capital campaign) exceeds \$1,300,000.
- CCOA began receiving CPF funding in 2022, \$15,000 annually.

East Hants Community Rider

- East Hants Community Rider is under the umbrella of East Hants Community Learning Association, an organization that has mission of ‘empowering individuals to live with a sense of freedom and confidence through accessible learning opportunities, transportation and food security’.
- EHCR helps people of all ages and mobilities overcome transportation barriers with high-quality, cost-effective transportation. Clients use services to access childcare, medical appointments, job interviews, education, personal errands and social events.
- EHCR was a partner in the NS Public Health Medical Transportation program where costs are covered by the province supporting many residents access medical services.
- Fleet is comprised 3 accessible 8-passenger vans, 4 hybrid SUVs and one fully electric SUV.
- 2024/2025 statistics include 466,663 kilometers traveled and a total of 12,972 rides.
- Increased ridership was noted from rural parts of East Hants and with the help of Fare Assistance Program, EHCR subsidized rates for lower income passengers.
- Annual operating budget greater than \$500,000 and they rely heavily on grants from multiple sources.
- EHCR has been receiving funding from the Municipality since 2005, using the General Government Grant Program before creation of Community Partnership Fund. Funding level over 15 years increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000 in 2015/2016. Council voted to increase funding to \$50,000 in 2022.

East Hants Family Resource Centre

- East Hants Family Resource Centre’s mission is to nurture and support family life through quality programs.
- Serving primarily the corridor area of East Hants their programs include prenatal, new parent, positive parenting, family literacy, along with recreation, social activities and events.
- EHFRC also supports families with advice, navigation of services, community connections and referrals through phone, email, 211 and social media.
- Highlights from 2024/2025 include:
 - Over 700 families served - Each year this number grows and this year it grew by more than 15%.
 - EHFRC does indicate that needs are increasing and many families are coming with more complex concerns.
 - Expanded services this year include programs that focus on well-being and social connections, but they have also increased one-on-one interactions, programming specifically for fathers and some expanded offerings for youth and school aged children.
 - Continued day-to-day support to families by providing diapers, formula, food and gas card, averaging 10-15 families a week for this critical support.
 - Community partners continue are key to EHFRC operations for programming, events and funding - but also for client supports/resources.
- EHFRC has an annual operating budget around \$400,000 with four staff members.
- EHFRC began receiving \$10,000 funding from the Municipality in 2011 using the General Government Grant Program before creation of Community Partnership Fund. Council approved an increase to \$20,000 beginning in 2023/2024.
- Staff recommend increasing their CPF funding to \$40,000 for 2026/2027.

East Hants Historical Society

- East Hants Historical Society has been operating for more than 50 years as a non-profit organization focusing on the promotion and preservation of history throughout East Hants.
- EHHS operates the Lower Selma Museum (June-September) - total visitation this year was 661 visitors.
- EHHS also provides lectures and presentations and develops and shares resources on geology and local cemeteries.

- Online presence continues to grow with presentations conducted online reaching attendees beyond East Hants. Their monthly e-newsletter monthly has over 400 subscribers.
- Operations continue at the Archives & Research Centre, which is located on Park Road in Elmsdale and is open to the public. A searchable lateral file database is in place and documents are added regularly. A Google Hub is also available online, featuring many scanned items of East Hants History.
- Annual operating budgets varied based on planned projects and programs, but typically average \$60,000.
- EHHS has received funding specifically identified by Council to cover rent of Park Road facility since 2016. Funding amount over the last seven years has been specific to rental agreement with slight annual increases. Funding for 2024/2025 totaled \$16,503. Council approved an increase to \$20,000 in 2025/2026.

East Hants Sports Heritage Society

- East Hants Sports Heritage Society (EHSHS) was incorporated in 2013 with the mandate of operating the East Hants Hall of Fame and to host annual sport awards recognizing those athletes and coaches currently competing.
- Hall of Fame celebration was held in October with 5 new inductees.
- East Hants Sport Awards also recognized athletes with current/recent accomplishments with Super Six Awards in 2025.
- Videos of inductees have thousands of views on YouTube.
- Annual operating budget is just over \$40,000, but in 2025 they ran at a deficit. For 2026, the group has plans to reduce operations with Super Six awards and holding fundraising golf tournaments. Hall of Fame inductions will pause, and as this is their largest expense, their 2026 budget forecasts a significant surplus.
- EHSHS has received \$5,000 annually from the Municipality since 2014, one year through General Government Grant before the creation of the Community Partnership Fund.
- Staff are recommending up to \$5000 be paid out to match organization's operational expenses incurred in 2026/2027.

East Hants Youth Links

- East Hants Youth Links (EHYL) has the mission 'to provide a safe, inclusive environment where youth can connect with their peers and engage in activities that develop confidence, life skills and links within their community.'
- Programming continued at the Riverside Education Centre after school, averaging 27 participants. 36 total activities were held (weekly), with the EHYL Coordinator hosting a variety of activities.
- Community sessions were also held evenings and weekends in partnership with Riverside United Church, often attracting high school age youth who had been participants in the REC programs during middle school.
- Escape room events were held throughout the year as fundraisers, but are enjoyed by community youth and other ages as well.
- Programming and Partnership summary:
 - Partnered with EH Curling Association for Youth Rocks
 - Hikes and scavenger hunts were popular - held at Milford Rec and Carrolls Corner
 - Several cooking classes were hosted in partnership with Riverview United Church
- Annual operating budget is around \$20,000 including part-time staff salary, but there was a surplus due to a staffing vacancy in 2024.
- EHYL has been receiving Community Partnership Funding in amount of \$6,000 since 2017. Council approved an increase to \$8000 in 2025/2026.

Kids Action (Annapolis Valley-Hants Community Action Program for Children)

- Kids Action Program has the mission to develop and deliver services that promote the health and well-being of young children and their families in the Annapolis Valley-Hants area. The Kids Action Program for Hants is based out of Kennetcook and provides services in the Hants North area.
- Support is provided to families through pre/post-natal care, play groups, car seat education, field trips and parenting support. Furthermore, they also assist families navigate systems and find resources.
- 2024/2025 Summary:
 - Playgroups have grown with weekly sessions being held at both the centre and Findley Park.
 - Increased programming added for school aged children and families have been successful.
 - Baby groups focusing on infants 0 - 12 months include: Baby Daze, Baby Walk & Talk, and Move with Me which all work to connect caregivers/parents at a critical time.
 - The Hants North site has been approved as Supervised Parenting and Exchange Services site, one of only a handful of approved sites in Nova Scotia.

- The group has many key community partners including Hants North Food Bank, SchoolsPlus, West Hants Family Resource Centre, Sipekne'katik First Nations, NS Public Health, and Hants North Recreation and Development Association.
- The organization has been allocating funding through CPF to support their van which was purchased in January of 2025. The vehicle supports program delivery and outreach work expanding the reach of the organization.
- Request for consideration for increased funding was received and is included with their package, due to increased operating expenses.
- Kids Action received \$10,000 through the Community Partnership Fund beginning in 2021 with funding specific to Hants North branch of operations.
- Staff recommend increasing their CPF funding to \$20,000 for 2026/2027.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The information summarized above demonstrates that these community associations meet the objectives of Community Partnership Fund Policy. These groups continue to provide valuable services to the community.

From Council's 2021 Strategic Plan, the key strategy of Strong Community:

A strong community is where people feel a sense of pride, are safe, connected and active. This is achieved through long-range community planning and by supporting those who live, work and visit in East Hants. Our goal is to provide services, programs and facilities, through direct service delivery and collaboration with others, that allow people and businesses to thrive.

The organizations in the Community Partnership Fund Program demonstrate a clear connection to “*Strong Community*” strategy, and our Vision as a “*vibrant, welcoming community that embraces rural and urban living - a place where everyone feels connected.*” These organizations are supporting our residents by offering opportunities and resources, and by helping make East Hants a place people want to live.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funds have been included in the 2026/2027 draft operating budget to provide Community Partnership Funding to the following community organizations:

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Total	\$158,000	\$128,000

The Staff Grant Review Committee have reviewed and are recommending the allocated amounts as per the above table. Changes from 2025/2026 allocations are East Hants Family Resource Centre funding increase from \$20,000 to \$40,000 and Kids Action Program funding increase from \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Alternatives

Council may consider changes to the list of funding recipients and/or funded amounts.

Attachments

Community Partnership Fund Annual Submissions for each of the seven associations.