

DATE OF MEETING NOVEMBER 19, 2025
AUTHORED BY ROSALIE SAWRIE, SOCIAL PLANNER
SUBJECT SOCIAL PLANNING GRANTS 2026

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present to the Finance and Audit Committee the recommended Social Planning Grants allocations for 2026.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the 2026 Social Planning Grants recommendations of \$85,000, and that the grant allocations be as follows:

Applicant Name: Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society **Recommend:** \$20,858
Project: Digital Literacy for Senior Newcomers Mentorship Program

Applicant Name: Haven Society **Recommend:** \$14,000
Project: Celebrate Life Project

Applicant Name: Nanaimo Brain Injury Society **Recommend:** \$13,700
Project: Concussion 101

Applicant Name: Nanaimo Family Life Association **Recommend:** \$10,000
Project: Reducing Community Barriers for Seniors

Applicant Name: Nanaimo Foodshare **Recommend:** \$11,442
Project: Shared Harvest

Applicant Name: Spinal Cord Injury BC **Recommend:** \$5,000
Project: Peer Support Program in Nanaimo

Applicant Name: Take a Hike Foundation **Recommend:** \$10,000
Project: Take a Hike Nanaimo Program

BACKGROUND

Since 2001, The City of Nanaimo has provided financial support to non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, and recognized faith groups through Social Planning Grants. Each year, a total of \$85,000 is allocated annually and distributed through calls for grant proposals in the fall.

The purpose of the Social Planning Grants program is to assist organizations in responding to social issues with initiatives that enhance social cohesion, address the root causes and effects of poverty, contribute to the vitality of our community and foster social equity and inclusion. Applications for the Social Planning Grants program should align to the desired outcomes and policies in *City Plan*, in particular, the *City Plan's* goal for 'A Healthy Nanaimo: Community Wellbeing & Livability'.

To be considered, applications must include the project summary including a timeline, location, staffing requirements, target market or audience, proposed programming, and community partnerships. In addition, the application must provide a description of expected outcomes, a plan for evaluating progress, and a detailed budget that includes both projected revenue sources (e.g. donations and other funding requests) and anticipated expenses. Funding will not be allocated for projects or programs outside the City of Nanaimo, to cover ongoing administrative expenses incurred during the organization's regular business activities, or to pay pre-existing debts.

DISCUSSION

In 2025, the City received 29 applications for the 2026 Social Planning Grants funding cycle. This is an increase from the 19 applications received for the 2025 cycle. The total amount of requested funding for the 2026 Social Planning Grants program is \$536,159 (Attachment A). This represents a 75% increase compared to the \$306,390 requested for the 2025 funding cycle. Since 2017, the Social Planning Grants program annual funding allocation has remained at \$85,000. With no increases over the past 9 years, the demand has significantly outpaced available funding.

Applications were scored by an evaluation committee comprised of City Staff in the Public Safety and Finance Departments. Evaluations were based on merit, relevance, feasibility, and potential impact relative to the 2026 Social Planning Grants program's assessment criteria (Attachment B).

Based on the evaluations, Staff are recommending that \$20,858 be allocated to Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society for their Digital Literacy for Senior Newcomers Mentorship Program, \$14,000 to Haven Society for their Celebrate Life Project, \$10,000 to the Nanaimo Brain Injury Society for their Concussion 101 program, \$10,000 to Nanaimo Family Life Association for their Reducing Community Barriers for Seniors program, \$11,442 to Nanaimo Foodshare for their Shared Harvest program, \$5,000 to Spinal Cord Injury BC for their Peer Support Program in Nanaimo, and \$10,000 to Take a Hike Foundation for their Take a Hike Nanaimo Program.

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the 2026 Social Planning Grants recommendations of \$85,000, and that the grant allocations be as follows:

Applicant Name: Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society **Recommend:** \$20,858
Project: Digital Literacy for Senior Newcomers Mentorship Program

Applicant Name: Haven Society **Recommend:** \$14,000
Project: Celebrate Life Project

Applicant Name: Nanaimo Brain Injury Society **Recommend:** \$13,700
Project: Concussion 101

Applicant Name: Nanaimo Family Life Association **Recommend:** \$10,000
Project: Reducing Community Barriers for Seniors

Applicant Name: Nanaimo Foodshare **Recommend:** \$11,442
Project: Shared Harvest

Applicant Name: Spinal Cord Injury BC **Recommend:** \$5,000
Project: Peer Support Program in Nanaimo

Applicant Name: Take a Hike Foundation **Recommend:** \$10,000
Project: Take a Hike Nanaimo Program

- The advantages of this option: Seven recommended projects, determined to have higher merit based on fulfilling the assessment criteria of the Social Planning Grants program, will receive full or partial funding.
- The disadvantages of this option: A number of organizations who submitted Social Planning Grant applications will receive no funding, or less funding than requested.
- Financial Implications: The recommendation allocates the full \$85,000 Social Planning Grants program budget for 2026.

2. That Council provide alternate direction. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City received 29 Social Planning Grant applications with a total requested amount of \$536,159 for 2026.
- The total budget for the 2026 Social Planning Grants is \$85,000.
- Staff are recommending that the full \$85,000 available be awarded to seven of the eligible projects.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: 2026 Social Planning Grants Program - Applications Received

ATTACHMENT B: Link to “2026 Social Planning Grants Assessment Criteria” |

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