

Report

Date November 12, 2025
Subject 2026 Grant-in-Aid

File:

PURPOSE

To review the 2026 Grant-in-Aid applications and provide recommendations on which grants should be approved, along with the suggested funding amounts.

BACKGROUND

Council's Grant-in-Aid Policy (Attachment 1) invites applications from non-profit societies operating within North Cowichan under the categories of tourism, economic development, social/environmental services, sports groups, and arts and culture. The grants can be used for capital, operating, or one-off special event purposes.

Applications are due by October 15, 2025, for review by the Committee of the Whole during budget deliberations.

DISCUSSION

The preliminary 2026 budget includes \$257,000 (\$246,750 in 2025) for Grant-in-Aid. The eligible requests for funding total \$808,650; however, one of the grant requests, for \$432,000, would be funded through the Growing Communities Fund if approved. Should the Committee of the Whole recommend fully funding all grant applications, an additional \$119,650 or a 0.29% increase in taxation would be required.

The details of grant amounts requested for 2026 as well as those provided in previous years are included in Attachment 2.

As part of Council's ongoing efforts to identify opportunities for reducing the 2026 tax rate, the Grant-in-Aid program has been identified as a potential area for reduction or elimination. This consideration will be reflected in the forthcoming 2026 Budget Update report.

In light of this, staff are seeking Council's direction regarding the future of the seven annual Grant-in-Aid allocations, as well as guidance on the processing of applications for the 2026 program year.

Annual Grant Contributions - \$185,600

There are eight annual funding contributions provided through the annual Grant-in-Aid category. The Committee of the Whole typically approves these without requiring the organization to submit an annual application unless additional funding is requested. There were no additional funding requests for 2026, and the annual grant amounts are as follows:

• B.C. Forest Discovery Centre - BC Forest Museum	\$25,000
• Chemainus & District Chamber of Commerce	\$30,000
• Chemainus Valley Historical Society	\$8,500
• Cowichan Historical Society	\$5,500
• Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce	\$34,000
• Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association	\$38,600
• Chemainus BIA. - Flower Baskets	\$24,000
• Chemainus Theatre Festival Society	\$20,000

Grants in Lieu of Taxes and Fees - \$1,000

North Cowichan covers the water and garbage fees for St. Michael's and All Angels Church Cemetery each year. Should Council continue to approve this, the organization will be advised that North Cowichan will cover these fees for 2026.

Economic Development/Tourism - \$11,500 requested

The Chemainus Communities in Bloom is requesting \$11,500 for planting, maintaining flower beds, the traffic circle, and revitalizing all planted areas. This organization has a history of receiving grants for beautification efforts in Chemainus, having been awarded \$7,000 in 2025.

Social/Environmental Services - \$533,350 requested

Seventeen requests have been received in this category:

1. BC Conservation Foundation – WildSafeBC Cowichan is requesting \$4,000 for delivering education to residents and visitors about wildlife safety and preventing human-wildlife conflict through awareness and attractant management.
2. Chemainus Community Schools Association - Eagle Tree is requesting \$5,500 for a farm-to-table gardening program. The grant would support wages, soil, seeds, gardening tools, etc.
3. Clements Center Society is requesting \$7,500 for an accessibility retrofit of a bathroom (tub-to-shower conversion).
4. Community Circles Restorative Justice Society is requesting \$18,150 for a Project Administrator to assist with their program which educates, engages, and involves residents in activities and processes that seek solutions to addressing harm and conflict.
5. Community Land Trust is requesting \$432,000 to cover approximately half of the building permit and Development Cost Charges for affordable housing at 3191 Sherman Road. Council stated in 2022 that they would provide a grant for this amount through the grant-in-aid process in 2023 (see the attached letter in their application package). This grant would be covered through the Growing Communities Fund under the umbrella of affordable housing and have no impact on taxation.

6. Cowichan Agricultural Society and Farmers' Institute requests \$7,000 to support the role of a coordinator/social media manager. Council provided \$7,000 in 2025 from the Agricultural Land Reserve for this role.
7. Cowichan Brain Injury Society is requesting \$5,000 to enhance accessibility, digital infrastructure, and service delivery capacity for individuals with brain injury.
8. Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society is requesting \$2,500 to assist with maintaining their frontline services (emotional support, support groups, navigation of healthcare and community resources). Council provided \$2,000 in 2025.
9. Cowichan Valley Independent Living is requesting \$25,000 to support special projects focused on improving accessibility.
10. Cowichan Valley Youth Services is requesting \$7,500 to support local youth and their parents/caregivers directly through the Connect Attachment Parenting Program. Council provided \$5,000 in 2025.
11. Foster Kritters Feral Cat Rescue Society is requesting \$1,500 for operating and paying bills associated with the assistance of feral cats, as well as public education. Council provided \$1,000 in 2025.
12. Grace Kidz Thrift Store is requesting \$2,500 to support the operations of the thrift store, including racks and displays, two sheds, and rental fees.
13. House of Grace Pregnancy Centre is requesting \$5,000 to support the improvement and accessibility of existing programs and resources, as well as future program development.
14. Cowichan – Bring Back the Bluebirds is requesting \$2,000 for support, volunteer coordination, and costs associated with caring for western bluebirds. Council has provided \$2,000 for many years.
15. Nourish Cowichan Society is requesting \$5,000 for new costs associated with operating a second program delivery vehicle.
16. Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society is requesting \$700 to support the construction and installation of a S'amunu/Quamichan watershed informational map display.
17. Take a Hike Foundation is requesting \$2,500 to go towards outdoor land-based learning costs in their Cowichan program. Council granted \$1,500 in 2023 and 2024.

Arts and Culture - \$44,200 requested

Seven requests have been received in this category:

1. Cowichan Historical Society is requesting \$6,200 to sustain core operations and public-facing programming at the Cowichan Valley Museum & Archives.
2. Cowichan Valley Performing Arts Foundation is requesting \$2,500 to support its student bursaries for performing arts activities and lessons.
3. Chemainus Rotary Club is requesting \$700 to assist with their community Summer Fest event (parade/car show, food and entertainment). Council has provided funding for this for many years (\$500 awarded in 2025).
4. Cowichan Valley Arts Council is requesting \$2,000 for the Youth Arts Showcase, an art exhibition that will run in their main gallery for a month. Council granted \$1,000 in 2025.
5. The Cowichan Folk Guild is requesting \$25,000 to support the expansion of live music opportunities in the Cowichan Valley, building on the success of their revitalized Islands Folk Festival.
6. Chemainus Valley Historical Society is requesting \$5,600 for acting on the behalf of the Visitors Center with handling of visitors and enquiries 28% of the time when the Centre is not open. Council provided \$1,500 in 2025 along with their annual grant of \$8,500.
7. Maple Bay Community Association is requesting \$2,200 towards their Canada Day celebration. Council provided \$3,500 in 2025.

Municipally Owned Community Halls - \$13,000 requested

Two requests have been received in this category:

1. Somenos Community Association is requesting \$10,000 to install a 50' cement walkway to the side door and add a heat pump to the downstairs area. Council has provided funding to this association for many years (\$10,000 in 2025).
2. Vimy Community Club is requesting \$3,000 for operational costs for the hall. Council has provided this amount for many years.

Sports Groups - \$20,000 requested

The Cowichan Rugby Club has requested \$20,000 (a \$15,000 increase from 2025) to cover their water bills, insurance costs, re-sanding of two fields, and bus insurance. Council has provided funding for many years (\$2,000 from 2015 to 2020 and \$5,000 from 2021 to 2025).

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve grant-in-aid amounts for 2026 as follows:
 - (1) B.C. Forest Discovery Centre - BC Forest Museum \$25,000
 - (2) Chemainus & District Chamber of Commerce \$30,000

- (3) Chemainus Valley Historical Society \$8,500
- (4) Cowichan Historical Society \$5,500
- (5) Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce \$34,000
- (6) Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association \$38,600
- (7) Chemainus BIA - Flower Baskets \$24,000
- (8) Chemainus Theatre Festival Society \$20,000
- (9) Chemainus Cemetery (St. Michael's and All Angels Church) \$1,000 to offset water and garbage fees
- (10) Chemainus Communities in Bloom \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (11) BC Conservation Foundation \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (12) Chemainus Community Schools Association – Tree Eagle \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (13) Clements Center Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (14) Community Circles Restorative Justice Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (15) Community Land Trust \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (16) Cowichan Agricultural Society and Farmers' Institute \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (17) Cowichan Brain Injury Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (18) Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (19) Cowichan Valley Independent Living \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (20) Cowichan Valley Youth Services \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (21) Foster Kritters Feral Cat Rescue Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (22) Grace Kidz Thrift Store \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (23) House of Grace Pregnancy Centre \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (24) Cowichan - Bring Back Bluebirds \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (25) Nourish Cowichan Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (26) Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (27) Take-a-Hike Foundation \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (28) Cowichan Historical Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (29) Cowichan Valley Performing Arts Foundation \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (30) Chemainus Rotary Club \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (31) Cowichan Valley Arts Council \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (32) Cowichan Folk Guild \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (33) Chemainus Valley Historical Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (34) Maple Bay Community Association \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (35) Somenos Community Association \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (36) Vimy Community Club (Hall) \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (37) Cowichan Rugby Club \$[_____ insert amount here]

IMPLICATIONS

The 2026 preliminary budget includes \$257,000 for grants-in-aid. The total amount of eligible funding requests is \$808,650. However, if approved, the \$432,000 request from the Community Land Trust will be funded through the Growing Communities Fund, resulting in no impact to taxation for this particular grant. Should the Committee of the Whole recommend fully funding all other grant applications, \$119,650 or 0.29% increase in taxation would be required.

Council has also granted the following organizations permissive tax exemptions that total approximately \$59,500 in forgone revenue for 2026 (based on 2025 assessment and tax rates):

- BC Forest Museum - \$6,930
- Cowichan Agricultural Society - \$3,702
- Chemainus Rotary Club - \$872
- Chemainus Valley Historical Society - \$335
- Clements Center Society - \$30,882
- Cowichan Rugby Club - \$5,879
- Duncan Chamber of Commerce - \$2,625
- Somenos Community Association - \$1,676
- St. Michael's and All Angels - \$4,257
- Vimy Community Club - \$2,305

As stated above, the Grant-in-Aid program has been identified as a potential area for reduction or elimination by Council to reduce the 2026 tax rate.

Staff are seeking Council's direction regarding the future of the seven annual Grant-in-Aid allocations, as well as guidance on the processing of applications for the 2026 program year.

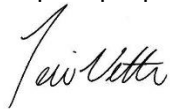
RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve grant-in-aid amounts for 2026 as follows:

- (1) B.C. Forest Discovery Centre - BC Forest Museum \$25,000
- (2) Chemainus & District Chamber of Commerce \$30,000
- (3) Chemainus Valley Historical Society \$8,500
- (4) Cowichan Historical Society \$5,500
- (5) Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce \$34,000
- (6) Cowichan Neighbourhood House Association \$38,600
- (7) Chemainus BIA. - Flower Baskets \$24,000
- (8) Chemainus Theatre Festival Society \$20,000
- (9) Chemainus Cemetery (St. Michael's and All Angels Church) \$1,000 to offset water and garbage fees
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- (12) Chemainus Community Schools Association – Tree Eagle \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (13) Clements Center Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
- (14) Community Circles Restorative Justice Society \$[_____ insert amount here]
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- (34) Maple Bay Community Association \$[_____insert amount here]
- (35) Somenos Community Association \$[_____insert amount here]
- (36) Vimy Community Club (Hall) \$[_____insert amount here]
- (37) Cowichan Rugby Club \$[_____insert amount here]

Report prepared by:



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Report reviewed by:



Bill Corsan
General Manager, Corporate Services and
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Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- (1) Grant-in-Aid Policy
- (2) 2026 Grant-in-Aid Applications Summary
- (3) Chemainus Communities in Bloom
- (4) BC Conservation Foundation
- (5) Chemainus Community Schools Association – Eagle Tree
- (6) Clements Center Society
- (7) Community Circles Restorative Justice Society
- (8) Community Land Trust
- (8)a Community Land Trust – additional request
- (9) Cowichan Agricultural Society and Farmers’ Institute
- (10) Cowichan Brain Injury Society
- (11) Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society

- (12) Cowichan Valley Independent Living
- (13) Cowichan Valley Youth Services
- (14) Foster Kritters Feral Cat Rescue Society
- (15) Grace Kidz Thrift Store
- (16) House of Grace Pregnancy Centre
- (17) Cowichan Bring Back Bluebirds
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- (19) Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society
- (20) Take-a-Hike Foundation
- (21) Cowichan Valley Historical Society
- (22) Cowichan Valley Performing Arts Foundation
- (23) Rotary Club of Chemainus
- (24) Cowichan Valley Arts Council
- (25) Cowichan Folk Guild
- (26) Chemainus Valley Historical Society
- (27) Maple Bay Community Association
- (28) Somenos Community Association
- (29) Vimy Community Club
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