



City Council Report

REPORT NUMBER 041-2026-Corporate Services-Finance

DATE

PREPARED January 15, 2026

FILE

CITY COUNCIL February 3, 2026

MEETING DATE

SUBJECT Community Partnership Fund Grant Award - 2026

RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUCIL

WITH RESPECT to Report 041-2026-Corporate Services-Finance, we recommend that funding in the amount of \$450,000 be approved for Our Kids Count pursuant to an application submitted under the Community Partnership Fund to be funded from the Community Partnership Reserve Fund;

AND THAT the Commissioner - Corporate Services & City Treasurer and the City Clerk be authorized to execute this agreement and any subsequent agreements with respect to the Community Partnership Fund.

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to recommend the award of Community Partnership funding for the 2026 fiscal year. The Grant Review Team reviewed applications to ensure compliance with the amended Policy, alignment with the Strategic Plan and the Community Safety & Well-Being Plan, and potential outcomes upon project completion. The Grant Review Team received two applications to review for consideration; one application is being recommended to receive funding:

- A contribution of \$450,000 to Our Kids Count to fund the purchase of the building at the corner of Simpson St. and McKenzie St. which will house a Community Hub (Kitchen) to provide community kitchen programming and a centralized location for food security initiatives.

Should Council proceed with the recommendation as presented, a total of \$450,000 from the Community Partnership Reserve Fund will be allocated to support the above project. The estimated remaining uncommitted balance of the Community Partnership Reserve Fund would be \$462,261. The Community Partnership Fund takes applications annually to be

considered for the following budget year. The deadline to apply for the 2027 funding cycle is July 21, 2026.

DISCUSSION

The Community Partnership Fund (CPF) supports capital projects within the City of Thunder Bay that provide a range of public benefit within the community. In 2022, the Community Partnership Policy was amended to update reporting requirements and adjust eligibility requirements. As there have been no project completions since the Community Partnership Policy was modified in 2022, assessment of the impact of policy changes is on hold. Administration anticipates some projects will be completed in 2026; proponents must submit final reports six months after project completion.

Administration did not receive any applications for the 2025 funding year. For the 2026 funding year, two applications were submitted to Administration by the deadline of July 21, 2025.

The Grant Review Team, comprised of five City staff, met to conduct a thorough review and assessment of the applications submitted. The Team reviewed applications to assess compliance with the amended Policy, alignment with the Strategic Plan and the Community Safety & Well-Being Plan, and potential outcomes upon project completion.

Upon review of the applications, Administration is recommending a grant be awarded to Our Kids Count as it aligns with the City's Strategic and Community Safety & Well-Being Plans and has a wide-spread potential impact for the residents of Thunder Bay. Administration is not recommending a grant be awarded to Matawa First Nation Management, as their project is fully funded and their intention for the grant is contingency funding. An overview of the applications is provided below.

Application Overview

Our Kids Count – Building Block Capital Campaign

Our Kids Count (OKC) is a charitable organization that aims to provide relief and reduce the impact of poverty on individuals, children, youth, and their families. They promote the health and development of individuals and their families through community programming. OKC is applying for their Building Block Capital Campaign which includes:

- A licensed childcare centre (opened in July 2025);
- A Community Hub (Kitchen);
- A Training Hub; and
- An outdoor play space (opened in July 2025).

The Community Hub (Kitchen) is in a renovated former retail space on the corner of Simpson Street and McKenzie Street. This hub will provide community kitchen programming and a centralized location for food security initiatives, addressing root causes of poverty and poor

nutrition while fostering social inclusion and resilience. OKC anticipates 1,200 individuals to be served annually, with a target of 22,000 meals prepared and distributed annually through the Community Hub. This program will provide a wide-spread impact on food insecurity and poverty reduction in Thunder Bay.

OKC requested \$500,000 from the CPF for the Building Block Capital Campaign project, amounting to 18.5% of the total project budget. As per the application, OKC has secured \$1,803,000 of their \$2.7 million goal (67%) through a mix of provincial and federal grants, as well as local fundraising.

The purchase of land tends to be an ineligible cost for many capital grant programs. As it is an allowable expense for the CPF, OKC is applying for the maximum grant to cover the purchase of the building that will house the Community Hub. The application estimates the purchase of the land and building to cost \$450,000.

As OKC programming provides relief and reduces the impact of poverty on individuals, children, youth, and their families, supporting this project aligns with the Community Safety & Well-Being Plan. The support of this project also aligns with multiple pillars of the Strategic Plan:

- Safety and well-being, as it improves access to supports for priority populations to narrow gaps in equity. It is also an initiative that connects neighbourhoods.
- Growth, as the project works to increase collaboration and a supportive environment where people can flourish.

The Grant Review Team recommends approval of a grant of \$450,000 for the purchase of the building for the Community Hub.

Matawa First Nations Management (Matawa) – Women’s Emergency Shelter

Matawa is a non-profit Tribal Council with nine member First Nations who share a collective vision for self-determination, growth, and community well-being. Matawa is working to establish an Indigenous Women’s Emergency Shelter in Thunder Bay to address gender based and/or intimate partner violence faced by Indigenous women. The shelter will have 10 units, or 15 beds, and provide safe, short-term accommodation for women and their dependent children.

Matawa is applying for \$500,000 from the CPF to support the project as contingency funding for increasing construction costs. Per the application, the project is fully funded, with the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC) as the main funder.

Matawa’s project aligns with the Community Safety & Well-Being Plan as it supports Indigenous women experiencing homelessness due to gender based violence. This project also aligns with multiple pillars of the Strategic Plan:

- Maamawee – All together, as it implements culturally appropriate spaces for Indigenous Women experiencing violence;

- Safety and well-being, as it improves access to supports for priority populations to narrow gaps in equity, as well as providing an opportunity for the Indigenous community to design and create Indigenized spaces.

The goal of the CPF is to allow community partners to leverage municipal dollars for other funding opportunities, and contingency funding is not considered an eligible cost under the CPF. As Matawa's project is fully funded as presented, municipal support is not leverageable at this time.

As Matawa's stated use for a CPF grant would be contingency, and the funds are not required to leverage more funding for the project, the Grant Review Team does not recommend providing a CPF grant at this time.

CONSULTATION

Corporate Report 8-2026 - Corporate Services – Finance was presented to the Finance and Administration Standing Committee on January 6, 2026, to seek feedback and endorsement of the recommendation to award OKC a CPF grant.

Discussion at the Standing Committee included questions around frequency of applications and uptake of the program, as well as the flexibility of the process if applications exceed the balance of the Reserve Fund. It was noted that a main tenet of the CPF is leveraging other funding sources, especially from other orders of government, leading to the fundraising work of non-profit organizations being identified as something that should be rewarded with the CPF program.

The recommendation was unanimously endorsed by the Finance and Administration Standing Committee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

Applications submitted for consideration under the Community Partnership Policy are funded from the Community Partnership Reserve Fund. The Reserve Fund received a contribution of \$100,000 through the 2025 budget process. The current estimated uncommitted balance is \$912,261 (this amount is exclusive of interest earned on the reserve fund balance in 2025).

Should Council proceed as recommended, the remaining uncommitted balance of the Reserve Fund would be \$462,261. The commitments to date are outlined below:

Approved Project	Commitment	Notes
OAHS	\$220,000	Funds released, project approaching completion
Matawa Training & Wellness Centre	\$100,000	Funds released, project approaching completion
Matawa Education & Care Centre	\$225,000	
RFDA	\$500,000	Funds released, project approaching completion

Community Clothing Assistance	\$ 14,275	
New – Our Kids Count	\$450,000	Proposed
Proposed Total Committed Funds	\$1,509,275	

In 2022, Administration was directed to determine funding opportunities to bring the CPF to an uncommitted balance of \$1 million, and to include contributions to the Reserve Fund in the operating budgets going forward. In 2023, a contribution of \$250,000 was included in the operating budget; since 2024, there have been annual contributions of \$100,000. \$100,000 has been proposed in the 2026 budget for consideration.

BACKGROUND

In 2022, Administration was directed to review the Community Partnership Policy (05-06-02) for changes to align the fund with other relevant grant sources, and for it to support capital projects that address community safety, well-being, homelessness, and poverty.

Report 74-2022 was presented on May 16, 2022, with an amended Community Partnership Policy (05-06-02) for Council consideration. Administration was directed to implement the Policy as presented and to transfer \$800,000 from the Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund to bring the uncommitted balance to \$1.0 million. Administration was also directed to report back in 2023 to present applications to Council for approval, and in 2024 to provide an update on the impact of the amended Policy for information purposes.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Attachment A: Appropriation #1-2026 OKC Community Partnership Fund

REPORT PREPARED BY

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REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

Keri Greaves, CPA, Commissioner – Corporate Services & City Treasurer

01/20/2026 (MM/DD/YEAR)