COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

A. GENERAL GUIDELINES

PROGRAM RATIONALE
What is the Community Enhancement Fund?

The Community Enhancement Fund provides grant funding from Wheatland County to enhance, promote and support groups and organizations that bring a broad range of enjoyment, benefit, beautification, recreation, entertainment, participation and enhancement projects to Wheatland County. The program is intended to invest tax payer dollars annually to support recreational, cultural and other community activities, facilities, and resources that are utilized by Wheatland County residents.

Within the Community Enhancement Fund grant program there are three categories:

- **Project-Based Grant Applications** that provide financial assistance for community organizations, for such things as, but not limited to, equipment purchases, beautification projects, facility construction or renovation projects, facility maintenance, celebrations and community events, history books, programs or special funding requests within Wheatland County.
- **Operating Grant Applications** that provide financial assistance to registered non-profit organizations in Wheatland County to enhance the organization's ability to operate and to deliver services to the community.
- **Library Base Grant** provided to libraries used by Wheatland County residents based on formula approved by Wheatland County Council.

The Community Enhancement Fund grant program is governed by the terms outlined in the Wheatland County Community Enhancement Reserve Policy.

ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS
Who is eligible for Community Enhancement Funding?

Eligible organizations must be registered under one of the following:

- *Societies Act*
- *Agricultural Societies Act*
- *Charities Registered under the Income Tax Act of Canada*
- *Libraries Act (Project-Based Grants only)*
- Child and Family Service Authorities
- Foundations established and regulated under the *Regional Health Authorities Act*
- *Canada Corporations Act* (non-profit sector)
- *Cemeteries Act* or *Cemetery Companies Act*
- Part 9 of the *Companies Act*
- Part 21 of the *Business Corporations Act – Extra-Provincial Corporations*
- Special Act of the Parliament of Canada
- Special Act of the Alberta Legislature

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

Who is not eligible for Community Enhancement Funding?

Groups who are not eligible for Community Enhancement Funding include:

- Municipalities
- Churches and Other Religious Organizations
- Political Organizations

Libraries are <u>not</u> eligible for operating funding as this is part of the Base Grant.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS
What projects might be funded?

The Community Enhancement fund is intended to support recreational, cultural and other community activities, facilities, and resources that are utilized by Wheatland County residents.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
When are applications due?

Applications are due January 31st of each year and will be reviewed between February 1st and March 31st.

Applicants will be informed of the decision regarding their funding after the end of the applicable review period.

If an application meets the eligibility criteria will it automatically get all the requested Community Enhancement Funding requested?

No. Due to the volume of applications received and the limited funds, not all eligible projects receive funding and even the projects that are approved may receive less than their requested amounts.

Will an application be considered if our organization has incomplete financial reporting?

No. Applicants that have overdue accounting from any previously approved Community Enhancement Fund projects will not be considered for new funding until their outstanding final reporting requirements have been satisfied.

WILL RETROACTIVE FUNDING APPLICATIONS BE CONSIDERED?

No.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

What criteria will be used to evaluate applications?

Funding applications are considered on a regional basis, rather than on a divisional boundary or community basis.

Each application is considered on its own merit recognizing:

- Community and regional needs
- Projects that will have lasting value to the communities and residents
- Creativity

Who can the applicant contact before submitting their application form?

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Grant Writer/Coordinator at the Wheatland County office to ensure their application forms are completed properly, and all required supporting documentation is included to avoid processing delays.

Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant.

How should applications be submitted?

Applicants can submit applications in person, via mail, fax or email.

What are the steps in the application approval or decline process?

- Applications must be submitted by January 31st deadline.
- Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt of their applications from Wheatland County.
- The Community Enhancement Regional Board reviews and recommends funding to Council, who then approves, refuses, or amends these recommendations.
- When an application has been approved, Wheatland County will notify the grant recipient and a cheque will be provided to them.
- When an application is declined, that applicant will be notified in writing. The Board's recommendations for funding are at the discretion of the Board with no obligation on the part of the Board to provide reasons for its decision.

Is the information in my application protected?

The *FOIP Act* applies to any information provided to Wheatland County. This information may be disclosed in response to an access requested under the Act, subject to any applicable exceptions to disclosure under the Act.

The personal information that is provided on the grant application form will be used by Wheatland County for the purpose of administering the Community Enhancement Fund program.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

Please note: Once an application has been approved and funding issued to an organization, the grant recipient, project name and description, as well as amount funded and fiscal year become a matter of public record.

FINAL REPORTING
When is the final report due on completed projects?

Project-Based and Operating Grants must be completed by December 31st of the grant year and final reporting received by Wheatland County by January 31st of the year following the grant year.

Is there a standard format for submitting reporting on projects?

Yes. Standard templates will be provided to applicants as well as instructions on filling them out.

Can an applicant request an extension on the grant completion and final reporting due date?

Yes. As per Resolution 17-02-04, "organizations may request a one year extension and if the specific project is not completed within two full years from the original application date, then the unspent funding should be returned". All extension requests must be submitted by the applicant in writing to the Community Enhancement Regional Board c/o Wheatland County. The request should include:

- an explanation as to why the project could not be completed within the timeframe,
- a description of what has been completed to date (in order to demonstrate that some progress has been made),
- a description of what remains to be done and a reasonable timeline for doing it (including a proposed new project completion date).

Any decision on extension requests will be communicated in writing to the applicant by the Grant Writer/Coordinator at the Wheatland County Office.

What happens if actual project costs are less than the approved budget?

If the actual costs are less than the approved budget, the applicant is required to refund unexpended funds to Wheatland County once the final amount is confirmed by the Grant Writer/Coordinator at the Wheatland County Office.

Confirmed unexpended funds are required to be paid to Wheatland County by February 28th of the year following the grant year. Applicants who have outstanding unexpended fund payments are ineligible for future Community Enhancement Funding.

Unexpended funds amounting to $100.00 or less are not required to be refunded.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

What happens if an applicant wants to reallocate unused funds to other projects?

Applicants are not able to apply to the Board for a reallocation of unused funds. All funds must be returned and the applicant must reapply for future funding.

What are the financial reporting requirements on completed projects?

Applicants must submit a financial report of actual costs by January 31st of the year following the funding year. The financial report must be submitted and signed by an authorized representative having legal and/or financial signing authority for the organization. The financial report must also be accompanied with the appropriate source documentation as outlined in the instructions.

Applicants also agree to provide access to all financial documents or records relative to all expenses and revenues related to the project.

Any applicant that does not comply with the reporting requirements will be ineligible to receive additional grant funding until acceptable accounting is provided.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND
PROJECT-BASED GRANT APPLICATIONS

Project-Based Grant Applications provide financial assistance for community organizations for such things as equipment purchases, beautification projects, facility construction or renovation projects, facility maintenance, community celebrations and special events, history books, programs or special funding requests within Wheatland County.

Are there any specific restrictions on Project-Based grant applications that would not be funded?

Project-Based grants cannot be used for:

- funding private or commercial sector facilities or programs
- for endowment purposes or donations to a third party
- debt reduction
- retroactive funding for costs that have already been incurred prior to January 1st of the funding year

Is there a matching funding requirement?

No.

Applicants are advised to contact the Grant Writer/Coordinator at the Wheatland County Office for advice on additional funding sources.

Are there any limitations on the amount of funding?

Funding for History Books are limited to $2,500.

Other grant applications have no maximum funding amount. Due to the popularity of the program applications for larger amounts of money applicants may not receive their full funding request if approved.

Can I apply for a multi-year project?

Applicants should indicate if their application is for a multi-year project. While Community Enhancement Funding will not be guaranteed for future years, reporting requirements for approved multi-year projects vary from regular annual projects.

APPLICATION PROCESSING
Should applications include letters of support for the project?

If the application involves capital upgrades to land and/or facilities under the direction or ownership of someone other than the grant applicant, a letter of support from the owner of the facility is required.

Other letters of support may be provided at the discretion of the applicant but are not required.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

FINAL REPORTING

When is the final reporting due on Project-Based applications?

All final reporting is due on January 31st of the year following the grant funding year.

For approved multi-year projects a signed declaration that approved funding is being held in reserves for the project must be submitted by January 31st of the year following the grant funding year. Final reporting will be required to be submitted upon the conclusion of the project.

What if my project was approved as a multi-year project?

If your project approval letter indicated that your project was approved as a multi-year project you are not required to complete final reporting until the project is complete. However, Wheatland County will require a signed statement indicating that received Community Enhancement Funding is being held in reserves for use on the project and has not been expended on other costs.

What happens if the scope of the approved project changes?

If changes occur, applicants are requested to contact the Grant Writer/Coordinator at the Wheatland County office for direction.

Significant changes in project scope may require that all unexpended funding be refunded to Wheatland County and the applicant complete an additional application for the new project scope in the next funding year.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

OPERATING GRANT APPLICATIONS

Community Operating Grants provide financial assistance to eligible registered organizations in Wheatland County to enhance the organization's ability to operate and to deliver services to the community.

Operating funding may cover **utilities and insurance**. Utilities in this context include natural gas and electricity.

Are there any specific restrictions on expenses that will not be funded?

Operating Grants cannot be used for:

- start-up costs of organizations
- debt or deficit reduction
- endowment funds
- celebrations or events
- equipment or furnishings
- libraries
- history books
- facility maintenance
- any other purpose that may be applied for under the Project-based Grant Application

Is there a matching funding requirement or a limit to operating funding that may be applied for?

No. Operating grants do not require any matching on the part of the applicant and there is no limit to the amount of funding that may be applied for. However, due to the popularity of the program, applicants may not receive the full amount of their applied funding if approved.

APPLICATION PROCESSING
Should applications include letters of support for the project?

No. Applicants are not required to submit letter of support for Operating Grant funding.

FINAL REPORTING
When is the final reporting due?

All final reporting is due on January 31 of the year following the grant funding year.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUND

LIBRARY BASE GRANT

Library Operating Funding provides guaranteed operating funding to libraries located within the boundaries of Wheatland County.

ELIGIBLE LIBRARIES

Libraries that receive Community Enhancement Funding include:

- Carseland Community Library
- Gleichen & District Library
- Rosebud Paper Back Deposit
- Strathmore Municipal Library
- Rockyford Municipal Library
- Standard Municipal Library
- Hussar Municipal Library

APPLICATION PROCESSING
How do libraries apply for Library Operating Funding?

In order to receive their funding the Marigold Library System is required to submit the number of Wheatland County residents currently registered as members at the above libraries.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS
How are annual funding allocations calculated for each library?

The following libraries receive operating funding as per Wheatland County Council in the amount of:

- Gleichen & District Library: $8,000/year
- Carseland Community Library: $8,000/year
- Rosebud Paper Back Deposit: $2,000/year

In addition all eligible libraries receive $15.00/year per number of Wheatland County residents who have membership at those libraries.

FINAL REPORTING
Are libraries required to submit final report?

No. Libraries are not required to submit final reporting on the use of the grant funding.