



Calgary



Circular Economy Grant Guidelines

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Grant Overview

Background

The City of Calgary Waste & Recycling Services' mission is to enable Calgarians to reduce and manage their waste responsibly now and into the future. By supporting leadership, education, services and programs, partnerships and capacity building initiatives, Waste & Recycling Services will enable Calgarians to move towards zero waste and a circular economy.

What is a Circular Economy?

A circular economy eliminates waste and pollution, and conserves resources. It is a shift from a throw-away to a circular mindset to extend the lifecycle of goods, food, and resources through better design and continuous reuse, so nothing goes to waste.

Purpose

The City of Calgary is piloting the Circular Economy Grant for non-profit organizations to support innovative work in the upper levels of the [waste hierarchy](#) (rethink/redesign, reduce and reuse) to help Calgarians move towards zero waste and a circular economy.

Objectives

Proposed projects should meet all the following Circular Economy Grant objectives:

- Promote understanding and knowledge of circular economy through innovative projects.
- Reduce waste generation and encourage reuse.
- Help individuals, organizations, and/or communities that might otherwise be hard to reach and have limited access to resources.

Funding

The City of Calgary will accept grant funding applications for a minimum of \$5,000 up to a maximum of \$25,000. Funds for each project will be allocated for a one-year term and projects must be delivered within the one-year timeframe.

This Circular Economy Grant pilot started in 2023 and will run through 2026. Total funding for each year is \$150,000. There is no matching funding requirement. However, applicants are encouraged to have their own contingency funds available. The Circular Economy Grant is a one-year project-specific funding and must not be considered an annual source of funding.

Circular Economy Grant recipients may apply for subsequent years' funding with a different proposal if their awarded project has been completed before the grant application re-opens. Please note that the priority will be given to organizations that have yet to receive funding.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Organizations

To be eligible for funding, applicants must be a not-for-profit organization or Society registered in Alberta, or a Federal not-for-profit registered extra-provincially in Alberta, or a Business Improvement Area (BIA) established through a City of Calgary bylaw. The organizations must have the intent of providing the proposed project in Calgary and to Calgary residents.

Eligible not-for-profit organizations could include:

- Community associations
- Community organizations
- Registered charitable organizations
- Environmental organizations
- Social recreation organizations (e.g., senior clubs)
- Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)
- Festivals and events' organizers

Other considerations:

- Organizations should have a mandate that benefits Calgarians.
- Organizations not registered in Alberta or extra provincially registered in Alberta may be eligible if partnered with a registered entity.
- Non-profit organizations should provide proof showing the organization is an active entity with their application if they are chosen to receive funding. The proof can be a corporation/non-profit search result that is no older than 30 days or, in the case of a federally registered not-for-profit, registration with the Canada Revenue Agency.
- BIAs should provide documentation showing the Bylaw number BIAs are established under.
- Successful applicants will receive a funding approval letter and will be required to sign an agreement with applicable terms and conditions that will govern the funds provided before funds are distributed and the project begins.
- Organizations must have insurance coverage meeting the requirements for the agreement (this must be secured prior to receiving funds).

Ineligible Organizations

The following applicants are ineligible* to apply:

- Individuals
- For-profit and private sector organizations

*Individuals or for-profit and private sector organizations may be eligible if they partner with a non-profit organization that is the lead for the project.

We value diversity of expertise, talent and opinion which creates an innovative and collaborative environment. We are committed to a respectful and inclusive workplace and welcome applications from all qualified organizations.

Eligible Projects

The Circular Economy Grant will provide funding for projects to support community-based actions that have the potential to contribute to the circular economy in Calgary.

The proposed project must fall into one of the following focus areas. To facilitate consensus, we have developed a statement for each focus area, accompanied by project examples from previous grant recipients. These focus areas and statements will undergo an annual review as part of the grant’s evaluation process, ensuring they remain in alignment with the Waste & Recycling Services’ strategies.

Focus areas**:

- Share, Trade, and Donate
- Maintain and Prolong
- Reuse and Redistribute
- Refurbish and Upcycle
- Food and Organic Waste Reduction

**The focus areas are based on Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s circular economy systems diagram.

Recycling and composting are important components of the circular economy, dealing with items that are no longer usable and beyond being recovered by other means. However, Circular Economy Grant prioritizes actions in the upper levels of the [waste hierarchy](#). Therefore, recycling and composting are not considered focus areas of this grant. Projects focused mainly on recycling and/or composting will not be eligible for the Circular Economy Grant.

If you’re uncertain about the focus area of your proposed project, feel free to contact our team at circulareconomygrants@calgary.ca. One of our team members will be happy to assist you.

Focus Area	2026 Statement
Share, trade, and donate	<p>Creating spaces where people can share, borrow, exchange, swap items to increase their usage.</p> <p>Project examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Silvera for Seniors’ project Free Little Fibre Libraries and Community Knitting Hub (2023)</i>. This project built free fibre libraries in the communities and encourages the donation of surplus yarn and fibre.

	<p>2. <i>Inglewood BIA's project Books & Bags Stations (2025)</i>. This project creates 12 stations along Inglewood's Main Street, offering free access to used books and recycled shopping bags.</p>
Maintain and prolong	<p>Creating spaces where people can care for, maintain, and repair items or learn skills to make them last longer.</p> <p>Project examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>CPAWS Southern Alberta Chapter's project Rewear and Repair, Outdoor Gear in a circular economy (2023)</i>. This project diverted outdoor recreation material waste through educational programs and workshops focusing on outdoor gear care and repair skills. 2. <i>Diversecities' project Newcomer DIY Workshops (2023)</i>. This project hosted hands-on workshops for newcomers on basic home maintenance and repair.
Reuse and redistribute	<p>Finding new uses for items without changing their original form and their original purpose.</p> <p>Project examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Calgary Flames Sports Bank's project Getting Kids in Gear (2024)</i>. This project collected new and gently used sports equipment and redistributed them to children in families facing difficult circumstances, ensuring the gear to be continuously used. 2. <i>Oak Park Church of Christ's project The Helping Hands Community Empowerment Project (2025)</i>. This project collects and redistributes usable household items, clothing, furniture, children's items, and food to those in need.
Refurbish and upcycle	<p>Creating new and functional items using materials that would otherwise be thrown away.</p> <p>Project examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Calgary Reggio Network Association's project Materials Redistribution Program for the Creative ReUse Project (2025)</i>. This project collects manufacturing byproducts that are usually considered waste – such as surplus stock, packing materials, imperfect outdated inventory and off ends – and repurpose them as educational and creative resources for the community members.

	<p>2. <i>Willow Ridge Community Association – Greener Grounds Project: Home Run for Sustainability (2025)</i>. This project repurposes demolition waste – such as steel fencing, posts, and shale – from an aging baseball diamond to create custom-designed tables and natural play hills in the community space.</p>
<p>Food and organic waste reduction</p>	<p>Finding ways to reduce or reuse food waste. This could also mean using food by-products to make other materials or making new food products using ingredients usually considered waste.</p> <p>Project example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The Alexandra Community Health Centre’s project Market to Market Circular Economy Initiative (2023)</i>. The Alex piloted a “Scrappy Kitchen” project, making meals with ingredients that were usually considered waste. 2. <i>Fresh Routes’ project Fresh Routes Mobile Grocery Store – A Well-Choreographed Dance of Sustainability, Preserving the Quality of the Produce (2024)</i>. This project upcycled “imperfect” produce that grocery stores couldn’t sell into pre-made meals to be sold at their mobile market locations.

Preference will be given to projects that:

- Clearly define the issue or waste challenge that the project will address.
- Demonstrate the link between the project and how it directly helps move Calgary to a circular economy in a positive way.
- Outline a clear plan for the project.
- Are community-based.
- Display innovation and/or new ideas.
- Place value on community partnerships.
- Emphasize access, equity, and diversity.
- Clearly demonstrate an understanding of success of the project and how activities can be measured.
- Are sustainable over the long term.

Ineligible Projects

The Circular Economy Grant will not provide funding to projects that don't directly contribute to the circular economy and the upper levels of [waste hierarchy](#) in Calgary, including but not limited to the following examples:

- Projects with a primary focus on composting and/or recycling.
- Community clean-up events' waste collection services, volunteer supplies, and reimbursement for advertisements.
- Waste collection services for festivals and events.
- Litter control and litter picking events.
- Art installation using waste materials.

Eligible Expenses (examples only)

Grant funds can only be used for the costs associated with the direct delivery of the proposed project.

Examples of eligible costs:

- Direct staff costs for delivery, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the project
- Direct non-staff costs for purchased services from contractors or consultants
- Communication tools and materials (e.g., website)
- Project materials and supplies including equipment rental or purchase (e.g., reusable materials to support single-use reduction initiatives, tool rental)
- Staff training for project-specific skills or knowledge
- Room/facility and event rental fees
- Professional speaker and professional skills instructor fees
- Translation expenses by professional translator
- Travel*** costs incurred by employees and volunteers directly related to the project
- Cost associated with acquiring a corporation/non-profit search result in the Detailed Application Stage

****Travel refers to going from Calgary to other cities or towns using reasonable means of transportation for reasons directly related to the project.*

Ineligible Expenses (examples only)

- Interest and loan fees
- Any costs incurred before the signing of the agreement, except for the cost incurred to acquire the corporation/non-profit search result (which is an eligible expense)
- Purchases to provide basic waste management infrastructure and services, such as bin enclosures and bin washing
- Hospitality (e.g., food and refreshments)
- Expenses and equipment unrelated to the intent described in the application form

- Fees and expenses for personal vehicles and parking, long-term rental of vehicles
- Gifts
- Lobbying or advocacy
- Mass market advertising campaigns
- Research, scientific studies, and unproven technologies
- Fundraising for costs not related to the project
- Contingency, a sum of money set aside at the start of a project to cover increased projected costs
- Direct financial compensation for the Board of Directors, individuals, or families
- Funding of staff positions or volunteer honorariums not related directly to the project
- Conferences
- Costs associated with the regular operation of your organization

Application Process

The application process includes two stages: Preliminary Application Stage and Detailed Application Stage. Follow the steps in each stage to prepare and submit your application.

Timeline



Preliminary Application Stage

During the open application period, interested parties can submit their preliminary application through the application portal link found on The City of Calgary website at [Circular Economy Grant](#).

The preliminary application includes:

- Contact information
- Eligibility criteria requirements
- Funding request
- Project overview
- Organizational alignment
- Project goals and circular economy grant objectives

Applicants are strongly recommended to reach out to our team at circulareconomygrants@calgary.ca to discuss your project prior to submitting the application and/or attend one of the information sessions (as available).

It is important that applicants retain a complete copy of their application for their own records should The City of Calgary have questions regarding the application.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Review Preliminary Application

Preliminary applications that meet the organization and project eligibility criteria (see Eligibility Criteria section above) will be fully reviewed by the Circular Economy Grant evaluation committee, comprised of The City of Calgary staff. The evaluation committee may contact the applicants if further information or clarification is required.

All organizations that submit a preliminary application will be notified of final decisions. Successful applicants will receive an email invitation to submit a detailed application. Applicants that are not successful will receive feedback and recommendations.

Detailed Application Stage

Selected preliminary applicants will be invited to proceed to the detailed application stage. Please note that an invitation to move on to the detailed application stage is not a guarantee of funding.

The detailed application includes:

- Contact information

- Confirm funding request
- Rationale
- Project plan
- Community benefit and engagement
- New ideas and innovation
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Risks and barriers
- Evaluation and success measures
- Project sustainability
- Budget plan

Review Detailed Application and Decision Making

Detailed applications will be fully reviewed by the Circular Economy Grant evaluation committee, comprised of The City of Calgary staff. The evaluation committee may contact the applicants if further information or clarification is required.

The Circular Economy Grant evaluation committee makes funding decisions. All organizations that submit a detailed application will be notified of final decision. All decisions are final; no appeals will be considered.

Successful applicants will move on to finalize funding agreement stage. Applicants that are not successful will receive feedback and recommendations. Applicants may not resubmit an application for the same project until written notification of the outcome of the current application is made by The City of Calgary.

Finalize Funding Agreement with Successful Applicants

If non-profit organizations are chosen to receive funding, they should provide proof showing the organization is an active entity. The proof can be a corporation/non-profit search result that is no older than 30 days or, in the case of a federally registered not-for-profit, registration with the CRA. BIAs should provide documentation showing the Bylaw number BIAs are established under.

Once the circular economy grant team verifies that organization meets the organizational criteria, successful applicants will receive a funding approval letter and will be required to sign a funding agreement with applicable terms and conditions that will govern the funds provided. Subsequently, the funds will be distributed, and the project begins.

The Circular Economy Grant will be reviewed every year with input from applicants and internal City staff.

Grant Limitations

Due to limited funds and high demands for Circular Economy Grant funding, not all requests meeting the established criteria will be approved for funding. Based on the available funds, it's up to the discretion of The City to approve full or less than requested funding in any or all successful detailed applications.

Reporting

Each grant recipient will be required to submit a mid-term report, a final report, and a final budget report as specified by The City of Calgary. Evaluations will determine whether funding recipients have helped move the goals and objectives of the Circular Economy Grant forward through their projects.

It is recommended organizations retain records for seven years from the date of grant closure letter from The City of Calgary. To maintain transparency and accountability, The City will make all funding allocation amounts available publicly.

Videographs/Photographs

For The City to be able to use any videograph(s)/photograph(s), careful attention is paid to concerns of copyright and consent. To address both concerns, partners are required to complete both The City's Model Release Form (X626), and Copyright Release Form (X629). Both forms need to be completed in advance and at the time that videograph(s)/photograph(s) are being captured and these forms and videographs/photographs can be submitted via the final report. Partners may also have their own forms they want filled out and this may vary by partner, however, for The City to be able to use videograph(s)/photograph(s), both the X626 and X629 must be submitted with all videograph(s)/photograph(s). All necessary documents will be provided to successful applicants.

Repayment of Grants

The City of Calgary may request the return of Circular Economy Grant funding if the project is not complete within the allowable timeframe. The City of Calgary may request the return of Circular Economy Grant funding if it is shown funds were not used for the stated purpose of the approved project. The City of Calgary may recoup funding payments if an organization fails to submit their reporting.