

### Edmonton Economic Recovery Grant Insights

The Edmonton Economic Recovery Grant (EERG) was created to directly assist businesses in adapting and pivoting their operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The April 26, 2021 Executive Committee report UFCSD00243 Edmonton Economic Recovery Grant Phase 2 outlines the structure and intent of the grant including successes, outcomes, progress, feedback and the Administration-led audit of grant recipients. The Edmonton Economic Recovery Grant was approved by Council on June 8, 2020, and included a one-time funding envelope of \$5.295 million. This funding came from the Council-approved COVID-19 relief program. The grants were allocated in three streams.

Administration developed a communications plan that provided information directly to over 40 business associations and used the City's social media channels to reach a broad audience. This targeted businesses from all industries and locations within Edmonton to be made aware of the grant. Council was also briefed on the grant program and supported building awareness of the grant.

### Edmonton Economic Recovery Grant - City Stream

The Edmonton Economic Recovery Grant - City Stream ran from June 2020 until the funds were depleted in December 2021.

This grant awarded \$1.59 million in COVID-19 support to 1,562 businesses.

- The grant funding was primarily used for:
  - PPE/Cleaning - 32.86%
  - Marketing/Advertising - 14.56%
  - Update/Establish Online Presence - 13.69%
  - Equipment Purchase - 8.49%
  - Longer Term PPE (eg. Sneeze shields, Air Purifiers, Signage, etc) - 5.58%
- The main industries that accessed funding:
  - Accommodation or food service - 28.36%
  - Other services (excluding public administration) - 20.66%
  - Retail Trade - 12.39%
  - Arts, entertainment and recreation - 9.26%
  - Health care and social assistance - 8.54%
- Insights received from applicants included:
  - 66% said that the grant helped employees continue to work.
  - 26% said that the grant enabled employees to return to work.
  - 8% said the grant enabled them to hire new employees.

- Operating costs were often included in grant applications such as utilities, insurance, permit fees, debt reduction, etc. However, the program was not designed to support these costs.
- Administration heard in the feedback for Phase 1 that businesses and organizations desired higher grant amounts (more than \$1,000) in order to have a larger impact.

### **Edmonton Economic Recovery Grant - Business Association Stream**

The Business Association Stream grant ran from June 2020 to May 2021. The program awarded \$922,960 to fund 18 unique business support projects tailored to meet the business needs of the different organizations' members, leveraging an estimated \$1.6 million in private funding based on projected project totals. Unallocated funds of \$400,000 were transferred to the Economic Action Plan Grant.

- 14 business organizations have not yet completed their project or have not yet reported to the City on project outcomes. This is within the established program timelines. The final project report is due to the City in Q1 2023.
- Although the funded projects were unique to each business association, the grant funding was primarily used for capacity building for member/targeted businesses and entrepreneurs (five of 18) and marketing (four of 18).
- The organizations that received funding included:
  - Business Improvement Areas
  - Business organizations supporting specific industries or ethnic business communities
  - Social support organizations with ties to the business community (Islamic Family Social Services Association), media (Radio Cite), food hubs and others
- Feedback from the business organizations includes:
  - Funding allowed them to pivot or create new programs to support businesses during COVID-19 in ways that were meaningful for the businesses they supported.
  - Funding was used to support businesses in establishing or expanding an online presence and allowing for access to an increased revenue source. (University of Alberta and the Making Edmonton Digital Project and Business Link).
  - Business Association Stream funding assisted the Downtown Business Association with the development and implementation of a Marketing/Loyalty card program to help welcome customers back downtown.

### **Attachment 3**

- The Islamic Family Social Services Association used the funding for a social enterprise that supports local businesses.