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## Report 2025-025

**Report Title:** Grant Activity Biannual Report – Year End 2024

**Committee Name:** Corporate Support

**Committee Meeting Date:** February 4, 2025

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Communications

**Reviewed by:** Kate Campbell  
Director of Communications & Information Technology  
Communications

**Approved by:** Jennifer Moore, CAO

**Council Meeting Date:** February 19, 2025

**Strategic Plan Priorities:**  Innovate for Service Excellence  
 Ignite Economic Opportunity  
 Foster a Thriving Community  
 Propel Sustainable Growth  
 Champion a Vibrant Future

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### Information Report

“**That** the Corporate Support Committee receive Report 2025-025 ‘Grant Activity Biannual Report – Year End 2024’ for information; and

**Further That** the Committee recommend that County Council receive this report for information.”

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### Purpose

To provide a summary of grant activity between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024.

## Background

The Communications Department plays an essential role in supporting Northumberland County's 2023-2027 Community Strategic Plan and priorities across all departments. A key part of this work involves managing corporate communications in a coordinated and strategic way, including providing centralized grant writing services.

The Senior Advisor, Grant Development & Special Projects helps Northumberland County secure funding from federal and provincial governments, as well as private sources, to support projects, programs, and services. Responsibilities include:

- Building and maintaining strong relationships with funding organizations and staying informed about available opportunities from government and industry sources to support community initiatives.
- Offering clear advice and guidance to staff and community partners about funding options, requirements, and application procedures.
- Working with County staff and community partners to create well-designed projects that meet the needs and expectations of funders.
- Researching and writing convincing proposals that align with the County's mission and goals.
- Managing the submission process to ensure proposals are completed and submitted on time.
- Assisting departments, as needed, in meeting reporting requirements for successful funding applications.
- Strengthening the community's ability to attract funding for local investments.

This role helps the County access resources needed to support vital initiatives and enhance quality of life for residents.

Between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024, seven funding applications led by the Senior Advisor, Grant Development & Special Projects were confirmed as successful, generating a total of \$373,291.82 in investments in Northumberland. Six applications were confirmed as unsuccessful.

The successful applications included:

1. \$2,500 from Farm Credit Canada's Community Funding program to support the purchase/installation of two natural gas-powered standby generators capable of automatic switching on during grid power failures at the Northumberland County Works Yard (60 Elgin St. W., Cobourg, ON).
2. \$77,500 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Community Investments Capital Grant for Transition House Coalition to purchase equipment supporting the creation of a 24/7 Hub for on-site wrap-around services for people experiencing homelessness, at 310 Division Street, Cobourg. This includes a dishwasher for the commercial kitchen, and furniture for 10 Transitional Housing units. These units will provide people experiencing homelessness, who are ready for more permanent housing, with affordable and centrally located short-term rentals, and the necessary support for a successful transition.

3. \$163,800 from the Ministry of Health's Dedicated Offload Nurses Program for hiring dedicated staff at Northumberland Hills Hospital and Campbellford Memorial Hospital who manage patient offloads, assisting with timely transition and freeing up paramedics for emergency response.
4. \$12,732.82 from Yamaha Stay Outdoors fund for the purpose of installing 121.92 m of fencing, two gates, and 20 regulatory signs to protect environmentally sensitive areas and enhance rider safety. This project will also fund the planting of 160 native species to restore damaged ecosystems and a social media campaign to promote environmental stewardship among trail users.
5. \$100,000 from Employment and Social Development Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund for a safe, fully accessible outdoor area at 800 Division Street in Cobourg. This space will support children's treatment and recreation, along with cultural awareness and outdoor education programs. This project represents a collaboration between Five Counties Children's Centre, Northumberland County's EarlyON Child and Family Centre, Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre, and YMCA Northumberland.
6. \$11,327 from the Rotary Club of Cobourg to launch an Agri-Therapy Program in the greenhouse within the new Golden Plough Lodge long-term care home, opening in 2025. This program will allow residents and their families to enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of the greenhouse and gardening; present a fresh environment to engage the community with more volunteer opportunities; and provide staff with a greenspace to breathe, center themselves, and boost overall resilience.
7. 76 hours of support (\$5,432 approx. value) from the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation's Community Outreach and Engagement Program. Over the course of 12 months, Northumberland County staff will collaborate with the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation team to develop and implement a community engagement strategy aimed at creating our first Climate Change Adaptation and Resiliency Plan.

Additionally, the Senior Advisor, Grant Development & Special Projects led the submission of an assessment – through the Intelligent Community Forum – of the County's use of technology and its innovation and engagement practices, to enhance quality of life, economic opportunities, and sustainability. This initial assessment benchmarked County practices against best practice municipal leaders. This will support development of a structured path forward for leveraging broadband connectivity, technology, and 3-P partnerships to foster community development, improve service delivery, and drive sustainable growth, while ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for all residents.

At the time of this report, 11 applications are awaiting funder decisions, valued at \$40,252,786.51.

### **Consultations**

When at capacity, the Senior Advisor/Grant Development & Special Projects provides support to departments working on their own grant applications rather than leading the process. This support includes:

- Prefilling applications with basic information.
- Sharing pre-written content for use in submissions.

- Reviewing draft applications and appendices.
- Offering recommendations on how to strengthen the application's strategy.

This role also provides advice and assistance to Member Municipalities and community partners when requested.

Between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024, one pre-application and one full application supported by the Senior Advisor, Grant Development & Special Projects were confirmed as successful. Five were confirmed as unsuccessful.

The successful pre- and full applications resulted in:

- \$98,610 from the Greenbelt Foundation's Resilient Greenbelt Fund to support the Rice Lake Plains Seed Co-op in building climate resilience and combating biodiversity loss in the eastern Oak Ridges Moraine/Greenbelt. The project aims to restore tallgrass ecosystems in oak savanna and tallgrass prairie sites by collecting, growing, and tracking native seeds, with active involvement from local communities and landowners. This initiative is a collaboration between Nature Conservancy Canada, Northumberland County Forest, Alderville First Nation, Rice Lake Plains Partnership, and Lower Trent Conservation. Of the total \$98,610 in funding secured, \$23,510 will be used to implement the project within the Northumberland County Forest. The remaining \$75,100 will support the community partners.

At the time of this report, two supported applications are awaiting a funder decision, valued at \$26,442,618.

### **Legislative Authority / Risk Considerations**

Grant writing activities are conducted in compliance with all relevant legislation.

### **Discussion / Options**

N/A

### **Financial Impact**

Between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024, funding was secured for investment in County initiatives, including:

- \$163,800 from the Provincial Government
- \$55,501.82 from Foundations/Corporations/Private Organizations

Funding was also secured for community partners for initiatives aligned with County priorities, including:

- \$100,000 from the Federal Government
- \$77,500 from the Provincial Government
- \$75,100 from Foundations/Corporations/Private Organizations

TOTAL: \$471,901.82

Since 2018, Northumberland County has secured \$83.6M in grant funding. To review additional details regarding application-based grant funds secured between 2018 to present, please visit [Northumberland County's Performance Dashboard](#).

## Member Municipality Impacts

A grant proposal submitted by a group of partners is often more likely to secure funding than one from a single applicant. To align with the County's mission to position Northumberland as a leader in best practices, Northumberland County encourages collaborative partnerships. We promote joint applications and consult with Member Municipalities, Alderville First Nation, and community partners whenever possible. From January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, capacity-building activities have included:

- Growing the Weekly Funding Opportunities E-blast distribution list by over 37%, ensuring that Northumberland County Directors and Managers, Alderville First Nation, the seven Member Municipalities, and non-profit organizations within Northumberland receive timely notification and information regarding available funding opportunities. Presently, 83 Northumberland County staff and staff from 130 member municipalities and community partners receive the Weekly Funding Opportunities E-blast.
- Refreshing the Weekly Funding Opportunities E-blast to make it easier to read on different devices and more engaging. A stylized newsletter version launched on May 13, 2024, and staff are using detailed analytics to track its effectiveness. Specifically:
  - **Open Rate:** measures the percentage of recipients who open the email out of the total sent. A higher open rate shows more interest in the content. Currently, the open rate for County staff is 43%, and for member municipalities/community partners, it is 41%. A good open rate typically ranges from 40% to 46%.
  - **Click Through Rate:** measures the percentage of recipients who click on one or more links in the email, out of the total emails delivered. A higher click through rate indicates that the recipients find the content interesting and are motivated to take action. The average click through rate for County staff is 19%, and for member municipalities/community partners, it is 16%. A good click through rate typically falls between 2% and 5%.
  - The **unsubscribe rate** is less than 1% for County staff, Member Municipalities, and community partners.
- Enhancing the County's outcomes measurement practices – imperative for successful funding applications – by leading a cross-organization project to refresh the [Northumberland County's Performance Dashboard](#) with a focus on improving user experience and navigation. This update included the integration of 12 new metrics related to Corporate Financial Wellbeing, Court Services, Housing & Shelter, Paramedic Services, and Talent Attraction & Retention.
- Scanning the funding landscape for specific opportunities, as requested by internal and external stakeholders, and providing timely advice and information on funding opportunities, requirements, and procedures. As of December 31, 2024, 14 Funding Opportunity Scans were completed for specific initiatives and provided to Northumberland County staff, Member Municipalities, and/or community partners.

- Delivering guidance to external stakeholders to generate value for the community through increased funding to the community overall. Grant writing support via the review of draft applications and related appendices, as well as recommendations on application positioning strategy, are provided to member municipalities and community partners on an ad hoc basis, as capacity permits.
- Engaging in speaking opportunities at pertinent community events and training sessions to elevate the quality of grant submissions – and the likelihood of success – from the community of Northumberland. Three workshops focusing on an Outcomes Measurement approach to grant writing were delivered to community members and Northumberland County staff during this period. 100% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they felt better equipped to create high-impact, outcomes-focused funding applications after attending the workshop.

## **Conclusion / Outcomes**

In 2024, Northumberland County made significant progress in securing funding for vital community projects, totaling \$471,901.82 in successful grants. This achievement is the result of a proactive approach to grant writing, supported by strong partnerships and well-targeted application strategies.

Looking ahead, global issues such as the cost of living, international conflicts, trade tensions, environmental concerns, and the ongoing impacts of the pandemic will continue to influence fiscal policies. This will affect both the availability of grant funding, and the types of projects considered eligible for funding.

As core inflation slows and modest growth is expected, economic forecasts suggest that Canada and Ontario may avoid a recession ([Bank of Canada reduces policy rate by 50 basis points to 3.25%, Dec 11, 2024](#); [Business Development Bank of Canada economic outlook for 2025, Dec 16, 2024](#)). This could positively impact grant writing.

The 2024 Federal and Provincial budgets prioritize grant opportunities focusing on housing, homelessness, education, the green economy, high living costs, public health care, infrastructure, economic renewal, and labour shortages. With both provincial and federal elections in 2025, any potential shifts in funding priorities will be closely monitored.

At the same time, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is urging the federal government to modernize municipal funding, highlighting that small, rural, and remote municipalities often face barriers in the grant application process due to limited staff resources ([Making Canada's Growth a Success: The case for a Municipal Growth Framework, Jun 2024, p. 43](#)).

On the other hand, generative Artificial Intelligence tools are transforming grant writing, and as a result, funders are receiving more applications than ever before. This is increasing the competition for available funds.

There are many changes and developments in the field of grant writing at the moment.

To stay competitive, Northumberland County will continue to leverage best practices and use the 'Outcomes Measurement Logic Model' to design projects that outshine the competition ensuring our initiatives align with funding priorities and reflect community needs.

## **Attachments**

N/A