

Small Business Incentives

Date Approved by Council: May 27, 2025

Resolution No.: 196/25

Mayor: "Original Signed"

Chief Administrative Officer: "Original Signed"

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Sturgeon County is committed to fostering growth and development for local small businesses by operating a Small Business Incentives Program. This program is designed to provide financial support to small businesses within the County that are implementing new equipment and technology, enhancing marketing efforts, diversifying their customer base, accessing training and education, or reducing the impacts of crime on their business. This Policy establishes the guiding principles that underpin the program's objectives and impartial application processes.

2. Revision History

<i>Approval Date</i>	<i>Revision Number</i>	<i>Modification</i>
May 27, 2025	1.0	New Document

3. Persons/Areas Affected

Eligible Sturgeon County Businesses
Economic Development Advisory Board
Council
County Administration
Chief Administrative Officer

4. Definitions

- 4.1. *Applicant* means the individual, organization, or business applying for financial support through a Small Business Incentive Program.
- 4.2. *Business* means:
- a commercial, merchandising, or industrial activity or undertaking;
 - a profession, trade, occupation, calling, or employment; or
 - an activity providing goods or services.

For additional clarity, not-for-profit associations, however organized or formed, including a co-operative or association of persons, are not considered eligible.

- 4.3. *County* means the Municipality of Sturgeon County.
- 4.4. *Chief Administrative Officer or CAO* means the Chief Administrative Officer for Sturgeon County.
- 4.5. *Community Wealth* means economic well-being of the community, including adequate opportunities for skilled employment, environmental stewardship, economic stability and growth, expansion of public service by strengthening of the municipal tax-base, and reduction of economic leakage.
- 4.6. *Development Permit* means a permit issued pursuant to the County's Land Use Bylaw.
- 4.7. *Eligibility Criteria* means terms that specify who qualifies to receive support through the Program and/or the actions necessary to qualify for the Incentives prior to receipt of funds.
- 4.8. *Eligible Expenses* means those expenses related to an approved project as outlined in the Small Business Incentive Directive.
- 4.9. *Good Standing* means a Business and/or Applicant that:
- is not in arrears on taxes, utilities, fees, fines, or other amounts owed to the County; and
 - is in compliance with the County's Land Use Bylaw and has obtained all necessary Development Permits; and
 - Is in compliance with all applicable provincial and federal codes, legislation, permits, and regulations, including but not limited to the *Safety Codes Act*.
- 4.10. *Incentives* means a financial contribution where Eligibility Criteria and/or conditions are compulsory for the recipient, and there is a formal application/selection process, and a future obligation is attached.
- 4.11. *Local Business* means a Business located within the corporate limits of Sturgeon County.
- 4.12. *Personal Use* – means assets, equipment, initiatives, and/or property that is used for a purpose other than to directly benefit the business.
- 4.13. *Program* – means the small business incentives, which are a set of incentives that establish clearly defined objectives, terms, conditions, provisions, and eligibility criteria for a recipient to have access to public funds through an objective assessment and selection process.
- 4.14. *Program Agreement* means a legal instrument documenting the terms and conditions under which an applicant receives public funds through the Program.

- 4.15. *Program Review Officer* means a staff member appointed by the CAO representing the Economic Innovation and Growth Services Department.
- 4.16. *Review Committee* means the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) which has responsibility for evaluating applications received under this policy. The Review Committee makes recommendations regarding this program.
- 4.17. *Small Business* means a business located within the municipal boundaries of Sturgeon County with more than a single employee, but less than 25 employees. For added clarity, this includes both full-time and part-time/seasonal employees.

5. Policy Statement

- 5.1. The County may, subject to budget approval and available funds, provide reimbursement-based incentives to encourage investment in local small businesses that:
- maintains a permanent physical location within the County;
 - maintains a valid and appropriate Development Permit issued pursuant to the Land Use Bylaw for the purpose of running the Applicant's business; and
 - maintains good standing with the County.

6. Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles will be considered in the development of any Corporate Directives and Procedures required to implement this Policy.

- Applicants for the Program must demonstrate how their application will contribute to the overall economic well-being of the County and generate Community Wealth.
- The maximum available Incentive for any single application is \$5,000. Applications for Incentives requesting \$1,000 or less will not be considered.
- In no way shall Incentives received from the County be seen as an endorsement of products, services, or ideas of any Applicant.
- Incentive applications are reviewed and awarded in the order they are received.
- Incentives will be provided as a reimbursement for a portion of Eligible Expenses at the completion of the project, and only if all the Eligibility Criteria have been met.
- Incentives will only be provided for assets, equipment, initiatives, and property exclusively for the business's operation, not for Personal Use or benefit.
- Applicants may be required to demonstrate that they possess the resources necessary to complete the project as outlined.
- Applicants must be in good standing with the County and not be in arrears on taxes, utilities, fees, fines, or any other amounts owing to the County.
- Applicants found to have falsified documents and/or reports, or submit information that is false or misleading, shall immediately reimburse the County any funds received from an Incentive.

- Applicants are limited to applying for an Incentive for a single project or initiative.
- Successful Applicants will be limited to one application every three years.
- Every effort shall be made to maintain the transparency and integrity of the Program. These efforts include but are not limited to:
 - Applicants who receive an Incentive will be published on the County's website and in the tri-annual financial report, at least once per calendar year. Additionally, successful applicants and their respective projects may be included in regular administrative updates reported to Council during Committee of the Whole meetings.
 - Records of decisions and discussions relating to approval or rejection of applications shall be maintained by the CAO.

7. Responsibilities

- 7.1. Applicants for the Program must demonstrate how their application will contribute to the overall economic well-being of the County and generate Community Wealth.
- 7.2. The Chief Administrative Officer is authorized to develop, as may be required, any Directives or Procedures required to implement this Policy.
- 7.3. The EDAB will objectively review and evaluate applications and seek additional information when necessary to make informed recommendations to the CAO on applications to this Policy and when or if updates to the Policy are required.

8. Review Period

Annually.

9. Cross Reference

None.