Primary Agricultural Societies Operating Grant

Program Guidelines

Classification: PUBLIC

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Introduction

Primary agricultural societies are part of the backbone of rural communities across the province. These societies play an important role in the communities they serve by bringing community members together to improve the quality of life for rural Albertans.

The Alberta government offers grant funding to support primary agricultural societies and the activities they undertake to enhance and enrich the rural communities they serve.

These guidelines and the sample grant application include instructions to assist applicants in completing their grant application. If an applicant requires additional information, they may contact the program office.

Primary Agricultural Societies Operating Grant Program

The Primary Agricultural Societies Operating Grant Program provides primary agricultural societies with grant funding for activities that align with Agriculture and Irrigation's (AGI) priorities and support outcomes identified in the ministry's business plan:

Outcome 1: Alberta's economy grows through investment in the agricultural sector.
Outcome 2: Agricultural productivity and resilience and rural quality of life are strengthened, diversified and enhanced.

Eligible societies receive a base grant of $17,500. In addition, societies can claim eligible expenses from the previous operating year to receive partial reimbursement.

The application deadline for the 2027 Primary Agricultural Societies Operating Grant Program is February 15, 2027.

Eligibility requirements

Primary agricultural societies that wish to receive grant funding must complete a grant application and submit it to AGI. Ministry staff will review each society's application to determine eligibility for grant funding.

Primary agricultural societies must be in good standing under the Agricultural Societies Act and operate a facility or run an agricultural event or program to be eligible to receive grant funding.

Reporting expenses

Claims that fall under the following categories are eligible for partial reimbursement:

- Governance, Leadership and Training Expenses
- Agricultural Activities and Programs Expenses
- Operational Expenses.

Applicants must use the grant application to report eligible expenses from the previous operating year. Additional required documentation includes:

- Year-end financial statements to demonstrate that all expenses are paid in full. Financial statements must be an audit report/review engagement report prepared by a professional accounting firm.
- Supporting documentation can include additional schedules or copies of specific ledger reports or a statement of expense template. For additional information about this template see Appendix E.

Applicants should provide adequate information about the expenses included in the application.

- Describe expenses/activities in detail by including the full name of camps, conferences, courses, and agricultural activities.
- Provide the number of registrations included in an expenses which relates to a conference or training.
- Do not provide the total expense without information on how many individuals attended.
- Use the statement of expense template if additional space is needed to list the expenses.
- Do not use acronyms. For example: “EFPC” will not be accepted – write out the full name “Environmental Farm Planning Course.”
- Do not use the term “donation” to describe an expense. It is not possible to verify if donations towards the general operation of another organization are being used for grant eligible expenses.
- Sponsorship of a specific grant eligible activity or program can be considered (i.e. sponsorship of an instructor fee for a farm safety session).

Expenses that have already been paid or reimbursed by another organization are not eligible for reimbursement. Societies must deduct these expenses from their operating expenses. Examples include:

- expenses that have already been paid using grant funding provided by the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies (AAAS) to support Open Farm Days activities.
- expenses that have already been paid using funding from municipal operating grants.

Additional information about expenses:

- Travel within Canada is eligible for reimbursement.
  - Mileage and lodging claims are reimbursed at Government of Alberta rates (see Appendix F).
- Ineligible expenses include:
  - GST and taxes.
  - bank/interest fees, lease payments and late payment penalties.
  - in-kind and in-contra expenses, including the donated use of facilities.
    - The Program may use discretion to determine whether an expenses is eligible or not.

Appendixes A-G on the following pages provide additional information to help primary agricultural societies complete the grant application form – including examples of eligible and ineligible expenses.

Appendix A: Governance, Leadership, and Training Expenses (Section 1)

This funding category supports agricultural societies by reimbursing:

- expenses incurred to enhance governance and leadership capacity within a society to support its operations and objectives.
  - Expenses related to regular meetings are not eligible (e.g. annual general meetings, regular board/committee meetings).

Examples of eligible expenses:

Governance	Leadership	Training
Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies conference & regional meetings	Registration for youth leadership activities (programs, camps, etc.)	Facility operations training for staff and volunteers (e.g. food safety, pro-serve, first aid, ice maintenance)
Board development activities (e.g. financial planning workshops, governance training)	Post-secondary scholarships	Conference fees for staff & volunteers related to agricultural society activities
Volunteer development	Sponsoring community leadership activities (4-H public speaking programs)	

Appendix B: Agricultural Activities and Program Expenses (Section 2)

This funding category supports agricultural societies by reimbursing:

- expenses incurred for activities, events, and programs specifically connected to “agricultural events.”
  - To be eligible for reimbursement, events/and programming must demonstrate strong agricultural relevance.
  - Expenses related to non-agricultural programming are not eligible.
  - Examples are provided below.

Examples of eligible expenses:

Youth & community agricultural programs	Agricultural education & training	Agricultural events & competitions	Event support & logistics
4-H agricultural activities (e.g. Livestock Achievement Day)	Fair judging workshops	Non-pro/senior amateur rodeos	Sponsorship of agricultural events
Communities in Bloom	Farm safety training	Equestrian sports (roping, gymkhana, team penning, horse shows, etc.)	Event insurance/rodeo sanction fees
Open Farm Days	Horticulture courses	Bull-a-rama	Advertising/signage
	Horse clinics/courses	Stock dog trials	Fair books and ribbons
	Agriculture market & trade development	Farmers’ markets	Judges/announcers/ security/contractors
			Additional staffing
		Bench show	Cleaning/sanitation
			Office expenses (related to organizing an agricultural event)

Examples of ineligible expenses:

Pro-rodeos	Non-agricultural activities and contests (ATV rally, BMX, sport-dog shows)	Donations to non-agricultural activities
Alcohol & corkage fees/beer gardens	Chuck wagons/pony chucks	Running of the bulls
Entertainment (e.g. music, parades, petting zoos, pony rides etc.)	Food/concession supplies	Purchase of capital items (e.g. gravel, sand, chutes, etc.
Fundraising activities (bingos, casinos, raffles, etc.)	Facility operations (ice-plant start-up)	Licensing fees
Memorials	Clothing	Prizes, awards & gifts
Tractor pulls	Art and culture activities & events (cowboy poetry, craft shows, tourist booths)	Racing (e.g. horse/dog/car)
Animal purchases	Young Hunter Training	Membership fees (includes Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies
Coaching/Refereeing Clinics		

Appendix C: Operational Expenses (Section 3)

This funding category supports agricultural societies by reimbursing:

- Some major expenses related facility operations – but not all expenses for facility operation.
  - Expenses for new construction or major renovations are not eligible.
- Eligible expenses identified on financial statements (for example, bookkeeping fees, insurance, utilities, repairs and maintenance and wages).
  - Claim bookkeeping expenses separately from professional fees (provide supporting documentation, such as a ledger).

Examples of eligible expenses:

Insurance	Wages/salaries & workers' compensation board premiums (include bookkeeping expenses)	Utilities (heat/power)
Repairs and Maintenance (Max $10,000) e.g. floor stripping, janitor supplies, equipment rentals, etc.		

Examples of ineligible expenses:

Professional Fees (accounting, legal fees, consulting fees)

Appendix D: Base Grant (Section 4)

Base grant funding is provided to reimburse expenditures that “encourage improvement in agriculture and enhance quality of life for people living in the community” as defined in the *Agricultural Societies Act*.

- Agricultural societies may spend grant funding to develop educational programs, events, services, and facilities based on community needs.
- The agricultural society’s total operational spending must exceed the base grant each year.

Appendix E: Statement of Expense Template

Use the Statement of Expense Template when there is not enough room in the grant application form to list all costs directly associated with an agricultural event/activity (advertising, postage, freight, highway signs, supplies, etc.).

- The template is illustrated below.
- See Appendix G: Sample Grant Application for an example of a completed statement of expense template.

Statement of Expenses Template

Name of the Agricultural Society: _____

Name of the Activity/Program:_____

Eligible Expenses	**Expense**	**Office Use Only**
Total Eligible Expenses		

Eligible Expenses	**Expense**	**Office Use Only**
Total Ineligible Expenses		

Appendix F: Travel Related Expenses

The Travel Expenses Schedule is based on the Alberta government's Meal and Hospitality Expense Policy.

- All travel-related expenses must be reasonable and appropriate.
- Expenses will be approved at the sole discretion of the Minister.
- GST is ineligible.
- Receipts may be requested.

Travel by Air

- Economy airfare is eligible.
- Cancellation insurance is not eligible.

Travel by Ground

- Taxi, intra-city public transportation is eligible.
- Parking is eligible.
- Vehicle rental (compact rate only).
  - Eligible only if there is a valid business purpose for renting a vehicle.
- The business kilometer rate for a private vehicle is $0.57 per km.
  - Proof of travel is required.

Accommodation

- Claim the reasonable actual cost of accommodation (receipt required) or the accommodation allowance of $20.15 per night.

Appendix G: Sample Grant Application

Access a sample grant application through this link: Appendix G – Sample Grant Application