



# Regional Agricultural Society Operating Grant

Program Guidelines

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## Introduction

Regional agricultural societies are an important part of rural communities across the province. These agricultural 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 regional agricultural societies and the activities they undertake to enhance and enrich the rural communities they serve.

These guidelines include instructions to assist applicants in completing their grant application. If additional information is required, please contact the program office at [agi.agsocietygrants@gov.ab.ca](mailto:agi.agsocietygrants@gov.ab.ca) or call 780-968-3517 (toll-free by dialing 310-0000 first).

## Regional Agricultural Society Operating Grant Program

The Regional Agricultural Societies Operating Grant Program (the “**Program**”) provides regional agricultural societies with grant funding for activities that align with Agriculture and Irrigation’s (“**AGI**”) following Departmental Business Plan Outcomes from the 2025-28 Ministry Business Plan:

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

Eligible societies receive a base grant of **up to \$298,853** and up to \$100,000 for **Agricultural Events and Programming Activities**.

The application deadline for the 2026 Regional Agricultural Societies Operating Grant Program is March 6, 2026.

## Eligibility requirements

The following agricultural societies are eligible for the Regional Agricultural Societies Operating Grant:

- Camrose Regional Exhibition and Agricultural Society
- Grande Prairie Regional Agricultural and Exhibition Society
- Lethbridge & District Exhibition
- Lloydminster Agricultural Exhibition Association Limited
- Medicine Hat Exhibition & Stampede Co. Ltd.
- Olds Agricultural Society
- Westerner Exposition Association

To participate in this Program, the regional agricultural society must provide the following planning documents, either at the time of the application or by the end of the reporting period stated in a grant agreement. All such documentation must be sufficiently current, comprehensive, and detailed, as determined by the Program team.

Copy of the regional agricultural society’s Business Plan for the year in which the application is submitted,

- Copy of the regional agricultural society’s most recent Strategic Plan update,
- Copy of the regional agricultural society’s most recent Asset Management Plan update with

infrastructure priorities clearly defined.

## Reporting

Final grant reporting must utilize a standardized reporting template provided by the department including:

- Strategic alignment with AGI's designated Business Plan Outcomes,
- Strategic partnership opportunities and formal community sensing initiatives supported by base grant funding of operations,
- Agricultural activity reporting,
- Board governance reporting,
- Non-agricultural events/programs supported by base grant funding of operations,
- Eligible agricultural activity expenses reporting,
- Eligible base grant expense reporting.

**Final grant reporting must also include submission of planning documents** (i.e., Business Plan, Strategic Plan update, and Asset Management Plan update that were either not submitted at the time of application or were deemed not to be sufficiently current, comprehensive, or detailed.) In 2025, regional agricultural societies were required to submit on an annual basis their strategic and asset management plans. Since these plans generally remain consistent from year to year, the revised direction is to provide the complete plans every three years, with an annual update that highlights key changes to those plans.

Other annual return reporting requirements include:

- The address of the registered office of the regional agricultural society.
- The full name, address, e-mail address and title of each officer and director of the regional agricultural society
- Most recent financial statement that has been approved at the annual general meeting (AGM) by the membership and signed by two directors of the regional agricultural society and the accountant; and must be an audit report or a review engagement report prepared by a professional accounting firm.
- A copy of the minutes of the most recent AGM.
- A copy of the minutes of the second most recent AGM, as adopted at the most recent AGM and signed by two directors of the regional agricultural society.
- AGM membership sign-in sheet as evidence that the society achieved quorum.

## Appendix A: Base Grant Activities and Eligible Expenses

The Program will provide a grant for “Base Grant Activities”, which means operations (utilities (heat and power), insurance, and wages only), non-major repairs and maintenance, and selected initiatives.

An applicant may receive up to \$298,853 for the following eligible expenses of Base Grant Activities:

Operational expenses, limited to: utilities (heat and power), insurance	Salaries, benefits, wages, and honorariums	Materials and labour for repairs and maintenance (up to \$100,000) for property owned by the regional agricultural society
Governance training and capacity building initiatives (board and senior management)	Business planning, strategic planning, feasibility studies	Marketing, business development, event attraction initiatives
Formal community engagement and sensing initiatives	Volunteer and youth engagement initiatives	Partnership development, joint procurement, and revenue diversification initiatives
Operational planning and tracking systems	Other non-capital initiatives that address a recommendation of the Deloitte Regional Agricultural Society Sustainability Assessment	Other costs related to base operations and deemed eligible by the Minister

## Appendix B: Agricultural Events and Programming Activities and Eligible Expenses

The Program will provide a grant for up to \$100,000 for “Agricultural Events and Programming Activities”, which means events and programming that meets the following criteria:

- The event or programming must demonstrate strong agricultural relevance.
- Reporting requirements will include the number and duration of events and programming, attendance, and volunteerism levels.
- There must be at least 25 eligible event days or programs included in the application.
  - An event day must be a full day (8 hours).
    - Event set up and tear down days count toward the total event days (no more than 1 day for set up and 1 day for tear down per event).
    - Events less than one day in duration can be cumulatively added together to make a full day.
    - An ongoing program is counted once (e.g., community garden and other static programs where there is not regular set up and tear down involved).
    - Agricultural events put on by third parties at regional agricultural society facilities (i.e., rentals) count toward the total event days.
  - The total eligible expenses for those events or programming must be at least \$100,000.

Agricultural education/training (for the agriculture industry and public)	Farm safety and mental health
Open Farm Days events	Agricultural trade shows and conferences
Rodeo, chuckwagons	4-H events and activities
Value-added processing events or initiatives	Livestock, poultry, and horse shows/sales
Commercial horticulture events or initiatives	Agricultural market/trade development events or initiatives
Farmers markets	Equine events and programs (e.g., team penning, team roping)
Local food events or initiatives	Environmental agricultural events or initiatives
Agricultural specific components of main summer fairs	Agricultural events and programming deemed eligible by the Minister.

## Appendix C: Ineligible Expenses

Prizes, prize money, and gifts	Entertainment and clothing
Purchase/ lease of motorized vehicles and other non-fixed equipment (e.g., passenger vehicles, tractors, skid steers, riding mowers, Zambonis)	Purchase of tools and small power equipment
Expenses incurred outside the grant term (as detailed in the grant agreement)	Permits, penalties, fees, debt repayment, interest payments
Expenses paid by a person other than the applicant	Capital projects (new construction or major repairs and renovations over \$100,000)
Food, beverages, and alcohol	Expenses related to horse racing
Expenses for which the applicant has already received reimbursement	Expenses arising from non-arm's length transactions that may involve a conflict of interest of board members or senior management
GST, PST	Costs deemed ineligible by the Minister